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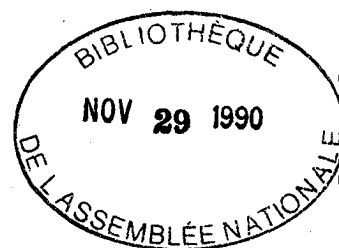
# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



**COMMISSION ON THE POLITICAL  
AND CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE  
OF QUÉBEC**

**Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau**

**Montréal, Thursday, November 15, 1990**

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**QUÉBEC**

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Montréal, Thursday, November 15, 1990

## Hearing of organizations

(9:36 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Gentlemen, I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. I'd like to remind you that the Commission's mandate is to examine and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and make recommendations thereon. During today's sitting we'll be hearing organizations that submitted a brief to the Commission.

I'd like to inform you of the rules governing the discussion. Some briefs have been allotted an hour and a half, others an hour and still others 30 minutes.

I'd also like to give you this morning's agenda. At 9:30, we'll be hearing the Conseil du patronat du Québec, which is already here; at 11:00, the Bloc québécois; at 2:00 p.m., the Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain; at 3:30, the Québec Association of Protestant School Boards; at 4:30, the Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec; at 7:00, the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste de Montréal; and at 8:20, the Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Association.

We'll begin this morning with the Conseil du patronat. The discussion will be an hour and a half long, so the speaking time will be divided among the members as follows: 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief; 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the government; 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the official opposition; 40 minutes for the members on the Chairman's list; and 10 minutes for the Chair.

Sébastien Allard, I understand you'll be making the presentation for the Conseil du patronat. Would you introduce your colleagues to us?

**Conseil du patronat du Québec**

**Mr. Allard (Sébastien):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Beginning on my left, my extreme left, Torrance Wylie, Executive Vice-President of Imasco; next, Philippe Casgrain, attorney with the firm Byers Casgrain; and André Raynauld, economist at the Université de Montréal; and on my right Guy Lafamme, Chairman of the Conseil du patronat and President of Les Industries de la Rive-Sud. Lastly, Jacques Garon, Research Director at the Conseil du patronat du Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 10 minutes for your presentation, Mr. Allard.

**Mr. Allard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Commission, we're pleased to be able to present our views this morning on Québec's place in Canada after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. It goes without saying that our comments will emphasize the economic aspect of this matter. As you know from reading the brief we submitted to the Commission, this point of view essentially defends the concept of federalism, but federalism with a modern constitution based on the strengths of the people, the strengths of the private sector and the will of the citizens of this country to continue to take advantage of the high standard of living that Canada can be proud of today. This would involve significant amendments to the Constitution but would maintain the traditional economic links between Québec and the rest of Canada in order to preserve, and even raise, Québec's standard of living.

Thus in the first section of our brief we establish that the Canadian Constitution must be amended significantly. It's clear that, in the aftermath of June 23, 1990, very few Canadians remain convinced that everything is going smoothly, from sea to sea, in the best of all constitutional worlds. The failed accord clearly shows that the 1982 agreement has serious deficiencies that must be corrected.

But beyond the rules of the constitutional game adopted in 1982 without Québec's agreement, we especially need fundamental changes to the very spirit underlying federalism as it now stands. At the top of the list is the need for far greater decentralization of certain powers now held by the central government. In a country as diversified as ours, the provinces must have far more autonomy than they do now in order to reflect their specificity as much as possible. Thus our objective must be greater autonomy for the provinces.

With respect to Québec specifically, immigration, labour and family law are some of the areas where provincial autonomy should be increased or confirmed. But the federal-provincial division of legislative powers in many other areas could also be redefined. Whether it's communications, universal health-care programs, research and development, regional development or transportation — these are areas in which Québec and the other provinces would benefit considerably from a new relationship.

As for Québec specifically, it should continue to maintain that it is a distinct society, a specificity that was, moreover, recognized by all the First Ministers when they met in 1987. This specificity is in no doubt whatsoever. It is shown mainly by the fact that, according to economist André Raynauld, French is the

common language of Québec, with 93.5 % of the population able to speak it, in comparison with 85 % in 1931.

Over the years, Québec has also passed an entire series of laws and created institutions that distinguish it fundamentally from the other provinces: Bill 101, the Civil Code, the Office de la langue française, the ministère du Revenu, the network of manpower centres, the Commission de formation professionnelle, and so on. All these achievements must be preserved and enhanced.

In the context of significant constitutional change for Canada, many people have even proposed that Québec adopt its own constitution, as certain American states have done within their federal system, or as Québec did when it adopted its own Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Commission must study this matter carefully. For our part, we are strongly in favour of it.

In the second and third sections of our brief, Mr. Chairman, we show that although Québec has undeniably changed in many ways and is no longer the Québec of the 1980 referendum, its current economic strength is to a large extent due to the close economic links it maintains with the rest of Canada. Therefore, given that the future flows from the past, we firmly believe that maintaining a federal framework that would ensure the continuity of Québec's economic links with the rest of Canada is a prerequisite for maintaining and even improving Québec's standard of living. If Québec is stronger today, it's obviously because it has been able to develop its own economy, but also to a large extent because it's part of Canada.

If we want to maintain and improve Québec's quality of life, we must bear in mind that right now we have to cope with the initial, and not always positive, consequences of free trade with the United States. Soon we'll also have to cope with a unified Europe, which is on the way to becoming a major economic force on the world scene. The sweeping political changes that recently occurred, and are still to come, in Eastern Europe will soon have considerable economic impact.

For all these reasons, to remain economically strong and to preserve its standard of living, Québec has nothing to gain by isolating itself economically on the North American continent. At a time when there's a major trend toward greater economic and social ties between many industrialized nations, which in return give up some of their sovereignty, we would be foolish to swim against the current. Québec has nothing to gain by restricting its market and isolating itself. Wouldn't this be the exact opposite of Europe 1992?

From this brief presentation, Mr. Chairman, we draw the following conclusions. First, it's federal-provincial relations that must be revised, and not federalism itself. Second, the consti-

tutional rules of 1982 must be amended significantly. Third, the provinces must be given greater decision-making powers, especially in such areas as immigration, manpower and family law, and for that matter in other areas too. Fourth, we must continue to defend Québec's distinctiveness and consider the advisability of a Québec constitution within the framework of a modern federal system, which would also have to define the place Canada intends to give its aboriginal peoples. Fifth, these changes and discussions must take place in a spirit of continuity, in other words by clearly and unequivocally maintaining Québec's economic links to the entire Canadian Confederation. Sixth, there is one priority, however: regardless of the new form federal-provincial relations take in future, Québec's standard of living must be maintained.

To us it is obvious that maintaining economic links between Québec and the other provinces is the most effective way of achieving this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
(9:45 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Allard. I'd like to suggest how we go about the question period. We have a long list of questions today. So I would ask that we try to cut short the preamble on both sides, that is both the person asking the question and the person answering, and answer with short, specific questions (sic). I understand this isn't always possible, but it might help us accommodate more members of the Commission. Pauline Marois will ask the first question.

**Mrs. Marois:** Is that all right? O.K. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to this sitting and thank you for your presentation. I very much enjoyed reading your brief. As you must know, I don't agree with some of your conclusions, but I think this discussion will definitely help us make progress and clarify certain things.

First, on page three of your brief, you say that the proposals you're submitting to us are based on a broad consensus. We've had representatives of the business community appear before us - I'm thinking of the *Chambre de commerce du Québec*, the *Mouvement Desjardins*, which also represents the business community, and also the *Bureau de commerce de Montréal* - and tell us they want to go much further than the proposal you're defending today. I'd like to remind you that they too represent the business community. So, especially with respect to repatriation of powers, how did you conduct your consultation? Who did you contact to be able to say you have a consensus on these demands, which are nevertheless restricted to three types of powers?

**Mr. Allard:** Mrs. Marois, I must tell you that at the *Conseil du patronat*, there's always a

great deal of consultation about important matters. The positions taken by the Conseil are not the positions of the President or the Chairman, but positions that have been checked with the members of the Conseil. In this case, that is, the constitutional question, the Conseil du patronat has been discussing it for a long time. We started before 1980. You're familiar with the position we took on the referendum and in the years that followed. The position of the Conseil's members hasn't changed all that much on this matter. More recently, I'm going back to last May, before the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, there was a consultation, a survey of the CPQ members by the Independent firm, CROP. The result of the poll showed that 88 % of our members supported the Meech Lake Accord. That's a large amount, and the poll was done by an independent firm, not by the CPQ itself, and it covered all the members.

There were also other types of consultations. For example, the former Presidents who meet from time to time - and the CPQ now has quite a few - were consulted and approved the position we're defending today. There have been consultations of the associations belonging to the CPQ, and there's a great deal of consultation at the monthly meetings of these associations. Once again, the CPQ's position was confirmed. The CPQ's Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, there was a special consultation of public-affairs people who formed a committee, and they all established the position we've presented to you.

**Mrs. Marois:** All right. I quite understand, but just the same there was no systematic consultation, I mean, of all the members, especially after the failure of Lake Meech.

**Mr. Allard:** There was a consultation...

**Mrs. Marois:** I'll go back to that. I'd like to ask another question...

**Mr. Allard:** There was a consultation of all members.

**Mrs. Marois:** But not a systematic one.

**Mr. Allard:** What do you mean by systematic?

**Mrs. Marois:** Like the one the Mouvement Desjardins did, for example. That's a good example, which we discussed at length here. They systematically sent all their administrators a questionnaire that people answered. Whether they liked the questions or not, they answered them.

But anyway I'd like to go back to the substance of your brief. You say Québec would have a lower standard of living if it were

sovereign. You essentially give two explanations, namely that Québec...

**Mr. Allard:** I'm sorry, I didn't understand the beginning of your question.

**Mrs. Marois:** You say Québec would have a lower standard of living if it were sovereign. You imply this and in certain places you say it's an entirely real risk that would indeed come true. Fine. You give two explanations. On the one hand you say Québec receives more from the federal government than it gives. Obviously we've seen that this was the case when things were going very badly in Québec. So federalism is profitable when times are tough in Québec. I'm not so sure that's an entirely interesting avenue, but it's your first reason. So you say: Québec receives more from the federal government, and access to international Canadian markets would be restricted if we were sovereign. But there are other organizations, I'm thinking of Desjardins again, and even the Bureau du commerce de Montréal, that have concluded that Québec is now in a position, yes, to receive more, but also the business community has also concluded that, ultimately, there's internationalization of markets, there's so much market globalization that political borders are irrelevant, and our Vice-President came here, the Vice-President of the Parti québécois, to say: Québec would continue to be a signatory to the GATT, Québec would continue to be a signatory to all the international treaties, and there would be a free flow of people, goods and capital. So from this standpoint how can you say or even imagine that it would be an economic apocalypse if Québec were sovereign?

**Mr. Allard:** I don't think we say in our brief that it would be an economic apocalypse. Nor do I think we say, at least not that way, that Québec's standard of living would drop. What we do say is that we have to maintain and ideally improve Québec's standard of living.

When we talk about trade with the other provinces, we don't say everything would grind to a halt the next day. What we're saying is that a large percentage of Québec's exports go to the other provinces and we'd have to maintain that market. We don't say it'll disappear, but we do say that right now things are working. So why take a position that could create problems?

As for the agreements you were referring to with the GATT and I don't know how many other international organizations... Would you mind listening to my answer?

**Mrs. Marois:** Don't worry, I'm listening.

**Mr. Allard:** I don't think we contradict what you're saying. Québec could negotiate

agreements. But we can say that if Québec declared itself sovereign tomorrow, tomorrow afternoon we wouldn't have an agreement with the GATT or the OECD or I don't know how many other organizations. It would take time to negotiate them. And during that time, we'd have to live with uncertainty, and uncertainty is bad for business and investment.

Now, Mr. Raynauld would perhaps like to add... because you alluded to figures and data in our report that were prepared by him.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Yes, I'm satisfied so far and I think we should go on to another area, if you don't mind. Mr. Brassard will take over.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Allard, I'd just like to quote what you say on page 14 of your brief. You say: (translation) "It would therefore be suicidal to embark on an adventure whose outcome could put our achievements at risk." That fits in with what my colleague was saying just now. In any case, you foresee many risks, but all the people who've appeared before us in the past few days, even if their viewpoint is federalist, which is entirely their right, also stated that we could maintain the Canadian economic space quite well by developing another formula, with a sovereign Québec, for example.

But having said that, I'd like to ask a question about renewed federalism, because fundamentally what you're proposing is to renew federalism. It's perfectly legitimate, your act of faith in favour of renewed federalism. But as you know the Catholic Church isn't always content with an act of faith. It has developed a theology: it wasn't enough just to believe in God, there had to be proof of His existence. I'd like you to tell me quite clearly: in addition to this act of faith in favour of a renewal of federalism, an in-depth renewal, how do you think it could be done with the existing amending formula, which, moreover, you contest? You say the amending formula isn't suitable, that it won't allow us to renew federalism, and I'd like to point out that, to amend the amending formula, unanimity is required. Meech failed precisely because it amended the amending formula, and that required unanimity. So you're proposing at the outset: we'll renew the amending formula, so we can better renew federalism. But you need unanimity to amend the amending formula. How do you think you could achieve this quickly by taking your approach, because you also say: we mustn't delay; we have to do it pretty quickly. So that's my question. I don't object to your being a

federalist, provided you don't insult us like yesterday, and you don't maintain that a sovereign Québec...

**Mr. Allard:** We didn't insult you yesterday.

**A voice:** We weren't even here yesterday.

**Mr. Brassard:** ...it would be a gulag, with repression of rights and freedoms. I respect your federalist convictions. I have no problem with that, but I think Mr. Parizeau was right when he said that now the burden of proof is on you. You have to show us that it's feasible. First, is it feasible that an amending formula that you don't consider practicable can be amended, something that, moreover, requires unanimity. Do you have an idea of the vicious circle you've got yourself into?

**Mr. Allard:** Look, when you make the statement you're making, you take for granted that the other provinces are satisfied with the existing Constitution and the possibility of amending it. We think the other provinces also disagree in many ways with the existing Constitution and the amending formula, because at some point another province will have problems to settle and won't be able to because of the rule on unanimity. So if all these people... (10:00 a.m.)

**Mr. Brassard:** But I just want to say... Yes, I know the other provinces are dissatisfied, but they're not dissatisfied the way Québec is. So we won't ever agree. For example, the other provinces, the West, they want Senate reform. For Québec, Senate reform isn't very important. So we'll never agree. I know the other provinces are dissatisfied, but it's not the same kind of dissatisfaction. When will we agree so we can effect these reforms?

**Mr. Allard:** Without doubt, the dissatisfaction varies from province to province. Mr. Casgrain would like to add something.

**Mr. Casgrain (Philippe):** If I may, I think there's something that has to be considered, something we state in our brief. We say that we feel, with due respect for the people who made it, that the proposal, as made at Lake Meech, probably wasn't the right one - moreover, experience shows this - in the sense that we didn't consider what the other provinces might have wanted. In this context, if, for example, the proposal today was: Yes, we want federalism, but federalism with a new foundation, namely decentralized federalism, in which the provinces would have residual powers, and not a system in which Ottawa confers certain powers, only to encroach on them on a regular basis.

Second, if we also propose that spending power be reduced, if not stopped in order to

prevent intrusion into certain areas of jurisdiction, that's something all the provinces... I defy you to find a single Premier in the country who would deny that his province wants as many powers as possible, provided that the formula were such that there would be something in it for everyone. You're quite right to say you don't reach compromises by insulting anyone, so I don't think, with all due respect, that it would be enough to say overnight: We've separated. Would you like to sit down with us, we've decided you're impossible to live with, but we'd like a new living arrangement tomorrow morning? Besides, everyone agrees, if you will, that from the outset it's essential to maintain the economic link.

In such a context, I don't see why we should say all the other provinces are implacable and closed to any form of dialogue, if there's something in it for each one, and not just one province saying: I'm so different that I'm the only one that should have this status. I think this is one of the problems we're faced with. Eight out of 10 Premiers said they were in favour of Lake Meech, so we shouldn't throw in the towel and refuse to start over.

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes, but Mr...

**Mr. Casgrain:** Casgrain.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Casgrain, I'd just like to point out that Meech was no big deal, but what you're proposing is recovery of significant powers; the *Chambre de commerce du Québec* is seeking even more powers, so if Meech failed to achieve what was, ultimately, not much in terms of power, it didn't even change the division of legislative powers. But you, you want a new division of legislative powers in favour of the provinces, and I understand that you're not asking for special status for Québec...

**Mr. Casgrain:** No.

**Mr. Brassard:** ...all the provinces would have the same powers. So Québec could forget about special status...

**Mr. Casgrain:** No, no, since...

**Mr. Brassard:** It's general decentralization.

**Mr. Casgrain:** A federation is nothing more than a group of sovereign states that share certain jurisdictions.

**Mr. Brassard:** That's what I'm saying, that's what I'm saying. Whereas many Quebecers have been seeking special status for decades, special powers for Québec, so it can develop as a people, as a national community, what you're ultimately seeking is transfers of legislative

powers, but for all provinces without exception. But, in conclusion I'd like to point out - I know I'm out of time, Mr. Chairman - I'd simply like to point out that you're suggesting an act of faith, but you're not demonstrating that it's feasible, that it's feasible to make such a significant change in the division of legislative powers within the Canadian federal system. You don't show that it is.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Casgrain, you have 10 seconds.

**Mr. Casgrain:** Very well. I simply mean that for 30 years we've been talking about changing the Constitution in order to decentralize and enable the provinces to finally become masters of their own rights and powers, and give Ottawa only what's necessary for a federal state. That's what we should propose for everyone. That's what I mean.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We'll now go to Mr. Béland. Right after Mr. Béland, it will be Mrs. Campbell Steer's turn.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to tell you I read your brief with a great deal of interest. I'm not superstitious but I was really stumped on page 13, because a lot of people have come here and given us figures, and I find that yours don't correspond with what we've heard so far. When you say Québec sends 61 % of its exports to the province of Ontario alone, we're at odds here, because the figures we've been given, and I think we know them pretty well by now, are that of all Québec's manufacturing production, 54 % is sold here, 26 % on the Canadian market and 20 % in the United States. The 61 % is probably the Canadian market. I can understand 26 %... So I'm surprised you say so categorically that we really have, our huge market, 61 % of our exports goes to the province of Ontario alone. I find that figure rather inaccurate and it makes me wonder about the rest of your figures.

**Mr. Allard:** We can tell you right away that it refers to exports to the other provinces.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, but it's 26 % according to our figures and you say 61 % goes to Ontario alone.

**Mr. Allard:** I'll let Mr. Raynauld answer that.

**Mr. Raynauld (André):** It's 26 % of all shipments, all deliveries, in the first place. Thirty-three per cent of total exports go to Ontario, and 61 % of exports to other provinces go to Ontario. These figures are entirely consistent with the ones originally prepared, but I

admit that the way they're stated is a bit vague.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, very vague, because it doesn't mean that... It doesn't reflect reality. I'd like to point out that if we reduce it to 26 %, that gives us a percentage almost as high as with the United States. And, as far as I know, we don't have political ties with the United States. When Mr. Allard said just now - I'd like you to explain it to me - that we must keep our political ties, otherwise we'll lose our economic ties, I don't really see the connection, and I'd like you to explain it to me.

Lastly, I'd like to go back to the concept of suicide; you say it would be suicidal to contemplate changes of this nature. If I understand suicide correctly, it's something you don't recover from. Normally you die from it. Do you really think that if we made these changes, Québec would die?

**Mr. Allard:** For everyone, I think there's definitely uncertainty about what would happen the day after a declaration of sovereignty. We're defending a federalist position, so we're saying: We've achieved certain things and we know what they are. We know how federalism and relations with the other provinces benefit Québec. It might be just as profitable with sovereignty, but we don't know this. So, given that it's what we have now and that in this respect it works relatively well, let's hold on to it and, as for federalism, it needs to be renewed, repaired, rearranged and improved. Let's try to improve it to get the other things we're asking for, such as the greatest possible autonomy in such areas as immigration, manpower and family law. Why start at zero instead of building on what's already there?

**Mr. Béland:** But, Mr. Allard, you're referring to the health-care system, the social-security system and the education system. Do you mean that in that case it is all financed by transfer payments? Or, if you admit that Quebecers finance their health-care system and education system, and they're not also part of the federal deficit, although they occasionally buy some of those services on credit, are you saying that in that case others are paying our way?

**Mr. Allard:** We certainly can't deny that Quebecers pay for a large portion of the things you've mentioned, and we don't contest that in our brief.

**Mr. Béland:** So we could continue to pay for them?

**Mr. Allard:** Will we continue to pay for them?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes.

**Mr. Allard:** Of course we'll continue to pay for them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Campbell Steer.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Mr. Allard, I'd like to congratulate you on an excellent brief, even though it doesn't necessarily correspond...

**Mr. Allard:** I'm sorry, I can't hear you very well. There's some noise coming from somewhere.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Oh really? I'd like to congratulate you on an excellent brief and point out that there's a certain correspondence between your viewpoint and that of the Bureau de commerce, which may please you somewhat. You're not alone. But I'd like to know, since I found this quite interesting, that we've heard a great deal about the constraints that federalism has imposed on the progress of French-speaking Quebecers... Starting on page 31 of Mr. Raynauld's presentation, I think I'd like to hear about the positive aspect you see, and a summary of the positive aspect that you see in federalism, in our progress.

**Mr. Allard:** I'd like to ask Mr. Raynauld to answer.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Beginning on page 31 of your appendix, you start talking about all that.

**Mr. Raynauld:** I'm sorry, I don't have the same copy, and the pages are slightly different. All right. Yes, the brief does indeed talk about the progress made by French and the progress made by Francophones in Québec over the past 30 years. The conclusion drawn is that federalism hasn't prevented Francophones from progressing, and it hasn't prevented French from progressing in Québec. I try to relate a bit of history, of what has happened in this regard. Because often we retain impressions that may have been valid a long time ago, and we don't always adapt to the new circumstances and changes that occur. So, with respect to French, I was essentially stating what was reported in the brief submitted by the Conseil du patronat du Québec, to the effect that in Québec today the common language is French. Accordingly, federalism hasn't hindered the progress of French. On the contrary, French has made considerable progress.

Then I try to show that the future or the success of a language depends on the number of people who speak it, the status of the people who speak it, and also the concentration of people speaking a given language in a given area. From the standpoint of these three factors,

there's been considerable progress. The number of Francophones has increased considerably in absolute terms. The proportion of people who speak French in Québec has also increased considerably, so that we can now say, for all practical purposes, that French may be spoken by nearly 95 % of the people in Québec.

Lastly, on the status of Francophones, everybody knows - and I don't need to repeat it, I think it's well known - that Francophones have been investing in the business community over the past 30 years, and have built up and developed companies so that now the proportion of businesses, for example, the number of jobs controlled by Francophones, has increased considerably to about 61 % of all businesses in Québec. So there's been considerable progress in that area too, obviously because Francophones now have a share of economic power, which was not the case previously. The fact that they do obviously means that at the same time they also promote French because it's their language. So...

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** But don't you think that if we were in a sovereign situation our progress would be just as pronounced? Or would it be less pronounced? Are you ready to...?

**Mr. Raynauld:** Of course I wouldn't say that from the standpoint of French, for example, or the place held by Francophones, we'd lose under sovereignty. The argument is: do we need sovereignty to obtain these results? And the answer is no. Again, we didn't need sovereignty to achieve the role and status we wanted. Federalism didn't prevent us. Federalism made it possible without confrontations, if I may say so, so I feel that, from that standpoint, sovereignty isn't necessary.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** So what you're saying, then, is: let's not throw off (sic) the baby with the bath water.

**Mr. Raynauld:** Yes, you could put it that way.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Now we'll go to Louis Laberge and, right after him, his good friend Charles-Albert Poissant.

**Mr. Laberge:** Oh my God!

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Laberge:** Mr. Allard, I've told you in private and I'll tell you again in public, the Conseil du patronat du Québec has changed. But now you're embarrassing me a bit, because earlier you told Mrs. Marois that you hadn't changed that much since 1983...

**Mr. Allard:** In terms of our position...

**Mr. Laberge:** I don't want to be disagreeable, so I'll take your word for it.

**A voice:** Some people haven't changed.  
(10:15 a.m.)

**Mr. Laberge:** Well, the least we can say is that it hasn't been a revolution. But I think you have changed. In 1980 you simply said no. Today you're being tactful about it and I've noticed that, like other employers' associations, I think you're telling us in a different way that the status quo is finished and we need change. That's a good sign. At least your ideas don't seem to be carved in stone. But you don't go nearly as far as the others when it comes to what we absolutely must have. Mr. Raynauld said: Quebecers have regained ground in Québec, French has progressed, and federalism has made this possible. But Mr. Raynauld, this was despite federalism and especially despite certain federalist individuals! I think that says more than the system itself. It's not the system that hindered us, but the people in the system.

You must admit we've had to do some pretty amazing things in Québec to effect change. But, really, you shocked me with your fiery language when you said: Why embark on a suicidal adventure? I thought you had a little more restraint than that. (Translation) "It would therefore be suicidal to embark on an adventure whose outcome could put our achievements at risk." I think, in any case since this Commission started, I haven't heard anyone talk about letting go of what we have, isolating Québec or creating a ghetto. On the contrary, we've been told that the modern Québec must open up to the world. Naturally, by placing priority on the provinces of Canada and the United States, our neighbours to the south, but also the rest of the world. Why do you use that expression in your brief, Mr. Allard? It gave me a bit of a shock. I find it rather unfortunate.

From another standpoint, unlike some others, because the other employers' associations talked about the powers that Québec should repatriate to fulfill its obligations. But you, you're talking about powers that the provinces... about decentralization of the federal government. I don't know whether you're aware, Mr. Allard and your colleagues, that one of the reasons why so many Canadians were opposed to the Meech Lake Accord was precisely because if the central, federal government had to give all the provinces half of what Québec was asking for, there would be no more central government.

The Canadian Labour Congress, the New Democratic Party, the major Canada-wide unions were opposed to Lake Meech because to grant Québec what little we were seeking meant opening the door to having the other provinces ask for the same thing, and that would be the

end of the federal government.

I don't know whether you're aware of that. If you're aware of it, then aren't you proposing a no-win situation? In other words, you're saying: Of course, we agree, we have to renegotiate. How are you going to go about renegotiating when they absolutely refuse to decentralize the government? The NDP won't go for it. Mr. Casgrain, I think you're well aware of it, given your adventurous youth... But it's no good. How are we going to do it? It would really be a dead end. I'm not saying that's what you want to do, but you say: We have to renegotiate the agreement but we've got to hold on to what we have. There's nobody, especially me, where I've got to... I understand, I'm thinking a little about my pension. If you start talking about pensions and all that, like Mr. Mulroney: What's the worker in Baie-Comeau going to do? Who's going to guarantee him his pension? It certainly isn't him.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Laberge:** What's going to guarantee the worker in Baie-Comeau his pension is our collective agreement. That's something to preserve. Well, there are things... I don't think we should stoop to that level.

I think someone from your group had the answer just now. You're federalists; everyone's entitled to be something... No, no, as if other people aren't to the same extent. But don't give me a lot of nonsense, because you don't see me accepting the argument that Canada is a complete mess. Of course it isn't! We haven't done that badly in Canada. It's not a banana republic, it's a democratic country. We disagree with certain things, that's for sure, but it isn't a banana republic. I've never said it was, so don't you say: Wait! An adventure like sovereignty is suicidal. Of course it isn't suicidal. Of course things would have to change...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Laberge, will you be getting to your question soon?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Laberge:** Pretty good, eh?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Laberge:** That's my question: How are you going to do it?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you.

**Mr. Wylie (Torrance):** Is there any time left for my answer, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Laberge:** Yes, yes, you've got time to answer.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...by someone else; it'll go faster.

**Mr. Wylie:** Perhaps I should begin with the current situation you were referring to, Mr. Laberge. It's true that the Meech Lake Accord failed outside Québec for several reasons, but these reasons include dissatisfaction with the existing federal system in several other regions. The time is ripe to reevaluate the possibilities of amending it. Québec is interested in repatriation of powers; other provinces, as Mr. Brassard said just now, are interested in reforming federal institutions, such as the Senate. At this point Québec has a rather unique opportunity if it stays in the game. To quote Winston Churchill: Meech Lake isn't the end of the story; it isn't the beginning of the end, it's the end of the beginning. So that's one hypothesis for the federalists. If they have the stamina, the time is ripe to find a trade-off that suits the interests of each region of the country and to rethink the system so that those who want more decentralized powers get them from the new system and those who want a different federal institution also achieve their goals.

**Mr. Laberge:** I'm on the Executive Council of the CLC, which has 2.2 million members, and that's not it at all. The CLC rejected it because the other provinces...

**Mr. Wylie:** Wait and see what the NDP does. Wait and see what Bob Rae does in Ontario. He's already said he's not satisfied with the existing federal system and he's only been in power a month.

**Mr. Laberge:** I've been there. I didn't see any Brinks trucks heading in this direction.

**Mr. Wylie:** So I think all the provinces will see the need to change the system.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Laberge, your time is up. That's all. Now, Charles-Albert Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From certain briefs, it seems that, in terms of the balance sheet, Québec hasn't lost out. Obviously, if we go into details, that's been sort of a safety valve, if you will, when we've been obliged to make up what I might call operating expenditures as opposed to the capital investments made elsewhere. Obviously, it doesn't have the same impact if you're obliged to receive unemployment insurance while more money is maybe being spent in the other provinces on fixed assets liable to create jobs.

Nonetheless, little by little, whether you like it or not, Quebecers are becoming increasingly important in Canada and they're increasingly tackling the economic problem and taking over some of the economic share of Ontario and the other provinces. That's a fairly recent development.

What will happen as a result is that maybe this valve has finally served a purpose; because of, well, our training, we've sort of been in the opium era, which meant we couldn't take charge of our economy, but we have in the past 30 years. And God knows that in those circumstances we worked much harder, and that's a quality of a people who, just because they don't have the means, have to work a little harder. That's fairly recent. Especially because we don't share the language of a major economic country called the United States, whose language is English. So it will always be favoured by English Canadians. But that just makes us work harder.

So now the only solution that's arisen or is being developed, is simply that Quebecers, having discovered the joys of making money, which enables their culture to develop, can simply go further. But what I said at the beginning, in my little opening spiel, is that the economy may gradually shift from the neighbouring provinces to Québec. That's what's happening right now and wasn't happening 30 years ago. But today there are companies doing takeovers. We've moved head offices from Toronto to Montréal without any fanfare. It's starting to happen. If it keeps up, well, I for one am optimistic. So maybe in 10 or 15 years transfer payments for unemployment insurance will go to the other provinces, and, thank goodness, they'll have missed the boat.

Having said this, right now I think everyone agrees, all the participants, myself included, that it's not working very well. But marriages never work very well. There are always problems. What would you suggest as a solution, right now, for repatriation? We agree that certain services should be repatriated to Québec, services that aren't appropriate for the federal government and never have been, but by force of circumstance it took them, arguing that, well, it had to have a national policy and possibly a Québec policy. Having said this, we haven't had much success with our negotiations. Someone was joking the other day about - to repeat what Winston Churchill said one day - how war is too important to be left to the generals. Maybe if it had been the business community that negotiated it, it would be settled.

Having said this, we haven't been asked to settle it, and I've got nothing against politicians, but perhaps it would have been in our interest to do it. But, anyway, that's not the way it was. Were you suggesting that, at present, to repatriate what Quebecers would like to have,

even if it means, on the quiet, if you will, not preventing the business community from really taking Canadian possession of Canada's business sector? While they're not watching us, we'll establish ourselves. We're doing just that. But, well, the fact remains that from the political standpoint there are certain things we should take, so how do you suggest we go about it?

**Mr. Allard:** It's definitely no easy matter to tell you exactly how it should be done, considering the three specific fields we mentioned: immigration, manpower and family law. First, these areas come under provincial jurisdiction. So what we're saying is let's repatriate what already belongs to the province. How do we go about it? We say by negotiating. Some people will say: There's no point in negotiating, we've already tried all that and it doesn't work. We have to keep trying. Now, this Commission on the ways of going about it, this Commission has decided to consult experts, a great many experts who could provide answers about the exact way it could be done. We at the Conseil du patronat don't pretend to take the place of these experts. But we believe it's feasible, and it has to be done by negotiation. We also think, as was said just now, that there are people in the other provinces who also want more autonomy in the same areas, such as manpower, for example, as those that are of special interest to Québec.

**Mr. Poissant:** Am I entitled to another question, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A short one.  
(10:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Poissant:** Ha, ha, ha! Sometimes the question's short and the answer's long. I wanted to ask you what your reaction would be - we have to find a formula, we have to find a way out of the impasse - if Quebecers took a hard-line position on their political future and their economic future and gave our neighbours - not only our neighbours, but all Canadians - the opportunity to say: Here's the position we're going to take if we can't agree. And we'll give you x amount of time. How would you react?

**Mr. Allard:** When you say: "Here's the position we're going to take", you're saying Québec will declare its sovereignty or we're going to be...

**Mr. Poissant:** Its autonomy, I don't want to get into that.

**Mr. Allard:** Fine, all right. How will the others react? It's pretty hard for us to predict, but since the failure of Lake Meech, we think there's been a change, and not just at the

Conseil du patronat. We think there's also been a change in the other provinces. There are provinces that have already set up committees and task forces similar to this Commission. The federal government has also appointed a committee that will go all over Canada to find out what Canadians want. We think all that will ultimately make people everywhere in Canada do a lot more thinking than they have in the past about the Constitution, provincial autonomy, provincial powers, and so on. Starting from that, we may be able to negotiate. Maybe it's utopian, but let's try it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Larose, it's your turn.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I'd like to say I very much appreciate the documents submitted by the Conseil du patronat. First, they prove you can be federalist without being racist or behaving like colonized people. In this sense, the Conseil du patronat's presentation was rather well done.

I've gone over all the submissions by business groups very carefully, including the Chambre de commerce, the Mouvement Desjardins, the Board of Trade and the others we still haven't heard from, and your brief also sheds light on things. It seems to me there are two polarizations developing in the business camp. There are those who say that, if we want to preserve what we've achieved and if we hope to improve our quality of life, as a society in any case, we have to get our hands on some levers, we have to be in a far better position to control a certain number of fiscal, monetary or other levers, and at the same time we're getting involved in several jurisdictions. I think the submission by the Chambre de commerce was the breach. I'd say it was the opening in the employers' argument, for that side. Then there are others, and you're in that camp, I think, the CPQ and the Board of Trade, who're trying, within the existing rules, and you'll have to give us some explanations because what you're proposing is to rework the amending formulas. Let's just say the last attempt was pretty painful. It took 18 years, and Québec ended up getting stabbed in the back. Do you have any guarantees that we could do it faster and get a satisfactory result?

So you're trying to rework things, within the existing rules but with an objective I think is different from the others. To continue with Mr. Poissant's analogy, I think if you want to talk about marriage or the relationship between a man and woman who are a couple, some would like to see the woman become independent within the couple, whereas others might open the wallet and give her more money, but wouldn't change the rules. I don't want to offend anyone, but I think you're sort of in that camp.

I'd like to know about the operationalization to effectively achieve this objective. I find it a bit hard to believe we'll succeed. I don't know.

**Mr. Allard:** Of course, Mr. Larose, we're not saying the negotiations we'll have to undertake will be easy. The past negotiations weren't easy. Any future negotiations we might have won't necessarily be easy. Except that, in any event, everyone on the Commission and a large majority of Quebecers recognize that, in any event, we'll have to negotiate. If we declare ourselves sovereign, we'll have to negotiate. If we stay within the federal system and we want change, we'll have to negotiate. We think it's best to negotiate in good faith, in a better atmosphere within federalism, than it is to slam the door, declare ourselves sovereign and say: Come on now, let's negotiate. We don't know how the others will react. Simply out of emotion, they might say: To hell with them, we're not going to negotiate. Maybe they won't do that because they too have interests to protect, but we don't know how it will unfold. Why not try to have the best chance possible. And we think the best chance for success is negotiation within the existing system.

**Mr. Larose:** I think that, in his study, Mr. Raynauld gives us part of the answer when he shows the very close ties between Québec and Ontario and Québec and Canada. It seems to me that, on the basis of their interests alone, they would be ill-advised not to look after these ties somewhat because, let's face it, they're not interested in us just because they like our faces. I think they have something to gain from this type of relationship.

**Mr. Allard:** Mr. Raynauld.

**Mr. Raynauld:** You're quite right. But what struck me was that, around this table, everything I've heard from a bit of a distance since the Commission began its work is that everyone agrees we've achieved certain things we have to preserve, we have to preserve them because... and these things are based on the free flow of goods and services, people, businesses, etc. We want to preserve all that. At the same time, we're saying we want to change the Constitution. Some people think we can't negotiate. Moreover, this is one of the official positions of the Parti québécois: We'll never agree with the English, or something like that. We'll never agree. In any case, that's the general idea. So in fact the questions asked this morning, I think we all have the same concern. We're asking ourselves whether negotiations would work. But I say to you, we'll have exactly the same problem if we declare ourselves independent today or if we declare ourselves sovereign. If the rest of

Canada doesn't want to negotiate, how are we going to keep the things everyone wants to preserve? How do we do that? It's a common problem, regardless of the position we take as the final result. We're going to have to negotiate. We're going to have to accept the fact that the others want to negotiate. Otherwise, if they don't want to negotiate, how can the sovereignists say at the same time: They don't want to negotiate but we don't give a damn; we're going to hold on to what we've got. We can't hold on to what we've got in that kind of scenario. So this "how" is fundamental but, again, it applies regardless of the position we take. If we simply want to amend the Constitution, you say a number of people think it won't work, but if we go for independence and the English won't budge either, then we're in exactly the same mess. We can't preserve what we've achieved and at the same time assume we won't have to negotiate.

**Mr. Larose:** But Mr. Raynauld, when you say on page 48 that you can't put a price on preserving what we have, because you say: (translation) "The first necessary conclusion is that we must preserve what we have achieved at any price." It seems to me you're stating the method. It means there's no price, and they can give us the short end of the stick for another 123 years. I think we're placing ourselves at a disadvantage when we say in advance that we'll pay the price to stay in Confederation.

**Mr. Raynauld:** Yes, but it's offset by a fact you raised just now, which is entirely correct, that they too have interests to protect. So I think we could get together. They've got interests to protect, we've got interests to protect, so why always assume: Oh no, they won't want to negotiate. We're saying: It seems to me it'll be easier to negotiate smaller changes, less extreme changes, if you will, rather than sovereignty. It seems to me that that should be easier to negotiate rather than negotiating, full stop.

**Mr. Larose:** But do you think that if we were to declare sovereignty, their response would be to shoot themselves in the foot?

**Mr. Raynauld:** Again, when we say they have interests - I think you're in a position to know, you negotiate far more than I do - there are respective shares. If you will, the interests aren't... There are interests on both sides. The point is to know whether one party has more than the other. I show that, with respect to certain types of trade in any case, Québec counts more on the markets in the other provinces than the other provinces do on Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A brief answer, Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Precisely because we have experience with negotiations, we think we've reached the stage where we have to be quite clear about our objective. In any case, that's my personal experience. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There are two minutes left in this set of questions. Would Mr. Bouchard like to ask a quick question?

**Mr. Bouchard:** I'll try to be quick, Mr. Chairman. I'll cut short the preamble and go straight to the question I'd like to ask. First, Mr. Béland may have got a shock on page 13. I read the whole brief but I got mine before he did. I got it on page 3, when I read that the 1982 Act was referred to as the 1982 agreement. That sheds quite a lot of light on where you stand. To you, it's an agreement, 1982, the unilateral imposition on Québec of a constitution. You call that an agreement. I call it an unacceptable act of aggression. It's one source of the political tension we have here today and that we have to deal with.

But ultimately it's about negotiation. Because, in essence, the conclusion you draw from all that is: We have to renegotiate. There's the business community. Well, I've worked with the business community. Yesterday we praised the business community's negotiating skills. It's true they're excellent negotiators. They know, for example, that when you negotiate, it's a power struggle. And what you're saying today is: Québec was too rigid about the Meech Lake Accord; we should have made other concessions. There was nothing in it for English Canada. On page 49 of Mr. Raynauld's brief the expression "reciprocal concessions" is used. In other words, you're asking us to forget what happened, to go back to the negotiating table ourselves, announcing in advance that we're going to make concessions. Think about how unrealistic that attitude is. Our opponents - because they've become our opponents - who just said no to us about minimal things, we're going to say to them: You said no. But in future we're going to make concessions so you'll say yes.

And we know exactly what concessions they'll ask for. The Senate, for example, the Senate is no innocuous matter. No western province will ever give up its veto if the Senate isn't reformed to make it an elected, and therefore even more harmful, body. Second, a Senate that will be weighted equally everywhere, throughout Confederation and will dilute Québec's presence in Ottawa even more. A clause enshrined in the Constitution to promote bilingualism, the distinctive character of New

Brunswick and so on, suppression of the notwithstanding clause, we know what they want: everything that will weaken Québec even more. And you ask us to start negotiating over again and say we're ready to make further concessions. That's not what businessmen usually do when they negotiate. When they've negotiated too much, and things have turned sour, they draw the line, because businessmen are also decision-makers. They know when to break away from an unacceptable situation and realign themselves on a solid foundation. That's what I think now, and so do a lot of other people. How can you suggest at this point that we open up that can of worms again?

**Mr. Casgrain:** A short while ago I heard that the Commission's mandate was to examine the political and constitutional status and make recommendations. I don't think, with all due respect, that we're here or that we're mandated to tell you whether we should separate or not. We're here with you to study the status. What I was trying to say just now, Mr. Bouchard, is that I feel we have to completely change the basis of the federation. It's not what it was in 1867. That's why I said: If we start from the completely different principle that the provinces are sovereign in their jurisdiction, that Ottawa has limited jurisdiction, which is considerable nonetheless, to the extent that it exercises it, we've got something on which we can rebuild the federation, which has to be rebuilt in any case. If everybody declared themselves sovereign tomorrow morning, we'll never see the end of it. We have to establish a link that will enable these sovereign states to function together. I think it's a fairly original suggestion and that it's up to the Commission to study how what we've achieved... Mr. Campeau, I look at you and I think of what we've achieved with the Caisse de dépôt during a minority government that was prepared to give us all sorts of things. I say to myself, if we can create the Caisse de dépôt and other things and also achieve, within Confederation, the position of strength we're in today... Look, the example is right in front of you. Who would have thought 20 years ago that we'd have the temerity to rename Dorchester Street (sic) René-Lévesque? That's how far we've come. We have to stop frightening ourselves. I think we can go further because the time is ripe.

**A voice:** We want more than that.

**Mr. Casgrain:** I understand.

**A voice:** We want more than that.

**A voice:** We won't be...

**A voice:** How about a Bouchard Avenue? I don't know.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Casgrain, Mr. Bouchard, we've used up quite a bit of the Chair's time. Now we'll go to Mr. Dufour and we'll give him one more minute of the Chair's time.

(10:45 a.m.)

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'll try not to take more than the Chairman's minute. First, I'd like to say to my colleagues who on several occasions have questioned the absence of an option in some of the briefs presented to us that this isn't the case this morning. We may question certain aspects of the brief, but I think that the option argued by the Conseil is quite clear. It's a federalist option, but a modern one that fully recognizes the specificity of Québec. The entire presentation, Mr. Chairman, has been made in a very clear context: ensuring, for our part, that Québec's standard of living is maintained and, as much as possible, improved, which we're all aiming for. And we still think that a federal system, modified of course, modified significantly, could respond to what we feel is the essential concern of all Quebecers.

I'd also like to say that we often talk about the various types of nationalism found in Québec. I'd like to say that the other groups have no monopoly on nationalism. I live in this environment too. It expresses itself quite clearly. There may be different ways of saying it, but the business community is quite prepared to build the Québec we've been talking about. And I repeat that we feel this Québec has more future in a federal framework. If I may take 30 seconds more of the Chairman's time, I'd like to go back to a few comments made by my colleagues, which began with the comments by my colleague, Mrs. Marois, who wanted to check the credibility of the CPQ's brief a bit. I could tell her that to consult 126 associations and 450 corporate members isn't the same thing as consulting all the members of the Parti québécois. I'd also like to tell her that her attempt to contrast the CPQ's brief with the one by the Bureau de commerce is totally unfounded, because the Bureau de commerce representative is a member of the CPQ's Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

I could also say a great deal about Mr. Laberge and the expression he quoted from the brief. I must say that, being around you, Louis, one does tend to pick up fiery language, so maybe we'll be more careful in future.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dufour, you're out of time. Perhaps you could save your comments for the working sittings between the members.

**Mr. Dufour:** I'll have a few for my friend

across the way.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Gil Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I'd first like to welcome you. Reading your brief and listening to you has been very interesting. I think you've given us food for thought that the Commission needs to properly appreciate all the consequences of the decisions before us. Emotions are one thing, but in the decisions we have to make, reason must predominate, and you've given us food for thought that I consider quite interesting. From the beginning, you're against the status quo. It's obvious that you're also against out-and-out independence, when you say it would be truly unrealistic. That's quite understandable. In the centre, between these two options, it seems there's your brief, which - despite certain questions my colleagues may have - seems to open up a lot of interesting possibilities. Right off, I see on page 9 of your brief you talk about the possibility of a Québec constitution, which I find quite interesting. It's a subject that is dear to me and one that could enable Québec to express its specificity in many ways.

On page 11... I know you're businessmen, you're looking for efficiency and you weigh your words carefully. Your title on page 11 reads: (translation) "A new federal system that maintains the economic links between Québec and the other provinces." I emphasize the expression "a new federal system" because in many places in your brief, you use this expression, "a new federal system". In your conclusion on page 15, you say: "In taking a position today on the constitutional issue, by arguing in favour of a modern federalism and a modern constitution, and by stating its conviction that economic links with Canada are in Québec's favour, the CPQ is in no way setting itself up as a constitutional authority." And at the bottom of the page you say in your last sentence: "We have done it in the past and we should be able to do it again successfully today, even if we have to change profoundly the way we think and act." Lastly, before asking my question, I think your sixth conclusion on page 16 is especially eloquent. You say this: "There is one priority, however: regardless of the new shape of federal-provincial relations, it is essential to maintain and even improve Québec's standard of living. We feel it is obvious that maintaining the economic links between Québec and the other provinces is the surest way of achieving this goal."

From this I understand, gentlemen, and please correct me if I've misunderstood you, that you're making a case for economic continuity. You're making a case for Québec's economic security. I believe that all Quebecers want to

guarantee this economic security. And you're making a case for an in-depth reform that will lead to "a new federal system". In this framework, is Québec, with complete autonomy, connected to its other federal partners as a function of this economic link and other ties that we might add, such as an army, international relations, foreign relations or a currency of course, do you think this is a federal system you're conjuring up?

**Mr. Allard:** We haven't specified the shape the system should take or how it should function. We've said in our brief, as you pointed out, that the status quo is unacceptable. We have to renew federalism. We're talking about a new federalism and also a constitution. But we haven't gone so far as to say what the future central government should be. You've cited some apparently obvious components. What we're mainly asking for is that, in this new system, Québec have far more autonomy in fields of activity which in any case, if we go back to 1867, were provincial areas of jurisdiction. So we're saying that's what we have to look at when we talk about renewed federalism. And we still believe that we can achieve renewed federalism through negotiation.

Mr. Rémillard you also referred to our last conclusion on page 16, and perhaps it should have been the first one. We feel that the well-being of Quebecers is of the utmost importance. No doubt there are people in Québec who want independence or sovereignty because it's an emotional issue. But we're still convinced that when the majority of Quebecers talk about sovereignty, they think that in a sovereign country they would have a higher level of well-being, a higher standard of living than they do today. We feel it's important not to deceive Quebecers, but to tell them the truth, to show them what could happen if one option we have chosen over another and ultimately to make them understand that in future what they're looking for is what the new Québec should give them: a higher standard of living for all.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Allard, we began our work more than six days ago, we began our work seven days ago, and the first brief we received was that of the *Chambre de commerce du Québec*. On the basis of a philosophy quite similar to yours, the *Chambre de commerce* was far more explicit, giving, for example, a list of the powers that should come exclusively under Québec's jurisdiction, and using monetary principles that favour a single currency, but with a decision-making process at the Bank of Canada level that would nevertheless accommodate the provinces, including Québec of course.

In that context, what do you think of that brief? Do you agree with the *Chambre de*

commerce's brief?

**Mr. Allard:** Well, I don't really want to discuss it because it's their brief and in any case I haven't read it. I'm not really familiar with it. But, as for us, our intention wasn't to tell the Commission what it should do, because I think it's the Commission's responsibility to ultimately make the kind of decision you were talking about just now. We tried, on the basis of a thesis, which is the federalist thesis - that's what we set out in our brief - we wanted to remind you what you should take into account regarding the changes we feel are most important: renewal of the Constitution, because it didn't work at Meech; and the great autonomy that Québec, first, and perhaps the other provinces, must have in certain areas. And we've stressed the negotiations we'll have to undertake to obtain the autonomy we're recommending. But we didn't go any further than that, and we left it up to the Commission to ultimately decide what it wants to propose.

**Mr. Rémiillard:** Mr. Allard, about the figures on pages 13 and 14, I'm not going to pass judgment on them because I know how difficult it is to provide figures like those, because the problem is that we don't have borders separating us from the other Canadian provinces. So obviously it's done by polls, and we don't have a system that would give us a precise idea, that would tell us exactly what the trade is. We have more accurate statistics on our trade with the United States, for example, or with other countries.

But, nevertheless, if I refer to the figures you give, don't you think the large amount of trade we have with Ontario in particular, and the other provinces, is an argument that can favour Québec, like the other provinces, regardless of the political system we might choose. In other words, the Canadian provinces, or Ontario, which is a partner, our main provincial partner, would still maintain special relations with Québec if we kept the federal system you're referring to.

**Mr. Allard:** I'll let Mr. Raynauld answer that.

**Mr. Raynauld:** Without a doubt. Economic relations would be maintained. The problem is always the same when we discuss this matter, and I agree entirely that we can't get very precise figures, figures that are rigorously accurate, and so on. I think we should avoid giving people the impression we can. Except that, on the basis of observation, we can see whether it's significant or insignificant, and what might happen in one situation or another.

So there's no reason to think that in a renewed federal system like that one, for

example, that this trade wouldn't be maintained. That's quite clear. There's no reason for this trade to be reduced, if you will, for constitutional or economic reasons.

Nor is certain that in a system in which Québec is sovereign - if we accept the hypotheses, presented today, whereby we absolutely must preserve what we've achieved - nor is it certain that we'll have to deprive ourselves, if you will, of access to the Canadian market. Except that I feel it's far easier to maintain the integrity of a market if there's a central government that coordinates policy rather than an independent or sovereign country that has to coordinate things itself by negotiating with 10 or 15 neighbours. So that's why we say we have to "maintain what we've achieved". We feel, in any case, that it's easier to maintain what we have in a federal system than in another system. But, then again, Canadian integration is a type of integration that depends just as much on common policies, for example, common federal policies, as it does on the absence of tariffs. There's much more... Excuse me?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Rémiillard.

**Mr. Rémiillard:** Protecting what we've achieved economically, economic continuity, the economic security of Quebecers, those are the government's first objectives, obviously, and within this framework we're trying to find things out by listening to the discussions here and what people come and tell us. We're trying to find the formula that will protect us, therefore, the one that economically will enable us to fully express the specificity of Québec, be it social, cultural, political or economic.

In this context, if I refer to your brief and what you're proposing - it's now obvious - in-depth modifications through a new federal system, there's the whole problem of negotiating this federal system. You were in favour of Meech; you came out in defence of Meech, very actively in fact. Now if we go and negotiate this new federalism, how do we proceed, in your view? Because you yourselves say in your brief that we have to change the existing amending formula. But to change the amending formula, we need unanimity. All that would take a long time. Economically, isn't all the time we take discussing this also a source of instability? Do you have any suggestions as to how we could do it as quickly as possible, referring to your brief and what you're proposing?

**Mr. Casgrain:** I think one of the things we're seen... For my part, when it was announced that the Commission had been approved, I said to myself: Here's an opportunity for Québec to express itself from more than a

strictly political standpoint vis-à-vis the rest of the country. We're very much counting on this Commission to achieve, we hope, a sort of consensus. We've taken the first steps toward this negotiation you're referring to. We can make certain statements without slamming the door. There are things that can be done. You talk about the Constitution. I think you've got the beginning of something that could explain in a rational and intelligent manner, not by slamming the door, where we want to go. If, for example, the new constitution you're talking about affirms a sovereignty like the one I was talking about, with residual powers, it can be put in place or proposed and serve as a model for others. That's how I see things, rather than starting up what I think would be a quite useless debate about whether to separate or not. That's what we expect from this Commission. We're sort of putting the ball back in your court, but I think you're sort of here for that reason, aren't you?

**Mr. Rémillard:** Your comments are quite interesting.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. The time allocated for this hearing is now up. Mr. Lafamme, Mr. Garon, Mr. Raynauld, Mr. Wylie, Mr. Allard and Mr. Casgrain, special thanks for your confidence in the Commission. I'd like to thank all of you for being here this morning.

**A voice:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:04 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:10 a.m.)

### **Bloc québécois**

**Mr. Tremblay (Benoît):** With me is Mr. Jules Fournier, a member of the BQ.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 10 minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Tremblay:** The Bloc québécois members thank the Commission for this opportunity to express their views on the political and constitutional future of Québec. Appended to our brief are the signatures of all the group's members.

When we decided to leave our respective political parties, we did so in order to participate fully in the debate on Québec's political future. The relevance and legitimacy of our decision were confirmed beyond any doubt during the by-election in Laurier-Sainte-Marie. Gilles Duceppe, a candidate backed by the Bloc québécois, got nearly 70 % of the votes. This unequivocal response from the Laurier-Sainte-

Marie constituents attests to the expectations of Quebecers and the inability of Canadian political parties to reflect our basic demands in their government decisions. We believe that Quebecers want an end to this double representation which enables another majority to manage a substantial part of our interests without even recognizing Québec as a distinct society in its decisions.

This situation is neither new nor confined to political parties. The history of Québec, ever since the conquest, has been characterized by a twofold aim: to create institutions that we can call our own, and to be given greater autonomy within the institutions we share with English Canada. In that respect, government institutions lag far behind. Most of our institutions have already exercised their right to self-determination. Certain members of this Commission in fact have played a special role in these changes. For example, there was the movement that included the Credit Unions and Caisse d'économie du Québec, which went through several periods of instability before affirming its Québécois identity and, a few years later, its affiliation with the Mouvement Desjardins. The Québec Liberal Party itself broke away from the Federal Liberal Party to gain its independence over 20 years ago. While we gradually adopted economic, social and, to a certain extent, political institutions that correspond to the real nature of Québec, insofar as government institutions are concerned, we are still ruled by a double system of representation, which results in a proliferation of costly inconsistencies and sterile confrontations.

The 1982 proclamation of the Constitutional Act, without the consent of Québec, and the rejection of the five minimal conditions contained in the Meech Lake Accord have made all Quebecers realize, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the gulf between the real nation and the legal nation continues to widen in dramatic fashion. In order for our long tradition of subtle but highly persistent struggle – as outlined in the Mouvement Desjardins brief – to finally express itself clearly through government institutions, we consider it timely to recall the first "whereas" of the act to establish this Commission, namely: "Quebecers are free to assume their own destiny, to determine their political status and to assure their economic, social and cultural development". It is with the full exercise of this liberty in mind that Quebecers must contribute to the work of this Commission and guide its recommendations.

Our brief comments abundantly on the political dynamics that have led to costly competition and sterile confrontations for the past several decades. Abusive use of spending power has been a favourite tool of the federal government to invade areas of provincial jurisdiction which it could not appropriate through constitutional reforms.

But the federal government's ability to act against the wishes of Québec is not primarily related to an abusive interpretation of old and obsolete constitutional documents that give it the appearance of legality. The federal government's power is principally related to a political power, sanctioned by a majority of Anglophone Canadians, which allows it to consider Québec society as a minority that must accept the decisions of a strong central government.

The Meech failure has thrown the spotlight on this situation. All Quebecers have had a chance to realize that Québec's minimal demands rapidly became maximal concessions, even for the governments which ratified the Accord, and that voters in all English-speaking provinces massively rejected recognition of Québec as a distinct society.

Here in Québec we know that English Canada's acceptance of the five Meech conditions would have represented a gesture of reparation, a prerequisite to negotiating top-to-bottom decentralization which would have been compatible with the role of a national state that the Québec government must play. But, had the Meech Lake Accord been adopted, none of this was on the agenda for future constitutional negotiations. We must draw our conclusions from what Canadian history and politics have taught us. For Québec's aspirations to be recognized, it must proclaim full sovereignty before negotiating any new agreement with English Canada.

Our brief stresses our conviction that, as a sovereign state, Québec would be in a better position to meet the challenges of market globalization. The countries best able to meet this challenge are those that have developed an internal cohesion that makes possible the changes imposed by international competition. In such countries, the main socio-economic players and the government work together to seek economic growth and full employment. In Canada, deep-seated differences and the ensuing political instability make it extremely difficult to obtain this kind of consensus, and they work against the adoption of firm directions.

In Québec, the solid support of two major political parties with regard to market expansion represents a considerable element of stability when it comes to promoting investments. In addition, we find the many efforts and concerted action of the Forum pour l'emploi particularly promising for the future.

In the current Canadian context, there are major obstacles to our adaptation and development: a grab bag of policies and employment programs, too many tools for promoting research and development in the hands of the federal government and too few in Québec, the Bank of Canada's high interest rates and strong dollar, totally unsuited to the Québec economy. These obstacles have been denounced

by many groups appearing before this Commission.

We believe that a sovereign Québec would be better able to coordinate all these policies and to conclude mutually beneficial agreements with our principal partners.

Competition between two types of government has led to excessive centralization and a proliferation of nit-picking standards that paralyse local initiatives. We know that greater efficiency in the public sector, as well as the promotion of solutions adapted to fighting social and regional inequities, and the recognition of the role played by large urban centres in international development depend on bringing power closer to the citizenry, along with a decentralization that a sovereign state with full powers would be better able to achieve.

In short, the Meech failure has clearly shown that the 1982 constitutional act intensifies the Canadian government policy of stalemating any initiatives of federal institutions that might be compatible with the aspirations of Québec.

Further, the globalization of trade requires a period of adaptation that a sovereign Québec would be better able to confront. We believe that the Québec government must act now and submit a clear proposal for Québec sovereignty to the people.

We recommend the following approach: that the government of Québec hold a referendum as soon as possible on the accession of Québec to sovereignty; that the National Assembly proclaim Québec's sovereignty before negotiating any new agreement with English Canada; that the Commission explore the possible areas of agreement between a sovereign Québec and the rest of Canada, particularly the agreements required to preserve a common economic space and the establishment of a monetary union. A sovereign Québec will then be able to negotiate such agreements as it deems desirable and establish a framework for common activities. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Tremblay. The first question goes to Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Mr. Tremblay, I read your brief with a great deal of interest. Unfortunately, I noted that you gave little attention to the problem of the Outaouais region. As you know, I come from the Outaouais and this issue is very close to my heart, since the Outaouais is probably the most vulnerable region when it comes to separation or absolute sovereignty. In your brief, on page 23 to be exact, you recommend that Québec proclaim its full sovereignty before the negotiation of any new agreement with English Canada. As you are no doubt aware, there are 26,000 civil servants who live in the Outaouais region and work for the

federal government; another 15,000 people live in the Outaouais and work in the private sector in Ontario; the idea of a sovereign Québec makes these people feel very insecure about their future, their economy, and their jobs.

This is a question I asked Mr. Bernard Landry when he was here, with regard to the Parti Québécois brief; he replied that, as far as he was concerned, he envisaged the integration of these civil servants; he didn't go into details, other than to say: For us, there are too few civil servants in a context of recovered powers. But I got no reply when it came to people in the private sector who live in the Outaouais region and work in Ontario. In fact, this was one of the concerns expressed by the Union des artistes yesterday morning in their brief, but we did not have the opportunity to ask them the question because we had run out of time. There are 2,000 people in the arts and culture living in the Outaouais region and working for Radio-Canada or other organizations; they too are concerned with the fate of these people, and they too foresee their integration.

What concerns me is how you will proceed with this integration, assuming that these people are to be part of the Québec civil service and that they're all to be integrated. Let's start with the civil servants. Will these people be guaranteed an income? Since you don't want to negotiate before separating, what system will these people be part of? Will they continue to work for the federal government even though Québec has declared its sovereignty and has no more ties whatsoever with the federal? Will they be part of the Québec civil service with the same advantages of the civil service collective agreements they have with the federal civil service? What happens to their salaries while these negotiations are under way, after sovereignty? What happens with their salaries in the meantime? Who will pay these people? Who will ensure their livelihood? What status will they have? I'm speaking of civil servants here; we'll get back later, if you wish, to those who work in the private sector.

**Mr. Tremblay:** Mr. Beaudry, you have raised an important point, sufficiently important in the context of our group to have filed a specific brief on this issue. You may not have received it yet, but our colleague Gilles Rocheleau will be submitting a brief dealing specifically with this issue. I would simply like to add that the reason so many people work in the private sector around Ottawa, in the Outaouais region, is mainly because advanced industrial research and development centres were set up there, which is no coincidence. In any event, I believe that, in the hypothesis of a sovereign Québec, as you have no doubt noticed, we clearly advocate free circulation of people, goods and monies. Therefore, I don't think there is any problem.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Yes, but the agreements you mention, free circulation of goods, people, etc... In your conclusion you state that you don't want any agreements whatsoever before proclaiming your sovereignty. But, when we say agreement, we mean consent between two individuals or two parties or two peoples. These agreements won't come into effect automatically. Proclaiming your sovereignty today doesn't mean that these agreements will be in place tomorrow. There is a period of negotiation. During this period, how do they continue to live in the Outaouais region, these people who depend on their jobs, who depend on employment in Ontario's private sector?

**Mr. Tremblay:** This proclamation, Mr. Beaudry, after a referendum, could easily provide for an interim period before it comes into effect, which would make it possible to come to an agreement on a number of things with English Canada; this would also enable us to submit unresolved issues to international authorities.

**Mr. Beaudry:** In that case, the conclusion found in your brief on page 23, which says: "...we recommend that Québec proclaim its full sovereignty before the negotiation of any new agreement..." is the wrong conclusion. What you're saying is: We should proclaim sovereignty and, before it comes into force, enter into a period of agreement that might last a year or two, or a given period of time, and then put sovereignty into effect. This is what you're saying.

**Mr. Tremblay:** And, Mr. Beaudry, at the same time take care of...

**Mr. Beaudry:** No, no, you have not answered the question. Is that or is that not what you're saying?

**Mr. Tremblay:** Yes, and at the same time take care of having this proclamation recognized internationally.

**Mr. Beaudry:** And in reply to my concerns and fears, what you're saying is: Just refer to the brief that Gilles Rocheleau will submit to the Commission. But what if Gilles Rocheleau is not heard by the Commission, I have no way of knowing whether the Commission will recognize Gilles Rocheleau. There may be a rule that says...

**A voice:** ...

**Mr. Beaudry:** I beg your pardon? As ex-organizer, Mr. Guy Chevette? I was never Gilles Rocheleau's organizer. Let's say I voted for Gilles Rocheleau. I may not vote again for Gilles

Rocheleau. We all have our options. But what if he is not heard? Who will answer my question? You are the ideal person to answer this question. I imagine you must have thought about it before telling us that sovereignty was the answer.

**Mr. Tremblay:** I think you have already received many answers in that regard. Now, if Mr. Rocheleau is not heard, you must have received his brief, which deals with this question. I do believe he should be heard, given the importance of the question you have asked, a question to which we have given special attention. I think it's very likely that the Commission will hear him, I certainly hope so, since the Commission will visit the regions.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I won't go back to it since it seems I can't get an answer from you. But I would simply like to point out that, as far as I am concerned, having in my possession Gilles Rocheleau's brief is not going to reassure civil servants in our region, the people who work in Ontario, when it comes to your opinion and the solution you propose with regard to their future and their economic security. I have not been given an answer. You're saying: Refer to Gilles Rocheleau's brief, which you will receive. If you haven't yet received it, it's just a matter of time and you'll know what the answers are.

**Mr. Tremblay:** I was there, Mr. Beaudry, when you asked other people this question, and as I recall, there were several answers on the subject of integration. Integration is something we'll experience shortly with the civil servants who deal with the GST. It is simply not my place to go into details. But, as I said before, I think this is a very important question. As a matter of fact, studies have revealed that there are far fewer federal civil servants assigned to Québec, approximately 18 %, while we represent 25 % of the population. Are there too few? Are there too many? The studies clearly show that, indeed, we have fewer, far fewer civil servants proportionally than our population warrants, and this presupposes, I imagine, that it will be relatively easy to integrate them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Beaudry. Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must confess that I have pondered this issue at length. Usually, this is something I ask other people to do, but in the case of the Bloc québécois, I have given much thought to the Bloc québécois and to your course of action, to assess the situation rather than pass judgment. And I finally came to the conclusion, after watching you proceed, after working with some of you - with some more than with others, given the circumstances - that, basically, you were

perfect evidence, perfect witnesses, men - I say men because for the time being, there are no women - who have looked at the issue from every angle and carried their reasoning to its logical conclusion. You are the ones who, at a certain point, said: Federalism has been given every chance and, finally, you realized that there is an end to everything and that enough is enough; that Québec as it was could never go any further in its aspirations if it remained within the system. Regrettably, among the absent are other men and women who had also shown their colours and who were on the same wavelength, people walking along the same road. It is regrettable that, at such a pivotal point for the future of Québec, at the last moment these people opted for their limousine or a certain ephemeral security. I do not wish to judge, but I find that, at this point in our history, when we need a strong show of support, I find certain absences distressing.  
(11:30 a.m.)

That said, I have read your brief, which clearly outlines what must be done and why it must be done. One thing that surprised me is that nowhere in this brief is the cultural aspect mentioned, although it would seem to me that this is a fundamental element of the issue.

**Mr. Tremblay:** Mr. Turgeon, first I would like to... You mentioned in your presentation that Québec can go no further. This is true in the case of government institutions. But Québec is moving forward because there are other institutions as well. Where I really side with you is on the question of constitutional stalemating.

Now, you're perfectly right when it comes to the importance of culture. Because of the time allotted to our presentation, and given the importance of the decision that will be made with regard to the economy, we have concentrated on economic matters in the second part of our brief, the one which deals mainly with what Québec should do. We placed this in the context of globalized trade, which now makes it much clearer that Québec must fully assume its responsibilities. We're far from saying that the cultural aspect is not important. It is very important. But in the current debate, we felt that the focus should be on Québec's ability to play a leading role in the globalization of markets. Basically, in our minds, we have long been sovereign when it comes to culture.

**Mr. Turgeon:** But since I still have a little time left in this question period, Mr. Chairman...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes.

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...not that I am in full agreement with Mr. Beaudry, but we share certain concerns. In actual fact, from a cultural standpoint, for example, do you share the claims

made by the Union des artistes yesterday? What will happen to organizations like Radio-Canada, the National Film Board, etc.? Have you taken a stand or decided anything about that?

**Mr. Tremblay:** In all honesty, I would rather say no. Any stand I might take would be a personal one at this point, since you filed your brief yesterday and I was unable to discuss it with the members of our group. I could give you my personal point of view, but since I am here as spokesman for the group, perhaps we could arrange to meet.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's all, thank you, Mr. Turgeon. The next period will be shared by Mr. Libman and Mr. Holden. Mr. Holden will be first.

**Mr. Holden:** M. le Président, hier soir j'ai regardé avec une stupéfaction mêlée d'admiration notre ami le whip du Parti québécois - le maître de l'hyperbole - nous dire pendant de longues minutes jusqu'à quel point il était tanné. J'ai bien cru qu'à un moment donné, M. le Président, il allait bondir de sa chaise et clamer son indignation avec tant d'ardeur qu'il irait en crever le plafond. Il était vraiment lancé et je me suis rendu compte que... I too am fed up with all these people who, whatever extreme position they've taken, treat the whole thing as a joke, laugh at people who come here presenting briefs that are sincere, who snicker, who don't take anyone seriously, who make comments that I find out of place.

M. Brassard se plaignait et était visiblement contrarié par la question, à savoir si les droits des minorités étaient mieux protégés sous le régime fédéral ou provincial. Il trouvait injuste qu'on ose laisser supposer que ces droits sont mieux protégés par le fédéral. Eh bien, moi, M. le Président, je tiens à vous dire que si je suis ici devant vous, c'est grâce à une institution fédérale, la Cour suprême du Canada, qui m'a reconnu des droits, des droits fondamentaux que l'Assemblée nationale du Québec, une institution provinciale, m'a retirés. Et le fait que je sois ici aujourd'hui, sans vouloir généraliser, c'est peut-être un exemple de ce que les "passeports gris" voulaient dire quand ils s'inquiétaient de la différence qui existait entre l'approche du fédéral et celle du provincial en matière de droits de la personne.

Et puis, bien sûr, nous avons eu la longue présentation de M. Larose, dont le cœur saigne à la moindre allusion de préjudice. Moi aussi, M. le Président, mon cœur saigne, tout comme celui de M. Larose. Aujourd'hui, mon cœur saigne de voir le Bloc québécois. Mon cœur saigne pour mon ami, le leader du fédéral, Brian Mulroney. Parce que, en ce qui me concerne, M. le Président, sans M. Mulroney, le leader du Bloc québécois et la plupart des membres du Bloc

ne seraient que d'illustres inconnus dans l'arène politique d'aujourd'hui. Comme mon ami M. Brassard, je ne demande pas qu'on réponde à cette affirmation, M. le Président. J'aimerais qu'on cède mon temps à M. Libman.

**Mr. Bouchard:** This is a personal attack, this is unacceptable and I want a chance to reply.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bouchard, you will have your say in a moment.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I insist on answering the charge.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bouchard, you will have the floor in a moment. Mr. Holden, please continue.

**Mr. Holden:** M. le Président, j'aimerais que le reste de mon temps soit accordé à M. Libman.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very well. Thank you... Thank you. Mr. Bouchard... Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** In this debate, Mr. Chairman, we often denounce fear-mongering, and with good reason. But on the other side of the coin, you have tactics that exploit emotions by using certain terms, certain emotionally charged and at times provocative expressions. For example, the head of your group of independent elected officials, one of our colleagues on this Commission, talks about Québec being prisoner of the federal system. We have seen that the opposite has been true for 30 years, even if your leader says that Québec was violated in 1982 by the repatriation of the Constitution. Another thing that must be pointed out, another one of your members, Mr. Lapierre, the Shefford MNA, voted for repatriation in 1982. At the time, he said it was the best thing for French Canadians. I see a contradiction in this.

My question is as follows: First, how do you explain this difference of opinion? Second, how do you explain this kind of political opportunism, these provocations that attempt to make Quebecers draw the wrong conclusions, that add to the confrontational atmosphere between Québec and Ottawa, that jeopardize the willingness of the rest of Canada to negotiate with Québec.

**Mr. Tremblay:** First, let me mention that, if he had not had the support of Quebecers, a strong support, Mr. Mulroney would be a brilliant lawyer and administrator rather than Prime Minister of Canada. And it was not by

chance that he received this support. He got it because he made a solemn promise to reintegrate Québec with honour and dignity.

Not all of us believed in 1984, but we did, I think, vote in favour – at least in my case – and in 1988, I decided to run for election with that team because Meech had happened. Not that we believed it was such a big deal, but it meant a return to the negotiating table to try to obtain a decentralized federalism which was suitable, and which is suitable, which could be suitable or which could have been suitable in a Québec state which is also a national state.

Of course, we were bitterly disappointed. But we were disappointed along the way, not just at the point of arrival. We must remember that, during the past year of discussions on Meech Lake, our minimal conditions had grown into maximal conditions, which were deemed unacceptable by many Canadians. What I would like to say, many people here at this table, many business people have said the same, Meech was dead before it had a chance because of its objective, which was to reintegrate Québec with honour and dignity.

**Mr. Libman:** OK, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Tremblay:** We rapidly lost our enthusiasm. Basically, it was an outright refusal to recognize Québec as a distinct society; that's the conclusion that must be drawn.

**Mr. Libman:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to continue. It is simply a rejection of the potential impact of the distinct society clause on the Charter, but I will ask another question. He has left the first one unanswered, I asked: Why is there a difference of opinion? Mr. Lapierre said that he voted in favour of repatriation. He said it was the best thing for French Canadians, but his leader says that Québec was violated in 1982 by repatriation. That was my question.

My next question is: You also often speak of a consensus, of solidarity between Francophone Quebecers on a type of sovereignty. This Commission has already found that the status quo is no longer viable in Québec, and perhaps I share that opinion. But can you explain why opinion polls, which are conducted during the most emotional moments of the debate, and also when there is no one to make a public argument for federalism, how do you explain that these polls show one-third of Francophone Quebecers in favour of the constitutional status quo?

**Mr. Tremblay:** I think this shows... I don't have the poll results you mention at hand. I went through the election in Laurier-Sainte-Marie not too long ago. Of course, this is not an Anglophone county. We practically had...

**Mr. Libman:** I'm speaking of Francophone Quebecers who are in favour...

**Mr. Tremblay:** Yes it's a Francophone county. What happened? Basically, we had the support of 70 % of the people. We also saw a strange phenomenon. We had candidates from the main Canadian parties who, along the way, showed an inclination towards sovereignty. Of course, the people did not believe them. So... I think this consensus is widely reflected, not only in the polls but also in an election like this.

**Mr. Libman:** Second, do you believe that there are no longer any Francophone Quebecers who love Canada as their country?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Tremblay:** I imagine there are a few left. We didn't live together for so long for nothing, and I think that this is precisely what happened in the 1980 referendum: a majority of Quebecers voted against because they wanted to keep ties with Canada. They even built a political program for themselves; they gave themselves a direction. They were told to expect change: No meant Yes to a strongly renewed federalism. They were disappointed, to say the least, since what happened was a unilateral repatriation of the Constitution without Québec. Of course, we all would have wished...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Rapidly, Mr. Tremblay, please!

**Mr. Tremblay:** If you wish, I'm done, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very well. Thank you. Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue. (11:45 a.m.)

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Over the next few minutes, we will agree on some points and disagree on others. I will ask my question in the same way you answer, as a representative.

So far, we have had both the emotional and intellectual approach. The federalists and the sovereignists have become polarized. This morning, and in Quebec City also, as you saw, Mr. Tremblay, Mr. Allard, and with the presentation of the CPQ brief, we can say that there have been actions on the part of Ottawa by a so-called centralizing government and by another which is less so. We are, as you know, engaged in a decentralization process which cannot be stopped and, for that very reason, will not stop. So far, and is this something that keeps coming up around the table, we have been speaking of the federal as a unified whole. As you yourself know, as our colleague and my colleague Lucien Bouchard knows, the federal is

not a unified whole. There are parties with different ideologies. When I read your brief, which by the way is very well prepared – one can feel that it hasn't been translated, it was written in excellent French and I congratulate you... not only that, but I'm with you, right up to page 15. And we can see in the brief, before 1982 there was, right... up to 1982 there were positions that were unsuitable for a large part of the population. There was Meech and wounded feelings for a lot of people. After page 15, I would part with your brief.

At this point, suddenly, and I think I'm putting this in the right perspective, Mr. Tremblay... Finally, some people are saying: Let's separate and negotiate, on the assumption, but not the evidence, that others or the others will want to negotiate. Others say: Let's negotiate before separating, and that's where we're at. You and I know from experience what a collective agreement is and what unions do. And we know that the majority of collective agreements are signed without the need for a strike or a lock-out. Using this analogy, some say: Let's strike because we're fed up, and others say: Let's negotiate and for the time being refrain from a strike. This morning, in reply to Mr. Beaudry, as you also mention in your brief, you said: We make a declaration and then, for a time, we open the door to negotiation. Are we in a 49-51 situation where we separate and then negotiate, or in a situation where others say: We negotiate, with the option of separation. And I would like you, with your experience and all that you represent, and what you have done, I'm thinking of Mr. Turgeon, but I'm not addressing this question specifically to you, this is not to single anybody out, but nine people left the Conservative Party, this is not as many as in the public's imagination. And those who stayed didn't do so because they had been crushed. I myself chose to stay not because I had been crushed, I stayed because I wanted to stay.

My question, Mr. Tremblay – and no, I didn't have a limousine, I paid for my two limousines, I paid for them before, by working – who, Mr. Tremblay, will a sovereign Québec negotiate with? The federal government alone... Mr. Allard, somebody else on the panel, said something this morning about all the provinces having more autonomy. This must have been a slip, it must have slipped his mind that Québec is distinct. Mr. Mulroney recognizes this, so does the Conservative Party, and I think that, without having to go to a caucus, we know that members of Parliament in Ottawa recognize it. Who will Québec negotiate with? The federal alone? And by virtue of what legitimacy? The federal government and the provinces together? The federal government or the other provinces separately? And my underlying question can be answered within this one: In your opinion, which

is to say in the opinion of the Bloc québécois, is the willingness of the rest of Canada to deal with a sovereign Québec and come to an agreement with it so absolute that the answer is No?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Tremblay, I don't want to...

**Mr. Hogue:** In your opinion, would the rest of Canada be willing to deal with a sovereign Québec and get along with it? In your opinion, or in that of the Bloc québécois, is the answer No or, as might be expected coming from an Anglophone culture, is it still Yes?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Tremblay, you have only one and a half to two minutes left to answer the question. Please keep it short.

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Chairman, if you and Mr. Bélanger would deign to give Mr. Tremblay a few minutes of your time.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Look...

**Mr. Tremblay:** Mr. Chairman, I can settle this easily. My answer will be short.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very well.

**Mr. Tremblay:** I think that the labour relations analogy is totally inappropriate. As you know, a union negotiates with bosses; it takes a boss to have workers and unions. Québec is a people that needs no boss, no master, and no federal government if it decides that this is the way it wants to operate. It's totally irrelevant.

Now, who should Québec negotiate with? Québec should negotiate with all its partners, all the main partners with which we share interests; there are such interests in most parts of Canada, but this is especially true in the case of Ontario. This is the largest area in terms of population and economy. I'm convinced that they're capable of arranging things so that we can have partners. They have major economic interests to protect. But if we look at Québec's trade relations, we can see more and more new partners that are important and with which we will have to negotiate.

I think that we must negotiate with all our major partners and arrive at agreements that are mutually beneficial.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I see. You have 30 seconds left, Mr. Hogue, if you want to use them.

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Tremblay, you're capable of working with symbolism and analogies. When I

mentioned collective agreements, I spoke of a partnership situation, I wasn't talking about a superior-subordinate relationship. I said there were groups called unions and groups called bosses engaged in a common task, namely to make the most out of the economy and ensure the well-being of personnel. With these people, what we know is that collective agreements are made without having to strike, that is, without any stoppage or breakdown. And using this analogy, I would ask you to reply, but not as you did earlier.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue, your ten minutes are up. Mrs. Monique Simard.

**Mrs. Simard:** Unfortunately, in many cases, even in labour relations, a break is inevitable because of incomprehension on the part of those who think they have all the powers and want to impose them on others. To return to your analogy, Mr. Hogue, I think that, for many of us, we have reached the conclusion that, indeed, through our perhaps individual experiences, that what Canada, the rest of Canada, is trying to do with regard to Québec, and what Québec refuses to accept, is not unlike groups of workers who decide to refuse management's arbitration and stand up for themselves.

Now, I would like to congratulate the Bloc québécois for their excellent brief and congratulate you as a group also, because beyond the number of people that make up the BQ, this is an exceptional political precedent, and your political symbolism and influence greatly surpass the number of individuals that make up your group.

As I was saying, through various experiences and choices, many of us have come to the same conclusions, and I think this is the case of the members of the Bloc québécois, individually and as an entity.

In your brief, you propose holding a referendum as soon as possible to find out, in democratic fashion, what the choice of the majority is, and I think as you do that the choice of this majority is to proclaim Québec's sovereignty; in that respect, the Laurier-Sainte-Marie election was very eloquent evidence. After this referendum, I would like to hear your views... after this referendum, how does the Bloc québécois see the process of consultation that would lead us to a tangible expression of this majority choice made by Quebecers? You say little about it in your brief and I would like to hear more from you on this.

**Mr. Tremblay:** Yes, let me say that the choice of proclaiming sovereignty is very clear, as I mentioned earlier, with an interim, and of negotiating agreements with English Canada, along with obtaining the international recogni-

tion, which is important, and settling through other means, if need be, those elements that could not be settled through rapid negotiations with English Canada. If everything is settled, good; but there may be disputes that should be settled according to internationally recognized rules.

Now, with regard to your second question, which focuses more closely on Québec institutions, I'm afraid I have to disappoint you. Frankly, we have not gone very far into this area, except for suggesting avenues which we consider important, namely coordination agencies, and this recommendation is in keeping with the rest of our brief, which aims to make Québec a high-profile participant in the context of globalized trade. We know that countries that achieve good results in this area are countries where social agents agree on broad policies and above all, on the goal of seeking both economic growth and full employment, and that major government policies are often the result of consensus among various agents in society.

There is another aspect of Québec institutions that we would like to stress. There is a need for decentralization. This would provide adequate solutions to problems of social inequities, local and regional, and would also make possible, as we mention in the brief, a better performance on the part of cities, particularly large cities, enhancing their importance in the context of an economic region's international performance. For all these reasons, we would like to see strong decentralization for all Québec institutions. For the time being, this is as far as we have gone.

**Mrs. Simard:** Thank you. Do I still have some time left?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes, you do.

**Mrs. Simard:** However, have you thought about... We spoke of the economy and concerted action, which you mention in your brief, but in political terms, after the referendum, have you, for example, thought about forming a constituent assembly to determine what the constitution of Québec, of a future Québec, would be? Have you looked into this question?

**Mr. Tremblay:** This is a unique experience for us, having an extended parliamentary commission where a number of people from various segments of society have the opportunity to get together with elected officials to propose a political and constitutional status for Québec. This is an extremely interesting experience, and it is easy to imagine - I followed every development of the work in progress and consider it highly interesting - that this is a further step in a process that may give us new

tools to define our institutions. So far, we consider this experience very, very valid, and it may serve us as a model for a form of constituent assembly, but that's as far as we got. (Noon)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is that all right, Madam? There are six minutes remaining in this particular block of time. If Messrs. Ouellet and Poissant would kindly share this time, we will have heard all the witnesses and, after this, just as it did for Mr. Dufour, the Chair will also donate time to Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I pass.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Chairman, here's my first question to the Bloc québécois: In your approach to Québec politics, do you stand apart from the Parti québécois? I beg your pardon?

**Mr. Tremblay:** This is for you to judge, Mr. Poissant. What we have presented is what we believe to be the course of action that must be followed, based on our analysis. It is up to you and the commentators, I suppose, to make the distinction.

**Mr. Poissant:** So, you don't know whether your approach is different from that of the Parti québécois. In this entire study which we Quebecers have agreed to undertake, do you find differences, for example, between the Parti québécois and the Bloc québécois?

**Mr. Tremblay:** You know, the Bloc québécois...

**A voice:** I've just about had enough!

**Mr. Tremblay:** ...is a very small organization with very little research... very few research people available. The Parti québécois, of course, has been proposing the idea of sovereignty for many years and it certainly has the capacity, and has taken steps on many issues that are not touched upon in the Bloc québécois brief. I think that, within the time limits and possibilities available to us, we have had to choose, as I mentioned to Mr. Turgeon earlier, and go to the heart of the matter, at least to what we believe is the heart of the matter.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you. Another question... In your recommendation, which is clear and simple: We recommend that Québec proclaim its full sovereignty before - and this is important - negotiating any new agreement with English Canada. The goal of my first question was, if yours is the same approach as the Parti

québécois, which says in one of its reports: It is obvious that we will never agree. In that case, what makes you think that, if we were unable to agree before, we'll be able to agree after?

**Mr. Tremblay:** I am well aware that you had an objective and that you are clearly putting it forward now. What we're saying is that English Canada must clearly understand that, by proclaiming our sovereignty, this is where we're headed and we can postpone its coming into force for a substantial period of time so as to negotiate a whole series of agreements with English Canada, in good faith, and I think it is possible to do so. But this has to be clear, absolutely clear and, of course, it must be done through a referendum, to make it clear that this is where we're going, and that, from now on, we will negotiate all cases on a one-on-one basis and come to agreements on that same basis. Because this can be stated, it can be declared. Our course of action is to put it in a form that gives Québec a position of strength that would enable it to insert into the rules of the game this simple declaration: From now on, negotiations will be one-on-one.

**Mr. Poissant:** And if this doesn't work, Mr. Tremblay, what happens then? There is one small detail, which is important and which, in my opinion... as a matter of fact, you mention it in your report, the fact that Canada's monetary policy has not served Québec. Assuming we agree on that, however, the question remains: Are we to have a separate currency, which would not be a viable solution, or do we renegotiate with the central bank? And if this fails during the interregnum, what happens then? We have to have some type of currency. Either it's Canadian currency, which does not serve our purpose and, in that case, there would be conditions. I read that we might have a limiting bank rate, for example, on... But, this could serve for a part of Canada and I asked Mr. Landry that question the other day. Couldn't there be a special bank rate for Québec and one for the rest of Canada? This said, if we do not align ourselves with Canada, we will have to align ourselves with the U.S. government, I imagine, since they're our closest neighbour. And what if this doesn't work? What happens then?

**Mr. Tremblay:** I have a feeling you did not read the details on bank rates and related matters which are contained in our brief. But we must keep this question separate, - this is not in our brief, I'll give you my personal answer. It seems quite clear to me. When we talk of the possibility of tying the Québec currency to another strong currency, with a fixed bank rate, we do this with a view to international dealings; the U.S. government doesn't enter into it. By linking our money with a stable currency we

would enable any agents negotiating on the international scene to know that the rates are tied to that particular currency. And the value of our currency, like the value of the Canadian dollar, depends on several factors, in particular the real interest rates that we are prepared to pay, which means, in effect, that international savings can flow in. We know that, in the Canadian context, we need about \$ 100 billion in savings per year. We Canadians save half of that, and the other half must come from outside. This is by way of example. It means that we have high interest rates. Of course, there is the other side, the fight against inflation. But when we say that we're making a decision to tie our currency to a strong currency, the idea is not at all to ally ourselves with the U.S. government. This is our decision, so that people who want to negotiate on the international scene will know what to expect.

**Mr. Poissant:** But, Mr. Tremblay, that's not the point...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 15 seconds left.

**Mr. Poissant:** There will still be talk of bank rates. There will be talk of a central American bank just the same. It is understood that we don't necessarily have to go with the United States, no more than we have to stay with Canadian currency. However, there will still be an umbrella that determines the bank rate.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Sorry, Mr. Tremblay, there is no time left. Mr. Bouchard, on the Chair's time.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Chairman, in my private and public life I have never insulted anybody and I will not start today, have no fear. I will not reply to Mr. Holden's low, mean-spirited provocation, but as a reminder of the context in which we find ourselves, as it happens, even if Mr. Holden and others don't like it, after four or five successive surveys of large samples of the Québec population by different firms, the Bloc québécois is well in the lead in federal polls. Its lead is twice that of its nearest opponent, in fact. Some people may not like it, but I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that nobody in the Bloc québécois thinks that these favourable polls are addressed to members of the Bloc québécois. We are modest enough to believe that these polls reflect the political line we have adopted and the political symbol we represent in Québec.

We are people who have gone to see what goes on in Ottawa, we are people who have paid our dues. We didn't come to this Commission simply to say: We should renegotiate, or we should do this or that. We decided to take the

plunge, and go into politics. I myself, who had decided that I would never go near politics, who had turned down all kinds of offers in the past, decided to go all the way, regardless of the risk. And I drained the cup to the last drop. I spent two years in Ottawa. I can honestly say that I was at the centre of the decision-making process in nearly all important ministerial committees.

True, I had the support and the friendship of the Prime Minister. But I didn't go into politics simply because of friendship. I went into politics because of a fundamental principle, namely to try and make the Federation work in a last-ditch attempt, what we call "le beau risque". This "beau risque", I lived it. I tried to make it work. And I wanted the Meech Lake Accord to pass. Not because I found it wonderful, or because I felt that there was nothing else for us to do, struck down and on bended knees as we were, by the forceful takeover of 1982. I felt that Quebecers still had a chance to go to Ottawa, to stop the shouting, the anxiety and the heart-bleeding, as you put it, Sir, to go to Ottawa and work loyally with all the resources at our disposal, modest as they were, in my case, I will admit.

After two years, I realized that the country which lived in the hearts and minds of my Anglophone colleagues, was not the same as mine, that this country called Canada was their country. And they wanted it their own way, according to their vision: centralized, unifying, strong, with interchangeable, modular provinces that are all equal, with Québec, say, equal to Prince Edward Island, and so on. This is not because they don't care for us, this is because they care for this country as they see it, which is not our country.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thirty seconds, Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** So we continued along the same lines as the debate that took place in Sept-Îles, where Meech was conceived, towards reconciliation. Up to this point, you and I have followed the same course. And when I saw that Ottawa was on the verge of making a deal with Mr. Jean Chrétien, I realized I had to get out because I didn't want to become another Jean Chrétien, Sir. This is why I am here.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Time's up. I'm sorry... to people in the room... it was agreed that there would be no applauding at this Commission. Mr. Gil Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Tremblay, Mr. Fournier, it is a pleasure to have you with us today. You belong to a political group which has a useful role to play for Québec in the House of Commons, in Ottawa. Looking back at some of your actions, seeing

how you regularly intervene, it is evident that you have the rights of Québec at heart, particularly in the case of Hibernia, for example, where you are in a position to defend the rights of Québec, and play a useful role. There are other avenues of discussion open to political parties, the House of Commons is one, and you have proven your usefulness.

You have submitted a brief which, in certain areas, brings up elements that could be called original. On page 15 of your brief you bring up a point which I find very important, and which has not been raised very often here. But this Canadian federalism crisis, as you call it, is not simply due to what's going on in Québec. This Canadian federalism crisis can be attributed to an uncontrolled deficit, for one thing, to interest rates, and to a disparity in regional development, development of the provinces in economic terms. I find this an extremely interesting element.

As elected officials you form a bloc, the Bloc québécois and perhaps in the near future we will see other blocs from Western Canada, the Atlantic provinces or Ontario. There is some talk of this, I don't know, we'll see what happens. But I believe this is an important factor to keep in mind. The other factor to keep in mind is that, this time, however, it is Quebecers who will decide their constitutional future, nobody else. In this context, on page 15 of your brief, at the bottom of the page, you say: "To be recognized in its aspirations, Québec must proclaim its full sovereignty before the negotiation of any new agreement with English Canada". Your brief is clear on certain points, but it remains ambiguous on this new agreement that you would like to have with the rest of Canada. Could you tell us more about it and define for us those elements of agreement you would negotiate?

**Mr. Tremblay:** We have been explicit on two elements in our recommendations, namely maintaining a common economic space and monetary union. I think these two agreements correspond to important elements and I think they would be easily negotiable, given our mutual interests. There would very likely be other agreements that we did not want to explore in this brief. I think that looking into these agreements is one of the important roles of the Commission.

What we wanted to stress is that, if we want to negotiate one-on-one, it is very, very important to establish a position of strength, to establish the sovereignty of Québec. For us, when... We saw this with Meech, but in Ottawa it is clear for us that when you say that other blocs may be forming elsewhere, even as this Commission is being held, you are probably referring to the Reform Party in the Canadian West. That bloc, Mr. Rémillard, is not

concerned with us. It is concerned with its own affairs.

So I think that... I'll let you go back if you wish to.

(12:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Rémillard:** Excuse me, but we have very little time. I didn't mean to interrupt you. But regarding this new agreement, I would simply like to grasp the meaning of your brief. I don't know whether Mr. Bouchard was interpreted correctly, but he recently said that the environment could come under federal jurisdiction, or that it could be shared. Is this the right interpretation? Is this part of the agreement you propose?

**Mr. Tremblay:** Since the Chair's time is limited, and I wouldn't want to make it necessary to... On that subject, I can tell you that the position was very clear. Mr. Bouchard's position on the environment was, and I think still is, that in the current system, where there are federal responsibilities regarding the environment, these responsibilities must be discharged in the current context. On the other hand, it is indeed urgent for Québec to repatriate all powers related to the environment.

So there is no question of our mentioning the environment as a possible area of agreement. Our perspective is clear. A sovereign Québec will be able to negotiate any kind of agreement it deems in its interest. And I imagine it will find partners with interests, partners with mutual interests. We want to keep all the options open when it comes to agreements that will have to be negotiated.

**Mr. Rémillard:** I gathered as much from your brief, Mr. Tremblay. I understand that you are open to many agreements, and your reasoning on the environment could be applied to trade, since there are many interprovincial or international trade elements, as well as many other areas.

In this context, Mr. Tremblay, I'm under the impression that you seek sovereignty more as a means of negotiating than as an end. Ultimately, what you want, much more than sovereignty, is the power to negotiate.

**Mr. Tremblay:** I think we should make a clear distinction here, Mr. Rémillard. You know, when two sovereign states have agreements and things no longer work, the agreements are dropped. In a Canadian federalism that no longer works, what we've been seeing for the past 40 years is frantic competition between the two governments, a sort of organized chaos. I think that the idea of attaining sovereignty is not simply to negotiate a new agreement that would be similar to the old one, it's to be able to say: Yes, we're willing to negotiate several agreements but, from now on, when an

agreement no longer works, when there is no longer any mutual interest in this agreement, it's up to the two of us to negotiate a new one once and for all.

**Mr. Rémillard:** In the context of this new agreement which, as you said, you see as very broad, depending on negotiations, do you see yourself playing a role in the House of Commons?

**Mr. Tremblay:** Personally, if I were to answer that question, I would have to say no. But when we speak of representation, I think we should avoid...

**Mr. Rémillard:** This question was not necessarily addressed to you personally, but you have understood the gist of my question.

**Mr. Tremblay:** We're saying that we're open to any agreement. I think, in the current context, we must avoid... For example, I have attended this Commission and mention was made of European parliaments. Look, we must be clear with our own people. What does a parliament mean to them? When we speak of common political institutions, if we speak of parliament, this would have nothing to do with what people have in mind. This is why we're very clear on that; our recommendations have nothing to do with double representation which, in our view, and we have said so in no uncertain terms, is highly detrimental. It must be clearly understood that the legitimacy of the Québec people is in the National Assembly and expresses itself through the National Assembly. Now, there are several forms of agreements that may be considered. If we take the European example, the legitimacy of the French is in the French government. Insofar as this is clear, we are open to all sorts of agreements.

**Mr. Rémillard:** I take it then that you do not exclude the possibility of continuing with a Canadian Parliament.

**Mr. Tremblay:** We are excluding it, Mr. Rémillard, in the course of action being discussed at the moment. I think that if, politically - and I may be going out on a limb where my group is concerned - it was suggested that we continue our role in the Canadian Parliament, we would be totally against it because its political meaning has no relevance to possible common institutions.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Let me try to understand...

**Mr. Tremblay:** There is a difference, which is subtle but absolutely fundamental.

**Mr. Rémillard:** ...your position better, if I

may. You recommend following a process to accede to sovereignty, a very democratic process, namely a referendum. The question asked at this referendum must be clear. I'm trying to find out how you see this agreement and how you see your role. What question would the Bloc québécois ask in this referendum?

**Mr. Tremblay:** It would be as clear as our recommendation, Mr. Rémillard: Do you, yes or no, want Québec to become a sovereign state? Period. And if explanations are needed, we'll explain once again about being free to make our own laws, levy our own taxes and make all international agreements. It's as simple as that.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** I would also like to welcome the members of the Bloc québécois. I'd like to go back to a subject about which I had the opportunity to question Mr. Landry, who represented the Parti québécois, last week, or rather this week, regarding the succession of state. I think you were here, actually, when I asked the question. I asked Mr. Landry whether, in the eventuality of a sovereign Québec of course, in terms of sharing the wealth after the divorce, perhaps not the family inheritance, but inheritance in terms of certain assets, if we look at the Vienna Convention, which specifies and lists such assets as airports, road and railway networks, these things would become the property of Québec. Other assets, however, and perhaps we should talk of liabilities, since the federal debt amounts to \$ 400 billion, what would happen to this debt of \$ 400 billion in the absence of an agreement with the federal government?

**Mr. Tremblay:** First of all, I think we must use the same criteria. What I mean is, if we use certain criteria for liabilities, the same criteria should apply to assets. I think it is clear that, in the interest of Quebecers, and certainly in the interest of people throughout Canada, there is a continuity to be considered, and we're already assuming the federal debt. Now, the distribution may vary. I have seen a number of studies on the subject, and I don't think it's up to us, at this stage, to take a position. What does seem very clear to us is that the liabilities seem to largely outweigh the assets. This, in some ways, reflects the government's spending for infrastructure. Why, for example, are the majority of large research centres built in Ottawa, on the west side of the Ottawa River? I think these things need to be discussed and, in case of disagreements, there are rules of international law. But, ultimately, these rules also depend on the good faith of the parties and the mutual or common benefits to be derived

from an agreement. In the present case, I think both sides have good reasons to arrive at agreements.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you. Do I have time for a short...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes, go ahead.

**Mr. Dauphin:** In your brief, you mention local, decentralized administrations in a future sovereign Québec. We have with us, as commissioners, two representatives of municipal organizations, the UMQ and the UMRCQ. In this form of decentralization, do you foresee an administrative decentralization or rather a decentralization which would be similar to a quasi-federation in a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Tremblay:** No, I'm not approaching it from a quasi-federation angle at all. The recommendations are in line with the issues we raised in terms of our performance. The small and medium-sized businesses of Rimouski or Mont-Laurier are also involved in international competition. I think we must have a certain continuity between local, regional and international levels.

Now, the means of action are much too centralized. It's clear that competition between the two governments has led to excessive centralization. The point we want to make in regard to seeking local initiatives that correspond to performance objectives in the present context, is that there is certainly a need for increased powers and, I would say, powers to take action.

We are also aware that many public services would probably be more effective if they were managed closer to the people. These are the two perspectives we have stressed in our brief, but I think it is very clear that there was never, and I have never heard anyone mention it before except at this Commission, any idea of a federation of Québec regions.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We are out of time for this group. The next fifteen minutes go to the parliamentary party forming the official opposition. Mr. Parizeau.

**Mr. Parizeau:** First of all, Mr. Chairman, I would like to salute the emergence of the Bloc québécois. This, I find, is a major political phenomenon which has its roots in the defection, over fundamental questions of principle, of a number of elected officials. And at a time when the public can be quite cynical about politicians, it is important to salute those who have made a commitment for reasons of principle

that they consider essential.

That said, Mr. Tremblay, I would like to have your views or opinion on my interpretation of the agreements that a sovereign Québec will have to establish with the federal government, because this is the subject of a discussion that we carried on for several minutes. I said "discussions with the federal government" because, as I see it, not all important agreements will be made only with the federal government. Later, and I don't presume to see into the future; later, there may be agreements with all kinds of people or groups, but at first I think it would only be with the federal government, and these agreements would consist mainly of arrangements to maintain certain institutions. Not so much agreements to change as agreements to maintain. Monetary union: Do we keep the same currency, and under what conditions? Why should we discuss conditions? To maintain a union. Customs: Do the two countries keep the same customs rights when it comes to third parties or does each have its own customs duties vis-à-vis others? The reasoning is the same, I imagine, as for monetary union; it will undoubtedly be in the interest of both sides but, again, it is a question of maintaining. Third, transportation: It is crystal clear that, here again, there will soon be a need to determine that we want to maintain existing things, at least quite a few of them. Canada will be split in two. The question of transportation, maintaining a number of relations in terms of transportation... In my view, it's probably of greater interest to Canada than to us; but mutual interest is clearly there. What about distribution of assets and debts? Who's going to run after whom? As we know, there are more debts than assets. Here, mind you, I'm not so sure that distribution would be in the interest of both parties.

(12:30 p.m.)

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Parizeau:** It may be more out of moral obligation that we have to see to or recognize a number of things. And there will be a number of transitional measures, such as the ones suggested by Mr. Beaudry, for example. But, at the outset, this is what we're talking about, and all this, ultimately, will have to be discussed with the federal government. I don't see the point of discussing common customs regulations with, say, Prince Edward Island.

So, if I understand correctly, Mr. Tremblay, the agreements you speak of in your brief are of the maintenance type, all of them negotiated, discussed... well, strictly speaking, to be discussed with the federal government, period. Not to predict the future or anything, but, in future there can be any number of agreements with certain Canadian provinces, foreign countries, whatever. But, have I understood you correctly?

This is important, given the discussions we have had for the past hour. I would at least like to know how you feel about this.

**Mr. Tremblay:** I think that what's important to emphasize in our brief... is perhaps our experience with the federal government. When we say we'll have to negotiate agreements after a referendum and after proclaiming sovereignty, with an interim that would allow us to negotiate or establish all the agreements you mention - and I think you have understood us correctly - our aim is to be very straightforward with English Canada.

You know, when you're in Ottawa, it's obvious that, for the majority of people, the only Montréal newspaper that gets read is *The Gazette*. It's unfortunate, but that's the way things are. And this awareness that something's going on, must be clearly established, beyond the shadow of a doubt. There is no doubt in our minds that the people of Québec want sovereignty and will continue to want sovereignty. But it is also essential that our partner, our current partners, understand clearly that this is our intention - today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. This is our conviction and this is why we have proposed this course of action.

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Chairman, kindly allow me to point out to our friend Mr. Holden that today... Mr. Brassard and I have been in politics for 14 years. So we're not just a flash in the pan. And I would like to add, for the benefit of Mr. Beaudry, who I think has adopted a legitimate mission in the interest of federal civil servants, I'd like to go back to brief 155 of Professor Maurice Saint-Germain of the University of Ottawa, which says that Québec has the financial capability and human resources to deal with a possible transfer of jurisdiction of federal employees, and that proportionately speaking, the number of federal civil servants living in Québec is lower than the proportion of Quebecers in relation to Canada, and in terms of Canada's national income and number of federal employees the figures are below what we find in the provincial public sector, and even lower when it comes to the current parapublic provincial sector.

These, I think, are significant statistics. Insofar as integration is concerned, after having negotiated several integration protocols over a period of 17 years, I can say that these are things that must be negotiated on a serious basis, not on a conflictual basis.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to point out an interesting aspect of the brief which has been approached indirectly, whereas you yourself have approached it head on, namely the position of strength. My main experience, for 17 years, has been in negotiation and I can't

believe that there are still people in Québec who are naïve enough to believe that you can approach your opponent beforehand and say: Propose anything you want, make any compromises you want, but it is a foregone conclusion that we will stay within the current federal framework.

I was reading the brief of the Conseil du patronat and, for all intents and purposes, what your predecessors at this table were saying is: No matter what happens, we're staying put. How can we negotiate from a position of strength that way? This is why I find your approach positive. In negotiations, can you name any boss who would grant something to a group of employees unless he's convinced that they won't take no for an answer? Have you ever heard of a union that will sit down with a boss and tell him: OK, no matter what you offer, we won't do anything, we'll take it and keep our mouths shut? Would you rather have a boss who is so easy-going as to say: Yes but this doesn't make sense, your demands are not enough, let me give you a little more? I would hope that we are no longer that naïve; the only way to get anywhere with bosses, or with the Chamber of Commerce, is to deal from a position of strength. This will not be achieved by saying to the rest of Canada: Whatever happens, whatever you give us, we're here to stay. It would no longer be a matter of 40 years, we'd have to live to be a thousand, never mind a hundred, if we wanted to see anything happen.

In my view, your report is to be commended for this positive approach: You were able to put a finger on what Québec needs, not just crumbs but full powers. I have no questions to ask, I'd rather let my colleague, Mr. Boisclair, ask the questions. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Boisclair.

**Mr. Boisclair:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Mr. Tremblay for this presentation. I'm sure it will be appreciated by the members of the Commission because, beyond your opinion, I think we must see in your participation the fruits of experience, as well as the results of a thorough reasoning which, as we all know, has led you to make a choice in favour of a Québec nation.

Mr. Chairman, there's a question I'd like to ask, but before I do, allow me to make a comment of my own, from a 24-year old who has the privilege of sitting on the National Assembly to plead for a cause that I have long defended, that of young people. I would like to say to all of the commissioners here that I consider the participation of young people in the work of this Commission essential. This Québec nation, this discussion surrounding the future of Québec, is something we all want, not just for

ourselves but for future generations. Today's young people want to be partners in the development of their society. More than ever, they are prepared to become the future of Québec. My generation is committed to excellence and competence. It is my generation which will bear the burden of integrating new Quebecers into schools and my generation which will have to face mounting international competition.

This is why I hope that all of you will follow up on the proposals of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse and hold a youth forum, as part of the commissions, on the future of Québec, so as to enable those young people who are involved in various political, social, cultural and economic movements to express their ideas and their views on the political and constitutional future of our people. We sincerely hope that the members of this Commission will ensure fair representation of youth groups in these hearings.

Having said this, I would like to go back to Mr. Tremblay, to salute him and express my pleasure at being here with him, since we represent the same people, you in Ottawa and I in Québec City. I'd like to go back to a subject which was debated earlier by a number of commission members, namely the question of economic integration. This is an issue you raise in your brief and I'd like to ask you how you see this economic integration. Does it involve, for example, a political association within a parliament or a supranational structure, or do you consider that economic association can work, for example, on the basis of charters or mixed sectorial commissions? Different scenarios have been proposed, different possibilities raised, but I would like to know whether you have given thought to this particular issue.

**Mr. Tremblay:** It is very, very clear that economic agreements must work in conjunction with agreements between sovereign countries, without having political institutions. It is quite clear to me, and I think it is clear to all the members of the Bloc. Now, what is important, I think, with regard to these agreements, is to see how Québec can develop, how we can internationalize our trade... Of course, Canadian provinces will still be important partners, but the North-South axis takes on greater importance with free trade. Further, in recent years, Québec has done very well with exports to Europe and I think that we must look at the question of agreements on the international level, including the question of economic development, of course, and take into account our main partners, but we must also take into account areas where we want to be in the future. And if I go by what I have seen in studies over the past few years, the growth of our business relations was stronger with the

United States, and even with Europe, than with the rest of Canada, where they are well established; I think these relations must be maintained; but we definitely have stronger growth with regard to Europe and the United States.

So if we look at the future, we have to... if you add up growth percentages that keep going up year after year in trade with Europe or the United States, well, after a number of years, economists would say that the structure of relations, the importance, if you will, is shifting from one or certain partners to others, so we must make sure that the structure of our agreements reflects these changes as we go along.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We have run out of time. Before closing this session, here is a brief message to the members of the Commission. Bus departure from Montréal to Québec City is at 10:00 p.m. tonight, from the Sheraton Centre. Please note that check-out time for members and personnel staying at the Sheraton is 1:00 p.m.

Thank you, Mr. Tremblay, thank you, Mr. Fournier, for this presentation. We will resume at 2:00 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:42 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 14:07 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Gentlemen, this afternoon we are hearing the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal.

The hearing will last one hour and thirty minutes, and I would like to reiterate the rules for the benefit of the Chamber of Commerce members. There will be 10 minutes to present your brief; the next 10 minutes will go to the ruling parliamentary party; another 15 minutes will be given to the official opposition; 40 minutes for other members of the Commission, each of whom will have 10 minutes, and 10 minutes for the Chair. Keep in mind that the questions and the answers to them must not exceed the time allowed. Now we'd like to welcome Mrs. Nycol Pageau-Goyette, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal. Before giving your presentation, would you kindly introduce your colleagues?

#### **Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal**

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette (Nycol):** With great pleasure, Mr. Campeau, Mr. Chairman. Now, Mr. Luc Lacharité, executive vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal, and Mr. Pierre-Paul Proulx, economist at the Univer-

sité de Montréal and at the Institut d'étude des villes internationales.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead. You have the floor.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Canada does not work any more. While our governments should be giving priority to attacking our economic difficulties, they are being forced to concentrate most of their energy on combatting crises caused by the growing inability of Canadian constitutional and political institutions to reduce tensions and to arbitrate disputes. Our brief also says that the failure of the Meech Lake Accord has convinced businessmen that this country's institutions have to be profoundly changed, or else we will be endlessly repeating the same debates. In this exercise, the Chamber affirms the need to consider first and foremost the interests of Québec. It notes that the very existence of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec amounts to an affirmation by the Québec National Assembly of its desire to consider all available options, including the repatriation of all powers. Our brief also refers to the needs which we see for Québec. In its brief, the Chamber in addition studies what it considers to be Québec's needs. It begins by pointing out the decisive importance of the economic dimension in any blueprint for society, I imagine that you suspected this.

As a general principle, in any project, both in its structural dimensions and in the attribution of powers, the Chamber will look for the conditions which it considers necessary for the economic development of Québec and, in particular, of the Montréal region. Consequently, the Chamber asks the Commission to clearly spell out the fiscal and economic consequences of the option or options it proposes. The constitutional debate will inevitably be expressed in a series of proposed structures.

When this brief was being drafted, no government had made public any specific project that the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal could comment on. We refuse to play the labels game by coming out in advance for or against sovereignty, federalism, whether renewed or asymmetric, confederalism or any other formula. At the present time, the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal considers that no possibility must be automatically excluded, except one, the continuation, with or without patching-up, of the present federalism, whose deficiencies seem to us insurmountable. Once precise projects are submitted to public debate, we will evaluate them in the light of the following considerations: the general principle should be to maintain powers at the level closest to the people; improvement of effectiveness by

clearer definition of areas of jurisdiction; disputes resolution and amendment mechanisms which will allow structures to evolve normally and to have other solutions than the present one of withdrawal.

The Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal stresses the basic importance of basing any constitutional proposal on values shared by all of Québec society to ensure a calm social climate, characterized by peace and harmony between groups. These values are based on respect for the liberty of each person, the affirmation that all are equal in their rights to dignity and with respect to the law, and the rigorous defence of the democratic process. We must also have collective respect as a distinct society with a Francophone majority. It is important, when we speak of our values, to insist on respect for Anglophone Quebecers, allophones, Amerindians, and Inuit. While considering the maintenance of a Canadian space preferable from the economic point of view, the Chamber recognizes the intrinsic viability of the Québec economy. The Québec economy is less and less linked to Canadian economic space and more and more linked to continental and world economic space. This is indeed true of all regions of Canada.

Major macroeconomic policies exercise a real effect on economic growth, but the room for manoeuvre which, in our opinion, national governments have in conducting their fiscal, monetary and trade policies is reduced by their membership in major agreements which govern the international economy and by the need to take into account the practices of neighbouring countries in order to maintain competitiveness.

The foundations of economic power are now shifting away from national boundaries to take on a regional form. Regions need to have more autonomy to sustain their own dynamism and pursue their own priorities. The prosperity of the regions is linked to factors such as the quality of human resources, capacity for innovation, local and regional synergy, the complementary action of different interested parties and the capacity of the region to participate in the great international networks. It is with all these considerations in mind that the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal stresses the priorities that should make it possible to effectively pursue future constitutional structures: higher education, professional development and upgrading, vocational education, support for technological research, development and innovation, immigration, management of strategic infrastructures, the ability of the great urban complexes, and in particular of Montréal, to project themselves effectively on the international stage. Moreover, even in areas delegated to a central authority, decisions can no longer be taken in isolation. A debate on the constitutional structures of this

country leads naturally to reflection on the internal structures of Québec. To the extent that Québec becomes an increasingly autonomous economic region, it must be structured in such a way as to exercise its powers as effectively as possible. In order to reduce the period of uncertainty to the maximum, the Chamber recommends that debates on this question take as little time as possible and that decisions be made quickly.

In conclusion, the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal stresses the unique opportunity offered by the establishment of this parliamentary Commission to prepare a real blueprint for society for all of Québec beyond any political partisanship. A real blueprint for society, for Québec of course, but also perhaps an inspiration for all of Canada whose needs for change are not less important than ours here in Québec. Canada as defined by the Fathers of Confederation no longer exists except in history books. Change, desirable yesterday, has today become a condition for the survival of our institutions from coast to coast. Major, even fundamental, changes in the sharing of powers are required. Only those nostalgic for a past era are still refusing to admit this obvious fact.

(2:15 p.m.)

This said, it is however the fundamental interests of Québec which the Commission must constantly keep in mind throughout its work. The powers necessary for promoting our fundamental interests are not negotiable. They are very clear. They are seen in the political, cultural and sociological evidence. In Québec, the very essence of our distinct society is vital and the powers to develop it can not be subjected to any bargaining whatever. Once these powers have been well established, agreements are of course negotiable and even desirable with partners who are interested and respectful of the fundamental character of the exercise of these powers. But let us be very clear on this, at this point we are speaking of possible agreements on mechanisms, on ways of doing things, and not on the propriety of the powers as such. It is in this perspective that the Chamber would encourage the Commission to carry out its work.

Québec has changed a great deal over the past 30 years. And the coming years will again require just as many changes if we want to distinguish ourselves on the world stage and build ourselves a future consistent with our ambitions, our dreams, and our immense potential. To act, to be able to act becomes a *sine qua non* for the actualization of our potential. To do this, we must obtain the means to build a society able to withstand competition from the most competitive countries in the world, in our way, by putting our faith in our unique characteristics which have permitted us to become what we are. This is what is at stake for us. It requires the ability to make our own

decisions, in areas as vital as immigration, the training of our labour force, our economic development policies, our cultural development, and many others.

Any sterile overlapping of jurisdiction, any struggle for power between levels of government whose policies have too often proven contradictory are burdens which will be too heavy to bear in the new world context. The most serious danger threatening Québec, just like the rest of Canada, would be to continue paying the price of obsolete structures modelled on a sharing of powers which still reflects the state of the world in the last century. This is the source of our unending and inconclusive sterile discussions.

Our competitors no longer leave us any choice. We have to give ourselves the means to compete with the best. Among these means, the power to decide for ourselves on our major policies in vital areas, on the basis of our own interests comes at the top of the list. To redistribute powers on the basis of the new reality is not to destroy Canada, but rather to give it a chance of again becoming a great country. There is nothing indecent about deciding one's own destiny for oneself. On the contrary, it is a sign of maturity.

And, seen from this angle, the present exercise is in no way the vengeful act of an ill-tempered malcontent. Indeed, on the contrary, Québec is playing the leading role in the search for a political organisation which is more effective from all points of view. In this sense, and if the exercise is successful, who knows whether, some day, Québec will not be playing the role of the cradle of a new country, better adapted to modern realities? This is what we ardently wish for.

A country made up of regions which will give to the whole all the strengths of a unit made up of dynamic parts, each of which is building on the basis of its own characteristics, instead of lowering the whole in search of an elusive common denominator.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You still have 30 seconds, Madam.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** This was how modern Europe was built and is now becoming one of the most formidable economic blocks in existence, without anyone having to sacrifice his identity, his culture or his autonomy. From this positive point of view, the work of the Commission should consist first in outlining the structure of powers necessary for the development of Québec, taking into account, of course, its specific nature. At this level of the work to be done, powers considered necessary are not negotiable. We insist on this, it is primordial, or else the exercise is once again doomed to failure from the beginning. Either these powers are

essential or else they are not. And the essential can not be negotiated away without giving up the very attainment of our objectives. To negotiate the essential is to agree to stop existing, and there can be no question of this. It is only when these sets of powers have been established and the functional links which must exist among them have been defined that we should become concerned with the examination of applicable structures. If there is room for negotiation, it is at the level of establishing one structure rather than another. It is here, and only here, that there is something to negotiate. Modern Québec has been built on the acceptance of change, on adaptation to new realities. We have adopted effective resources which today are the envy of our partners, in order to face the new rules of the game on the world stage. The political history of Québec makes it obvious that we have been successful when we have decided to exercise the powers we needed. As we all know, the greatness of a nation cannot be negotiated, it must be affirmed and then it becomes recognized.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I cannot allow you two minutes, I can perhaps allow you...

Mrs. Pageau-Goyette: One sentence.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): One sentence? All right.

Mrs. Pageau-Goyette: We are on the right path to ensuring that our partners will more and more be absolutely compelled to share our destiny because we will have been able to show vision, determination and dynamism. The Commission will bear a heavy responsibility for the results of these events and the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal assures you of our complete support. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Pageau-Goyette. The first question is for Mr. Cosmo Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Mrs. Pageau-Goyette, we thank you for your brief, for the excellence of your brief. In your brief, you point out, especially for businessmen, that the priority is to create a climate of confidence and economic stability in which the rules of the game are very clear and very clearly established. You also tell us at a certain point of the priorities for which Québec should have almost exclusive jurisdiction. You speak of higher education, research and development, vocational education, immigration, and other things, but, at a certain point, you also mention that aspects such as defence, external affairs and management of the postal system could be entrusted to a central government. On another page of your brief, you

no longer exclude the possibility that repatriation of all powers must not be excluded. By digging a little deeper into these items which you have included in your brief, could we say that the repatriation of all the powers of which you speak would also be the sovereignty of Québec?

Mrs. Pageau-Goyette: I will take the position taken by the other chambers of commerce and other business groups. There is no question of coming out today in favour of one option or another. However, what the paragraphs you have quoted mean is that there are things which are essential, which are non-negotiable, such as our distinct character, the levers which will allow us to develop and be the best on the world stage. There are other aspects which are not less important, but on which, perhaps, the battle should not be fought with so much ardour, and we are thinking in particular of monetary policies and fiscal policies, where the room for manoeuvre is not as large in the final analysis, whether in Québec, or in Canada. We are all bound by what is going on all over the world. So, of course, if the powers were repatriated to Québec, we would perhaps not have the interest rates that we have now, or perhaps we would, we do not know. And what I mean is that we will still be obliged to respect the GATT agreement and the Free Trade Agreement. We would be included in a universal international agreement, which would not really leave us any room for manoeuvre, any more than Canada even. And it is in this sense that we say that these powers do not appear to us to be essential. But if we have to repatriate them, let's repatriate them.

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, my second question is this: you speak at a certain moment that... you say that this last solution involves a price to be paid while stating in the same breath that it could cost as much to preserve Canadian economic, political and cultural space. My question is: What are the costs related to the maintenance of Canadian economic, political and cultural space, in your opinion?

Mrs. Pageau-Goyette: I think that the duplication, the division, the areas of overlap and the inefficiency existing in these two systems is absolutely inconceivable today, and we are paying the price for this. We pay it with a deficit which is absolutely enormous, which is beyond our means. And I think that we can no longer continue. This is the price which we must pay if we remain in Canada, the price of separating would perhaps be different, but there is always a price, whatever option we chose.

Mr. Maciocia: Did you, Mr. Chairman, also point out, still within economic space, that

Canadian economic space is gradually losing its importance? I did not catch exactly what you meant by "its importance".

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I am going to ask Mr. Pierre-Paul Proulx, please, since he is the one who did this part of the study for us. I am going to ask him to elaborate on this aspect in greater detail.

**Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul):** Thank you. Thank you very much. So, what we observe, if we examine the changes in shipments from Québec to the other provinces — that is, until 1984, since certain data stops there — Québec is shipping less and less to Ontario and Western Canada. It is somewhat maintaining its markets in the Atlantic provinces. If we also examine the data, some of which is a little more recent than what we put in our brief, and we now examine exports from Québec to the United States, we find something very interesting: our exports to the States, more towards the American South, are increasing at times by an average of 40 % per year. Although our shipments to the other provinces are increasing by 3 % per year, our shipments towards the United States, where it is most dynamic, are increasing — and that is the most dynamic market — by 40 %.

The third part of this puzzle, if you will, is that if we examine Québec from an international standpoint, we again find that exports and the dynamism of our international markets are superior to what we find in the Canadian common market. So, it is in this sense that we say that the economic space of Québec is changing. This is not surprising because the Québec economy has become more mature with respect to high technology products and that means that it covers more ground. The more expensive products, higher value added, the farther they reach. Products are going more and more to the southern United States, they are going a little less, and I repeat, to the West. We are maintaining a few to the Atlantic. Products are going internationally and the question that raises, and what we wanted to address in our brief, is what do we do in a context where the economic space is changing and we have political space. How do we form economic policy in a changing economic space? This is what we have attempted to address in another part of our brief.

**Mr. Maciocia:** My last question and then I will leave the floor to my colleague, Jacques Chagnon. Are you in agreement with the brief of the Chambre de commerce du Québec?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Basically, yes. We were present when the brief was adopted. We are concerned with certain aspects which, in our opinion, could have been quantified at that level.

I am thinking, for example, of the repatriation of Unemployment Insurance, where we do not really have any figures and it is difficult to know if this would be a good thing or not. So, for all these reasons, we have decided to present our brief more in terms of the interests of the greater Montréal region, targeting more on what the Montréal region needs to affirm itself, in order to be the engine which it is expected to be to lead Québec to economic prosperity. And so it is in this sense that without dissociating ourselves completely from the brief of the Chambre de commerce du Québec, we wanted to restrict our thought to the needs of Montréal as the great regional economic engine of Québec development.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Now, in the present context, with the powers that we have, what would be the situation of Québec in relation to the Europe 92 market, which will become a huge, very important market, and they ask whether Québec really is in a good position in relation to this? What are the powers or the resources we will need to face this potential market?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** We have spoken of this a lot and I think that others before us have repeated it more than enough. I think that we have to recover all aspects of education and vocational education, and all aspects of control over our resources, because we consider that these are the factors which will determine whether a society succeeds or not. In this sense, we must have the mechanisms to manage our immigration, to manage our training, to educate our population to become the best in the world. It is in this sense that at this time the overlapping is extremely costly. Excuse me, Mr. Proulx wanted to add a...  
(2:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Proulx:** You are asking a question which is very basic, that is, how will Québec fit into this changed world, if you wish? And they often say if you put two economists in one room, you will end up with three opinions. If you will allow me, I am going to give you one of the three opinions. This is the result of an effort to understand what is actually going on in the European space where we see some regions doing well while others are declining. To reply, very briefly, to your question, because it should be developed in great length, what could be advocated, and in this case what I would advocate, is that, first, Québec could become involved and be competitive internationally and thus penetrate European markets, first, to the extent that there is what we call a synergic environment, an environment in which people work together, where employers, unions, and

researchers are flexible with respect to business, where language and cultural solidarities are outdated also, but where there is, within an environment, a synergy. In brief, to work in a more open space, we must go back to our roots. This is the first element of competitiveness, it is to be able to work very closely together and to move forward. We see this in certain regions of Europe which are doing well. The second part is that we must go beyond our space.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** If you will allow me, I am going to interrupt you. My colleague from Saint-Louis has a couple of questions to ask you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jacques Chagnon.

**Mr. Chagnon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to thank the members of the Chamber of Commerce for coming to present this brief to us this afternoon, here, in Montréal, may it be said in passing. In your brief and on reading your brief, we remain a little unsatisfied, because you bring us, following a completely logical path of reasoning... You conclude that there has been a failure when you say that if Canada is to survive and if Québec is to play a role in it consistent with its resources and its ambitions, from the moment such a conclusion is drawn, the debate changes in nature. You arrive at a logical series of actions, of findings, but you do not draw any conclusion. That leaves us unsatisfied. Is there a reason why you have not drawn any conclusion? Is there not one of these blueprints for society in which you said... You congratulate us for this work which should, in principle, allow us to give birth to a blueprint for society, but, as a group, you tell us that you do not take a position, in fact. But is there not a position, among those which could be taken, which would be favourable or more favourable for the set of economic resources available to the metropolitan region?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** This is indeed not an easy question. Our contribution, the Chamber's, first we did not prepare it as a committee because, in our opinion, we would perhaps run a risk of making the debate very ordinary. In a committee, people do not always say everything they think. So, what we did was a number of individual consultations which essentially all said the same thing, that is, that we are able to assume responsibility for ourselves; that we are able to create wealth; that we are now able to share a vision with the unions, with the cultural communities, with the community groups. We feel good in this newness of Québec, in this new Québec, but we do not feel that it is up to us, businesspeople whose first mission is to create wealth, that it is up to us to define a political

option. What we are telling you is that whatever you give birth to, we are prepared to take up the challenge. This is the message that we have come to bring you.

**Mr. Chagnon:** You want us to give birth quickly and you say that decisions should be made quickly.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** That is right!

**Mr. Chagnon:** Is there a method or methods that you would favour and which could bring us fewer disruptions, perhaps, economically?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I would very much like to have at our disposal all the specialists and experts that you have and that you will have, to manage to define these means, to evaluate them against each other, but you will understand that, with the time that you have given us, this was not easy and that it was even impossible to do. It is no use for me to try to reply directly to your question, I will not succeed.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Madam. So, we still have about a minute or a minute and a half for the Government parliamentary group. We will now have 15 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group. Mr. Jacques Parizeau.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mrs. Marois will begin, Mr. Chairman...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Marois.

**Mr. Parizeau:** ...and then, Mr. Bourdon and finally, myself.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am reassured a little because from the beginning of our work, there have been businessmen telling us that they would have settled this more quickly than the politicians. So, you say, you would prefer that the politicians end up by solving it.

I welcome you to our work. I liked your brief a lot. First, as an organization concerned with business and economics, you remind us on the other hand that the economy is also part of a set of values and of sociological and cultural realities. You appeal to social peace, harmony, solidarity, cultural values and respect for Francophone space, and I was happy to find that in your brief.

This being said, I would not like to misrepresent your thoughts; I will take up certain elements of your thoughts and ask you two questions. You say on page 2, that while considering the maintenance of a Canadian space

preferable from the economic point of view, the Chamber recognizes the intrinsic viability of the Québec economy. You recall further on, on page 14, that our industrial base, our geographical situation, our human resources and our natural resources allow us to look forward to a prosperous future if Québec chooses the path of autonomy. And you say you have excluded no avenue. Following this, and throughout the brief, you very harshly criticize federalism and its results for our territory, and here again I only take a few sentences, but I do not think that this misrepresents your thoughts or that I am taking them out of context, but I am situating them well within their context. You say that for the moment, the Chamber has rather acquired the conviction that the perpetual resurgence of the constitutional question and the chronic inability to solve questions related to the sharing of powers are very largely caused by the growing inability of present constitutional structures to meet the needs of either Québec or Canada. Québec needs renewed institutions and new tools to pursue its march towards progress. A country which puts a brake on its momentum is not a viable country. There is, obviously, a cost to pay for any transition whatever it may be, but we consider that if the country is not able to solve its problems and resume its march towards progress, it could cost even more not to proceed with fundamental changes in our political institutions.

For you, between the status quo and autonomy, does it appear to you that the status quo costs us more in terms of negative effects on our capacity for progress and growth? First question with respect to economic progress, and social and cultural progress, because of course it all goes together, as you point out.

Second question. You said in your opening remarks, Madam, that you believe we have to have the powers considered necessary and they are not negotiable. How, considering what you know of the negotiations that have been carried on so far, how will we be able to appropriate the powers considered necessary? What tool are we going to choose? Are we going to choose to consult our people? Are we going to choose to negotiate with one government or with eleven? What means are we going to favour?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I think first that one part of the question is bizarre in the sense that the Prime Minister himself has said that the status quo does not exist. So, from that, I think that it is a hypothetical question and I refuse to reply. However, when we spoke of the ineffectiveness of the federal system, I must also tell you that the ineffectiveness of the Québec system has also been noted. And the squabbling among the Departments, in particular with respect to training, are common knowledge and

are costing us money. There is total ineffectiveness at this level. We also have to clean up our own house. It is not very clean, it is not very orderly. As for evaluating the various options, since that was the meaning of your first question, we have not done so. We count on you to provide us with the elements which will allow us to evaluate these options. And we will come before you to tell you what we think of it. On the second question...

**Mrs. Marois:** In your brief, once you have made the criticism... Let us imagine that we have problems in our house, but, in the brief that you present, there is more criticism of the ambiguities, of the duplications, etc., of the federal system in which we live. So between the status quo and autonomy, is there a greater price to pay to preserve the status quo or to go on towards autonomy?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** We have frankly not done the calculations...

**Mrs. Marois:** O.K.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** ...and I tell you that we count on you to do so.

**Mr. Bourdon:** Madam Chairman, I address Madam Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, with the consent of the Chairman of the Commission...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Of course, of course.

**Mr. Bourdon:** ...and I am happy that we can say Madam Chairman, at this Commission.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Thank you.

**Mr. Bourdon:** I would like to tell you how much I enjoyed your brief. During the seventies, I was a firm believer in the priority of the social over the economic, and the businessmen and the few businesswomen of the time spoke of the primacy of the economic. And your brief, I think, well illustrates the considerable change which has occurred in business circles. On page 6, for example, you speak of your members' interest in the health network, cultural institutions, urban planning, the cultural communities and the need to integrate them. And for my part, and this must be true for others as well, we now see that before distributing wealth, we must count on a strong business class to create that wealth. I very much appreciated it, in your brief also, on page 21, when you speak of the tens of thousands of persons waiting for status in Montréal, that is, of the refugees, who are living under absolutely unbelievable conditions. I

think that it is one of the first briefs, also, which tells us that management of the strategic infrastructures should be given exclusively to Québec, and you speak in this regard of ports, airports, highway networks and in general of all equipment used to transport persons, goods and data, which have become of major strategic importance. You also say that Québec must be able to support Montréal so that it remains an international window and, as a Quebecer from Montréal, I am particularly proud of your brief in this regard. You still do not say explicitly what country has your favour, but I do not have any doubt that, with many others, we will end up getting together to find this country, and I find it extremely important, among other things, that you say something which is fundamental, that it is up to Quebecers to make the choices, and they are able to do so with respect from others, whatever the agitators may say, even when they are supported by the dinosaurs.

So, my last question, you say that it is urgent to get going, do you want the Québec government to organise a referendum in the near future, in which the population of Québec, after the work of this Commission, would be called on to decide?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** You are unfair when you ask businesspeople questions like that. We are not in a position to reply to that, we are not politicians, we do not live within that context, we are not able to evaluate a referendum in relation to an election. How do you expect us to reply frankly, correctly, with the means at our disposal? It is not right for you to ask us these questions. However, if I may be allowed, please give me an opportunity to speak of airports, I am pleased to speak about them, because this is an example of coordination which is unique, in my opinion. Seven organizations from the greater Montréal area which got together and said to themselves, these airports would be better managed and more effective, we could use them as levers of economic development if we took over their management. And this is what we are in the process of concluding. It will have taken two and a half years, three years now, since in December it will be three years, but I have every reason to believe that by Christmas we will have Dorval and Mirabel in our hands. And treating them as levers of economic development, rather than as equipment management, makes all the difference in the world, and it is with this that we hope, as businesspeople, to build a strong and powerful region.

**Mr. Bourdon:** And I hope we get the port before Easter, Madam.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jacques Parizeau.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Madam, I will try to ask you questions which you will not find unfair.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I have confidence in you.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Essentially, basing myself on the last paragraph on page 6 and the few lines which follow on page 7, you say that the responsibility for the failure of the Meech Lake Accord very clearly resides outside of Québec. This is of great consequence. Yes. The majority of our members still ardently desire to preserve a Canadian economic, political and cultural space... So you say most of your members still ardently desire to be Canadians, because this is what that means. Economic, political and cultural, this is what it means.  
(2:45 p.m.)

But they now find that, under present conditions, this option, to be Canadians, carries a price to pay which could prove to be as high as that of autonomy. So you indicate here that for the autonomy of Québec, there would be a high price to pay, but that for federalism perhaps the price will be as high if not higher. And you conclude that it is no longer sufficient to want federalism, the time has come either to adapt it to better meet our needs, or to abandon it for a better adapted structure. If not federalism, sovereignty. We understand each other. We do not have much choice.

And this choice would be made for economic reasons, because of the prices to pay. This is an extremely original thesis, it is probably the first time that we have heard it in twenty years. Normally, many people in Québec say that they can no longer endure the Canadian political system. There is no question of agreeing to Canadian cultural space, but we remain federalists and Canadians because of the economy. Here what you tell us is that you are attached to Canada from economic, political and cultural points of view, but the economy of federalism could lead you to change your point of view.

Am I interpreting your thoughts correctly? This is extremely interesting. It is truly, in my opinion, the first time that Canadians have said that we could stop being Canadians because of the economy. Am I mistaken in my interpretation?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** It is nice to hear you. Umm... My goodness. How am I going to reply to that? You are so good in economics and I do not want to look silly here compared with you. I would just like to say... What I want to tell you, Mr. Parizeau, what I want you to tell the Commission, is that in business circles, we are

not afraid any more. Unlike the past, we are no longer afraid to examine the options of change, because if we had a price to pay for our autonomy, for our desire for autonomy, it is already done.

In Québec, we have suffered from crises that Canada has never gone through. And, so how shall I say it... I think that Québec, if we were for example sovereign, of course we would have difficulties to finance our debt, for example. But I would really like to see Canada try to finance its debt without Québec.

So, I tell myself that at some given moment there is going to be a balance of power somewhere, and they are going to say to themselves, "Well, perhaps these Quebecers are not as stupid as all that and if we had listened to them, perhaps they would have made sense." And then maybe it would also be to our advantage. And to rebuild like this, what we said just now, Canada as a great country.

I do not know if I am expressing myself properly. Of course I do not speak to you in figures, and I do not speak to you in economic abstractions, but I speak to you as the people say, with their guts, with what they feel. They are prepared to take up the challenge.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right?

**A voice:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** So next question, Mr. Michel Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** We have heard a lot about monetary policy. You bring in an additional element when you say on page 19 that although there is a certain merit, and although Québec would be better served if it controlled its own macroeconomic policies, a future Bank of Québec would not have the room to manoeuvre that would allow it to adopt a very different monetary policy, understood, from that of the Bank of Canada. And you say that this is even more true with increased integration into the large international systems.

I would like hear Mr. Proulx, if possible, give us a few more details on why the room to manoeuvre would be not particularly different, or why monetary policy would be not particularly different.

**Mr. Proulx:** You are no doubt more familiar with the total debate on the room to manoeuvre.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** If I were not in agreement with that, I would not have asked you the question, I can tell you right away. But go ahead.

**Mr. Proulx:** Yes, so we have to try to dissect the situation and then try to determine what are the factors determining real interest rates, and, once the inflation differentials experienced have been considered, to try to determine a little of what the room to manoeuvre of the Bank of Canada or of a Bank of Québec is, with respect to the application of the rate of exchange in a world where - and here the factors that I will mention narrow the room to manoeuvre - in a world where financial intervention is extremely tight, you know - you work on a world-wide basis in certain networks - therefore financial intervention - the slightest differences in interest rates have extremely rapid repercussions - in a world in which the game is played, the OECD, the World Bank, all work together to try to see that the gaps in our trade balances or in our balances of payments are balanced.

So in this way, from these efforts at coordination of macroeconomic policies - I submit that this is also true for trade policy in another forum - reluctantly we cannot deny the existing room to manoeuvre, we only have to look at what has been done with our rate of exchange, on the one hand, and the real interest rates we are experiencing, on the other. But if we try to break down the determining factors, there are real constraints which come from the increased and growing international coordination with respect to the determination and practice of monetary policy, there are real monetary constraints which come from very rapid financial intervention on the markets and, in this way, this is what we were attempting to refer to. These policies are essential, but neither the Bank of Québec, on the one hand, nor the Bank of Canada, on the other, has the room to manoeuvre that it would like.

For example, if we ask... I presume... we have good Quebec compatriots at the Bank of Canada who would like to be more sensitive to the needs of Québec, which are not those of Ontario, for example, but the events in the Gulf raise concerns about inflation. Because of inflation, we right away have a factor which enters into the determination of the interest rate and it is on this basis... Determining factors external to our internal monetary policy leave room to manoeuvre because we see... There is one, but it is narrow, all the more so since coordination efforts are all going in this direction. Doing this, we conclude: Let's have these policies, there would be a certain room to manoeuvre. For example, exports of raw materials, which made up a good part of the Canadian trade balance, but not ours, mean that the Canadian dollar is up. For Québec, we would like a little lower dollar, actually, but there are relatively restricted rooms of manoeuvre and, by doing this, we say: Let's think of other policies which will complement the essential macro-

economic policies. If you wish, I could also speak of trade policy but that is another question.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** Essentially, you are saying that it is completely possible for Québec itself to exercise all these powers on its own, and do it as well as anyone, except that once the operation is over, it will not bring about enormous change, even if it is done properly.

**Mr. Proulx:** Yes. What we claim in this connection is that, monetary union or no monetary union, there are factors determining the reality of financial markets which mean that there would be major financial intervention. Québec could exercise these policies. But the resulting room to manoeuvre, in our opinion, is not so great that it will determine its competitiveness in this new world we were speaking of. There are other elements in our policies and in our behaviour which are essential complements to monetary policies. Fiscal policies: we are so mired in debt that there is a little less talk about them. Trade policies: with the GATT, they will come back to us, even if we are defeated... If indeed there was difficulty in negotiations and in maintaining economic space — that was Mr. Parizeau's question just now — this would come back to the extent that Québec and the other Canadian provinces are good citizens of the North American Free Trade Agreement and are good citizens of the GATT who say: we do not play games with tariff barriers, we do not play games with non-tariffs barriers. So, the international rules are fundamental in determining national policies, the...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Sir, Mr. Proulx, I have to interrupt you, you have just used up the Chairman's reserve.

**Mr. Proulx:** I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Parizeau, you still have one minute. Later? Mr. Rémillard, same thing, you still have a minute and a half. Later?

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right? So, we will go on to the 40 minute block. Mr. Roger Nicolet, who will be followed by Mr. Ghislain Dufour.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like, if you will allow me, to consider two distinct lines of thought in your brief. The first,

and I refer to page 22 of your text where I read that the Montréal region does not have a political structure which reflects its economic and social reality, which singularly complicates its development. And you will allow me, Ha, ha, ha! In particular to stress this comment. But in all logic and with a concern for symmetry, you come back and touch a problem which is very close to our area of concern. I would like to hear you elaborate on this.

The second is perhaps a more delicate matter and I hope that you will not interpret my request as being a desire to reinterpret or to take up in a different way what you hesitated to deal with just now, but, with the Conseil du patronat this morning, businessmen like you, we discussed and exchanged opinions at length on the whole sequence of events which could bring about this renegotiation to which you aspire. It seems that they, at any rate, seem to have confidence in a kind of dynamic which emanates from this Canadian malaise which you have identified yourselves, which is related to this Quebec reality which you described so well in your brief. This being established, it seems to me at any rate that, in this presentation, the Canadian power play is not working. And I am thinking, in particular, of all those who are trying to perpetuate opposition to change, and I will not point them out, I think that it is obvious, when we look at the very operation of the country. So, in this balance, don't you think that a release mechanism should be contemplated, that we will have to articulate one and take the initiative of really launching the debate?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** To your first question, when we speak of the division of the economic regions of Québec, for example, you will admit that the fact that Laval, for example, is identified as a regional tourist area is a little bizarre when we are right next to Montréal. And what we have tried... Fine, this type of thing often occurs in other sectors. There are many cases. Without considering that not even Montréal has the powers or levers of development really appropriate to it, but we are always tagging behind a government situated 250 kilometres from the main region. And what I wanted to tell you about this is that Montréal, for four or five years now, has decided to work in coordination, with a single vision of the economic development of Montréal. And it is this coordination which, in my opinion, is going to give us this new dynamism that we are seeking so hard. Luc gives me further details. That is it, it was in the same direction. But if we think, for example... yes, last year we created a committee which included all the other chairmen of chambers of commerce, for example, in the greater Montréal region, to manage to agree on development strategies, on policies which would be common to us all: to examine,

for example, transportation, to stop doing things that divide us. We are now trying to work out a way to agree and to be all heading in the same direction. So, that is a little about this regional coordination. But go ahead...

**Mr. Nicolet:** In brief, you are still speaking of political structures. Do you see a grouping beyond the Montréal Urban Community which would really provide an administrative and political function over all of the greater metropolitan region?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I think that Mr. Lacharité would like to reply to this question.

**Mr. Lacharité (Luc):** This is not so much a matter of structure as a matter of rethinking a little the mode of operation of certain of our structures, and what Mrs. Pageau-Goyette explained to you a few moments ago all leads to bringing powers to a region which works, as we are trying to illustrate to you, increasingly in coordination with local powers, with regional powers. And it is in this sense that we say Quebec structure must encourage and favour this dynamic. It must review its operation. When we think of the powers or when we think of the sectors in which this dynamic must be played out, we think of education, we think of the training of the labour force, I mean, we think of economic development, and must certain structures be reviewed? Perhaps yes.  
(3:00 p.m.)

Almost daily, we have opportunities to verify that the division of the economic regions, as we know it, no longer matches Montréal's reality because of its own dynamic. We can no longer work in isolation within the Urban Community, we can no longer work in isolation within the South Shore. Does the South Shore identify with the Montérégie? What is the Montérégie? Does it divide the South Shore, either from the regions a little further east, or from the economic region of Montréal, from the city of Montréal? Indeed, the dynamic is a little confused and I think that it is not so much at the level of structures but at the level of a reorganization of powers which would facilitate a better dynamic, which would allow the people to work together locally and regionally.

There are structures for this. The Urban Community exists, MRCs exist, municipalities exist.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Does that answer your question, Mr. Nicolet?

**A voice:** The first one, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I have a second question on what the Conseil du patronat said this morning. Unfortunately, I did not follow the debate this morning. I was trying to prepare for this afternoon.

I must tell you that if I replied to this question as a businessperson, I would tell you first what the objectives are, what the objectives are that we want to attain and then add the means and the institutions to that.

**Mr. Nicolet:** In any negotiation, there must be a strategic plan in order to succeed in these negotiations. It is...

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** This is what I am getting at. We must be sure of what is essential and that is not negotiable. So, the objectives which are essential objectives must no longer be negotiable.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Madam.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like first to thank and congratulate the Montréal Chamber of Commerce for its brief, which brings us a whole series of perspectives to which we find it very easy to relate.

I must say moreover that in the analysis there are very few differences, even if certain people would like to see differences. The only real difference is the option. We have clearly opted for a form of federalism, but when I reread at the bottom of page 2 of the Chamber's brief the sentence that Mr. Parizeau quoted just now, while considering the maintenance of a Canadian space preferable from an economic point of view, the Chamber notes the intrinsic viability of the Québec economy. It is a finding that we share completely and which will be found in the foreword to our brief.

This said, I note with you, on page 22 of your brief, and you mentioned it, Madam Chairman, just now, I note that you are experiencing, especially in Montréal, a number of problems and we could extend them to a good number of other regions of Québec when you say that first it is necessary to better exercise our powers. I am completely in agreement with you. This has nothing to do with the present government. It is a series of problems which have accumulated over the years with successive governments. When you say that inter-departmental coordination must be improved in Québec City in the area of vocational education, the division of regions, Montréal does not have a political structure which reflects its economic and sociological reality, etc. So, it is a finding with which, of course, we will be in

agreement.

The question that I would like to ask you, Madam Chairman, is the following. Considering that if we separated, we would immediately renegotiate a new currency anyway as part of monetary policy, this is in the program of the Parti québécois, I am in agreement in saying that we have many problems with monetary policy that you identify, problems of interest rates, value of the dollar, etc. If we managed to solve these two problems, in the present context, the problems that you identify on page 22, plus the elements of monetary policy which were suggested by the Chambre de commerce du Québec, in particular having official representatives from the regions at the Central Bank to take into account the interests of the regions, do you believe that this would already have really improved the lives of your entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurs that you represent, and that the problem would not arise in the same way?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I am trying to see what is hidden behind this question and...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Excuse me! What I mean is that when we defended Meech Lake, we all said, as businessmen, "Meech Lake or else." We have now come to the "or else" here. Do we have a map, a strike mandate, or have we really arrived there? And once again, there is the whole question of means. Are they going to give us more goodies than what we asked for last time when it was truly an absolute minimum? I do not see what sort of balance of power we have, at this time. Mr. Dufour, perhaps you are more accustomed than I am to negotiations, union or otherwise, but I do not see what we are bringing with us to put on the table, we do not have anything more to give. At this time, what we want is to develop, we want to succeed, we want to be a winning society. This is what we want to be at this time. If they give us training, if they give us immigration - I would really like to see how this will happen after Meech Lake - will we be better off? Will we want to remain within federalism? Perhaps so, we will have to see, but we will have to get there, but it is not obvious that we will find it easy.

**Mr. Dufour:** Indeed, Mr. Chairman, it is because I choose one of your two options, because you say it is no longer sufficient to want federalism - I am in agreement with that - the time has come either to arrange it, I suggest arrangement, as Pierre Péladeau did this morning, whom we have identified as being someone who had just come out clearly for independence. I read the *Journal de Montréal*,

this is not what he said: Change must take place by negotiation, step by step, issue by issue. So, you have identified a certain number of subjects which are important and which are the same as ours. But, my question, which really does not have any ulterior motive, is that the economic development of Montréal must be assured, we have always said so, that the economic development of Québec must be based on the major centres, including Montréal, you need a certain number of tools. If we partially settle - because it will never be possible to do so - the problems identified, and very well identified on page 22, and we manage to solve certain problems of monetary policy, interest rates and the value of the dollar which clearly works against our exports, would we set out the whole present political problem in the same terms?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Perhaps not. You remember last summer, an American journalist wrote that if independence were to take place in Québec under Mr. Bourassa, it would be done by press releases. It appears to me that this is a little what you are saying. It would be carried out issue by issue, and we would announce, after the issue was concluded, there, that is settled. Yes, perhaps, that will hurt less and the price to pay will perhaps be less, but what is clear, at this time, is that the status quo, as we now know it, cannot work any longer, it no longer corresponds to our needs, it no longer allows us to develop. So, how will this take place? It is your responsibility as Commission members, and I leave that to you because I myself would not know how to go about it.

**Mr. Dufour:** You are perfectly right about the status quo, I think that it has been totally rejected here. You are right, like all the business groups, to throw the comment back on the Commission. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Guy d'Anjou, and then Mrs. Campbell Steer.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to congratulate Mrs. Pageau-Goyette and the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal on your excellent brief. You say that you are not economists, but I think that your analysis of the economic situation, from the point of view of both fiscal policies and monetary policies, is very accurate. I have one question to ask you. You say in your brief that Canada does not work any more, we absolutely have to do something. I think that there is quite unanimous agreement on that. You identify overlapping jurisdictions, certain inefficiency, not only on the part of the federal government, but even within the Québec government, but especially between the two levels of government. My question would be the following: Wouldn't one

way of changing direction and avoiding these double jurisdictions, for example, of preventing the federal government from playing a role in areas of Québec jurisdiction, be to give residual powers to the provinces instead of to the federal government and to eliminate the federal government's power to spend without the consent of the province concerned?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** That is what we wrote in the brief: that residual power and the spending capacity should be given to the provinces. But, this said, Mr. d'Anjou, with all due respect, there are things about which we can wonder. Think, for example, of the environment, the environment which is a prerogative in principle, which was, I should say, under provincial jurisdiction, which is now exercised in part at the federal level. If we brought this power back to Québec, would it be better exercised? We must have political will in proportion to the powers that we wish to give ourselves.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** It remains that we cannot write political will into the constitution; it may result in changes eventually. But I think that we must always have political will. Whatever constitution we have, we must always have the political will to be closer to the citizens and to further develop all our sectors of activity. Thank you.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** You make this an objective, and that is what we have to do, in my opinion.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** This is certain, but we cannot write it into a constitution. I think that it depends...

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** The objective, perhaps...

**Mr. d'Anjou:** The objective, yes. But political will is going to depend on the action of citizens and the desire of politicians of all organizations which bring pressure on governments.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Steer.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** As I had difficulty this morning... As you might well believe, the Chamber and the Board of Trade agree, in my opinion, quite closely in their analyses of the present situation. And I repeat it here: the federalism practised today is no longer bearable. I just wanted to know if you could draw some conclusions for me here, a synthesis on page 7, the renewed institutions and new tools to pursue our march towards progress. I would just like to

have a synthesis of the renewed institutions and the tools you think we need.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** You are speaking of a "shopping list" here. I think that this is not really what we have been attempting in very specific terms to know: Do we need all of the power related to immigration? Do we need everything concerning education? Do we need all the legislative power? Do we need... we did not really dwell on this. We said to ourselves: What, as a region, do we need to develop, to succeed? What we need are the determining factors, those determining factors which create great cities: a qualified labour force, coordination, people who work together with the same purpose, the same objective. And, within the present framework, this does not always appear possible to us.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** But at this time it is rather criteria of success that you wish to state. It takes a certain training of our labour force and coordination of our people to promote the progress and success of our country.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Other things are also needed. We need coherent development policies, I mean... I do not see what the policy of dispersal throughout Canada has given us. When we try, when we say that the greater Montréal region is an axis of development, one of the axes of development, it is aeronautics, and that anything is set up just about anywhere, we lack vision. We need coordination to give strength to a region. And this is not what they have done in Canada, they have dispersed things, and we can no longer go put up with that as a region.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Yes. We agree completely.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Laberge, followed by Mr. Béland.  
(3:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Laberge:** Mr. Chairman, it is refreshing to have people living in a modern Québec present a brief to the Commission, telling us about things as they are, and not as they were or were expected to be 50 years ago, but as they really are today. It's refreshing for the people sitting opposite. The Chamber starts off with a bang. The Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal acknowledges that Canada does not work any more. This is a finding which, I think, is more or less unanimously endorsed. I think everyone has said in different ways that the status quo is not working any more. But you have gone a step further, and that is what I find refreshing. Here, I hope we will be able to actually talk about what to do with the Québec

of tomorrow, within Canada or outside of Canada. Everyone has also said that there is no question of creating ghettos all around Québec and isolating ourselves, absolutely not. You do say so. I think everyone agrees with that, except... I have lost track of my pages with all this. Once you state that you don't want a ghetto, that there must be economic links, with Canada or other countries. And you repeat that several times. But the part of the passage that I really liked... I can't find the page, but I will in a minute. It is when you say, on pages 2 and 3, here, almost at the beginning of the brief, that although, from an economic point of view, the Chamber prefers that we maintain a Canadian space, it also acknowledges the intrinsic viability of the Québec economy. This is extremely important.

Let's stop frightening old people, there is no more room for fear-mongering, let's discuss the issues as they should be discussed. The issue is, what is best for Québec? Regarding the public servants in the Outaouais region mentioned by my friend, who are all part of our family, you can be sure that we are going to integrate them. I can give you my word on that. By the way, I must tell you that, as members of the family, they voted for the position that the FTQ came to present to this Commission. If there are some who have doubts because their jobs are at stake, I think that is understandable, but even for them, the fear-mongering is over. We will make our choices, we will act and we will thrash about like devils in Holy water. I say so because soon people will come... Good. Devils in Holy water.

We have to make sure that the Québec of tomorrow will be a Québec with, of course, relations with the rest of the world, but a Québec which will be pleasant to live in, where everyone will feel at home, even those who today are coming to us with some pretty funny business. We must speak out. We have to say to those who tried to spread fear in 1980 that it doesn't work any more, let's face it squarely, let's face it sincerely. Which option is better than the other? Members of the Chamber, you certainly say to yourselves: We are very open-minded. You have been a little more forthcoming than the Conseil du Patronat in saying so. And I commend you for that. But the Conseil du Patronat has also said: We also do not rule out any option. We are willing to look at all the options. And that is great.

And I would like to congratulate you. It was worth waiting ten years to see how things have changed among employers. We should also admit that 10 years ago, we did not expect, and we didn't have, either, a clear position from the Mouvement Desjardins, as we have this time. We did not expect a clear position from the Chamber of Commerce, from several chambers of commerce, including the Chamber of Commerce

of Greater Montréal, as we have this time. Even in the case of the Conseil du Patronat, I said so this morning, it is not revolution, it is evolution. I think this is fine. Except that every businessman, every businesswoman, everyone in these circles has said that the worst that could happen is if this concern and uncertainty were to continue. This is the worst that can happen. Let's decide one way or the other, let's confront the issue squarely, we must make a decision as quickly as possible. At the moment, given the state of the negotiations, given the current Constitution, which means that before anyone can say yes, several others must be consulted, given the firm decision of our Prime Minister, who was actually speaking for us, to say, "It's over, we will no longer waste our time with this business about the 11." Let's decide, we are ready.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Béland, if you would like to reply to Mr. Laberge, you have the floor.

Mrs. Pageau-Goyette: Mr. Chairman, may I, I just have a small point.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): But you are taking up some of Mr. Laberge's time, he may not be too pleased with you. Go ahead, Madam.

Mrs. Pageau-Goyette: It is just to say, in defense of the CPQ, that it uses figures in its brief which do not go beyond 1984. Québec is tending to continue developing and therefore made some progress between 1984 and 1990, and the figures that have been quoted, for example, where the quantity of Québec manufactured products, the quantity of Québec manufactured products distributed across Canada is very large, these figures are now tending to decrease and the products are increasingly being distributed internationally, certainly, then, I would like to add that this is another example of the inefficiency of our federal government, when it is not able to produce up-to-date statistics...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Pageau-Goyette: Excuse me, but there is a problem. I want to say, still in defence of Mr. Dufour, that the last figures available are those of 1984; we have, on our own, searched a little further and have discovered that Québec has continued to develop, and I must say in defense of Mr. Dufour that if he had the figures we have, would he perhaps have come to the same conclusions?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I am very sorry, in this hall. It was agreed, at this Commission, that there would be no applause.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Sorry.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, I would like to say that I was not applauding, of course this morning, when a question was asked, of course, Mr. Raynaud admitted that his figures were from 1984. In our brief, we had 1986 figures, we unanimously agreed on that. My question, it refers to... You talk a lot about economic space, and I find that very interesting, because Québec currently has important economic links with territories with which we also have political links, but we also have economic links with territories with which we do not have political links. Some people have come here telling us or leading us to believe that if we broke our political links with certain territories, we would also be breaking the economic links. The conclusion that follows from that is that we should not, obviously, create divisions, or separation, as we stand to lose important markets. My question is, in your opinion, why is it important to establish political links in order to establish or maintain economic links? Do you think it is essential, necessary, useful, or do you think it does not make any difference?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Well, we do business with almost every country in the world, are we therefore going to establish political links with all these countries? I think - in this, please understand us, we share the view held by Mr. Dufour and the Board of Trade - that the greatest possible economic integration is desirable. This is what we also hope for, but not necessarily political integration at any cost. Mr. Proulx would like to talk about economists, you know how it is.

**Mr. Proulx:** If we bring our data up to date, we see that about a quarter of the products of the province of Québec are still distributed in the rest of country. But if we think about the factors which determine trade flow, they are many, and the political context is but one of the factors which determine our trade flows. With this in mind, what we were referring to, it is written in our brief, is that as long as Québec and the other provinces of Canada are good citizens of the Free Trade Agreement and GATT, the other determining factors would become more important, and this would ensure that after a certain period, some trade flows would have changed but would still continue,

given the real factors that determine trade flows, and it depends on the competitive ability of Québec, the needs of Ontario, and on fundamental issues. Therefore, there is no need for such rigid equivalency between the context, the political structure and the direction of trade flows. It is just one of many factors.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I will not comment on the statements made by Mr. Laberge regarding the federal public servants in our region, who, it seems, are all members of your federation. I will get the figures, and then we will see how many they are, what the percentage is. But I would simply say, Mr. Chairman, that it is reassuring to note that so many people are asking questions and are concerned about the situation of public servants in the Outaouais region. Certainly, they too are worried about their situation. And the more people who are worried about their situation the better protection they will get. And I must admit that statements of that kind are reassuring.

My question, Madam, follows the same lines as the questions of Mrs. Pauline Marois and Mr. Nicolet to a certain extent. On page 22 of your brief, you say that the Montréal region does not have a political structure which reflects its economic and sociological reality. And you also say on page 3 that you recognize that the prosperity of regions is linked to factors such as the quality of human resources, the ability to innovate, and local and regional synergy.

By all accounts, you would like to see more power centralized in the regions. There are organizations here which have come before the Commission and which have been heard, particularly the representatives of regional coordination and development organizations, who have come to tell us that they strongly favour decentralization of power towards the regions. They have even advocated regional governments with a transfer of budgets, that is, with taxation powers in the regions. I would have liked to hear your opinion concerning those comments which have already been presented to us by other representatives.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** You are referring to what is now known as "le pelletage" [shovel-ling].

**Mr. Beaudry:** Possibly.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** We shovel from the federal to the provincial, from the provincial to the municipal. We are then in that, what do the French say, in that "logic"? Well then, we are in that logic. Yes! It's a little like everything else. If we say that power has to be brought as close

as possible to the people, then we have to be consistent. And it is obvious that if the Québec government, for example, wants to pass on a bill to the municipalities, then the municipalities will say: What power comes with this bill? And what power can we better exercise?

I think it is the next step. And maybe I should not have said so, since I am stating a personal opinion. I have not sought the opinions of our members, but my instincts tell me that if we say that we want to bring power as close as possible to the people, then this should apply to all levels.

**Mr. Beaudry:** But even a kind of regional government somewhere between the provincial government and the municipal government has been advocated.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Don't you think we already have enough government?

**Mr. Beaudry:** Another level of government will have to be created. Pardon?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Don't you think we already have enough government, I don't know but...

**Mr. Beaudry:** No, no, but I am asking for your comments because these proposals have been made by other representatives. And I would like to have your comments. Do you think that another level of government would be practical or would it not instead hamper the political measures that must be taken in order to serve our regions?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Please forgive me, I will come back to an experience with which I have been closely involved for three years now, and once again this is the experience with Dorval and Mirabel airports. In this experience of coordination, we certainly did not have a level of government between the federal government and ourselves, or between the provincial government and ourselves. Together as a region we told ourselves, "We need these facilities as a lever for economic development." We sat down around a table, it took us two years to come to an agreement. Please understand that it is never easy. But after two years we said, "We are going to create a non-profit corporation which will negotiate for control of the airports." We did not need a government. Then we went to the governments and said: This is what we want to do. If you approve, would you like to help us, and how would you help us? Well, what did the Québec government, for example, do about this issue? They helped us with studies, they helped us with advice, they helped us with money. They helped us with advice that turned out to be immensely

practical. Because when you are dealing with airports, you are dealing with municipal taxation, you are dealing with legislation, you are dealing with an inheritance to be distributed. Finally, it is so complex, you can see that seven volunteers, since that is what the group was made up of, that is actually what we were, seven volunteers, to negotiate this, we could not do it all alone.

But what I want to say to you is this: Do we need so many levels of government to manage our own affairs, to define ourselves, to take our destiny in our own hands? Do we need an additional bureaucracy? Do we need all that? I do not think we do. But once again, I would like to say that this is my personal opinion, since I have not consulted with my board of directors on this issue.

(3:30 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Beaudry? Two persons have not had their turn yet and we have only four minutes left. So, Mrs. Monique Simard and, if there is still time, Mr. Lucien Bouchard. Madam?

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** ...something because it is bothering me. I did not want to put words in anyone's mouth. I really think that by saying that I saw a certain similarity between our points of view, well, maybe I put words in someone's mouth, and that was not my intention. I was taking comfort in the fact that two groups which supposedly speak for the Montréal business community share a common point of view on which they seem to agree: the inadequacy of the status quo and the possibility, quote, of perhaps restructuring the current situation. On the other hand, the Board of Trade is more categorical in its choice. I think this is fairer than what I said initially.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The consensus can begin.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bouchard? Three minutes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Madam, on page 12 of your brief, you outline the guiding principles for organizing cooperation between what will remain of the federal government and the Québec government, assuming that we want to maintain cooperation, since we might also assume that we do not want cooperation. But assuming that we want cooperation, you state that the powers that would be left to the federal level must be delegated by Québec. They are not powers to be exercised exclusively by the federal government nor would they belong to the federal government; they would come from Québec, which would delegate the powers time by time, case by case, and which could reclaim them case

by case if it wished. That's it. Therefore, it would not be necessary to have a government in Ottawa. It could be a political authority to manage the powers left there. You leave the options open on that. You have not taken a firm position on that.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** It's an option...

**Mr. Bouchard:** What is important is that the Québec government should have all the powers and, when it thinks it necessary, from time to time, it could then delegate some to Ottawa.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Let me specify: All the powers necessary for its affirmation and its development.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Then which ones will remain in Ottawa?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Defence, do we really need it? The Post Office, these are major services, do we need them in order to develop? Well, maybe yes, maybe no, it is up to you to make your own judgment. What we are saying to you is that as a business community, we need a qualified labour force, we need the things that will make Montréal a great city, a great region, and that is as far as our suggestions go. As for the rest, you certainly have a better understanding of the issues than we do.

**Mr. Bouchard:** And to conclude, Mr. Chairman, even Defence and the Post Office would be left to Ottawa, but under delegation by the Québec government, the State of Québec.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** Yes, on which we will obviously, in my opinion, at last have something to say. Also, we should not allow the spending power to get to the point where it is right now.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** This 40-minute period is now over, and I would like to thank the members and participants in this 40-minute period. We have been able to hear everyone who registered. I will now return to Mr. Rémillard, who has a minute and a half.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Pageau-Goyette, Mr. Lacharité, Mr. Proulx, thank you for answering our questions with so much sincerity and conviction. Your diagnosis is very clear in your brief: Canada does not work any more. The handwriting is on the wall. You also tell us that you were deeply hurt by the failure of Meech Lake. You supported Meech Lake, you believed in Meech Lake just as I did. Now that Meech Lake is dead, you are deeply

disappointed. You are proposing substantial changes. Mrs. Pageau-Goyette, you refer by analogy to the area of negotiations between employers and unions. We know that when things are getting a little tough in negotiations between employers and unions, we resort to mediation or conciliation at the beginning as a first step, and when mediation and conciliation do not work, then union leaders look for a strike mandate and stuff it into their back pocket. They then negotiate with their boss and say, "You see, we have a strike mandate from our workers. If our negotiations do not work, we are going on strike." If this step does not work, there is a third step, which is a strike. We close the shop and we go to the boss, and say: "Let's negotiate." But during that time, everything is on hold, nothing is working as long as common ground has not been found. In your opinion, Mrs. Pageau-Goyette, given these three steps, where do we currently stand?

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I would really like to be in a position to answer your question. It is not easy. You participated in Meech Lake. What did you have in your pocket?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I am not being mean when I say this, but we businesspeople said "Meech Lake or else", that is what we said, and before I came here, I read over the statements of the entire group again, what does the "or else" mean? Does it mean that you had a strike mandate in your pocket? Does it mean that you have to come and get it now? I think it is up to you to judge this better... I'm sure you will do a better job than I will. You implemented this last approach so well.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right, our time is up.

**Mr. Rémillard:** I am taking...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Rémillard:** I am taking careful note of your answer, Mrs. Pageau-Goyette.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Parizeau, a quick comment.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Nothing to add, Mr. Chairman, except to thank Mrs. Pageau-Goyette for the enlightening views she has offered us this afternoon. I think the conversation we just had, if I can say so, has thrown more light on some of the issues in the brief. Thank you, Madam.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Lacharité, Mr. Proulx, Mrs. Pageau-Goyette, thank you all for your helpful comments. You have ten seconds.

**Mrs. Pageau-Goyette:** I wish you all the best of luck, and you may be assured that we are behind you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Madam. We like you very much, but would you be kind enough to leave the floor to the next participant.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:37 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:43 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Order, please!

Now the Québec Association of Protestant School Boards. This session will last one hour. I will allocate the speaking time.

You have 10 minutes to present the brief; 10 minutes are reserved for the Government parliamentary group; 10 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group; 25 minutes for other members registered with the Chairman and, finally, 5 minutes for the Chair.

Mr. John Simms, Association President, will you please introduce your colleagues.

#### **Québec Association of Protestant School Boards (QAPSB)**

**Mr. Simms (John):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left is David Wadsworth, executive director of the QAPSB; on my right, Me Collin Irving, the QAPSB's legal counsel; Peter Riordan, first vice-president of the QAPSB; and Dr. George Cochrane, secretary general.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Welcome to all of you. Mr. Simms, you have 10 minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Simms:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Québec Association of Protestant School Boards, I would like to thank the Commission for allowing us to present our point of view on the political and constitutional future of Québec. I would like to introduce the people... Wadsworth, Colin Irving, Peter Riordan, George Cochrane.

I don't think it is necessary to read our brief to you, since copies were furnished to you and to representatives of the media. During the time we are allotted, I would instead like to emphasize the most important points in the four parts of our brief. Afterwards, we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

As we have indicated, the Québec

Association of Protestant School Boards represents the 29 Protestant school boards in Québec and the 84 556 students enrolled in their schools. The QAPSB has been in existence for 61 years, but Protestant schools have existed for some 150 years and we are very proud of that. What is Protestant education? In our brief, we have tried to explain that in its philosophy, Protestant education goes back to the first English-speaking inhabitants of this province. These people brought their philosophy with them in the form of the community's commitment to education and to non-denominational schools. This philosophy is very basic, and differs considerably from the philosophy of the Catholic schools in Québec and from the separate schools in several other provinces of Canada. Our schools encompass a pluralistic philosophy that is concerned with individual effort, based on beliefs about the nature of Man and his duty that spring from the Protestant Reformation, from the Old and New Testament, and from Greek philosophy. Our educational system is multi-denominational. It encourages the right of every person to his own beliefs. It encourages brotherhood and the respect of traditional religious beliefs. These values, which have existed in Québec for over 200 years, are even more important in today's pluralistic society. They are notions of human dignity, brotherhood, individual responsibility, and diversity in the quest for meaning.

It has been asserted that we represent only Anglophones; this is false. Let's examine the current statistics. Among the 84 556 students enrolled in our schools, 22 621, or over 25 %, attend schools in which the language of education is French. Not all the students are Protestants. There are 38 330 Protestant students and 39 323 students of other faiths. The latter are students whose parents do not identify with any religion or whose religion is other than Protestant or Catholic. There are 6 903 Catholic children, the majority of whom come from regions outside the Montreal area, receiving an English-language education under agreements with their local Catholic school board. Given the fact that the varied clientele of these schools is not Protestant, it [this assertion] shows ignorance of the philosophy and the pluralistic nature of these schools.

What do we want for the future of Québec? The philosophy underlying Protestant education maintains that the individual is more important than the society. This is why we suggest, we even insist, that this idea be written into the Constitution, into the Declaration of Rights, into the Charter, and any other document. Without this guarantee, there is a danger that the rights of minority groups could be eroded. Our school boards, elected by a community that strongly believes in individual rights, are institutions that must have full rights to govern and control the

subjects taught and the teaching methods used. We do not support a system that encourages uniformity. Diversity is necessary for Québec to develop fully... The diverse cultures of the men and women of Québec must be integrated, or else Québec will lose the characteristics that make it distinctive. Our community believes in locally elected school boards that have the obligations and powers required to meet the needs of that community. Such a tradition must be recognized in Québec, no matter how Québec evolves.

To close, ladies and gentlemen, we ask you to recommend that Québec provide a constitutional guarantee for the existence, protection, and survival of the individual and collective rights to education of cultural or linguistic minorities, a guarantee that is not subject to veto under a notwithstanding clause. The law should guarantee every citizen individual rights. This belief represents the foundation of our system of education. We strongly insist on assurances that such rights be intrinsic to any constitutional reform. The effect of such a guarantee would be to promote and enrich existing minorities, and this would surely add a basic element to the structure of Québec. The future of Québec is very important to us, but we want a Québec that would respect the educational rights of its Protestant minority, a minority that has greatly contributed to the history of this province and aspires to play an important role in the years to come. Thank you for your attention. All my colleagues are available to take part in the questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Simms. The questions will be addressed to you, and you can redirect them. We will start with Mr. Chevette.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to ask some technical questions to place your description in the context of Québec. You tell us that at the school board level, in the 29 school boards, there are about 84 000 students. I would like to know the exact number for Montréal, the PSBGM, and how many for the 28 others, first of all.

**Mr. Wadsworth (David):** All right. There are 33 000 students in the Protestant School Board of Greater Montréal; there are about 12 000 in the Lakeshore School Board, 10 000 on the South Shore, and 8 000 more in the LaSalle School Board, which is on and north of Île Laval. The rest are small school boards outside the Montréal region, where there are school boards of 3 000, 4 000, or something like that.

**Mr. Chevette:** So we can conclude that about two thirds of them are in the Greater Montréal area?

**Mr. Wadsworth:** Yes, about two thirds, 50 000 in Montréal.

**Mr. Chevette:** O.K. Now, in your brief, you talk about the dangers that, for all practical purposes, the application of Bill 107 would involve. I don't know whether this is exactly what you say, but what I understood was this. At the point that the Québec government is getting ready to obtain a judgment in the near future concerning the establishment of linguistic school boards, you conclude from this that it will have the effect of creating an educational system that is closed in on itself, while the whole spirit of Bill 107 was really to set up a pluralistic school system. How can you support your thesis that applying the law, as it is designed, would have the effect of bringing about a centralized, monolithic system instead of a pluralistic one?

**Mr. Wadsworth:** May I begin the answer, and then perhaps Mr. Irving, our legal counsel, can answer. For me, the problem is that if you have a linguistic system, that's fine, but at the same time that you have it, the law says that you can have Catholic and Protestant schools. Say there there is one school in a region, where half the students are Protestant and half or maybe more than half, say 51 %, are Catholics, and they decide to make it into a Catholic school. The system of education in Catholic schools is different from the system in Protestant schools. Now I think that problems are going to exist in such schools. There is a different style of education, a different philosophy of education, between Catholics and Protestants. That's clear. It is why there are separate schools in other provinces. But on our side, we are always ready to accept Catholics and we are teaching Catholics in our system now. But to say that a Protestant school is going to become a Catholic school because the parents in the neighbourhood have decided that they are going to do it, what are the Protestants going to do? Are they going to stay? Or will they have to move because they can't just stay in the town because there is only one school? For me, this is a problem, and perhaps Mr. Irving can answer.

**Mr. Irving (Colin):** The question, as asked, brings up fairly broad considerations. You ask, why contest Bill 107? It must not be forgotten that the system, the Protestant system that is there, first of all it has been there for nearly 150 years. The system that exists today was built by the community, using local revenues, through local taxes. There is a tradition, dating back to the 19th century, of local control over schools. It is very important to us to keep this system. And the whole thing was built, was created under the protection of certain constitutional

guarantees. Guarantees which, it must be said in 1990, are based on considerations that no longer apply today. If we were to redo the Constitution — you are perhaps in the process of doing so — we would not establish it on the basis of Catholics and Protestants, but nonetheless those guarantees are there. They were there, it was under the aegis of these guarantees that the Protestant community (which is not exclusively Protestant) created this system. Any community in the same situation would do the same thing. We don't want to destroy this system that has worked so well for so long. If it were a question of another modern system, but with equivalent constitutional guarantees, perhaps the response would have been entirely different. Moreover, on the pedagogical level, we are opposed to too strict government control. That has nothing to do with the type of government in Québec. It is not the government of Québec, it is the idea of a system of education that is 100 % controlled by the government.

**Mr. Chevrete:** Mr. Chairman, my question was the following, it is that you state on page 8 of your brief that what is coming is a monolithic system, while the entire discussion in fact took place in accordance with a respect for the different confessions, if I may use the term, that was specifically intended to allow pluralism. Taking into account that it is particularly on the Island of Montréal that certain aberrations are being experienced in some classes, I am going to let my colleague on the left, Mrs. Harel, continue the questioning.

**Mrs. Harel:** Yes, we notice that at present, the majority of students attending classes in the schools governed by the Protestant School Board are not of the Protestant denomination. There are 46 256 students who are not Protestant, or between 52 % and 54 %. If we were looking at a curve, we would see that the progression is startling. Clearly the question we can ask ourselves is, how is it that our neighbours to the south have bussing of students to facilitate, promote, and encourage racial integration and we do the same thing to discourage or in a sense lessen ethnic integration? And clearly the other paradox is, how is it that if you think that you are contesting linguistic school boards for different reasons, the CECM is also contesting them? You tell us that it is for a good reason, pluralism, and the CECM tells us that it is for a good reason, the Catholic faith. But the result is the same; in both cases, you are opposed to change.  
(4 p.m.)

And the last question I would ask you, because we have experienced it in Montréal, how can you imagine, on the eve of the year 2000, in a multi-ethnic society where the school should

be the crucible of integration and mutual respect, how can you imagine that we are still going to be putting together electoral lists by asking people, before giving them the right to vote, on what denomination they base their solemn oath, in order to be able to grant them the right to vote? Do you find that in a modern, multi-ethnic, pluralistic, cosmopolitan, progressive society this is any way to go on living together?

**Mr. Wadsworth:** But Madam, there is a problem. The Protestant school boards and the Protestant schools have always accepted everyone, no matter whom, in their schools. But it is the system established for voting that says, Catholic or Protestant, where do you want to vote? But our schools were always open to all religions. Catholics went to Catholic schools. As the record shows, we have Catholic students in our schools, but it is outside of Montréal, where the Catholic school boards have no English school system for the children. That is why we have Catholic students in our schools. If you look at the figures for Montréal, there are only 600 Catholic children in the schools, but these are children who had problems requiring special education and problems where they are sent to schools that are almost private schools, for children in difficulty. But our system was always open. It is because the rules of the game say that you must state your religion in order to vote, but our schools have always accepted anyone, no matter whom, and have always been open.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, sir. We will go on to Mrs. Lorraine Pagé now.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Good afternoon, gentlemen. Thank you for coming before the Commission and sharing your views with us. I have a few observations to make, and of course some questions. The first thing I would observe is, I wouldn't exactly call it failure to comprehend, because I know why you are doing it, but let's just call it failure to comprehend anyway. When I read your brief, the position you are defending, the feeling it gave me is that you are claiming the right to remain something, a confessional school board, in order to become something else, a school board that is not mainly Protestant in the students it serves, and which is, you even state it in your brief, non-confessional.

You understand that I personally find it peculiar to ask to remain something that in fact you no longer are. And you even say this.

My second observation is that I find there are some very strange assertions in your brief. The first is on page 13, where you bring three facts to our attention. Québec. You say that the first fact is that it is Francophone. Well, we all agree about that! The second fact, the fact that

the cultural and linguistic minorities within its territory will not be taken into consideration. There I find it peculiar to speak of a fact and then put it in the future, and I do not understand why you decide in such a peremptory way that in Québec cultural and linguistic minorities will not be taken into consideration. I totally fail to understand where you got that idea. The third fact, in the same sentence, the fact that individual rights will be abolished. Will you please tell me where you got the notion that individual rights will be abolished in Québec?

Moreover, the Québec Charter, in my opinion, provides mechanisms for guaranteeing certain individual rights that are better than those we have with the Canadian Charter. Then, you place on the same footing an indisputable fact, that Québec is Francophone, with two opinions which, if you want to know what I think, are based on absolutely no rational analysis of contemporary Québec or observed reality.

Another of your bizarre assertions is found on page 14, where you tell us that in Québec there is opposition to a plan for Québec in which the rights and ideas of individuals are considered dangerous. Please excuse me, but there you've lost me; I didn't understand, over the course of these past days and weeks and given the general nature of our debates here, that we were the sort of people who judge that the ideas of individuals are dangerous. These assertions in your brief seem very odd to me.

Now I have two questions to ask you. Page 15.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You are allowed five minutes.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Yes, I have two questions. They're short.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Page 15, first question. Bill 107 proposes a system of school boards based on language, which will be that in name only. I tell you right away, I don't agree with all the provisions of Bill 107, but I don't understand why you say that Bill 107 is going to create linguistic school boards that are so in name only. I don't understand what you mean by that. They are going to be French, and they are going to be English, and it won't be in name only. There are places where they will be in French and others where they will be in English. I don't understand.

My last question is the following. The confessional structures appeared in Québec and Canada at a time when the separation between Church and State was not what it has become over the course of the years. But when you say that it is necessary to maintain the confessional

structures, it seems to me that at that point, in the criterion, in the development of a contemporary Québec that is multi-cultural and therefore multi-denominational, you're sending a message about a hierarchy of religions. It is as if you were saying that there are two good religions, Catholicism and Protestantism, and no others.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Pagé. Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** I'd like to hear what you have to say on the subject. I'm finished.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, I think that you have taken up every bit of your five minutes. Listen, if the Chair gives you some time, can you provide an answer?

**Mr. Wadsworth:** An answer. May I answer?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes, go ahead.

**Mr. Wadsworth:** On the question of... We have looked at Bill 107. We have seen what powers are granted to school boards and what powers are given to the Ministère, and we find that, in reality, the power remains in the hands of the Ministère de l'Éducation and not the school boards. That is why we say that the rights protected in confessional school boards in 1867 – and those are the protections that are there now – are real powers. It is also true that the Courts have not been in agreement with it. It hasn't gotten to the Supreme Court, but it is clear. That's the first... The second... Colin, do you want to answer the second because I don't remember the question.

**Mr. Irving (Colin):** Yes, well it is in that sense that we say that they are school boards in name only. They are called school boards but they simply haven't got the powers of a real school board. All the power is in the hands of the Minister of Education. As for the second, Madam...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Sir, could you please speak into the microphone. We're having trouble hearing you.

**Mr. Irving:** Oh. I'm sorry.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Just move a little closer to it.

**Mr. Irving:** Is it working? Yes. We are very far from suggesting that there are only two good religions and it would be tedious and take hours rather than minutes to explain the history of the system. You know very well that in 1867, the

population was pretty much divided between Protestants and Catholics, so those two divisions were chosen. But on the Protestant side, which was effectively the English-speaking side, when they were talking about Protestants they were talking about Anglophones. We by no means wish to suggest that there are only two religions. Moreover, that has never been the philosophy of the Protestant school system, which has always been, as Dr. Simms was saying earlier, open to everyone. Moreover, it must not be forgotten either, when we talk about the present system, that from the start, and by law, Montréal schools were common schools, even if they were called Catholic and Protestant. They were common schools open to everyone and that is still the case, but as I just said, if we had the whole thing to do over again, it is obvious that we would not choose Catholic and Protestant as the two divisions, and if constitutional guarantees for minority education were proposed to us, such as are found to some extent in the Canadian Charter, the response might be very different. And if some measure of control over schools is left under local control – the lady who preceded me here spoke of the importance of keeping power as close as possible to the people, and that was well received – well, we were saying the same thing. We don't want a government in Québec City – and they would say the same thing in Ontario, they wouldn't want a government in Toronto – in a position to make all the decisions about schools in distant regions. That's all. It is not a matter of wanting to promote one religion more than another. It has never been like that.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Mrs. Campbell Steer?

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** I want to say that I have attended a Protestant school; et les résultats n'ont pas été meilleurs, à mon avis. En fait, ce que je voudrais vous demander, c'est quel genre... Supposons que nous nous trouvions devant une situation dans laquelle Québec est un État souverain ou se situe dans un nouveau système fédéral où les pouvoirs dans le domaine de l'éducation sont tous aux mains de la province, et qu'il n'y ait aucune intervention en matière de formation de la main-d'oeuvre ou de formation quelconque de la part du fédéral. Comment alors, selon vous, devraient être formulées les garanties constitutionnelles? Qu'estimeriez-vous acceptable ou nécessaire?

**Mr. Simms:** À l'heure actuelle, bien sûr, la province a les pouvoirs en matière d'éducation, elle a fondamentalement tous les pouvoirs...

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Mais il semble y avoir au moins quelque confusion entre...  
(4:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Simms:** ...mais il y a eu une entente à la Confédération. Madame le juge Wilson, dans la cause des écoles séparées de l'Ontario en 1987, a déclaré que c'est cette entente qui a rendu possible la Confédération, la protection des Catholiques en Ontario et de la minorité protestante au Québec. Ce que nous proposons, c'est qu'il y ait des garanties constitutionnelles; en autant que le Québec demeure à l'intérieur d'un système fédéral, elles devraient demeurer où elles sont. Si le Québec devenait souverain, etc., différent, il est fort possible que la nouvelle constitution enchâsserait ces garanties qui ne pourraient pas être outrepassées par le prochain gouvernement appelé au pouvoir. Elles seraient des garanties comme telles, et elles seraient inscrites dans la Charte, sans clause dérogatoire ou autre. Ce serait une garantie et nous nous attendrions à ce qu'ils donnent des garanties aux minorités telles que nous. C'est ce que nous prévoyions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. d'Anjou, followed by Mr. Holden.

**Mr. Simms:** Excuse us for a minute. Mr. Irving.

**Mr. Irving:** Je pourrais seulement ajouter que, si vous voulez vraiment voir ce que devraient être les garanties, la Cour Suprême du Canada a récemment considéré les droits des minorités francophones dans les autres provinces et a rédigé un certain nombre de jugements à ce sujet. Ce que la Cour a proposé, c'est qu'il doit y avoir un système scolaire... En effet, elle a proposé qu'il devait y avoir, en vertu de la loi, un système scolaire qui fasse partie intégrante de la structure de la collectivité minoritaire; cette collectivité devrait avoir un important droit de regard sur le fonctionnement des écoles, particulièrement en ce qui a trait au programme d'études. Ce contrôle est maintenant garanti par la Constitution aux minorités francophones partout ailleurs au Canada; ce serait là une base convenable pour tout genre de garanties constitutionnelles qu'on recherche ici.

**A voice:** Merci.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. d'Anjou.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I would first like to congratulate you, Dr. Simms, for the way you presented your position, in a French that I would call excellent. Year after year, whenever I meet you, I observe that you are making progress, and it is doubtless because you have realized that you have to make an effort. I want to thank you and compliment you on it. I think that you deserve it.

I am very aware of the problems raised by

a reform with the scope of the one that Bill 107 is creating in the school system. It is creating problems for us too. You mustn't forget that we represent the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec, and so we also represent English-speaking Catholics. They are worried too. We espouse the point of view that you have expressed in regard to the necessity for constitutional guarantees, whatever that Constitution may be, for public education systems governed by the citizens, by the representatives of the users of the system. You have already partly answered my question in regard to the extent of constitutional protection for linguistic school boards by saying... In sum, what you said was the necessity for a local school government that would be Anglophone in one case, Francophone in another; do you see another constitutional guarantee for religious rights, for example?

**Mr. Riordon (Peter):** Mr. Chairman, we are convinced that education in particular, among the activities which have a place in our society, education is something very close to the interests of the family, parents, children. It is not something that should be removed from local control. Parents feel it is a very, very important thing to have some way of making their influence felt. That is why we take the position that it is essential for genuine local control and governance to be set up either under the federal Constitution or another Constitution, and that for this local control and governance to be protected against changes in government and politicians from one period of time to another, and for communities to know that local control of education is always available to them. It is too important for everyone.

There can be minimum standards that apply across the province, even across Canada, even across North America, if you like, but they are minimum standards. Variations in education must be available according to local needs. The constitutional protection that I think I am asking you for should provide protection for a system that protects the needs of minorities, whether confessional as it is today... or we could see, or foresee, a linguistic system in the future. But I repeat: constitutional protection must guarantee local control and governance so that the education given to students reflects the needs of their community, and it should be accessible to the parents of these students in their community, not through some far-off bureaucracy.

I think that we would be ready to accept constitutional guarantees, as we were just discussing, on a linguistic basis, but they must be solid guarantees that protect not only the majority but also minorities.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank

you.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you very much for your openness. I can tell you that we agree with your positions and are happy to cooperate with you. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Richard Holden.

**Mr. Holden:** Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue aux représentants de la Commission des écoles protestantes et je demande à céder ma période de temps à M. Libman, qui a quelques questions à leur poser.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have just said something that is completely in agreement with something which Mr. d'Anjou said last week, and which I think is very important.

La semaine dernière, M. d'Anjou reconnaissait également qu'il est très important que l'éducation soit décentralisée pour permettre une grande part de contrôle au niveau local et je crois qu'il est très important de maintenir une bonne qualité d'enseignement.

Ma question porte sur un point mentionné à la page 8 de votre mémoire, dont je vous donne lecture. Le mémoire dit: "During a 15-year period, from 1974 to 1989, the population of our schools dropped from around 125 000 to 84 556. During the same period, the population of our English schools dropped from around 122 000 to 61 935."

Or, à l'heure actuelle, les articles 72 et 73 de la Charte de la langue française stipulent que l'accès aux écoles anglaises est ouvert aux personnes dont les parents ont reçu leur enseignement en anglais au Canada. L'article 23.1.a de la Charte stipule que si votre langue maternelle est l'anglais, vous avez le droit de fréquenter une école anglaise.

Or, en vertu de l'article 59 de notre Constitution, l'Assemblée nationale du Québec pourrait choisir d'appliquer l'article 23.1.a; ce qui signifie que les enfants immigrant au Québec, venant d'Angleterre ou des États-Unis et dont la langue maternelle est l'anglais, mais dont les parents n'ont pas fréquenté l'école en anglais au Canada, seraient autorisés, en vertu de l'article 23.1.a, à fréquenter l'école anglaise. Je souligne ce fait à la lumière des statistiques à la baisse et, à l'école anglaise, parce que, actuellement au Québec, il y a environ 9 500 enfants qui tombent dans la catégorie visée par l'article 23.1.a. Il s'agit d'immigrants originaires des États-Unis, d'Angleterre ou d'ailleurs, qui doivent fréquenter l'école française parce que leurs parents n'ont pas reçu

leur enseignement en anglais au Canada.

Or, ces 9 500 étudiants représentent peut-être 1 % du secteur francophone mais, à la lumière des statistiques à la baisse, ils représentent une proportion de 10 à 15 % du secteur anglais, dont nous avons grand besoin. Nous devons formuler des recommandations à l'Assemblée nationale; votre groupement serait-il prêt à adresser une ferme recommandation à l'Assemblée nationale, l'incitant à envisager, en vertu de l'article 59 de notre Constitution, l'application de l'article 23.1.a afin de permettre, au moins, à ces 9 500 étudiants, dont la langue maternelle est l'anglais, d'avoir au moins accès aux écoles anglaises au Québec, étudiants qui représentent, je le répète, seulement 1 % du secteur français?

Mr. Wadsworth: Nul doute que, en ce qui concerne notre association — et nous l'avons d'ailleurs mentionné dans d'autres mémoires que nous avons présentés à l'Assemblée nationale —, nous recommanderions très fortement que cet article soit appliqué à la province de Québec. Compte tenu de notre nombre et de ce qu'il représente, il n'y a pas grand danger pour un groupe qui réunit 61 000 anglophones. Ils forment un système scolaire, mais ils ne forment pas le système scolaire de la majorité et ne peuvent donc causer de problème — ce point est d'ailleurs mentionné dans notre mémoire. Les commissions scolaires protestantes ont été celles qui ont lancé les cours d'immersion au cours des années 60 dans cette province, et nous avons fait instruire nos enfants pour qu'ils parlent tous le français beaucoup mieux que nous. Et c'est vraiment incroyable. Écoutez nos enfants aujourd'hui, ils ne nous ressemblent pas, nous, avec notre accent anglais, quand nous parlons français. Alors, je recommanderais très fortement que l'Assemblée examine la possibilité d'appliquer cet article aux anglophones originaires d'autres parties du monde que le Québec.

Mr. Libman: Just to conclude, je crois qu'il est important de souligner que, chaque fois qu'on parle de la possibilité de modifier la Charte de la langue française, cela devient une question très délicate; mais je pense que, si on souligne le fait que ce groupe ne représente que 1 % du secteur français, mais une proportion, bien nécessaire, de 10 à 15 % du secteur anglais, c'est peut-être un point qui sera ou qui pourra être considéré comme une nette possibilité et, espérons-le, l'Assemblée nationale accueillera peut-être cette recommandation.

A voice: M. Irving.

Mr. Irving: Pourrais-je seulement ajouter quelques mots à ce que M. Wadsworth vient de dire, M. Libman? Nous avons eu, dans diverses causes devant les tribunaux, des indications de

ce qui arrivera au système scolaire de langue anglaise au cours des années à venir; il a déjà chuté considérablement et on prévoit qu'il continuera de baisser encore de façon appréciable. Il me semble que, pour la Commission qui examine l'avenir du Québec et l'avenir constitutionnel, il ne pourrait guère y avoir message plus clair à l'intention de la collectivité anglaise: si on est réellement d'avis que la collectivité anglaise est la bienvenue ici, l'acceptation de cette disposition particulière, qui permettrait à la collectivité de se renouveler de l'extérieur, serait de la plus haute importance et le message qui sera alors livré ne fera aucun doute. En fait, si je peux me permettre d'ajouter encore ces quelques mots, le Québec sera tout simplement dans la même position que toutes les autres provinces, parce que cet article s'applique déjà dans toutes les autres provinces.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. I give the floor to Mr. Roger Nicolet, who will be followed by Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like, if you will allow me, to read part of the text in its original version, because I believe that the original version reflects more precisely the ideas of those who wrote it. Et je lis au bas de la page 14 le passage suivant: "Ou parce qu'on avait l'impression, justifiable ou non, que ce petit groupe de personnes, soit les commissions scolaires protestantes du Québec et les personnes qui les appuient, s'opposaient fortement aux projets pour un Québec où les droits et les idées des individus sont jugés dangereux." And my question is, I would like to know whether you share this perception, on one hand, and if so, what can we in Québec do as a collectivity to dissipate that sort of apprehension? (4:30 p.m.)

A voice: Non, non, allez-y.

Mr. Irving: All right, first, Mr. Nicolet, it is not a statement of fact. It is a question that is to be — moreover, it is the same in the translation — no, it is not the point of view of the QAPSB that "la pensée individuelle est jugée dangereuse au Québec", obviously not. We are here to give you our own ideas. People are wondering about the real motives behind Bill 107, but in respect to what has already been discussed. This law is seen as demonstrating a very marked tendency to keep all power in the hands of the government. But it is not a question of fear that all individual thought would be considered dangerous, but rather that from the standpoint of the government, a school system in which the local group has something really important to say about the system is considered dangerous, not in the... That's it, there is nothing more...

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's all, Mr. Nicolet?

Mr. Nicolet: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Laberge.

A voice: Excuse me...

Mr. Simms: À la page 15, M. Nicolet, le texte enchaîne avec la même idée et dit: "Ce que le projet de loi n° 107 propose, c'est un système de commissions scolaires basé sur la langue et où le nom de commission scolaire serait purement symbolique." Je crois que l'un des points majeurs que nous tentions de faire valoir visait les gouvernants des commissions scolaires - le même thème qu'évoquait M. d'Anjou lorsqu'il parlait de l'importance d'avoir des commissions scolaires élues au niveau local. Des commissions scolaires élues au suffrage universel, qui représentent la collectivité locale, et non un système d'éducation centralisé par l'État. Nous n'acceptons pas l'idée que des individus anonymes établissent le programme d'études de nos étudiants et que les pouvoirs se retrouvent en totalité aux mains du ministère. Tout a toujours été une question d'équilibre et de contrepoids, de sorte que le ministère a sa place. Mais les personnes qui forment la collectivité ont certainement leur mot à dire et leur place également dans l'établissement du programme scolaire de nos enfants.

Mr. Nicolet: If you will permit me, Mr. Chairman, very quickly... Mr. Simms, there are within Québec society a multitude of other forces that, like you, are uneasy about the centralization of power. And I think that there are a certain number of points of agreement, of perceptions, as to the danger of centralized control by a Québec bureaucracy. But - and it is why I picked out that passage - people have the impression that it has become part of the dispute that separates the Anglophone community from the rest of Québec society, and it is that perception that must be dissipated, I think. There is, of course, a certain dynamic but it is intrinsic to the way every government works, and in Québec society, there is a whole series of other factors that in their concerns support some of the elements that you are dealing with here. And unfortunately, sometimes, the way you formulate the viewpoints you advance may cause confusion, and it seems important to me to clarify that viewpoint.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Nicolet. Mr. Laberge, I'm sorry, but the time is up. We will go on to Mr. Russell Williams

now.

Mr. Williams: Yes, thank you. On behalf of my political party, I would like to thank you...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Williams, will you please move closer to the microphone?

Mr. Williams: Ah! Sorry. I would like to thank you for submitting a brief to this Commission. I would like to congratulate all the boards, associations, federations of school boards for these submissions, because I think all these groups have demonstrated their commitment to Québec education, and with pride, and I know that is a very important thing. I know that with the new Bill 107, school board elections now take place the third Sunday in November for all elected representatives. I want to wish all the candidates good luck. But I particularly want to emphasize the importance of the work of thousands of individuals in the Québec school system. It is work that is extremely important for the future of our society, because the education of our children is crucial. Finally, before I ask a question, I would like to congratulate you as an association and a board for your leadership in French immersion courses, because I think you really did show leadership. Et j'estime que votre mémoire présentait admirablement bien certaines des complexités que vous vivez. L'une d'elles, c'est que vous êtes protestants, mais que vous ne l'êtes pas complètement. Deuxièmement, vous êtes ouverts aux étudiants anglais, mais pas complètement; et troisièmement, vous êtes très fiers de vos programmes anglais, mais vous êtes également fiers de vos programmes français. Ce n'est pas une question facile, et les solutions ne sont pas simples.

Your association is asking for the inclusion of a clause in the Constitution guaranteeing the rights of cultural and linguistic minorities in immigration matters. If I understand correctly. Does that mean that every cultural and linguistic minority would have its own system of education?

Mr. Wadsworth: No. Agir de la sorte, ce serait enlever... Ce que cette mesure apporterait, ce serait la fragmentation de vos minorités. Il importerait peu aux protestants si le système devenait éventuellement totalement français, pourvu qu'il y ait un droit d'accès à un système d'enseignement différent de celui de la majorité. Si la majorité veut un certain type d'enseignement et que nous estimons fermement que ce système d'enseignement doit être adopté parce qu'il enseigne à l'enfant quelque chose de différent, alors nous insisterions pour le conserver. Mais en même temps - et que ceci

soit bien clair - je ne suis pas ici pour affirmer que les commissions scolaires protestantes sont prêtes à dire que tout le système devrait être français. C'est faux.

**Mr. Williams:** Permettez-moi d'apporter une précision. Vous dites qu'il doit y avoir un système protestant. Qu'est-ce qui empêche les autres religions de dire à leur tour: Nous voulons une commission distincte dans ce domaine?

**Mr. Wadsworth:** Pourriez-vous répéter?

**Mr. Williams:** Toute autre confession religieuse ne pourrait-elle pas se définir en fonction d'une prolifération de commissions scolaires?

**Mr. Riordon:** L'un des points sur lesquels nous devrions être très clairs, c'est que le système d'enseignement protestant, bien que défini et protégé comme tel par la Constitution, n'est pas un système qui enseigne des croyances religieuses particulières. Ce n'est pas un système scolaire religieux. C'est un système scolaire laïque. Nous avons, dans le système protestant, toujours accueilli les gens de toutes les croyances et nous les avons accommodés le mieux possible pour qu'ils puissent pratiquer, apprendre leur religion, s'ils sont assez nombreux dans notre système pour le justifier. Nous ne recherchons pas un système religieux. Nous existons par définition constitutionnelle. Nous fonctionnons en pratique comme un système laïque. Nous ne voulons pas nous voir imposer toute autre croyance religieuse, pas plus que nous voulons imposer à nos élèves quelque croyance religieuse que ce soit. Nous avons un système de valeurs auquel nous tenons fermement. Il est décrit dans le mémoire.

**Mr. Williams:** Merci. For the future, thinking in the long term, do you believe that linguistic rights are more important to protect than confessional rights? If you had a choice between the two, if we are speaking of the future of Québec, which seems the more solid for the future of your community?

**Mr. Riordon:** We are not against linguistic guarantees, but the guarantees we are seeking are constitutional guarantees.

**Mr. Williams:** But if you have a choice between the two, which are more important, linguistic or confessional?

**Mr. Riordon:** I think that if we want to make a real choice today - and we haven't conducted a survey among our constituents - I believe that for the future, perhaps we should

say linguistic. But that takes guarantees, not laws.

**Mr. Simms:** Twenty-one years ago, at the time of the Victoria Conference, the QAPSB offered to accept a linguistic guarantee. Il y a 21 ans, c'est ce que nous avons offert, et nous nous en tenons à cela.

**Mr. Williams:** Très bien, merci. J'aurais une dernière question. Vous avez parlé du besoin de contrôle et d'autonomie au niveau local. Vous avez aussi parlé des différentes valeurs pour lesquelles vous luttiez. Si nous transférons complètement les pouvoirs à la commission scolaire de la façon dont vous le dites, quelles garanties aurions-nous en tant que province que nous pourrions maintenir la qualité élevée d'enseignement que nous offrons aujourd'hui?

**Mr. Simms:** Il y a une place pour le ministère de l'Éducation. Lorsque le ministère de l'Éducation a été créé, au moment de la Commission Parent, en 1964, nous l'avons bien accueilli et nous avons collaboré avec lui. Nous croyons, en fait, que chacun doit avoir un certain nombre de responsabilités. Certes, le ministère devrait avoir des responsabilités d'ensemble, mais il y en a, à l'échelle locale, que nous aimerions voir confier aux parents, et ils ont un rôle influent dans la vie de leurs enfants et l'enseignement qu'ils reçoivent. Maintenant, j'aimerais aussi ajouter ceci: voulons-nous vous voir partir avec le sentiment que nous n'enseignons pas la religion et la morale dans nos écoles? Peter l'a mentionné, mais j'aimerais le souligner: nous ne sommes pas totalement laïques quand vient le temps d'enseigner la religion et la morale. Nous croyons que c'est un point très important. Very, very important. Lorsqu'un nombre toujours grandissant de nos enfants se suicident, prennent de la drogue et sortent sur la voie de l'alcoolisme, quand nos prisons sont surpeuplées, qu'est-ce qui pourrait être plus important que l'enseignement des valeurs, l'enseignement de la religion et de la morale? La seule chose, c'est que nous ne catéchisons pas, nous n'avons pas de religion standard à offrir; nous tentons plutôt de traiter de ces questions de façon objective pour que les élèves puissent en arriver à une décision personnelle quant à la religion, à la morale et aux valeurs fondamentales qu'ils souhaitent observer dans leur vie.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you very much, Mr. Simms, for that eloquent explanation of your educational values. I would like to pass to Mr. Chagnon now.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jacques Chagnon.

**Mr. Chagnon:** Mr. Chairman, in the not-so-distant past, I was associated with that battle of wills for recovery of local power, and I have not changed my opinion even several years later. I think that it is an interesting struggle, and one that has certain attractions, but perhaps in a different forum from this one. Coming back to the text, to the brief of the Federation of Protestant School Boards, we can see that there are a number of contradictions. I would like to raise one of them, on page 6, quickly. It says about the Protestant school boards, in the first paragraph: "It makes them no less Protestant" because they include Buddhists, Muslims, etc. The second paragraph begins: "The Protestant schools are non-confessional, as we have indicated and as Mr. Justice Brossard has declared." So, there is a small problem in regard to rigour and consistency.

On page 17, to return to the actual object of the work of our Commission, the title is "The Future Constitution of Québec", and on the third line of the first paragraph, you tell us, "As Quebecers and Canadians, we want a strong, united Canada." The constitutional clause to protect the powers of the Protestant school boards, do you want them in the Constitution of Québec, within Canada? Can you give me some explanation of that? How do you want to reposition yourselves in all that? Do you intend... Finally, reading that, one might think that you were seeking to have a genuine Québec constitution. But how does that jibe with the federal government as it exists at present?

**Mr. Wadsworth:** If Québec remains in Canada, we want a constitutional guarantee from Canada. But if Québec goes it alone, the guarantee must be in a charter of rights, which is not a law that can be changed at some point by the National Assembly or anyone else. The Charter is there and if the rights of minorities are protected in a charter like that, it is a guarantee that is supposed to be good for all time.

**Mr. Chagnon:** Which of the two systems do you prefer?

**Mr. Wadsworth:** I am not... I am not an elected representative. Uh, we were here only for our brief. We don't have either the responsibility or the right to speak on the subject.

**Mr. Chagnon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, gentlemen. Time is now up. Gentlemen of the QAPSB, merci d'être venus ici aujourd'hui.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:46 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:51 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...is devoted to the Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec. I repeat the rules about allocation of time. The Conférence des recteurs will have 10 minutes to present their brief, there will be 10 minutes for the parliamentary party forming the government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary party forming the official opposition, and 25 minutes for the other members. Mr. Patrick Kenniff, are you the one who is going to present the brief?

**Mr. Kenniff (Patrick):** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Would you kindly introduce your colleagues?

#### Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ)

**Mr. Kenniff:** Mr. Chairman, thank you for your welcome. I am pleased to introduce the members of the delegation from the Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec. First, on my left, Mr. Jacques L'Écuyer, who is vice-president of teaching and research at Université du Québec; on my near right, Mrs. Claire McNicoll, who is director general of the Conference and seated next to Mrs. McNicoll is Mr. Claude Corbo, who is the rector of Université du Québec à Montréal.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Kenniff, you have 10 minutes in which to present your brief.

**Mr. Kenniff:** I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't intend to read the brief because it would be too onerous and time does not permit; it would be more useful perhaps to present some of the salient facts and make several comments about the contents of the brief, which the Commission members have already received. First, I think it is important to point out that those of us here this afternoon are representatives of the Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec, and in this role, we don't claim to represent all the members of the various university communities throughout Québec. I think it is no secret that within our university communities there are differences of opinion on the main question under study by this Commission. Our intention is not to offer you a perfect solution to the whole issue - this is not our responsibility and we could not, in this respect, represent the point of view of all our members - but rather to address, in detail, some of the aspects of the constitutional issue that concern us as Québec universities. I think it is natural that we are concerned with Québec's economic and social development and with its

constitutional future, of course.

In our brief we have tried to review some of the issues preoccupying the universities, while at the same time clearly showing that a certain sharing of responsibility with respect to higher education has been developing over the years in Canada. Québec obviously has the main responsibility for the whole field of university education; the federal government has an involvement that has developed over the years in the area of research. In our brief we have reported on the financing of existing programs, programs going back to 1977, where we have reported... These were the transfers made to Québec for post-secondary education and the health programs. We have tried to demonstrate that as far as post-secondary education is concerned, and thus the university sector, the balance is rather negative, especially for the past seven or eight years, while at the same time, the federal government has been progressively implementing a program of cutbacks that is further distancing this program from its original objectives.

The analysis contained in Appendix 1 shows that for the current year, this loss of income will increase to \$ 1.3 billion. These figures tell us that not only did the current system force us into considerable losses of revenue, but at the same time, the universities were not able to efficiently plan their available resources over the longer term. Thus, I think we can conclude that what is important for us, what we are trying to achieve, is the ability to plan effectively for a period of several years, starting from a precise knowledge of the amounts we will receive via existing federal government program transfers to Québec, and from Québec to the universities.

Another issue we emphasized is the question of university research, where we reported with respect to federal granting bodies, that today, on the whole, and clearly there are qualifications to be made, on the whole, there is a positive balance for Québec universities in general, with respect to the Medical Research Council of Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada where in fact, the total shared by Québec universities is proportionately large relative to the number of Quebecers in the total Canadian population. Vis-à-vis the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the picture is less rosy. Québec is seeking to make up lost ground in this area, and the results for the last full year indicate that we have made great progress, but we still have some catching up to do.

With respect to the three granting councils, we must emphasize that grants are made on the basis of peer review of the quality of the grant applications made by Québec academics and those from the other Canadian provinces. Indeed, we can say that in situations where we are judged

by our peers, the results are good, which serves to emphasize, I think, that Québec universities have become much more competitive in the Canadian context than they were some 10 or 20 years ago.

The situation is less rosy concerning research contracts, where, in fact, over the past 5 years, we have seen Québec's share drop to 10 % of the Canadian total, while Ontario's share has risen from 40 % to 47 %. I think that in the case of research contracts, it is clear that peer judgment is not the rule; over and above the scientific quality of the applications, there may be other factors influencing decisions. And I think this leads us to conclude that from this standpoint, Québec has much catching up to do if we wish to have a fair share of the money granted for this purpose.

After drawing a picture of the existing programs and of research, which are indeed the "sinews of war" as far as the financing of Québec universities is concerned, we spoke of the constitutional options in a section dedicated to this question; and I think what must be emphasized is that for Québec universities, we are stressing that insofar as constitutional proposals are developed, whatever they may be, we are ready to adapt to all the options that are open to this Commission. Whatever the constitutional plan, whether all responsibility is vested in the Government of Québec, whether there are shared responsibilities between a central government and that of Québec, or whether there is some other solution, the universities are stressing the importance of maintaining a system that encourages research through evaluation by one's peers, and that this system that calls for peer review uses peers who come from outside of Québec and sometimes even from outside of Canada, as is the case today in Québec. Such a system should allow for and encourage the free movement of students and professors between institutions and countries. So, on the whole, faced with the constitutional options, I think this is what we can tell you as the Conférence des recteurs. Individually, the universities may take other stands, just as the professors in our institutions may take other stands, and we know there are a number of professors who have made submissions to the Commission.

(5:00 p.m.)

As for the Conférence des recteurs, we are saying that is important for the future of Québec that Québec be competitive, able to compete in the North American context and that to be competitive in the North American context, we need a very strong university system, centred on development of research and quality of teaching. We could adapt to any constitutional solution that would give more power to Québec, such as one having some differences in the sharing of responsibilities, insofar as the division

is clear and logical and enables the university network to provide Québec with the human resources it needs to be competitive and ensure the development of Québec society overall.

Mr. Chairman, this is a very brief overview. I am trying to stay within my allotted time. This is a short overview of the brief. We are completely at your disposal to answer any questions that the presentation or the brief has raised or any other related questions. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Kenniff. The first questioner is Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Rector, Madam. I will ask you a hypothetical question to begin with, but one that could become real later on. Anyway, for now it is hypothetical.

If Québec separates, is there a danger or a possibility that the research that the universities carry out in collaboration with business could be markedly changed? This question occurred to me after reading your brief, which was very well done. Paragraphs 2,3.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Hogue, would you like to bring your microphone just a little closer?

Mr. Hogue: Only Mr. Laberge can tell me what to do.

A voice: I understood the question.

Mr. Hogue: Did you follow me? Yes?

A voice: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Hogue: 2,3, on page 9, I think... a lovely brief, but this university-companies connection... a new life for Québec.

Mr. Kenniff: If you are thinking about the intentions of Québec universities, very close relationships between universities and business have been developing for several years, not only between individual universities and individual businesses, but also between the university community and business in general. I'm thinking particularly of initiatives such as the Centre de recherche Informatique de Montreal, CITEC, and the Technoparc, which is the high-technology park here in Montreal; these are university-business initiatives.

I think when we speak of our open-mindedness with respect to the constitutional options, we are stating that whatever the constitutional status of Québec, it will always be essential to maintain an openness to the outside world, a willingness to continue and to develop our ability to compete, and that in every

society today this is being achieved in part by closer cooperation between the university and business. I don't think that will change. Clearly the constitutional status may have an impact on the structure of Québec business, and when it does, the formula that would be used to ensure this cooperation between the universities and business might be altered somewhat. I think that from the standpoint of objectives, it will change nothing.

Mr. Hogue: When I was a member of the CRSH, this policy of matching funds, if you will allow me the expression, was initiated. The board of directors wondered about the ease or the difficulty for some universities to be able - I'm thinking about the HEC as well - to be able to make this link with head offices and... I was thinking about Esso, for example, where the head offices might be located in areas other than Québec. But the answer would be the same, I suppose.

Mr. Kenniff: Yes. I think that in this respect Québec's situation, in this particular program of matching funds from granting bodies in Ottawa, Québec's performance has been very good. It was a formula. There was also... I think we have to view Québec's success as a result of its participation in the network of centres of excellence, a program set up by the federal government; we state this in our brief. In another place, we speak of 14 centres of excellence and of the 7 in which Québec universities participate. Since the time of our report, there is a 15th centre of excellence in which Québec also participates, we must add "1" to everything. In fact, there has been a very strong involvement in these programs by Québec universities.

Mr. Hogue: Would I, or would we be right in believing that it is not the federal presence in the area of financing education and research that might disturb CREPUQ, but rather the possibility that federal financial involvement in Québec might decrease?

Mr. Kenniff: I think what disturbs us right now is that the amount of money available to finance Québec's university network is tending to decrease. Currently, this sum comes mainly - not totally, but in large part - from federal transfer payments through existing programs, with another part coming out of Québec government funds. It is this global envelope that is tending to shrink. We are indeed disturbed by the fact that the federal envelope, which is very important, is also decreasing in size, while for the past three years, the Québec government has been trying very hard to redress the universities' financial situation by injecting its own money.

**Mr. Hogue:** Putting political considerations aside, it goes without saying, there is a Space Agency located in Québec. Could the CRSNG, and by the same token the universities, recoup in the foreseeable future, a percentage that appears to be owed to it, as compared in particular with Ontario's percentage?

**Mr. Kenniff:** Mr. Chairman, this is a very hypothetical question. I will answer simply by saying that it's not necessarily the physical location of the Space Agency that will determine the outcome, but rather the actual distribution of the money that will be committed to this agency and the decisions that will be made. We have tried, Québec universities and, in particular, Montreal universities, to establish working links with the Space Agency with the specific goal of trying to attract more research funds, but we are not yet convinced, at this stage of development of the Agency in the suburbs of Montreal, that the existence of the Agency is going to mean more money is going to be used for research in Québec's universities.

**Mr. Hogue:** But Mr. Kenniff, the question...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue, five minutes have elapsed.

**Mr. Hogue:** Fifteen seconds?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We have already used up six minutes.

**Mr. Hogue:** The question, like the answer, was not hypothetical; it was realistic.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perfect. We now turn to Mrs. Lorraine Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Hello, Gentlemen and Madam. I would first like to tell you that I am very pleased to hear you reminding us just how essential education and research are to job creation, competitiveness, access to markets, and so on. You know that there has been much emphasis on the economic aspects during our hearings on Québec's political and constitutional future. We have been told about doing business, creating wealth, and unfortunately, far too often, the same people who speak of these matters are among the first to tell us that we have to cut education costs because it's expensive, and that there isn't enough money for research. And you have just shown us very eloquently that there are close ties between education and research. So, I am particularly pleased to find some supporters in this matter.

When you presented your brief, you illustrated, in my view, one of Canada's greatest weaknesses: our low investment in research

compared to other industrialized countries. This, I think can be blamed on the inertia of Canada and the federal government. I should also add that the countries that have invested the most in research - I'm thinking of Japan and Germany - are the countries that didn't have to invest much in the military because they didn't have a choice; they were told they didn't have the right to an army, but that left them free, on the other hand, to invest elsewhere.

Now you tell us that globally, you have received your quota of research budgets, but that in other respects, the federal government's awarding policy for scientific and technological contracts has hurt Québec. This is important because it's the whole idea of profitable federalism that can be brought up here. But I would much rather deal with an aspect that is tied to Québec's full jurisdiction over education and research. In your brief, you show that although you received your share, the budgets may have been, for example, concentrated more in the biomedical sciences and less in engineering. Do you think Québec having full powers in education and research - and here, when I speak of powers I'm obviously speaking of responsibilities - that this wouldn't be the very thing to allow Québec to develop a coherent policy for sectors that would deserve to receive strong support in terms of research? Research supporting development, technology, the most fragile sectors of our economy, and so on? I would like to hear what you have to say about this question in particular.

**Mr. Kenniff:** I think it goes without saying that whoever talks of responsibility is also talking about powers when it comes to developing policies. So, from the hypothetical time when Québec has full responsibility for higher education, including research, it's very clear that in theory, Québec would have the absolute power to establish its priorities, taking into account all the constraints experienced in any political system, all the external constraints imposed by our interdependence. We were speaking, a while ago, very recently, about this question in relation, for example, to the cooperation in the area of university research that exists among the countries of the European Community, based on the policies of each of the member countries. It is very clear that each country has its own policy but that each one tries to coordinate its policy with those of the other countries so as to produce a coherent community approach. Thus, as far as your hypothesis is concerned, I think that the answer is fairly clear. We must recognize, on the other hand, that in the context of federal government granting bodies, the fact that we are starting to see strategies for research development is a relatively recent phenomenon; before that, the envelopes were distributed after peer review and

were thus based on quality. I think we have to maintain this quality aspect but it is in the absence of these strategies for development of research that Québec has gone ahead with the development of its own tools such as the Fonds d'aide à la formation des chercheurs - FCAR - a valuable tool enabling development of research strategies while maintaining the context of grants.

So... Well, I hope that this has somewhat answered your question.

**Mrs. Pagé:** It has answered it very well. Thank you. That's it for me.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perfect, Madam. Then, on to Mr. Claude Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you. First, I would like to voice a little disappointment and I will not ask you to reply to it since obviously you can't answer a disappointment. When I read at the beginning of your brief that you are telling us that we can easily understand that the Conference can give its opinion on the choice of a constitutional status, I must tell you that since I've been sitting here, there have been many groups in front of us who have said "We cannot give you an opinion, as you can easily understand." I confess that this is becoming harder and harder for me to understand because those of us who were invited to sit on this Commission are not constitutional experts either. I'm looking around the table: there are a few, very distinguished, but all the rest are people from other backgrounds and we are being asked to make a recommendation to the National Assembly on the matter. And I'm sorry that - this probably depends on our system - many of the people who come here and say "You can easily understand that we cannot take a stand on the question." Fine, but perhaps you could help us with my question. Many people have come here to tell us that in the current federal system there is a lot of overlap, a lot of duplication. Some have told us that this helps us, because then we can knock on two doors. So, even though there is no overall planning, it's not serious, at least we know that one door will open up to us. If one of them doesn't open, we'll go to the other one.

(5:15 p.m.)

My question is this: In your sphere of interest, is there duplication, confusion, are there additional costs? Is there an absence of planning? And if there is, do you suffer or benefit from it?

**Mr. Kenniff:** First of all, I'll say that perhaps the word "easily" was used a little too readily. We have presented our brief with the specific goal of helping the Commission with some of the factors we know well, but even so,

I think that we are giving you an opening when we say that whatever the constitutional option, the universities can adapt to it as long as a certain number of rules that are important for the development of our society are observed.

You spoke of duplication. In our domain, there are few such areas because on the whole, the constitutional responsibility for education lies with Québec, where the federal government has become directly involved over the years, as a result of its own power to spend, is in the area of assistance to research. The only overlap lies in the fact that there are granting bodies in the federal government and in Québec: the FCAR in Québec, and the granting councils in Ottawa. But, in reality, this has not been a nuisance as such, right up to now, but has instead enabled the universities to have greater access to research grants and, to some degree, I think, has allowed Québec, through FCAR especially, to develop its own research strategies and to give a big push in the right direction, which has had a certain ripple effect. I think some grants, especially... I can recall the programme des actions structurales, which helped some universities prepare themselves, to be competitive in the federal program of networks of centres of excellence. I think that Mr. Corbo might have something to add, with your permission, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Corbo (Claude):** Mr. Chairman, beyond Mr. Kenniff's remarks, I think we must say that the government of Québec has always jealously guarded its jurisdiction over higher education and research. As proof, I recall the already ancient history of the centres of excellence that preceded the 1984 batch, where the Secretary of State for Canada offered the universities \$ 25 000 000 to develop the centres of excellence. He received the proposals. He chose those which seemed to him to have priority, but the Québec government indicated to the universities that there were other types of priorities to be considered. Moreover, Mr. Chairman, there is another matter to which we must pay close attention. If the government of Québec is very jealous of its constitutional prerogatives, the other provinces, or our university colleagues and the universities in other provinces, or in provinces smaller than Québec, are becoming more concerned with asking... or they hope that the federal government can act more and better than the scattered provinces can in the areas of post-secondary education and research, these being considered questions of major national interest. Thus, there are trends currently coming into play in the country, and we must be aware of them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Béland, your time is up. We are going to go on to Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Kenniff, I would like to thank you for your brief and your presentation. I would like to draw your attention in particular to the statistics you provided, among them, those on page 10 of your brief. To be perfectly frank, I found you to be amazingly calm, almost dispassionate in your account of the statistics on the distribution of research funds in Canada. I understand that Québec universities think they have received their share. But, if you glance at all research activities carried out by the federal government, the numbers you indicate on page 10 especially, which corroborate those we are already familiar with, are appalling. Because the universities, is it not true, cannot disassociate themselves from or close their eyes to research carried out elsewhere, in other universities. And the federal government, when it finds a way to give five times as many research contracts to Ontario than to Québec in the period of 1984 to 1987-1988 - we don't know about after that - doesn't show much fairness in the manner in which research funds are distributed.

I can tell you - Dr. Hogue, who is here in front of me will remember - that one of the questions that had a way of getting the Québec caucus worked up, of getting us all excited, like a red flag in front of a bull, was the question of research, of the distribution of research funds. And you take a single sentence to tell us about it, to denounce it to us as unacceptable. But having said this, in the conclusions you have drawn, you don't appear to propose any means of redressing such a situation even though they seem to be built in, because it is repeated from year to year... and it gets worse all the time. It fell by half in the fiscal period beginning in 1985, for example. So what do you propose?

Is there not something basic in all of this? Are Québec universities, intellectuals, Québec researchers, those who are building the future, those who are designing tomorrow's Québec, for example, not going to be disturbed by such a situation? Are they not going to decide that the time has come to transfer to Québec the responsibility and the funds that Ottawa is now allocating in Ontario? Because let's not forget that when they give almost 50 % of the funds as research contracts to Ontario, contrasted with 10 % to Québec, it's Québec's money that is going to Ontario to increase the lead Ontario has taken and which is going to continue increasing over the course of the coming years. Is there not some in-depth reflection to be done by Québec's university researchers and transmitted to us with a very clear conclusion?

**Mr. Kenniff:** Listen, I may have appeared very calm, but I think that's because the numbers speak for themselves. This is a situation that is, obviously, of great concern, but

it is not a situation that...it's a situation that has been stable and at a very low level for a long time, but that has been dropping for several years. Thus, it's even more of a concern. Even so, there have been some efforts from the Québec government to compensate, I think. Québec has always been concerned about this matter. I'm thinking specifically of the Fonds de développement technologique that Québec set up several years ago, which aims more at encouraging research contracts with business and with the universities. I also, finally, noting... We have to realize that clearly the funds used for research contracts come from federal departments, from research centres at the federal government level, and which, from this standpoint, if there is a large share that stays in Ontario, almost half of this money, well! these are expenditures that are centred in Ottawa and its environs. Perhaps we would have to look at this a little closer. I'm not saying that the situation is any rosier than the numbers indicate. Either the federal government changes its policy or the funds must be made available to the government of Québec for distribution to Québec universities.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Exactly right... Have I a minute left?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No, your time is up. Mr. d'Anjou.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Mr. Kenniff, we know that university research revenues come in part from foundations, foundations created by the universities themselves, private foundations, grants from businesses and even private foundations outside of Québec. Do you have an idea of the proportion of research funding in Québec universities that comes from such foundations?

**Mr. Kenniff:** Mr. L'Écuyer.

**Mr. L'Écuyer (Jacques):** The proportion, the foundations are particularly important in the medical field. In the natural sciences and engineering, the foundations do not play an important role. There are many more contracts; research contracts in that domain are particularly important. And obviously I think we should be concerned, all the more since according to the CRSNG, our performance is not as good as elsewhere. In the area of scientific and technological development, where contracts are important, there are serious problems. On the side... The foundations, it's really on the medical side, and somewhat in the social sciences too, but it is not a large proportion.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Do you receive worthwhile grants from large private businesses?

**Mr. L'Écuyer:** Yes, in big business, over the years, Québec has been very active in going after... Québec universities, in going after funding from corporations. Then there are the research chairs that have been developed, there are the centres of excellence, and I think it has become very, very important for the policies of... Obviously, university research plays a big role in economic development and in regional development too. I think this is an important dimension.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now turn to the parliamentary party representing the government. Mr. Gil Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Rectors, Madam, thank you for having agreed to come and speak to us. You have given us a very meaty brief, one that presents the situation in education very well and in particular, certainly, higher education. Some might wish that you had taken a position on the constitutional option so we could know how our rectors really see the constitutional future of Québec. But I readily understand that you prefer not to, even though you have knowledge and judgment to bring us that is extremely important for us so that we may have the whole picture, in order that we, as a Commission, can do our job and make the necessary decisions in the framework of our mandate.

I examined and I read your brief carefully. Talking about federal-provincial relationships is a very interesting subject because we know that the big battle of the 1950s over Ottawa's grants to universities was a historic one in the annals of federal-provincial relations, when Duplessis said that we had to go and get our "booty" and that Ottawa must remain in its own field of responsibility. And what was so unusual and extraordinary at the time was that Mr. Trudeau stood with Duplessis and not with Ottawa, because he was against the grants that were being given to the universities by Ottawa, and that were overlapping the province's responsibilities, thereby muddying the waters considerably. This was not for a better world then anymore than it is now.

I was especially sensitive, obviously, to page 10 of your brief, where you tell us - and I believe it's a passage that's worth lingering over - you say that since 1985-1986, the share of the contracts awarded to Québec has fallen by one-half to 10 % of the Canadian total. And you go on to say that this drop certainly benefited Ontario, whose share climbed from 40 % to 48.7 % during the period from 1984-1985 to 1987-1988. The situation has improved somewhat since; for example, I have the numbers here in front of me, where they say that in 1987-1988 we have moved up to 14 %. But the trend for

the first three months of 1990 is 11 %. This is clearly insufficient if we compare these numbers with our proportion of the Canadian population, since we make up about 25.2 % of the Canadian population.

Why are we not receiving our fair share? We have made all the necessary efforts. My colleague at the time, Pierre MacDonald, who was responsible for the matter as Minister of Technical Development, did everything he could. We even retained the services of a specialist, Dr. Beaulne, in Ottawa, to be at our Ottawa bureau for making the contacts that were essential if our researchers were to obtain contracts. We tried to establish all the relations we could with the various federal departments to increase the possibility of having research contracts. But we were told the same story over and over: you don't propose enough research projects. We don't have enough research projects coming from Québec, from our universities. We would very much like to give you your share, but you don't have research projects that are worthwhile enough to enable us to give you your fair share.

What do you think of this argument?

(5:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Kenniff:** There are several reasons that may explain the situation that prevails today with respect to research contracts. Among these reasons - I spoke of them to Mr. Bouchard a short time ago - is the obvious fact that the federal departments and the big federal government research centres are located in the Ottawa area, so inevitably are calculated as amounts that are spent there, and calculated as being spent in Ontario. The second reason may be Québec's industrial structure, which is such that the potential for research contracts, businesses, universities, was perhaps not as well developed until recently in Québec as it was in Ontario. Third, I could offer the fact that the very difficult years the universities have lived through in terms of cutbacks, especially since the end of the 1970s, have meant that the universities were unable to support the infrastructure required to develop research efforts in the area of basic research. Clearly, that is the eventual starting point for the ability to do applied research, since that is what we are talking about. When we talk about research contracts, we're talking about applied research. As you know, Mr. Rémillard, it is only this year that the government of Québec started to offset the indirect costs of university research according to a clearly established program. Previously, the universities had to absorb these costs, which meant an infrastructure that is clearly insufficient for the development of big projects, at least as compared with Ontario's universities. We don't know the numbers for Québec universities vis-à-vis the whole of Canada or the province of Ontario. I don't know if Mr. L'Écuyer has any additional comments to

make?

**Mr. L'Écuyer:** Yes. Listen, we can ask a number of questions about the distribution. I think that Québec universities have amply proved over the past few years that they were able to go out and find contracts and that their projects were adequate. Take an organization such as the INRS, for example, go after one-half of its research budget in contracts and there you have the situation in many sectors. I think that one of the factors probably is the development of sustained relationships with the federal departments. This is perhaps one of the largest factors at the level, in any case, of the researchers, and perhaps more generally too, of the various governments' policies for development of research.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. L'Écuyer, are you finally telling us that if we don't have our fair share of scientific research, it's not that Ottawa doesn't want to give it to us, but because we don't go about it the right way? Is that what you're saying?

**Mr. L'Écuyer:** No, not at all. What I'm actually saying is that we have in Québec, because you asked the question in those terms, the potential and the interest to go and get research budgets and contracts. But those contracts are not based on peer review, they are judged by an entirely different set of criteria. There are relations with some federal laboratories that may have existed for a long time and it can be very difficult sometimes to break into these situations. What I wish to say, basically, is that I believe Québec and Québec universities currently have the ability and they use it very well today, particularly at the level of business.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Guy Bélanger? There isn't much time left for you.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank you. So if I understand correctly, you are saying that our lobbying of the organizations that disburse research budgets is insufficient or is badly organized. Ha, ha, ha! You also say, somewhere in your brief, I think it's on page 14, that we have too great a tendency in Québec to try to bring everything under or graft all research projects onto the technological developments we anticipate. You reproach us in this regard for neglecting the whole aspect of development of the social sciences or research at the social level. I would like your comments on this.

**Mr. Kenniff:** We emphasize this dimension, we must remember, in the area of development of research, that there are not only the

domains associated with technological change; the humanities and social sciences are also very important for our society, to resolve some of the problems we are currently experiencing. We must emphasize, moreover, that for several years, there has been a significant development of the ability to do research in the social sciences and humanities in some of our universities, that there is a very large increase, especially - I'm familiar with it - in Mr. Corbo's university, in these areas, in regard to research grants. I would like to make a distinction with respect to your remark and to Mr. Rémillard's earlier question; we must distinguish between research contracts and research grants. As for research grants, I explained a little about our actions vis-à-vis the granting bodies in Ottawa, it's just the same, except for the CRSNG, it's pretty much the same. It's in the area of research contracts, of applied research, of research that is sponsored, notably by federal departments and laboratories, that things are not so rosy.

**A voice:** Fine.

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, putting it plainly, when research funds are granted by peer committee review, Québec researchers, in general, are going to be looking for a proportion comparable to the population: 25 %. It's more than the population in social sciences, it's more in biomedical sciences, it's less in natural science and engineering, but we're starting to have some explanations for these figures. On the whole, however, the funds obtained after peer review compare with the population. It's when the funds are not allocated by peer review in the granting bodies that there is a drop to 10 %.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Well, then...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is now up, Mr. Bélanger. We now go on to Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, we are faced with a lovely case, a perfect example, which illustrates very well the evolution of Canadian federalism, because at the beginning, if we look at the British North America Act, education, if there is one irrefutable thing, is the exclusive responsibility of the provinces: exclusivity in favour of the provinces. The federal government has nothing to do with the matter, absolutely nothing. Then, over the course of the years, over the years, for one reason or another, using, as you have indicated elsewhere, its spending power, the federal government has quietly installed itself, insinuated itself, has taken root in the education sector, particularly in post-secondary education. Mr. Corbo was saying this afternoon that Québec has always been jealous

of its prerogatives in education matters. Yes, it's true, the minister was recalling Duplessis this afternoon. But that produced nothing. The federal government moved in anyway, in a big way, into post-secondary and university education. So that today, a large part of university financing depends on Ottawa, depends on the federal government, by means of the existing programs. And when it decides to reduce it, well then, the universities and colleges have problems, and it decides this on its own. It's not negotiated, all that, let's be clear. It's not the result of negotiations between Québec and Ottawa. It's Ottawa that decides the level of financing. So, when there are financial problems, and there are, God knows there have been for some time, Ottawa cuts back the existing educational programs, and then the universities have financing problems.

I confess that considering the situation you are so familiar with, this is not a description, I'm not telling you anything new by describing all this. You know all about it, you've known for ages. I confess that faced with a situation such as the one you know so well, I find you extraordinarily timid. I can well believe that you don't wish to take a stand, as Mr. Béland noted this afternoon, on the constitutional and political status of Québec. Fine, very well, there are many who don't wish to. Perfect, no problem, our friendship won't suffer because of that.

But there, just the same, in educational matters, you should have been a little more daring. When you say on page 4 that you were showing us the problem of existing programs, that they are constantly decreasing and that you felt it important to make the Commission members more aware of the evolution of federal government involvement in financing post-secondary education. And then you go on to research. We expected, at the very least, from the rectors and the university community, that at least you were coming to tell us: Listen, whatever status you choose, whatever status the people choose in the future, whether it be this one, it should be at the very least essential, indispensable that in educational matters, Québec recover fully, wholly and totally its exclusive jurisdiction.

I would have expected that from you. At least that. I'm not asking you to take a stand on Québec sovereignty. Even if I were to ask the question, I know that you wouldn't answer it. I'm not asking you that. But at the very least, I would have expected that in your brief you would have asked, demanded even, that in education, Québec recover its exclusive responsibility and that the federal government pack up its bags and go home. You didn't do that. I'm sorry about that. Unless you want to pick up where you left off. You can, verbally.

**Mr. Kenniff:** That's a long introduction to

the question. As rector of a university and chairman of CREPUQ, I think I have given the reasons why my colleagues and I don't wish to take a stand on the constitutional question in the name of our institutions. That takes nothing away from our rights as citizens, Mr. Brassard.

You said that when existing programs are decreased, it means that the universities have problems. In the existing programs, federal financing is decreasing; it's the Québec government that has a problem. Obviously, at this time, the Québec government has to choose whether or not to pass the problem along to the universities. These are the terms in which it must be put, and I would remind you that the university cutbacks started well before the existing programs began to feel the 1982 cuts. It was in 1979 that major cutbacks began. It's a question of balance. Maybe we overestimated the ability of the figures to speak for themselves, but there has been a large decrease in transfer payments, which have never had any strings attached. Québec can spend this money any way it wants, when the amounts decrease, obviously, but this situation is a deplorable one. We did not come here to criticize the constitutional situation that has prevailed in Canada for a number of years, to say: Listen, federal government interference in research is a very bad thing. I think that universities, very coolly, in analysing the current situation, are going to say that it's not a black and white picture. In fact, the federal granting bodies have helped in the development of Québec research, just as Québec programs have helped. When we said that we would adapt to any constitutional solution, whether it be entirely Québec's responsibility in the domain in question or shared between Québec and the federal government, what we wish, obviously, is that the universities' role in the development of Québec society is acknowledged as important. I am going to stop there because I know that Mr. Corbo would also like to make some comments.

**Mr. Corbo:** Mr. Chairman, Québec universities have experienced many disappointments in the past decade, as Mr. Kenniff has said. Perhaps we should put the question another way. Perhaps this Commission should make it known to the National Assembly and the Government of Québec that the constitutional arrangement it is recommending also has the virtue of giving an important place to the whole educational process, including university education, because at that point, the future of Québec is at stake, and the failure of a constitutional structure, whatever it may be, to adequately support education, would not be acceptable to the universities.

**Mr. Brassard:** I agree with you, Mr. Corbo, except I say to myself that if even the experts

in university education, post-secondary education, are not able to come before us and tell us that in this domain, exclusive responsibility and jurisdiction should be in Québec and only in Québec, if you are unable to come and tell us that, who is going to tell us that? But I'm not asking you to commit yourself to renewed federalism or sovereignty or sovereignty-association, that's not what I'm asking you. In education, do you agree that for it to work properly, for Québec and Quebecers to be able to meet the enormous challenges, considerable in this domain, with all the consequences, equally considerable, knowing what the economic implications are, do you think that this jurisdiction should become once more exclusively Québec's?

**Mr. Kenniff:** Mr. Chairman, I think that, a short while ago, in reply to Mrs. Pagé's question, I replied by saying that if responsibility is exclusive, the ability to establish policies is exclusive. If the government of Québec were to take back full jurisdiction over education, and in particular over higher education, then it would be free to define the policies. This situation does not displease us. Conversely, the current evidence regarding research grants as opposed to research contracts is that on the whole, Québec is withdrawing its share - I'm not saying that it's perfect across the board - all the same, in most areas. Thus, I don't think we should be asked to declare the system a failure on the functional level right now with respect to research grants. On the other hand, we recognize very clearly that if the full responsibility for university research was here in Québec, Québec would be free to define its own policies.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Quickly, Mr. Corbo, if you wish to add anything.

**Mr. Corbo:** One image, Mr. Chairman. Québec universities are turning naturally to the government of Québec when it's a question of policy affecting universities; it may be that the universities in other parts of Canada turn more naturally to the federal government. This may be a factor.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perfect. The time is up. Mr. Corbo, Mrs. McNicoll, Mr. Kenniff, Mr. L'Écuyer, thank you for helping the Commission in its work.

The sitting is recessed; we will resume at 7:00 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:48 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:06 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We are

resuming today's agenda. We have the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal with us for a period of one hour and a half. You know that time for questions is divided as follows: 15 minutes for the Government parliamentary party, 15 minutes for the Official Opposition group, 40 minutes for the other members, 10 minutes for the Chair and 10 minutes for the presentation of your brief. Mr. Dorion, would you like to introduce your colleagues to us?

#### **Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal**

**Mr. Dorion (Jean):** Certainly, Mr. Chairman. On my right, our First Vice-President, Mr. Ferdinand Prémont; also on my right, our Second Vice-President, Mrs. Sylvie Mérimée; on my left, our Secretary-General, Mrs. Lise Gagnier; and also on my left, a member of our Regional Council, Mr. Pierre de Bellefeuille.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dorion, you now have 10 minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Dorion:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal has been in existence for the last 156 years. It was therefore created before Confederation, and even before the Act of Union. In other words, experience has shown that the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal can outlive many types of governments even though it has its preferences. You will not be surprised therefore to note upon reading our brief that we are not afraid of change. Our brief deals primarily with the demographic question. It touches on the serious problems currently facing Québec in this respect and, in particular, those affecting Montréal. We believe that these problems cannot be solved within Canadian federalism.

Let's start by talking about the need for a family policy. The current birthrate, as everyone knows, is not even enough to ensure the replacement of generations in Québec. This situation calls for a family policy, but what is currently serving as a family policy is an inefficient duplication of federal and Québec government assistance programs. Developing a true family policy is an extremely complex process. The war on poverty and policies affecting labour and the status of women are part of it, of course, but values must be influenced too, through education, in particular. In short, as explained in our brief, the formula for boosting the birthrate is far from simple and is not compatible with the intervention of two governments with differing ideas. We believe that if the government of Québec had all the means of action at its disposal, it would stand a much better chance of achieving real

results, especially considering that the need for action in this field is felt more acutely in Québec than elsewhere.

However, experiences in other countries teach us that a family policy, though indispensable, can produce only limited results. To maintain its population, Québec must also turn to immigration. Furthermore, the biggest countries on our continent were built through immigration – the United States, Argentina, Brazil – without challenging their linguistic homogeneity.

It is a well-known fact that people of English descent are now only a small minority in the United States. The same goes for those of Portuguese descent in Brazil, and those of Spanish descent in Argentina. And yet, in each of these three countries, immigrants from all over the world quickly adopted the language of the founding European group. In each case, this group had the sense and above all, needless to say, the power to establish, right from the start, the rules of the game. Immigration, instead of playing against it, therefore worked in its favour by constantly increasing the number of people who spoke the language.

In Québec, the process is completely inverted. Despite a centuries-old population of primarily French descent, Québec is seeing the majority of its immigrants adopt English and our brief contains some figures on the subject which speak for themselves. Is it just a coincidence that this unusual, unfair situation, the only one of its kind in America, is in fact taking place within the borders of the only people on our continent who adopted bilingualism or rather, had bilingualism forced on them?

To begin with, there is the bilingualism of federal institutions. In our airports and in all federal offices our immigrants read little red and blue signs proclaiming "English or French, the choice is yours, the pleasure is ours," and though they do not expect so much choice, they quickly draw their own conclusions. There is the bilingualism of our laws and courts, both federal and Québec, that successive constitutions have imposed on us. And the law governing all human activities, it is not surprising to see foreign firms established here using English in their key activities, even those within Québec. And finally, there is the bilingualism of all our Québec public services. There is really nothing surprising about the fact that, 13 years after the passage of Bill 101, scarcely half of the large companies in Québec have their francization certificates, even though we know that the possession of such a certificate does not in any way mean that all the personnel there work in French.

If the majority of immigrants to Québec do not become French-speaking, it is due to the insufficiency and ambiguity of Québec's language laws, whose inadequacies stem primarily from the

restrictive constitution under which they were adopted, or because of which they were doomed to failure. In the name of the Canadian Constitution, the Supreme Court in 1979 struck down the articles in Bill 101 making French the only official language of Québec's laws and courts. In the name of the Canadian Constitution, the Supreme Court in 1988 invalidated the clauses in Bill 101 dealing with signs and corporate names, forcing Québec to invoke the notwithstanding clause which is valid for five years only, earning us friendly quinquennial debates. In the name of the Canadian Constitution, the Superior Court repudiated Québec's right to require parents to send their children to French schools in cases where the parents or their children had already received English schooling in Canada. This decision means parents can avoid Bill 101 simply by briefly sending their children to a private English school in Québec. It also leaves us defenceless against future massive inter-provincial migrations. This may not be the case at the moment, but the fact remains that we have no protection against this phenomenon, should it ever occur.

Finally, in the name of the Canadian Constitution, Québec is perpetuating an outdated educational system which entrusts the integration of a large percentage of Montréal's young immigrants to a school board run by Anglophones and chaired, moreover, by someone who is unilingual. We mention the experience of one of our members, a teacher in a high school with a large multiethnic population, who is unable to get a good number of his students to speak French at school. This teacher is constantly being told that we live in Canada and that, in this country, English is not only an official language, it is the language of the majority. It is not by staying in Canada that we will be able to change this perception, for in Canada, it corresponds to reality. The bilingualism of our public institutions is a result of the unfair and unusual privileges enjoyed by the English in Québec. These privileges are a direct legacy of the violence inflicted on our people in 1760. The restoration of French as the true official language of Québec and the common language of its people remains to be done. At this point, it is important to highlight the strategic position of the Island of Montréal, whose school population is now only half Francophone. The francization of this new generation of Montréalers, which cannot be done just at school and which becomes very difficult to do in neighbourhoods where Francophones are becoming a minority, is therefore the crucial prize at stake in a veritable race against time. (7:15 p.m.)

Québec francization policies clash with the restrictive Canadian Constitution. In fact, the linguistic duality forced on Québec by Canada is

an insurmountable obstacle to the francization of immigrants. Therefore, we must break with this duality by creating a sovereign Francophone state in Québec. Immigrants are not responsible for the ambiguity of our current positions on our national identity. It is up to us to send them a clear message. Immigrants will be able to truly and irreversibly integrate themselves into French Québec only when Québec is a real country, with a Québec passport and Québec citizenship.

I do not want to end without mentioning another inescapable demographic reality. Québec's percentage of the total Canadian population dropped from 32.3 % in 1871 to 25.8 % in 1986. This decrease is accelerating, and our ability to influence the Canadian political system, or to leave it, will be diminished when we make up only 20 % or 18 % of the population. The choice of sovereignty is therefore an urgent one. Sovereignty is a modern solution, as numerous examples in other countries illustrate. But we would like to warn the population about those who would play with words; a sovereign state is one that, alone, passes laws, levies taxes, and establishes foreign relations. The existence of a Parliament in Ottawa, to which Quebecers would elect members, is not compatible with Québec sovereignty. We are aware that national independence is not absolute. We are aware that nations, through the governments they control, are called upon to negotiate and implement all kinds of agreements. We are aware that a sovereign Québec must continue to ensure beneficial exchanges with its neighbours. We are aware of all this, and we are also aware that only through sovereignty can a population participate in such negotiations, sign such agreements and maximize such exchanges.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal proposes that the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec recommend that the Québec government present a declaration to the National Assembly which solemnly proclaims its intention to make Québec a sovereign state, and set up a commission whose purpose is to elaborate the constitution of this state. This constitution will have to be submitted to the people of Québec in a referendum. Should the government reject this recommendation, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal would suggest that the Québec government, whose constitutional program fell apart with the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, call a general election so that Québec may have a government with a clear constitutional mandate.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Commission, I am ready to answer questions and I may at times ask my colleagues to supplement my answers. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Dorion. Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington,

you have the floor.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dorion, Mr. Prémont, Mrs. Mériméau, Mrs. Gagnier, and Mr. Bellefeuille, on behalf of the government, I would like to thank you for appearing before the Commission on the future of Québec to present your brief. And, as you know, I am not from Montréal, I am an MNA from Matane, in other words, a regionalist. I learned many things from reading your brief, especially about your history, which includes, among other things, the fact that in the social sphere, in 1893 you created... The public schools created in 1893 were the origin of the applied arts schools, the École des Beaux-Arts, and the École des hautes études commerciales. And the year I was born, you even set up the Prêt d'honneur (foundation which provides student grants). I congratulate you. And in the field of politics, you add that the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal led the campaigns which resulted in official recognition of our provincial holiday and our provincial flag. I think that all Quebecers are proud of their flag and I was not aware that it was the work of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal.

The demographic question in Québec is of vital concern to you. And you even say that if Quebecers want to continue to exist as a people, they must choose sovereignty. This choice must be made as quickly as possible, before our demographic weight drops any lower. If it makes you feel any better, this entire question of demography... You must realize that the concerns you voice are also the concerns of the Québec government at this time. So much so, for example, all the policies being put forward... The government is concerned with raising the birthrate of Québec women and improving its control over the integration of immigrants. Speaking of this, I don't know if you read today's *La Presse*, on November 15, but a big headline proclaims that the Bourassa government's policy for improving the birthrate is bearing fruit. The article says that Québec is the only province in Canada which registered a noticeable increase in its birthrate in 1988. And it says, for example, that Statistics Canada attributes part of this increase in the birthrate to the Bourassa government's policy for improving the birthrate. And this is clearly a reversal of a trend. If this reversal continues, it gives us hope in any event of reaching the replacement rate that demographers have come up with, or 2.1 children per woman. Obviously, the policies put forward may not be enough, we must push even further... Not enough to raise the demographic rate to 2.1 children per woman, but they are a good start. And I think that we can expect a brighter future.

As for immigration, all the organizations which have come here, I think there is a

consensus emerging. The government must secure the powers relating to immigration. That, I believe, is the consensus.

As for the economic aspects of sovereignty, I find that your association is very quiet on the subject. I would like to hear you talk about the economic aspects of sovereignty in a little more detail. Does your association foresee some sort of relationship with the rest of Canada, an economic relationship? And if so, how do you picture it, this economic relationship, if Quebecers became sovereign?

**Mr. Dorion:** First of all, I would like to thank you, Madam, for your very kind words concerning the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal and its past activities. I hope that its current activities will delight you as well.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mrs. Hovington:** I'm not so sure.

**Mr. Dorion:** You highlighted the efforts of the Québec government to develop a form of family policy and it is not our intention to disparage what has been done. We have merely observed, like everyone, and I think the current Québec government was the first to observe this, the extent to which federal intervention in this matter has often been very harmful. I am thinking, in particular, of the national child care policy which the federal government has so often promised. And in the end, the only result of this promise has been that the Québec government, which had already put a lot of effort into creating such a policy, put things on hold for a time while waiting to see what the federal government was going to do. And finally, the federal government still has done nothing and everything has been delayed because there are, in short, two administrations that can be blamed and that can blame each other.

You also spoke of the efforts made to increase the birthrate. The increase mentioned in the newspapers, everyone knows that it is very, very, very modest. It is a few tenths of 1 % of a child. The rate rose from 1.41 to 1.49 I believe, something like that, according to what I read in the newspaper this morning. The rate must reach 2.1, which is a lot higher. Because fractions are one of the extremely important elements of this field, and require an enormous effort, involving incredible changes in behaviour. Therefore, we unfortunately cannot, even with the best family policy, expect to settle all of Québec's demographic problems. Our population is aging. We are aware that family policies employed in other countries have produced results, but very modest ones nonetheless. So the problem of immigration will remain, therefore, along with that of the current anglicization of immigrants.

You asked about our position on the economic aspect of sovereignty. First of all, we are not an organization specialized in economic matters. We do not pretend to have the answers to all the economic questions, but we see, like many people in Québec, that we now have a business community which is completely capable of competing with foreign capitalists. Secondly, we also see that responsible organizations such as Merrill Lynch, the Bank of Montreal and even the Vermont Public Service Commission have expressed the opinion, in more or less confidential documents, that an independent Québec, an autonomous Québec is viable. As for the rest, we think that it will of course be necessary to negotiate economic agreements with the rest of Canada, but all countries have to negotiate economic agreements with their neighbours. We have faith in the ability of Québec society in this respect.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But I repeat the question, Mr. President, a question which has been asked here of many organizations that, in fact, advocate declaring sovereignty and then negotiating with the rest of Canada, but it still takes two to negotiate. How do you envision the talks which could be held with the rest of Canada concerning economic questions, the division of assets and liabilities, and a state's inheritance rights, if we declare unilateral sovereignty?

**Mr. Dorion:** Well, then! I am going to answer what most of the organizations no doubt answered, in other words, that of course, it takes two to negotiate, and Canada has enormous interests at stake in Québec, and once the Québec population's desire for independence becomes obvious, the English-Canadian business community, whose members are pragmatic people, will realize that they must limit the damage and consequently, they will try to negotiate with us. Such agreements are not only to Québec's advantage. They are also in the interest of English Canada which has enormous investments in Québec, English Canada where access to the ocean - in the case of Ontario, anyway - is through the St. Lawrence, English Canada which also has an interest in sharing the burden of its national debt with a future Québec state, etc. So I think this is in the interests of both parties, once we get beyond the bad language which might be used at a certain, probably short-lived, stage, because Anglo-Saxons are very sensible people. I think that once we are beyond that, people will sit down at the bargaining table and reach some serious agreements.

**Mrs. Hovington:** And you suggest that the National Assembly declare sovereignty, and then create a commission to map out the Québec constitution. This constitution must then be

submitted to the people in a referendum. If I understand you correctly, you are suggesting that the government declare Québec sovereignty – simply by going before the National Assembly – without having a referendum first. Because the Union des artistes also advocated... And all the people say here that the future of Québec belongs to the men and women of Québec. It does not belong to a political party, or does not belong, if you wish, to any one organization. And yet you want the National Assembly to declare sovereignty and then create a commission to set up a constitution; a referendum will then be called to accept this constitution. Is that right?

**Mr. Dorion:** That is not exactly what we said. What we said was that we would ask the Commission to recommend that the Québec government present the National Assembly with a declaration which solemnly proclaims its intention to turn Québec into a sovereign state and not solemnly declare independence or sovereignty. There is, you must admit, a big difference. Nothing will be proclaimed unilaterally or, more specifically, without the explicit support of the population in a referendum.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But the referendum you are talking about, you do say that the Constitution... the referendum would go... The mandate of the Commission would be to elaborate a constitution and the referendum would be to accept this constitution.

**Mr. Dorion:** Yes, this constitution. Which would involve...

**Mrs. Hovington:** It would not be for reaching a decision on sovereignty.

**Mr. Dorion:** Well, the first article of this constitution would certainly be that Québec is a sovereign state. So the population would, of course, have a chance to express their opinion of this principle.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you. I will now give the floor to my colleague.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Robert Benoit.  
(7:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Dorion and your team, thank you for being here with us this evening. When I was very young, as far back as I can remember, my father was a member of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste and there was something mystical about his going to meetings of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste. The day you made me go door-to-door for the Prêt d'honneur is the day I truly understood the mysticism I had

not understood. But, in any event, you have promoted, and you still do promote the French fact in Québec and in America and, in this respect, I think that we owe you a lot for what you done for the French fact on this continent. Yesterday, concerning another brief, Mr. Laberge said that he had raised an eyebrow when he read certain passages. I must admit that when I read your brief, I too was somewhat startled at several places which are a bit rough.

In particular, I am going to quote a passage which I find a little strong. When you say, you talk about the various forms of federalism in the various countries which have some type of federalism, you say that in Canada, federal affiliation was only maintained through keeping Québec a minority and through manipulating leaders who took advantage of the passivity and the naïveté of many of our compatriots. I think that this is very strong, I think that we have had leaders, in this country, in this province, who have through the years shouldered their responsibilities. And it is unfortunate to end up with such a simplistic evaluation of our current political situation.

That said, I would like to ask a few questions. The first: you talk a lot about the French fact in Québec, and once again, I congratulate you on it. Moreover, you say a little further on in your brief that the major media networks are becoming globalized. Therefore, Québec, be it sovereign, part of a federated or confederated government or whatever form we end up agreeing on, we will be part of this major trend towards globalized communications. And how, in a sea of 300 million English speakers, how are we going to be able, us Quebecers – and you have thought about this, it is the primary mission of your organization – how are we going to be able to not only survive in the coming years, as a people, but also continue to advance and promote the French fact?

**Mr. Dorion:** Thank you, Mr. Benoit. Listen, you seem a little upset by the fact that I mentioned that several of our leaders manipulated the population at various times during our history. Unfortunately, I think that this is a historical reality and I could elaborate and talk about quite a few of them. And there are biographies of these people which illustrate this fact, but I think I can give you a specific example. When the House of Commons met for the final vote on the Canada Act, that is, the bill to patriate the Canadian Constitution, it was November 24, 1981. Just before the vote there was a final speech from the government, which was the last speech given in French by Mrs. Monique Bégin, a distinguished representative of the government in power. And, it was in the Journal of the House of Commons of November 24, she said that the people of Québec were

often worried, at that time, and were going to ask them whether the government had taken away Québec's Bill 101. You will recall, Mr. Benoit, that at the time, nationalist organizations believed that patriation and in fact the Charter of Rights, included in the federal government's constitutional reform bill, was going to have a very harmful impact.

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Dorion, I asked you a specific question on the globalization of communications and the French fact. I would appreciate it if you would answer the question, Mr. Dorion.

**Mr. Dorion:** Mr. Benoit, I am certainly going to answer your question but, since you also mentioned that you did not believe that we were right to call into question the manipulation of some of our exchanges, I would like to very quickly finish with this example. Mrs. Bégin said no, we have decided to respect Bill 101 in order to maintain social peace in Québec. All the clauses of the current Bill 101, predominance of French schools, French as the language of work, signs in French, she said, just before the vote, French used for business, and so on, remain. We are only suggesting that one amendment, the changing of one word, etc.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dorion, the time allotted to the government is nearly over. Please respond quickly, and then we will move on to another group of questions.

**Mr. Dorion:** Yes, all right. Well, as for the globalization of communications, I would say – and I know that this may surprise a number of people – that the primary problem experienced in Québec in this respect is not the fact that there is very strong pressure nowadays from American culture, language, etc., which is, in fact, distributed through all sorts of channels, in favour of this globalization of communications; this is not the primary linguistic problem facing us in Québec. The primary linguistic problem we face is that Québec does not have the instruments needed to face this situation.

Other countries feel this pressure too, but these countries have only one official language; this has an incredible effect on all respects of public life. In these countries, immigrants choose the language of the country. No one asks for English schools in France...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The time allotted is now up, Mr. Dorion. We now hand the floor over to Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. President, I too would like to thank the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste for agreeing to appear before this Commission, because it is a long-standing French-Canadian

institution with an absolutely remarkable list of accomplishments. When you say in your brief that the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste has been part of the political evolution of Québec for the last 150 years and that its history is inextricably linked with the battle to protect the identity and promote the sovereignty of Quebecers, a truer thing was never said. And I think that, in the current context, we should recognize the remarkable work you have accomplished over the last 150 years, at times during difficult periods when nationalism, as we say, was often perceived as or considered a weakness. This is no longer the case, fortunately, but at one time. But you nonetheless kept the flame burning and defended the vital interests of Quebecers. It is evident that you put a great deal of emphasis on the issue of language. I am not reproaching you for this because many organizations have appeared here to talk about economics. It was a matter of, it depended on their vocation, and we were happy to discuss this matter with them, but I find it only normal that you emphasize the language issue. Especially since you are the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, and I think that the problem of language is more acutely felt in Montréal than anywhere else in Québec.

You also maintain – and this is the basis of my first question – that the most disturbing, and long-standing, problem in Québec, concerning immigrants, lies in the massive anglicization of new arrivals. Since your organization has roots in Montréal that go back over a century, I would like you to tell us the reasons behind this massive anglicization of new arrivals, and how and in what way Québec sovereignty will give the Québec government the means and the tools to wipe out, to end this serious phenomenon which obviously threatens not only the survival but the future of the Québec people. For example, has Bill 101, which forces the children of immigrants to attend French school, solved the problem? Is the problem as serious and as big as ever, the phenomenon of massive anglicization of new arrivals? And in what way will Québec sovereignty enable us to settle, once and for all, this problem, whose severity is not recognized but measurable?

**Mr. Dorion:** Well! I believe, when we are talking about the issue of the integration of immigrants, that the current situation in Québec is inadequate on two levels. First of all, there is a structural level. Québec needs a power structure which makes immigrants feel that it is fundamentally to their advantage to learn French. In 1985, Bill 101 had already been in force for eight years at that point, immigrant parents were asked whether they agreed with the law obliging Québec immigrants to send their children to French school. And only 24 % of all these allophone parents agreed with this,

accepted this. Of course, over 24 % of immigrant children were already attending French schools, but it was clear that, in many cases, this was in spite of the parents' wishes. Why? Because English remains the dominant language in Québec, and immigrant parents are aware of this; and they feel that their child's future is not furthered by a French education. They obey the law, but not happily, in many cases. I am not saying that there are no immigrants who have joined the Francophone community with enthusiasm, but it can be said, even today, that the majority have not done so.

Therefore, on the level of distribution of powers, there is a serious problem. In particular, the bilingual nature of all our institutions means English is established everywhere in Québec. And the influence – as one of your colleagues from the Liberal Party pointed out – of the English language, through the media and in all sorts of ways, is very strong. In addition, in our society, this penetration is absolutely legitimate and, in some respects, it is even protected by the law. I am thinking of the federal Official Languages Act which, in fact, has this effect at times, in several sectors. Obviously, there is not much you can do to adjust the North American balance of power in such a context if you have no tools.

There is another level, not of power, but of symbols. I think that the integration of immigrants, the children of immigrants, will be a thousand times easier when an immigrant child leafing through his atlas at school sees that Québec is a different colour than the rest of Canada on the map of the world. This may seem, this sort of dream could be considered childish; you may think that this is not really important. I know that the Commission includes many serious people from the world of business, for whom such considerations are perhaps less important. But I think that symbolic aspects are very important, especially in the education of the young.

And as Québec is currently not a real country, it is obviously very difficult to ask those who settle here to become part of our country. Right now, they are trying to become part of something bigger and better, which is completely justified by the makeup of our current political system.

You also asked whether Bill 101 solved the problem. I would like to hand the floor over to my colleague, Ferdinand Prémont, our Vice-President, who is a teacher at the École Saint-Luc and who will be able to give you a full response. Mr. Prémont?

**Mr. Prémont (Ferdinand):** Yes, I would add that at the school where I teach, there are 1 600 students, 80 % of whom are from various ethnic groups. Within the school, there are 87 different ethnic groups, 42 different languages, and 9 or 10 different religions, so the

integration of immigrants, for us, in our classes, when we have 3 or 4 Bégins or Dorions or Québécois names, is somewhat unusual. We have three or four little Québécois in each class. The other names are Nguyen something and we often get mixed up in the names, trying to remember them; but the problem we have is showing the students the importance of French. I can situate you, all the same. The École Saint-Luc is on the corner of Chemin Côte Saint-Luc and Cavendish. So, when our students walk out of the school, they go to a restaurant, they order in English. They go to a store on the other side of the street, they still speak English. Everything is done in English. When we ask them to speak French in school, you are perhaps familiar with the little debate held at the CECM last year, when it was proposed that French be spoken in our schools. As things now stand, we are allowed to speak French in the classrooms. But even so, we must insist that our young people... ask young people to speak French because every day they watch television in another language. They live in another language and when we ask them to speak French so they will be able to get their diplomas in French, then, they start to wonder. They are not sure. This is why the only way to make them understand that French is important, is to advocate sovereignty so that we may...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine.

**Mr. Prémont:** ...so that it is clear to immigrants who arrive here in Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine, Mr. Prémont. We are a little short of time. Mr. André Boisclair?

**Mr. Boisclair:** I would like to greet you and your colleagues and say how much...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your mike, Mr. Boisclair. Get closer, that's it. (7:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Boisclair:** ...so, on one hand, to welcome Mr. Dorion and the people who accompany him and tell you how very convincing you are and to see how convinced you are, as well. Of course, your comments and the presentation you made this evening illustrate somewhat the continuation of your unfailing commitment to a French-speaking and sovereign Québec. And, when I reread your brief, and in particular when you discuss the immigration issue, I am deeply affected by Canada's current inability to extract a clear consensus on a certain number of objectives and the major policies of our society. In short, I believe, and correct me if I misinterpret your brief, I believe that you are highlighting profound differences, which make it extremely difficult to reach a

consensus and which, finally, call into question the Canadian orientations which we agree on, which the Canadian government agrees on, of course, and which we do not always agree on here.

The question that I would like to ask, I may perhaps go beyond the context of your brief a little, but it is the question on everyone's lips. I had the chance to visit my riding today, and everyone was talking about the irresponsible statement made by Mr. Pallascio, from the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal, with regard to immigration being reserved for Francophones with Judeo-Christian values, as he said. I would like to ask you, on the one hand, to comment on this statement, and secondly, ask you, in light of your experience, upon what would you build an immigration policy for a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Dorion:** Thank you, Mr. Boisclair. Well. First of all you would like me to comment on the statement made by the chairman of the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal. I think that this statement is, indeed, absolutely disgraceful. It is particularly disgraceful because it comes from someone who is in charge of thousands of children in the schools, many of whom do not have a Judeo-Christian background. It is therefore a slap in the face to these children, so to speak, and I hope that Mr. Pallascio will correct his statements. Otherwise, it would be extremely disturbing to realize that positions of great responsibility in the field of education in Montréal were filled by people incapable of dealing with the new challenges facing us.

Now, what should form the basis of the immigration policy of a possible independent Québec, more than possible, of a probable and certain independent Québec. I believe that the selection criteria should most definitely leave aside considerations like those set forth by Mr. Pallascio. I do not believe that either racial or religious discrimination is a legitimate foundation. I think that candidates must be chosen on the basis of their individual qualities, their ability to adapt. It is conceivable that certain countries produce far fewer adaptable candidates, but I think that if candidates must be turned down, it should be on the basis of their personal qualities and not their nationality or their religious, cultural, etc. background.

It seems to me that most countries who welcome immigrants - Australia, the United States, the countries in South America I mentioned earlier - are examples of the fact that it is possible to make a single nation with people of widely divergent origins. In Brazil, the distinctions found here are not made, or at least, are made far less often. I can tell you that in many countries I have visited, where there were large numbers of immigrants, it was obvious that

the children, right from the first generation born in the country, considered themselves from that country. They thought that the culture, language, etc. of their parents were certainly worthy of respect, but such things were, to a great extent, already no longer theirs and were even less so in the second and third generations. It seems to me that we can make a French-speaking Québec with people of various backgrounds, and we must judge candidates on their ability to integrate themselves, of course, but not by using ethnic or religious criteria.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...of the official opposition is up. Mr. Serge Turgeon now has the floor.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To begin, I would like to try to continue in the same vein as Mrs. Hovington and Mr. Brassard, namely, how certain parallels can meet, and converge to the effect that I think that everyone seated at this table will agree to recognize the incredible importance, in other words the incredible influence of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste on Québec society, in its past and current history, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste having always played the role of a veritable watchdog, not a mad dog, not an attack dog, but a guard dog, for that is the state in which we have long been kept.

That said, and somewhat like Mrs. Hovington, I am a little intrigued, bothered by something in your brief which I do not entirely understand, and this is with regard to how to go about it, how to attain sovereignty. So, Mr. Dorion, a very specific question, notwithstanding - what a lovely word that is - what is written in your brief, would the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste rally behind the idea of holding a referendum as soon as possible, once this Commission tables its report, a referendum on sovereignty?

**Mr. Dorion:** Yes, we would surely rally behind the idea of holding a referendum on sovereignty, as long as that is what it would truly be. Like many people in Québec, we are afraid, at this time, that people are attempting to confuse the current issue, to confuse the stakes and present Quebecers with some sort of watered-down plan, the same type we were given concerning the Meech Lake Accord. A plan in which words are everything and reality nothing. A plan which does not have much to back it up, but which is covered with big words. That is why we say in our brief that sovereignty, for example, assumes that Québec is the only state to make the laws of the land, the only state to levy taxes and the only state which has a Parliament of representatives elected by the people. If this were the case, yes, certainly, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, who has been

demanding Québec sovereignty since 1969, would not hesitate to rally round this idea.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Well, that clarifies things. You say, Mr. Dorion, and it is also in the brief of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, that the anglicization of Québec is the product of history, the product of institutions. Obviously, we blame English Canada for many things, but, don't you think, Mr. Dorion, that this anglicization is also, and perhaps above all, the result of our fascination with American culture?

**Mr. Dorion:** Listen, Mr. Turgeon, I would say that this fascination exists everywhere. It exists throughout the entire world. Personally speaking, I have traveled a lot and I have noticed it everywhere. There is an interest in things American, in the English language, etc. There are certainly many more English words in the Japanese language, for example, than there are in French, infinitely more. But, beyond the fascination that people may have with English, there is also their ability to organize themselves in the face of this expansionism of the English language. And most of the countries usually mentioned, when compared with Québec, countries such as France or Japan, Brazil or wherever, these countries are states unto themselves and have governments which are liable or accountable only to the people of the country, in theory, at any rate. And, in point of fact, I think that in the sphere of language, this is true not only in theory but in practice as well. When you have a government, a structure of government like that which exists in Canada and in Québec, which is officially bilingual, how can you prevent the penetration of the English language? The methods for doing this are, to all intents and purposes, nonexistent. Bill 101 was an attempt to do something, but nearly all the sections of Bill 101 would have a great deal of difficulty before the courts. How can you slow down, restrict the use of English? As soon as you do, you are told that it is unlawful because Canada is a bilingual country, there are two languages and each must be allowed to develop, it being understood, in fact, that it is English which develops and French which declines under such a system.

I believe that the real problem in Québec is not the fascination with things American, the fascination with English; I think that it is the lack of methods for controlling, channelling the penetration of English in Québec. And English is established in Québec, that is the problem.

**Mr. Turgeon:** You obviously attach a great deal of importance - as we saw with Mr. Boisclair's question - to the problem of anglicization of immigrants. Furthermore, it is nearly an obsession. Are you afraid, Mr. Dorion, that you may be accused of being hostile

towards immigration?

**Mr. Dorion:** Listen, Mr. Turgeon, on November 26, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste will hand out the prizes it awards each year to people who have distinguished themselves in various fields. This year, among our 12 recipients, there are 3 immigrants, people who were not born in Québec. Two people are receiving prizes and a Bene Merenti de Patria silver medal is being awarded posthumously to Mrs. Alice Poznanska Parizeau. I do not think that this is the behaviour of an organization which is hostile towards immigrants. Some of our members are immigrants. We maintain good relations with many organizations from the immigrant milieu. "No, I do not think that worrying about the anglicization of immigrants is anti-immigrant. On the contrary, it is an attempt to establish good relations between immigrants and Quebecers of French ancestry.

**Mr. Turgeon:** You have given good answers.

**Mr. Dorion:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...Mr. Turgeon. Mr. Libman will go next, followed by Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, their national anthem "O Canada" was sung for the first time at a 19th century celebration of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste. I just wanted to highlight this fact, Mr. Dorion. This evening, instead of getting into a debate or challenging certain points in your brief which I believe are mistaken, a little exaggerated even, or getting into a debate about sovereignty, which I question, I would like, this evening, to see whether it is possible to draw a little closer together. Day after day, the members of this Commission see us... All the members of this Commission, we see the importance of striking a balance, drawing the line between collective rights and collective aspirations, on the one hand, and individual rights and the rights of minorities, on the other. And I think that it would be very worthwhile if this Commission were able to find an equitable way of diminishing, perhaps, the linguistic tension in Québec. I, for one, want to remain in Québec. In fact, if I want to live in an English-speaking province in Canada, Section 6 of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives me the right to move anywhere in Canada. There must be a way to promote or protect the French language in North America, in the North American context, but in a positive way, and without crossing the line, without upsetting the balance. To me, this balance lies in the restrictive clauses in both of our Charters, Section 1 in the Canadian Charter, and Section 9.1 in the Québec Charter. The

balance is the reasonable limit in the case of a free and democratic society. But last year's election showed me that Québec Anglophones cannot accept the current location of this line. There are certain articles in Bill 101 which are unacceptable to today's Anglophone community.

Therefore, in light of all this, Mr. Dorion, and forgetting sovereignty for just a moment, where can the dialogue or rapprochement begin? What things can you accept? For example, how about guarantees for the social services and health-care institutions of Anglophones or guarantees for their school boards? In your opinion, where can we find some common ground? Can we discuss things? Can we discuss, this evening perhaps, this common ground? Or do you in fact believe that Québec Anglophones have no right to even suggest this type of discussion? Could you elaborate on this, should it exist, could we at least try to find some sort of rapprochement, or a type of common ground?

**Mr. Dorion:** Thank you, Mr. Libman. You mentioned at the beginning that the anthem "O Canada" was sung for the first time at the foundation of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal. We recall these episodes with some nostalgia and they also remind us, in fact, that we lost a country. Of course, our predecessors believed that all of Canada would be their country. They became disillusioned. We have figures on the enormous, incredible assimilation which has occurred and is still occurring among Francophones outside Québec. Our brief contains figures which illustrate the severity of the problem. In a way, we now understand that Québec is where the safety of our national identity truly lies. And I would also like to rejoice in your desire for rapprochement and the courteousness which characterizes our discussion this evening. Especially since two weeks ago, *The Gazette* said I was cracked for supporting the opinions that I support. It simply shows how badly informed they are.  
(8:00 p.m.)

Listen, you ask me, what position will Anglophones hold in a sovereign Québec? I think that it would surely be a democratic society. I think that a democratic society takes care of the problems that people have, including even the difficulties that someone whose mother tongue is not French may have functioning in a French-speaking society.

At the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, we opposed Bill 142 concerning social services because it made the reception of services in English a right. We do not agree with that. We believe that in a humane, democratic society, it is perhaps normal that hospitals are asked to take measures so that the people in their care who do not understand the language of the country can be cared for and understand what is being done to them. But we do not like

the idea that this be made a right under the law, because if it were, we do not see why it would not be the case for all the other linguistic minorities. There are also people of various origins in Québec who do not understand French and who speak other languages. Therefore, the idea of special rights is something that bothers us a little.

Of course, we cannot completely erase history. Certain realities must be taken into account. But we do not like the idea of having the Constitution include special rights for a minority, rights that other minorities would not enjoy. I could also perhaps ask my colleague, Mr. de Bellefeuille, to add to what I have just been saying. Mr. de Bellefeuille?

**Mr. de Bellefeuille (Pierre):** Concerning the position of Anglophones in a sovereign Québec, we have all taken note, I believe, of the recommendation made to this Commission by the Union des artistes, which mentioned the possibility of reciprocal agreements. A sovereign Québec could make reciprocal agreements with Canada or with the Canadian provinces which could hold that the conditions of Anglophones in Québec be aligned with the conditions of Francophones in the Canadian provinces. We can obviously...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Oh! Excuse me. One moment, please. It is agreed that there will be no applause during the sittings.

**Mr. de Bellefeuille:** Obviously, this reciprocity can be seen two ways; to simplify things a little, either in a positive way or in a negative way. The negative way: reciprocal agreements could be used to restrict the rights and privileges of Québec Anglophones. We would rather view reciprocal agreements, reciprocal treaties, in a positive light, as a means of enhancing and improving the conditions of Francophones in Canadian provinces, aligning the conditions of Francophones outside Québec with the rights and privileges enjoyed by Anglophones in Québec.

But I would like to add something, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, to the first part of Mr. Libman's comments, when he spoke of individual rights and collective rights. I believe, Mr. Chairman, in all modesty, though I'm not a lawyer, that this very debate, this issue is often badly worded, in the sense that, in my opinion, there is no conflict between individual rights and collective rights.

Since collective rights are of the same type as individual rights, since they are derived from individual rights, conflicts in fact arise between different rights. Take, for example, the right of an individual or community to defend its language and culture, and, on the other hand, the right of an individual to make any sort of

commercial sign, in any language he or she desires. These are two different rights. Québec made a choice in this matter. It is a political choice.

One can think whatever one wants of the choice Québec made. We approve of this choice, but it is not a conflict between the individual and the community. Moreover, as far as this matter is concerned, I share the opinion of Mr. Rémillard who said to this Commission that seeing conflicts between individual rights and collective rights was a dangerous thing to the extent that those who like to simplify could end up believing that in order to defend collective rights, one must limit or restrict individual rights, which is not the case.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Another question, on the Chair's time.

**Mr. Libman:** I just want the line of the first question I asked to be clarified a little. Instead of talking about reciprocity, because there is a big difference between the fact that 500 000 Anglophones live within a 40-kilometre radius of downtown Montréal, there is a strong concentration... If there were English Quebecers dispersed throughout Québec, the situation would be more like the situation of Francophones outside Québec. The question I asked is the fact that there are fears, in the Anglophone community, these articles of Bill 101 which I mentioned, there are concerns about Bill 107, with no constitutional guarantee. People are afraid. Is there somewhere, is there some place for a rapprochement between the fears which currently exist in the Anglophone community, and the position which you have presented this evening in your brief? Is there any chance of making a small concession?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have one minute to respond.

**Mr. Dorion:** This is a vast and complex question, Mr. Libman. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste has always taken into account the views held by the Anglophone community concerning the type of activities which we engage in. We have, at times, made changes to our position, but of course we must not, on the pretext of harmony, skirt the real problems in Québec. There is, within Québec, a conflict which is in the process of resolving itself in a way which is sometimes painful for those involved, in the same way, moreover, the problem, the existence of the problem, for the last two centuries, has been painful for the majority. Nonetheless, I think that, in a civilized society, there is room for civilized dialogue.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank

you, that is enough. We now give the floor to Mr. Ouellet, and then to Mr. Nicolet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Dorion, you probably won't be surprised that, in my opinion, your brief paints a fairly selective picture of the French language and culture's struggle to survive in Québec. In passing, I would like to point out that one of the distortions is the attempt to malign Mrs. Monique Bégin, a true Quebecer and an extremely capable woman, a respected minister to whom we owe our universal health-care and hospitalization system, which is still free of charge. Canadians and Quebecers still receive free health care thanks to her determination. I would like to begin with a sentence on page 38 of your brief, which speaks of this great Francophone adventure, which began on the banks of the St. Lawrence four centuries ago. The great Francophone adventure is obviously far from over. It not only carries on, but is a resounding success in Québec, and through its strength and vigour, in several Canadian provinces outside of Québec.

Aside from the six million or so French speakers in Québec, there are also one million French speakers outside the province, and more than one million English speakers who have learned to speak French, who are bilingual and who help protect and promote French throughout North America. You state - it's the title of page 8 of your brief - that everything is a question of numbers. Don't you agree that it is in the best interests of Francophones not only to have a strong position in Québec, but also to be able to count on support from outside Québec? Especially since, as you say, there are fewer and fewer Francophones outside Québec. You have given us the figures, they are nothing new, they're the same ones that are always being quoted in regard to our supposed assimilation. But, as you say, everything is a question of numbers. There are one million French speakers outside Québec and another million Canadians who have learned to speak French, who believe in bilingualism in Canada, and who respect Quebecers' desire to live, work and play in French.

I wonder why, all of a sudden, you believe that sovereignty is absolutely necessary to ensure our survival. The Québec people's will to survive has always prevailed. Why, all of a sudden, have you lost confidence in its ability to prevail in the future?

**Mr. Dorion:** Well, Mr. Ouellet, we think that what will prevail in the future is the current situation in Canada, in other words the galloping assimilation of the Francophone population outside Québec. In the revised version of our brief, the bound copy, which we sent to the Commission but that apparently hasn't been distributed. Do you have it, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes.

**Mr. Dorion:** Mr. Ouellet doesn't seem to have the same version. He has a preliminary version. Like many other organizations, we sent a preliminary version.

**A voice:** It must have got lost in Ottawa.

**Mr. Dorion:** In it is a table on assimilation, or, as you call it, Mr. Ouellet, supposed assimilation. It seems that this phenomenon is a bit more prevalent than you seem to think. In the table, we compare - it's on page 4 of the revised version of the brief - the number of people in each province in the 1986 census who declared that they were of French origin, with the number of people who declared that they spoke French at home. The difference between the two, expressed as a percentage, gives the rate of disappearance of French, which was 27 % in New Brunswick. This means that 27 % of the people who said they were of French origin no longer spoke French at home. French is no longer the language spoken at home. And New Brunswick was the province with the lowest rate.

The rate was 70.9 % in Ontario; 75 % in Manitoba; 89.4 % in Saskatchewan; 88.8 % in Alberta; 91.5 % in British Columbia; 82.8 % in Nova Scotia; 85.4 % in Prince Edward Island; and 93.1 % in Newfoundland.

So, when you speak of supposed assimilation, Mr. Ouellet, and say that these figures are nothing new, of course they are nothing new. Moreover, they get worse and worse with each census. But we can't quote you any better figures, they were the only ones given to us by Statistics Canada.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that the mechanism of assimilation is extremely simple. For example, Charles Castonguay has shown that, in Manitoba, 45 % of all young Franco-Manitobans who marry select non-Francophone partners, and that 94 % of the children of these couples have English as their mother tongue. These statistics are highly reliable, they come from the federal government. This means that almost half of the community disappears in this way with each new generation, and the half that remains goes on to suffer the same fate in the next generation. It is really a phenomenon of galloping assimilation.

(8:15 p.m.)

Is there anything else I can add on the assimilation of Francophones outside Québec? It is an ongoing phenomenon, and therefore, the figures we have now will get even worse in the future. Of course, as you pointed out, Mr. Ouellet, there are Anglophones in Canada who have learned French. At one time, it was all the rage to learn French, perhaps it still is. But people who learn French as a second

language, cannot be as, how shall I say, cannot be motivated or relied on to the same extent to defend the culture. They learn it because it is useful or necessary, perhaps, but is it evident that they will pass it on to their children? You certainly can't rely on it. The knowledge of a second language is not something that can be passed down to the next generation. It is not automatic. I speak several languages myself, but nothing says that my children will be multilingual. It's not a sure thing. The chances are greater when it's your mother tongue, unless, of course, you are unlucky enough to be a Francophone living in British Columbia. That's the problem.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Excuse me, Mr. President. I have studied the table you mention, but there is a phenomenon that you cannot deny: the French fact in Ontario does not correspond to these figures at all. Something is wrong. You said that these figures are from the federal government. It's another example of "when something goes wrong, it's always Canada's fault." I tell you, this table doesn't correspond to reality. I can't accept this data. I'm not saying that you have fudged the figures, just that there's something wrong with them. It doesn't correspond to reality.

**Mr. Dorion:** Well...

**Mr. Ouellet:** But, aside from this, you are proposing that Québec be sovereign and you are saying that it must assume full responsibility in the area of immigration. Professor Prémont spoke, just a moment ago, of the situation of the young people who go out, watch TV, hear English. The North-American reality, we'll leave out English Canada for the moment - according to you they are the villains and shouldn't be considered - but let's look at the others, the Americans. American TV stations will continue to exist, they will not go away. In a sovereign Québec, what guarantees do you have that the same number of immigrants, the same quality and quantity of immigrants, will be attracted to Québec and will be integrated into the French-speaking milieu as you hope? That they won't be influenced by the North American English-speaking reality?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Ouellet, your ten minutes are up. Do you want another 30 seconds, if I subtract it from the time allotted to the Chair?

**Mr. Dorion:** O.K.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** But you'll have it taken away somewhere else.

**Mr. Dorion:** I believe, Mr. Chairman, that

French will have considerable appeal when it is the only official language in Québec. I also talked about the symbolic aspect of sovereignty. By this, I mean that, in the classroom, when a child from Chili or Vietnam looks at a map of the world in his atlas and sees that the country in which he is living is called Québec and is a different colour, I think that he will realize — and this is just one element among many but it has a great deal of symbolic value — that it is his country. And he will do what the children of immigrants have done around the world in countries that welcome immigrants and where there is a strong American influence, where everyone listens to American music like we do, they will learn French all the same because French is the language spoken in their country.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Mr. Larose?

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say to Mr. Dorion that I am beginning to get sick and tired of these people who, with positions of responsibility, are let loose on our society to cause incredible harm. Their name may be Donderi or Pallascio, it doesn't matter, but at some point, an organization like yours, like other organizations in Québec, has to put a stop to it! Because racism has to be nipped in the bud. In a fragile society like ours, if we don't maintain good relations with our neighbours and harshly condemn those who erect barriers, we're going to be in big trouble. You said that you found this attitude deplorable; I believe that you must condemn it strongly, because it makes no sense at all. Secondly, and I think there is some difference between us on this point, I disagree totally with Mr. de Bellefeuille when he says that in a sovereign Québec, we could bargain with the rights of one group to enhance the rights of another. I want to be very clear on this point with my friend, Libman. It's not true that Anglophones will lose some of their rights in a sovereign Québec. They are a founding people and have historical rights. However, we cannot allow the rights of the English-speaking minority to infringe on the rights of Francophones.

We will be clear on this point. A sovereign Québec will create comfortable conditions for the majority, the minority, the aboriginal peoples and the cultural communities. Since the rules will be clear for everyone, I think that it will be a calm and peaceful place to live. People who are obsessed with using the defense of individual rights as a strategy to attack the majority — I don't believe them when they say they are just defending their individual rights — must be denounced. It is not true that a country can become a democracy while denying the rights of the majority, it is simply not true!

An organization like the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste must stand up and be counted on this subject. Sovereign Québec will be a country with rights, that respects all rights, majority rights, minority rights, and the rights of the cultural communities and aboriginal peoples. It seems to me that we've come full circle on this point. Have I made myself clear? I'm a little tired of hearing people jabber away about these phony questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I imagine you'd like to comment on this. But first, I'd just like to remind people that it's very nice of them to applaud but that our rules forbid applause. So please don't force us to clear the room. Mr. Dorion, would you like to comment?

**Mr. Dorion:** My Lord, I thought I was going to be answering a question, but what we got from Mr. Larose was more like a cry from the heart. Two weeks ago, I was at the annual meeting of the Canadian Jewish Congress, where I had the opportunity to explain the views of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal on ethnic relations. I think that we understood each other quite well. I think that, in Québec, there will be an improved understanding of the historical rights of the majority, which in turn will lead to a peaceful dialogue on the place of minorities in Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Next, I give the floor to Mr. Hogue. But, before you begin, let me warn you that there are seven minutes left in this group of questions.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, you know that my introductions are always short. Ha, ha, ha!

**Voice:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Hogue:** So, I'll skip the introductions and go right to my comments.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue, could you please adjust your mike, I can't understand what you're saying.

**Mr. Hogue:** Oh! I wanted to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that you know that my introductions are short; but, in any case, I'll skip the introductions and go right to my comments.

I am pleased, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. President, with Mr. Larose's comments. I was almost ready to do the same thing, but quite often he comes first. I didn't like the position presented by Mr. de Bellefeuille at all. It disturbed me a great deal. I would like to thank Mr. Larose, not for losing his temper, but for bringing up the problem.

Since I have a little under seven minutes, I'll start on page 4, Mr. President, where you say that an overwhelming consensus was reached after the failure of Meech Lake, that nothing is working any more, and that it is clear that we can't expect English Canada to provide the solution to our constitutional problem. Then, on page 5, the second word at the very top, you write that our quest for freedom was a common thread. I, myself, would replace the word freedom with the word autonomy. It's more a question of autonomy than freedom, at least in my personal lingo and philosophy. I have the impression that we have freedom but that we are always looking for more autonomy.

Next, on page 6, you say... just a second, I'll find it, that nothing has changed 123 years later: Québec is still a province just like the others and, on the next line, that our efforts have all been in vain. In other words... Yes, it was all in vain. French Canadians still haven't been assimilated 121 years later. I was elected as a Conservative MP in the Outremont riding, which elected Liberals for 121 years. Things do change. But 123 years later in the history of Québec, nothing has changed for Francophones, when in fact, we are stronger than ever. Québec continues to be a province that is not like the others.

Next, on page 8, there's something that made me raise an eyebrow because I believe it's a fundamental point. "Rep by pop." I am using your expression, "rep by pop," which you use in a historical context, and you say that everything is a question of numbers.

So, Québec after separation. Everything is a question of numbers. Is the same phenomenon - I'm asking you this naively, almost innocently - is everything a question of numbers? Could we, through immigration and the problems we are aware of, could we experience the same phenomenon that we recognize and recognized in the past, which has not, however, materialized for us?

I am almost finished, Mr. Chairman. In my opinion, Mr. President, the more globalization we experience, the more we will need to attach ourselves to a patch of land somewhere where we can feel at home. What difference does it make if the borders are bigger or smaller if it is your home? I am a federalist and a French Canadian. Why, after so many years, do you no longer have faith in things remaining as they are? I have listened closely to your comments and opinions, but I would like to ask the same question with a different dialectic.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We'll have two responses, and we'll take some time allotted to the Chairman. So, first I would like to give the floor to Mr. de Bellefeuille, who I mentioned at the beginning, and Mr. Dorion can then respond.

**Mr. de Bellefeuille:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to say in response to the question that the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal believes that Québec must tangibly demonstrate its solidarity with Francophones in the other Canadian provinces, and that politics is not necessarily a matter of being nice or having faith. Politics is a question of bargaining power and reciprocal agreements, and I am surprised that a long-time trade unionist like Mr. Larose would have such a poor understanding of the realities of practical politics.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dorion.

**Mr. Dorion:** Yes. Well, Mr. Hogue, you stress that 123 years later, the French fact is very strong in Québec. I'm quite prepared to agree with you that, indeed, the French fact is currently very strong in Québec, but we must not assume the attitude of the man who, upon learning from his doctor that he has cancer, decides not to take it seriously because he has enjoyed good health for 60 years or so. I believe that we must recognize that a completely new situation has arisen in Québec, which we have never faced before: the risk of Francophones becoming a minority. The danger is not yet imminent for Québec as a whole, but it is very imminent on the island of Montréal. I think that if we do not take measures to ensure that the people who come to live here become Francophones and help maintain and increase our majority instead of reducing it, I think that we will face an extremely dangerous and probably irreversible situation.

**Voice:** But my question was on the choice...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you very much, Mr. Prémont, Mrs. Mériméau, Mrs. Gagnier, Mr. de Bellefeuille. Thank you for advancing the work of the Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:30 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:40 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Let's get back to work. We will now move on to the Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Association. The sitting will last one hour. I would like to present Mr. Pasquale Minicucci, the President. Mr. Minicucci, would you please introduce your colleagues?

#### **Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Association**

**Mr. Minicucci (Pasquale):** Mr. Co-chairman, on my right is Me Consolato Gattuso, member of

the board of directors, and Mr. Michael Stante, member of the board of directors.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You now have ten minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Minicucci:** Thank you, Messrs. Co-chairmen and distinguished members of the Commission. As president of the Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Association, I'm pleased and honoured to be here this evening to present our brief, entitled "A Prosperous Future".

The debate on the constitutional future of Québec will have profound consequences for all the people of Québec. The Québec Italian community recognizes the importance of asserting its role in this context.

The Italian community of Québec has existed for more than 100 years, and has over 250 000 members today. The Québec Italian community is, by far, the most integrated in all aspects of Québec life. This dynamic community has shown its ability to integrate in and adapt to social, political and economic changes, to all aspects of Québec life, functioning as easily in French as in English, yet maintaining deep respect for and close ties with its cultural and linguistic roots.

The Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Association, commonly known as the CIBPA, represents an important segment of the Québec Italian community, namely businesspeople and professionals of Italian origin. The CIBPA was founded in 1949 and now has more than 600 members in Québec. It belongs to a national federation uniting the various CIBPA divisions across Canada.

Our association's objective is to bring together businesspeople and professionals of Italian origin to create a business network, while remaining true to our Italian roots. The CIBPA offers its members various services and information related to the complex and diverse issues of the business world. One of its chief objectives is to examine and study the various economic issues that will have a direct or indirect effect on the welfare of our members and the Québec Italian community in general. Now, given the importance of our association and our community in Québec society, it's part of our duty and responsibility to express our concerns and our recommendations regarding the constitutional future of Québec.

Our brief presents a summary of the major points of importance to the Québec Italian business community, without going into needless statistics and tables. We have no doubt that the Commission has heard many of those.

The Commission has a heavy responsibility: rather than focusing on past failures, it must concentrate on the aspects that have made Québec and Canada the envy of the entire world.

As a business association, we want to make sure that the Commission will take into consideration the need for continued economic growth and prosperity and for a standard of living that continues to rise for all Quebecers. In order to do this, Québec must maintain a stable political and social climate that will reassure investors and ensure the influx of capital needed to sustain the Québec economy. Confidence in our government, standard of living, and stability are factors that foreign investors look at, and foreign investors are essential to Québec, given our limited sources of capital. In addition, Québec must attract and keep immigrants. In view of the Québec's decreasing birthrate. To counter the decreasing birthrate, Québec will have to attract immigrants from different countries, making sure that their fundamental rights and freedoms are respected and protected. It will also have to ensure a positive immigration rate, and keep our manpower in Québec. The Italian community is the third largest community in Québec. We wish to take part in all stages of constitutional renewal and in any possible negotiations – and we insist on being consulted – so that the Québec Italian community can continue to help build a prosperous Québec. We are here to stay.

In conclusion, the Québec Italian business community will not support the option of sovereignty for Québec because of the economic weakening and instability it would create. Whatever efforts are expended by the various groups submitting briefs, whatever the Commission's final results, this debate must be settled quickly with all the serenity Quebecers have always shown. A thought from the preliminary report of the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, in 1965, applies as much to the present situation as it did in 1965. The report states that in any critical situation, extreme positions take the spotlight, casting into the shadows the less exciting or more nuanced opinions, even when those are held by the majority of people. Together, Québec and Canada have built a country that is the envy of the rest of the world, a country which, with its subtleties and its diversity, serves both sides very well. The CIBPA is convinced that by keeping this in mind, we will ensure, in Québec and in Canada, a prosperous future for ourselves and for our children.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Minicucci. Mrs. Harel.

**Mrs. Harel:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to welcome you this evening. We both live in the east end of Montréal; the Italian community is concentrated there and I represent part of the population...

**A voice:** Mrs Harel...

**Mrs. Harel:** You tell us the Italian community is large, with a quarter of a million people. As you speak before the Commission tonight, do you feel you are representing it in its entirety?

**Mr. Minicucci:** Madam, we are a business and professional association. We are a very important part of our community. Therefore, the viewpoint of our brief is mainly an economic one. The National Congress of Italian Canadians also submitted a brief that was along the same lines as ours, and it dealt with aspects of society and culture with respect to the future.

**Mrs. Harel:** So, I'm given to understand that you speak on behalf of the Italian business community... because that would have really surprised me, since we are so interrelated. Almost all of us have, in our families, nieces, nephews that have married into the Italian community. The opinion you expressed about sovereignty can't... I don't think you, yourself, believe that it's necessarily the opinion of the entire Italian community. I find that...

**Mr. Minicucci:** The opinion we expressed, which is mainly on a business level, is that sovereignty could create uncertainty followed by instability, and for us, one of the objectives expressed in our brief was continued economic growth in Québec and an improved quality of life for everyone.

**Mrs. Harel:** Well, this morning, or this afternoon rather, the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Montréal said before this Commission that Canada does not work any more, and described how Canada is sinking into a recession, with overly high interest rates and restricted credit, which means that unemployment is rising, businesses are having more difficulties, bankruptcies are increasing, and so on, and painted a rather gloomy picture of Canada's economic situation.

In reading your brief, first, I was surprised on page 5. I know it's a matter of perception. But you perceive the 1976-1980 period as a gloomy one, you judge it severely in economic terms and you say that between 1981 and 1988 there was an about-face, as if that was due to the referendum. Before the referendum, things were going badly, and after the referendum, since it was a "no", things went well. That really surprised me coming from businesspeople, because I can tell you that things started to go badly in my riding during the recession. When the interest rates hit 22 %, thousands of people were laid off, especially in the east end - 8 000 - and this continued in a growth period that kept unemployment at 9 %; now it is 11 %. Therefore, I don't really see how you can maintain that before the recession things were

better, and that during and after, things were bad.

**Mr. Minicucci:** The only way I can respond to that is that Québec or the east end of Montréal is not the only place experiencing the impact of the current recession. It is being felt everywhere in Canada and in the province of Québec, throughout all the different industries.

**Mrs. Harel:** Do you really believe that Canadian policies having nothing to do with the current economic situation?

**Mr. Minicucci:** What do you mean?

**Mrs. Harel:** For example, Canadian policies with respect to interest rates and the Bank of Canada's monetary policy, Canadian policies with respect to the concentration of investments in Ontario, etc., do they have nothing to do with our current economic reality?

**Mr. Minicucci:** We're not here to debate the Bank of Canada's policy with respect to interest rates for fighting inflation or whether the Canadian dollar should be at 88 or... Based on what we've seen, on the history of the Italian business community, what we see, what we feel is that the sovereignty option gives us cause for concern... because we've seen... We want to ensure that the province retains stability and confidence. In the 1976-1980 period, before the referendum, we saw what happened, after there was an about-face. That's a fact.

**Mrs. Harel:** Yes, but is that fact not attributable to one of the worst recessions we have seen since the thirties, the depression years, and which obviously affected the entire world economy?

I would regret it if we didn't discuss an important subject you raised in your brief, immigration. I'm still amazed that you can think Québec does not attract immigrants, the good ones, because you seem to be afraid that a sovereign Québec would not be attractive to immigrants. There is some sort of confusion here. Are you aware that year after year, there are more than 140 000 applications for immigration in the various offices, either the offices of Québec agencies abroad or Canadian embassy offices. If Québec says "no", it's often or usually to immigrants and dependants of immigrants with very high levels of education, with academic training, with very high levels of professional training, who could come here and take jobs that educated Quebecers with considerable specialized training could hold. And I rather agree with you that this whole immigration policy should perhaps be re-examined. Because if that were the case, how do you explain that it's in Québec that immigrant

investors — you are no doubt aware that it's in Québec that immigrant investors have mostly set up shop — maybe because they are protected by laws like the Securities Act, and that the rules of the game are changed by Ottawa, precisely to counter the tendency which was to set up shop in Québec first.

**Mr. Minicucci:** I think the main objective is... we're not saying that Québec does not attract immigrants, on the contrary. What we meant is if we go into uncertain areas, we may not be able to attract the number of immigrants we want, given our low birthrate. That's it. This is the goal we are aiming for.

**Mrs. Harel:** I feel there is some confusion about the matter of immigration. It is largely sustained by the idea that if the agreement that Ottawa refuses to sign was signed, it would give us more powers than we now have. But you know that even with an agreement like the one that has been shelved, we still wouldn't have over 50 % of the choices to be made with respect to immigrants, because over 50 %, more than the majority of immigrants are refugees, are under federal jurisdiction, and supposedly fall in the category of family reunification. The other half, over which Québec has some say, consists of independent immigrants and immigrant investors, but even here, Québec must refuse, year after year, more than 100 000 persons. Perhaps this immigration policy should be re-examined and focus on objectives other than those that keep away people who would fill jobs that people here are capable of filling.

I don't think we need to be afraid that we won't attract immigrants. If you knew how many people from other countries come to see an elected representative every day, because they want to practise here as doctors, engineers, or lawyers, and to practise here means belonging to a professional corporation; it's more complicated.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Harel, your time is up. Do you have anything to add, sir?

**Mr. Minicucci:** No.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No? Alright. I'll now give the floor to Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank you for the brief you presented and the chance to discuss it with you. I understand that formulating a judgment on the situation must have been difficult, because you consider that the status quo is unacceptable and must be changed. But once the process of change

has started, it has to stop somewhere. I don't want to stop there; I want to go all the way to sovereignty. But you, you don't want to go as far as sovereignty, you want to stop somewhere.

You stop at a plan to amend or revise the constitution, as the current vocabulary has it. What amazes me the most is that you are businesspeople. You live in Québec; you are Quebecers. You know what happened; you bask in our political atmosphere, and when you present the Commission with what you think the solution is, you say we need to negotiate another plan to amend the constitution that would include the five conditions of the Meech Lake Accord — it's spelled out on page 11 — along with other powers the Québec government could negotiate. So the solution, for you is to go back to the negotiating table and submit a project whereby Québec would ask that English Canada recognize the five conditions of the Meech Lake Accord, as well as other powers.

Two questions come to mind, and maybe you can guess what they are. First, why do you imagine that English Canada, which has just said no to those five conditions, would now say yes, because we would add even more demands to the demands they have already rejected? And second, what other powers do you think Québec should demand?

**Mr. Minicucci:** In terms of additional powers, I would answer your question as follows: The aim of this Commission, I think, is to listen to Quebecers and to find out what the people of Québec want for their province. The Commission will then make a recommendation. It's up to the Commission, really, to decide what the additional powers are. We, as a community, have said no to sovereignty because it causes uncertainty. On the other hand, we encourage the Commission, as soon as a recommendation is made, to see to it that the Québec government takes that recommendation, follows up on it and settles our position quickly. I think that is the most logical way to proceed.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Do I have 30 seconds, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I still have 30 seconds. So, what makes you think that we could now convince the people who have just said no to the five conditions, that we could represent those conditions to them, in addition to other powers... What makes you think they would say yes?

**Mr. Minicucci:** Because, as a business association, we know that nothing is etched in stone. It is through negotiation, in a spirit of compromise, negotiation and tolerance that two

parties normally reach a compromise, an agreement that is favorable to both of them.

I would like to stress, however, that if sovereignty is the ultimate decision of the Commission... The Italian community has been here in Québec for 100 years or more and we are a very important part of this province. We are completely integrated, and we will stay and continue to help build a province or a strong country for all Quebecers. On the other hand, we would prefer that Québec enter into a new agreement of renewed federalism, or a new pact. That is our position.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Mr. Bouchard, I'd like to point out to the members that we now have five minutes left. Mr. Libman, you're next.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I warmly welcome our guests, the Italian community, the most trilingual community in Québec. Surveys published recently in *Le Devoir* showed that cultural communities, or 93 % of the cultural communities, are federalist. This figure should be stressed.

But my question is a little along the same lines as Mr. Ouellet's, when he spoke with the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste earlier. Do you think that Québec, as an independent country, as an independent, monolingual French country, will be as attractive to immigrants as it is now as a province of Canada?

**Mr. Minicucci:** I think that Québec has always maintained its policy of openness toward all immigrants. I don't see why that would change, and that is one of our recommendations.

**Mr. Libman:** Yes, but would it be as attractive for immigrants to come to an independent Québec, as to Québec as a province in a larger country, Canada...

**Mr. Minicucci:** One thing is certain, minority groups in Québec are the best treated. And I don't see why that would change, in any way.

**Mr. Libman:** Just the question of attraction. In Italy, for example, the attraction of going to the country of Québec... On the other hand, Canada is a larger country; do you think that there would be the same attraction to go to Québec if it were a country?

**Mr. Minicucci:** You're asking me to make speculations when there are a lot of variables, and I can't do that.

**Mr. Libman:** O.K. A second question, then. Several months ago, several clauses in the political project of the CECM were considered to

be slightly discriminatory. How far are you willing to go to help the French language flourish in Québec? How far are you willing to go? Or perhaps, if I put the question another way, what are your solutions to the problems in Montréal's Catholic schools, to the presence of other languages in the halls or on the school grounds?

(9:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Minicucci:** Mr. Libman, we are a business association. This is not a problem we have studied or dealt with. On the other hand, as indicated in our brief, upholding fundamental rights and freedoms of minority and cultural groups has always been a cornerstone of Québec society and it must continue to uphold that policy. I don't know if that answers your question.

**Mr. Libman:** O.K.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman? Mr. Béland?

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I would like to thank you for your willingness to continue with us, no matter what course we take, because I think we really need you, and you can see that the problem facing us is not an easy one. What you say is true, you will be among those called upon to resolve that issue, but you have given us a signal that you would prefer this issue not to be settled by sovereignty. I must confess that, like Mr. Bouchard, I have some difficulty following you because, like many people who have come here, you're saying: The whole constitutional question causes uncertainty and that's not good. Like many others - I was going to say, like almost everyone - you come here and say: You must act quickly, but sovereignty is not the answer because that too will lead to instability.

That's where I have trouble following you because we would make a clear-cut choice. We would say: Fine, we have settled the constitutional question. But you're saying: This clear-cut choice that would settle the constitutional question is still a source of instability, that it would result in a weakening of the Québec economy and a reduction in the quality of life for all Quebecers. Those assertions are very significant, and have very serious consequences, but that's not what anybody here wants. I don't know what studies you base these findings on. I would like to hear you on this. I've looked at the bibliography included with your brief. Obviously, if those are the newspaper articles you read, I understand your conclusion. But have you read other articles? Have you done other studies?

**Mr. Minicucci:** We did studies in the time that was given us, which was unfortunately a

little compressed. The position we took is truly representative of the opinion of our Association. The government's decision, if it opts for sovereignty, in our opinion, will not end uncertainty. There will still be many questions even after that decision is taken, such as how to settle the debt, and so on... lots of things. So in terms of studies, unfortunately, the time... We did not make an in-depth study. We're perfectly willing to do one and submit our projects later. But really, we represent the opinions of the business community. That's what...

**Mr. Béland:** But you have confidence in the alternative, which is to go back to the negotiating table. You're businesspeople. You know that during negotiations, what works is when the balance of power... Do you think that after the last experience, the whole Meech Lake thing, that the balance of power between Québec and Canada would be more favorable?

**Mr. Minicucci:** The question is hard to answer because, since the Accord fell through, there has been a lot of talk, a lot of thinking on both sides. The Italian business community believes that the recommendations contained in the Accord and other things... that Canada and the rest of the country would be ready to listen and then negotiate.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue?

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I would really appreciate not having to cut you off. You have five minutes.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Hogue:** Ha, ha, ha! Give me more time, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'm sorry, that's the way things are.

**Mr. Hogue:** I find your report interesting and naturally I fully share your approach and your position. I'd like to ask you two questions that are not covered in the report. You speak of native-born Italians or Italian Canadians who live on Canadian soil. What do these people, who are not from Québec, say about the current situation? What do they say about the status quo, when they see what happened in Québec in 1982? My second question - keep it in mind - what do Italians say among themselves, across the country, since you're businesspeople and

communicate easily.

My second question, would you like to tell us a little about what is happening in Italy? When I took my Italian courses, when I was doing my studies in Cleveland, there was a professor from the north of Italy, and she had married an Italian from the south, and she told me then that this was an unusual situation, because - this was in the sixties - Italians from the north and Italians from the south almost never married. But she married him and they lived in the United States and got along well together. And she also talked to me about Italian regionalisms. She told me that the spoken language in Rome was purer than the language spoken in the other regions. Anyhow, they lived together, as Italians. How do they adjust to that whole situation, Italians, in beautiful Italy? That is my second question, and you can take the rest of my five minutes to answer it.

**Mr. Minicucci:** This is outside the purview of the Commission.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, but that's my question.

**Mr. Minicucci:** Mr. Hogue, first of all, the CIBPA, our association, which represents the Québec Italian business community, has limited ties with our country of origin, because we are Québec businesspeople. On the other hand, we remain close to our origins, our culture and our language. There are members of our association and our community who continue to do business with Italy, and we know that Italy today is one of the countries that make up the Big Seven, which is an economic force. But as for your other questions, it is not our position to answer them, because we are Canadians, most of us, and Quebecers. Most of us were born here, therefore, what happens in Italy is outside of our concerns, and we...

**Mr. Hogue:** There are regional differences in Italy.

**Mr. Minicucci:** I imagine there are.

**Mr. Hogue:** You have some idea, and those people live together with a certain number of conflicts without wanting to separate. That's my question.

**Mr. Minicucci:** From what I understand...

**Mr. Hogue:** I am not making a connection between Canada and Italy.

**Mr. Minicucci:** No, but you're asking me a question about Italy and I'm not a sociological expert. I am of Italian origin, but I am a Quebecer. I am not in a position to answer you. As for the other question, about the Italian

Canadians, the other members of our federation, our brief, our study concerns Québec, concerns Quebecers, Italian Quebecers, and it is limited to and focuses on them, and I cannot give you an answer about what is happening. I know that the Italian community is flexible, open, and is willing to compromise and live alongside other cultural groups. This means that presumably, they would like to have our problems settled, to see economic growth encouraged and the standard of living raised for Quebecers as well as the rest of the country.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good. Perhaps we will delegate you. Thank you, Mr. Hogue. Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, Italian is one of the languages of work in Québec; we have several thousand union members of Italian origin, especially in the construction sector, and it is a pleasure to have you here this evening.

I will take up the remark made by Mr. Béland. I find that you keep company that is rather, well, not dubious, but let's say pretty uniform in their views, judging from your bibliography. It would be a pleasure to send you CNTU documents, particularly with regard to the present state of the economy, which attempt to illustrate that, compared with other societies within Canada, Québec is reasonably well equipped to assume its own destiny. It seems to me that this contradicts some of the articles you may have read.

At first I was surprised by your summary... That's where I had started. You say in the last paragraph that the Italian Canadian community will not support the option of sovereignty for Québec. But back on page 12 of your text, I thought I detected an important nuance where you say: Nevertheless, our association would not accept total sovereignty... I got the impression that you could adapt very well to a sovereignty that would not be the equivalent of walls surrounding Québec. Especially with the reasons you give, that it would mean instability and a weakening of the Québec economy.

Let's suppose that on the contrary, it would represent stability, that by assuming its collective identity as a country, Québec solves the problem. "Denzio", the fact that instead of weakening the economy by taking control of the main economic levers, we do not experience in Québec the impact of the economy or the management of the economy of Canada, because, perhaps I can point out that the recession of 1981-1982 was very different from the current one. The 1981-1982 recession was a recession of the Western world. The one we are going through now is a made-in-Canada recession. Mr. Hogue does not like it when I say that it's

his government, because he says that it's not under his government; it's Mr. Crow, but let's say that these are people who do fraternize to some extent. But the recession we're having in Québec is a recession imported from Ottawa.

If we took control of the levers, say, the monetary policy, or the fiscal policy and if we could use it for the economic development of Québec and thereby strengthen our economy rather than weaken it, I take it that you would be in agreement with such a sovereignty. Am I deluding myself?

**Mr. Minicucci:** We do not doubt that Québec has economic power, that it could, possibly, with its economic power... We are aware, as we said before, that our bibliography... our time was too short to do all the research.

On the other hand, if I understand your question, one must look at the context here because we talked about federalism, which has many definitions. The only concern of the Italian Canadian business community is that sovereignty as such will create uncertainty outside of Québec, and that will cause us problems; it will weaken the Québec economy because of an "overflow" of capital; this concerns us. We are conveying the concerns of the Italian Québec business community. This is what... I am sure you have studies that can support various arguments and I am sure other people can bring in various economic studies to present other arguments. We saw it from a rather pragmatic and logical point of view.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up, Mr. Larose, I'm very sorry. Mr. Maciocia.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minicucci, Mr. Gattuso and Mr. Stante, I thank you on behalf of the Commission for the presentation of your brief. I am aware of the importance of your organization, and I think it was essential that you be here this evening to present the views of the Italian business community on a possible constitutional change for Québec within Canada.  
(9:15 p.m.)

I will say from the outset, it's not easy. I understand your nervousness, and the Commission members probably noticed it a little. We understand that it is not easy to sit before a commission and be comfortable and relaxed, especially when it's your first opportunity to do so. I understand perfectly, and I understand your hesitation with respect to this situation.

Since I am of Italian origin, I am also very familiar with the views of that community and, as I said in my opening speech, the Italian community is probably the one that is most integrated into the Québec population. I believe this is true beyond the shadow of a doubt. It

really is the most integrated community. Today we can say with pride - I said it the other day and I repeat it today - we are proud of our origins, but we are also proud to be Quebecers. When you say in your brief that our association... It is very clear to me that you are taking a Canadian federalist position. That is clear, and we respect it. But, like Mr. Béland or Mr. Bouchard, I believe, I don't remember which, was saying a moment ago... You were saying, for example, that Québec must have additional powers, apart from the five conditions of the Meech Lake Accord.

It is certain that those five conditions were not easy to negotiate, because there was probably reticence on the part of certain English-speaking provinces. When you say that tonight, I imagine that, like other organizations, you are speaking of additional powers in areas like manpower, education and immigration. Québec needs those levers for the sake of progress, for the economic prosperity of Québec. You say, "Go negotiate those additional powers, and the question you were asked was, 'How?'". I am convinced that your reason for including this in your brief is that opinion has been changing since the Meech Lake failure. The opinion, not only of Quebecers, but even of Canadians in general is no longer the same. Québec was probably not taken seriously at the time of the Meech Lake Accord, because it always said that it was a basis for negotiation and we probably could have negotiated at that time. But, personally, I believe that Québec is now taken seriously within Canada, particularly English Canada. And that, I believe, is the reason why you say it should still negotiate, because, like all the other organizations said earlier, whether it's sovereignty or renewed federalism, negotiation is necessary.

When you say you fear for the stability, even the efficiency of the Québec economy if the move is towards sovereignty, I understand. Because something should be changed and we know that the possibility was already there for coming into our own with something, probably... Things could even be better, but it's still an adventure. We really don't know whether it would be for the better. And this is where I understand your brief. It is in this spirit that I can understand and accept it. That is why I'm telling you, and I repeat to the members of the Commission, that some of the answers Mr. Minicucci has given tonight should not be taken... Because I understand the nervousness and the emotion he was feeling this evening, because, you see, he is a young member of the community, it's true, but this is a very, very good thing. I can say this in all honesty. And I would say that the Italian community, as I said before, has integrated wonderfully into Québec society.

I am proud of one thing, among others, and

it is on page 8 of this brief - and it does you and your organization great credit, Mr. Minicucci: Our community will remain in Québec, whatever the Commission ultimately recommends, hence the importance of our participation in this debate. It is clear that the Italian community is in Québec and will stay in Québec. The only question I want to ask you is this one. You mention on the last page of your brief, I believe, that the Italian community is the third largest one in Québec and say: We wish to take part in all stages of constitutional renewal and in any possible negotiations - and we firmly insist on being consulted - so that the Italian Québec community can contribute its share in order to go on building a prosperous Québec. In what way do you see the Commission and the Québec government benefiting from your contribution and consultation?

Mr. Minicucci: Thank you, Mr. Maciocia, for your kind words. I think, as you said earlier, that the community is by far the most integrated of the cultural communities and that we are present in all aspects of Québec life, political, economic and social. We have important leaders in various organizations. In concrete terms, we and the CIBPA can contribute a lot to the government in an advisory capacity. We have people in the field, like yourself, and we encourage strong participation and representation from our community in future negotiations. I think we have contributed a great deal towards building a Québec that is very prosperous today and we want to continue to help build a province, a future country that will remain the envy of the entire world. It is with that goal in mind that we wish to take part in the entire process. Obviously, it depends on how the government will consult us. We are willing to put all the assistance and resources we have at its disposal.

Mr. Maciocia: I think my colleague Mr. Dauphin would like to ask a question, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Dauphin.

A voice: Yes, sir.

Mr. Dauphin: I would like to extend a welcome to the Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Association. Like my colleague from Viger, Mr. Maciocia, I spend all my nights with a member of your community, since I married an Italian, that is, a Quebecer of Italian origin, six years ago.

A voice: From the south or the north?

Mr. Dauphin: She is from the south of

Italy.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Dauphin:** Moreover, she is very well integrated because she married a Quebecer of pure stock: me. But she is integrating me, because I've been making my own wine for six years. Real Italian wine.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Dauphin:** I've been making my own Calabrian sausages too - they're very good, by the way - I've gained 20 pounds.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Dauphin:** Having said this, I also agree with your argument that it is the largest cultural community in Québec and it is a very well integrated one. But I would also express a wish. It is that, whatever recommendations the Commission makes, and of course, whatever recommendations or decisions are made by the government and the people of Québec, my wish is that you also demonstrate openness. I note that you advocate that federal ties be maintained, a renewed federalism, but it would be my most heartfelt wish that our cultural communities, specifically the Italian community, join the majority of Quebecers who are Francophones, in our future as Quebecers together. Now, you mentioned in your brief that federalism has many advantages in our present system. Could you tell us some of them?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You don't have much time...

**Mr. Minicucci:** I share your tastes in Italian cuisine. As for the advantages, as I mentioned at the beginning of our brief, we did not want to get lost in figures or tables showing what the retained earnings of Québec imports or exports are, and so on. What we have seen, and this is based in fact, is that Québec and Canada have lived together since 1867; there may be nuances, but I still think that Canada as such and Québec as such, together have a quality of life that is extraordinary, which is the envy of the entire world, and I am proud to be a Quebecer, and we are certain that as soon as this relationship is modified so that it can satisfy everyone, it will continue to be productive.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up. There is still some time for the Chair. I would like to thank you, Mr. Pasquale Minicucci, Mr. Gattuso, Mr. Stante. I think all of us have friends of Italian origin, and we appreciate your community, I think you know that. But thank you for your contribution to our

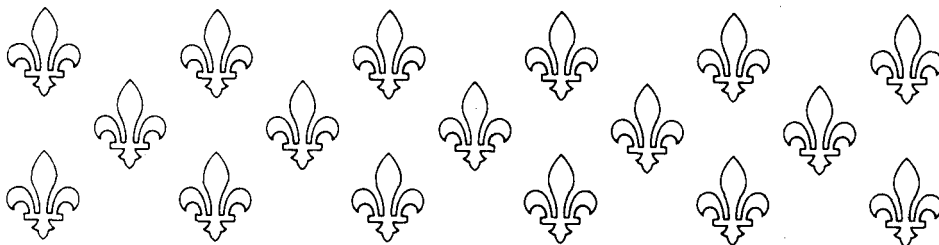
Commission on the future of Québec and thank you especially, sir, for speaking so straightforwardly. Thank you.

**Mr. Minicucci:** Mr. Chairman, on behalf of all the members of the Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Association, and the Italian community, we thank you for welcoming us so warmly tonight, and we wish you all the best.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** For the Commission members, just a few brief messages. First, the bus for Québec City leaves at 10:00 p.m. from the Sheraton Hotel. Second, the Commission resumes its public hearings on Tuesday, November 20 in Saint-Hyacinthe. Third, we will return to Montréal on the 21st. If you have friends who would like to attend the hearings, they are welcome. Fourth, our first trip outside the city is ending tonight and I would like to thank the staff of the Commission. I think it did a good job of organizing everything. Applause is allowed only in exceptional cases.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

(End of sittings, 9:28 p.m.)



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# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



**COMMISSION ON THE POLITICAL  
AND CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE  
OF QUÉBEC**

**Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau**

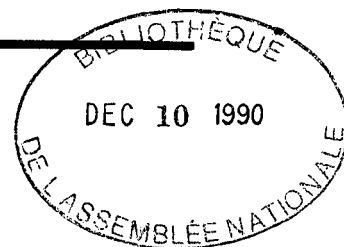
**Saint-Hyacinthe, Tuesday, November 20, 1990**

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**QUÉBEC**



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 Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant  
 Mr. Richard B. Holden  
 Mr. Gil Rémillard  
 Mrs. Christiane Pelchat  
 Mr. Jacques Brassard  
 Mr. Denis Lazure  
 Mr. Yvon Lafrance  
 Mr. François Beaulne  
 Mr. Lucien Bouchard  
 Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue  
 Mrs. Pauline Marois  
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 Mr. Jacques Proulx  
 Mr. Marcel Beaudry  
 Mr. Jean Campeau  
 Mr. Roger Nicolet  
 Mr. Charles Messier  
 Mr. Michel Charbonneau  
 Mrs. Cécile Vermette  
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- \* Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

St-Hyacinthe, Tuesday, November 20, 1990

## Hearing of organizations and individuals

(9:41 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Ladies and Gentlemen, if you would please take your seats, the sitting is about to begin. I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. I remind you that the mandate of the Commission is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to formulate recommendations in this regard.

Today the sitting will be devoted to hearing the following individuals and organizations: at 9:30 a.m., for one hour, the NDP of Canada, Québec section; at 10:30 a.m., for 30 minutes, Mr. Michel Dupuis; at 11 a.m., for one hour, the Conseil culturel de la Montérégie; after adjournment for lunch, at 2 p.m., the Corporation professionnelle des médecins vétérinaires, for one hour; at 3 p.m., the Association des retraités de l'enseignement, secteur Longueuil, for 30 minutes; at 3:30 p.m., for 30 minutes, Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau; at 4 p.m., for 30 minutes, the Citizens of Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville; at 4:30 p.m., Mr. Yves Beauchemin, for 30 minutes; at 5 p.m., for 30 minutes, the Association des anglophones dans un Québec indépendant; at 5:30 p.m., Mr. Jacques Saada. After adjournment for supper, at 5:30 p.m., Mr. Maurice Giroux, for 30 minutes; at 8 p.m., jointly for one hour, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil and others, the Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-Hubert and the Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-Yamaska. We will adjourn at 9 p.m.

I remind you that, since this is a Parliamentary Commission, in fact a broadened one, according to its rules, as in Parliament, the audience may not applaud or make noise of any kind. If it does, even inadvertently, and this has happened in the past, we will have to ask you to stop applauding or the audience will unfortunately have to leave.

The rules for the discussion of briefs are as follows: for a brief to be presented in one hour, the person who presents it has 10 minutes. There are 10 minutes for questions and answers from the Chair, 10 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 10 minutes for the Opposition parliamentary group and 25 minutes for the members who have registered, each of whom has five minutes. For 30-minute presentations, there are five minutes for the Chair, five minutes for each of the two parliamentary groups, 10 minutes for the members who have registered, each of whom has five minutes and, lastly, five minutes for presentation of the brief.

We begin our sitting this morning with the presentation of the Québec section of the New

Democratic Party of Canada. Mr. Phillip Edmonston, MP for Chambly, is presenting the brief, which has been distributed to the members, who have read it. Mr. Edmonston, please introduce the people accompanying you and then use the 10 minutes allotted to present the brief.

## NDP of Canada, Québec section

**Mr. Edmonston (Phillip):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Mr. Raymond Guardia, who is Secretary of the NDP of Canada-Québec; here on my left is Mr. Raymond Lusignan, who is a voter in the Chambly riding.

I am very happy to be able to present this brief to you today, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission. It is a particular pleasure for me because it was some 20 years ago that I decided to come to Québec and the first town I settled in, for three years, was Saint-Barnabé-Sud, which is 16 kilometres from Saint-Hyacinthe. I lived there for three years.

Before discussing the brief in detail, I would like very much just to draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that, when I saw the composition of this committee, of this Commission, I wanted it to be the most representative possible, and I recognize that you did your utmost to include just about everyone, with, I think, just one exception, which I find an extremely serious one. The future of Québec is very important, particularly for the elderly, the senior citizens, the people who belong to the various senior citizens' associations. As a politician, I listen quite a bit to my constituents and one thing I have often heard from the elderly are questions that showed their anxiety over the future of Québec. And when I think of the last Referendum, in the 1980s, the last one, I have the impression that it was the elderly, the elders, who were manipulated by fear, manipulated by all sorts of dubious declarations. And I just want to ask you whether it would be possible for you to take special steps to listen to and include the elderly before the work of the Commission is completed, to make a special effort to listen to these people, because they represent our heritage, and, especially because they are people who are going to vote in a future referendum and who are very concerned about what is happening today and will happen in the near future.

The brief that I submitted is entitled **Québec-Canada: la fin du beau risque, oui ou non?** When I mention "le beau risque", I am, of course, referring to the expression of the late René Lévesque. I personally do not believe that "le beau risque" is over. But I do believe that it is a few minutes to midnight and this is our last

bet. All the money is on the table, and it is now or never.

I will begin the presentation of the brief I have submitted to you by stating that the question of self-determination was decided by the NDP 50 years ago. I am therefore somewhat surprised when I see a whole political party that has finally understood that Quebecers are entitled to self-determination. The NDP has accepted this as a basic principle since 1940. I don't know whether I am the first Anglophone to say this to you, but I believe that Québec can become independent and I am not convinced that it would be a catastrophe. I am not convinced that it would mean a \$ 0.50 or \$ 0.60 dollar. I have seen elsewhere a whole country that agreed, that obtained independence. I believe that Québec can become independent and can be a viable country.

Studies are cited in the brief I have submitted to you. There is even the example of Norway and Sweden, which became independent. They had a rather acrimonious debate, but they became independent. A number of small countries have done very well after their independence, with their specialized work force and with a well run economy.

However, if Québec wants independence, I see two obstacles: the first is the complexity of negotiations, the question of the federal deficit, the question of what we are going to do with those poor federal civil servants, what we are going to do with federal buildings and infrastructures. The second obstacle is a psychological one. We have used terms. I myself have used the term sovereignty-association. Chairman Bélanger has used it. It seems that certain political parties believe they hold a copyright on it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I apologize for interrupting you, sir, but what you say is not correct. Please stick to the facts, Mr. Edmonston.

**Mr. Edmonston:** Alright. I apologize, Mr. Chairman. I am just going to comment about what I believe sovereignty-association is according to my own definition. To me, sovereignty-association means giving Québec the powers that will provide it with autonomy in the issues that we, in Québec, decide are essential for us.

I can tell you that I am not here to give you a long shopping list of powers that we must repatriate because I am neither an economist nor a constitutional expert, who would be qualified to do that. But what is essential is that Québec have power over programs that it considers important for two reasons: for the sake of efficiency and to be able to administer the programs at a lower cost and tailor them to our needs here in Québec and, secondly, to protect

our culture, to protect our language.

I mention psychological obstacles because, at the present time in Québec, we would like to see a profound change. The federal government is an old jalopy, isn't it! Another politician pushing a car as an example, a great big old wreck. It's so costly that it doesn't meet today's needs, with a driver in whom I don't have much confidence. What they need is another vehicle that really meets our needs better. And that's it. The various polls have shown that this is called sovereignty-association, this is called autonomy for Québec, or independence. People have had enough. They want a profound change.

Can a new Canada be created without separation, without independence? I think so. The way, I believe, is to... Look at what happened with Meech Lake. The federal government used Meech, had Meech using loaded dice. Meech was destined to fail because we negotiated at 11 o'clock. Even union leaders never negotiate at 11 o'clock. We have to negotiate one on one and not as suggested by other political parties, one on four regions or one on five regions. One on one.

Secondly, we have to use section 43 of the Constitution, which refers...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Edmonston, your 10 minutes are up. You would perhaps like to conclude with a relatively brief sentence.

**Mr. Edmonston:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. We can use section 43 of the Constitution, I believe, to have negotiations with the federal government and, lastly, I think that by using the "notwithstanding" clause, we can protect our culture and our language for the future. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Edmonston. We begin with the block of questions for all members, and the first person registered is Mr. Libman, who will be followed by Mr. Béland and Mrs. Campbell Steer.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Firstly, I am just a little confused about what you suggest. Are you suggesting a form of sovereignty-association for Québec?

**Mr. Edmonston:** I am suggesting a radical decentralization of Québec-Canada power, and I am suggesting that we negotiate with the federal government using section 43 of the Constitution to have a better relationship between Québec and Canada. Your question: Do I now advocate independence? No. When I refer to sovereignty-association, is it the sovereignty-association advocated by the Parti québécois in the 1980s? No.

**M. Libman:** D'accord. Mais si vous voulez, parlons un peu de cette question de souveraineté-association. On a beaucoup discuté la semaine dernière de la meilleure position possible pour négocier avec le gouvernement fédéral. Pensez-vous vraiment, pensez-vous que le Canada voudrait un tant soit peu négocier avec le Québec si le Québec se déclarait souverain? Qu'est-ce que le Canada y gagnerait si le Québec avait déjà déclaré sa souveraineté?

**M. Edmonston:** Je pense que si le Québec déclarait sa souveraineté, faisait un référendum et s'orientait vers la souveraineté, les négociations seraient très difficiles; le Canada considérerait probablement qu'il ne sert à rien de négocier quoi que ce soit. Toutefois...

**M. Libman:** Vous pensez, donc, que nous ferions mieux de voir à ce que le système fédéral fonctionne, que nous essayions de négocier dans le cadre du système fédéral?

**M. Edmonston:** Si vous essayez de...

**M. Libman:** Je vous pose la question.

**M. Edmonston:** Oui, je comprends votre question, mais je pense que ce que vous me demandez, c'est: Pouvons-nous arriver à une sorte de fédéralisme renouvelé? Non.

**M. Libman:** Pourquoi?

**M. Edmonston:** Parce que, actuellement, les dés sont pipés contre le Québec.

**M. Libman:** Pourquoi?

**M. Edmonston:** Principalement à cause de la façon dont la Constitution a été établie, de la façon dont le Lac Meech a été constitué, parce que nous avons dû négocier à onze, ou à dix ou à neuf personnes. Je crois que nous pouvons avoir un Canada... Je pense que nous pouvons avoir un Québec fort, qui décide de ses besoins et qui exécute des programmes qu'il conçoit et gère, mais je ne crois pas que nous pouvons le faire simplement en disant que ce qu'il nous faut, c'est juste un fédéralisme renouvelé. À mon avis, pour reprendre cette analogie avec l'automobile, si vous permettez, rapidement, c'est comme de dire: Tout ce qu'il vous faut, c'est une mise au point et votre moteur va mieux tourner. Il nous faut un autre véhicule. Nous avons besoin d'un changement pour gérer plus efficacement, sans être indépendants, les programmes qui relèvent de nous.

**M. Libman:** O.K. Parce que... Juste pour terminer, M. le Président. Votre mémoire soulevait un point intéressant, que les membres de la Commission semblent avoir laissé passer en

plusieurs occasions: parce que 95 % de la population canadienne ou les gouvernements représentant 95 % de la population étaient en faveur de Meech et que c'est finalement juste l'interprétation de la clause de société distincte qui a, de fait, tué l'accord, ne pensez-vous pas que nous avions atteint un consensus et que c'est seulement la formule qui était très mauvaise? (10 heures)

**M. Edmonston:** La formule était très mauvaise, première des choses. Et je ne veux pas que vous pensiez que c'était à cause d'une seule province. On pourrait croire que c'étaient Wells et Filmon, mais je suivais de très près les négociations du Lac Meech, en tant que député, et je peux vous dire que j'ai assisté à des rencontres dans l'Ouest et que la population était dans une grande mesure contre le Québec. Mais les dirigeants politiques ont avalé la pilule, ont fait des concessions et, dans bien des cas, je pense, à l'encontre de leur population... Et je dois ajouter qu'en tant que nouveau membre du caucus néo-démocrate, arrivant au sein du groupe avec l'opinion que les gens étaient plutôt contre le Québec et le Lac Meech, puis changeant d'idée et votant en faveur de l'accord compte tenu de certains ajouts, j'étais fier. J'ai senti que nous pourrions négocier avec le Canada anglais.

**M. Libman:** Si vous dites que ce sentiment existe, comment pouvez-vous alors...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'm sorry, Mr. Libman, but your time is up. Mr. Béland is next.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Edmonston, I want to thank you. Your brief is easy to read, it is simple and I think it really takes us to the heart of the problem. However, when you say in your brief that the only two options that can be implemented by Québec are the status quo or a unilateral declaration of independence, I must say that, for the past few days here, since we have been hearing the briefs, we have heard just the opposite. People have told us that the status quo pure and simple is difficult to accept. People tell us that outright independence, as was proposed here, is not acceptable either. We are well aware that we have to live with others. You say, however, that these are the only two constitutional options open to Québec. But, later on, you say that you are confident that we will be able to negotiate. Therefore, you are not for the status quo and you are not for maintaining the present situation either. And to encourage us toward a renewed Canada, you tell us that there is section 43. There is the Canadian Constitution. Aren't these the same rules that applied during all the Meech Lake negotiations? And, to give us hope, you say

that it could be interpreted more broadly. How do you respond to that?

**Mr. Edmonston:** No, Mr. Béland. Meech Lake required the unanimity of all the provinces. This is why I say that the dice were loaded. Section 43 is a one-on-one negotiating tool. That makes all the difference. I can tell you that in referring to the status quo, I wanted to say whether, by using the Constitution, by using existing structures, Québec can still negotiate and obtain what it wants to have. I call that the status quo, but I do not want to arrive at a status quo. I want to arrive at something better than what we now have. But we have that sort of constitutional arrangement in which it is extremely difficult to have major changes without independence, except by using creativity, by using section 43, by using the "notwithstanding" clause and, particularly, by negotiating one on one. If we cannot negotiate one on one, it's all over.

**Mr. Béland:** But how can we negotiate one on one?

**Mr. Edmonston:** Firstly, section 43. After this Commission, Québec will decide, I hope, what powers it considers essential. Mr. Bourassa and our Québec government will negotiate directly with the federal government. I believe that, with the present Constitution, we do not need to negotiate with eight or nine other individuals or provinces.

**Mr. Béland:** But what you are saying is that we must become one before doing that? This is how I understood what you are saying. I am trying to understand you correctly.

**Mr. Edmonston:** But I believe... Yes, yes, but I believe that we are one. We are one. According to section 43 of the Constitution, we can do it. But I do not want to say that section 43 is a cure-all. I believe that negotiations will be difficult... in which section 43 will not play a part. We cannot make administrative agreements, but I can tell you that, with Cullen-Couture, I no longer understand what the federal government wants to do because that is an administrative agreement that should have been applied long ago. But in regard to manpower training, as you have already noted, I feel that it is essential and we must have that for immigration. We must have... At the federal level, immigration opened the door but closed the wallet. And we are the ones who are placed in a difficult position because of federal action.

**Mr. Béland:** You're starting your grocery list.

**Mr. Edmonston:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Béland, I am sorry but the five-minute periods are short. Your time is up. Mrs. Campbell Steer, who will be followed by Mr. Beaumier.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Mr. Edmonston, I also liked your presentation because it was clear. It takes a stand and we can discuss it together. What I also liked is the fact that you talked about a system that could be described as a federal system, but not a status quo like the one we now have. And secondly, at least you propose something. It could work. At least it's worth some discussion to see whether your negotiating option can work and, once again, negotiation before or after independence is negotiation between the same partners. However, I would like to know whether you can elaborate somewhat on the role that you see for our representatives. That means elected Québec, and those things within the new federalist system that you see.

**Mr. Edmonston:** I believe there will be a place for Members of Parliament, even if I have a conflict of interest in saying that. I think that, with certain powers for Québec, for example, residual powers that will remain in Québec and certain repatriation powers, powers for Québec with an opting-out effect. Opting out is extremely important. There may still be Members of Parliament, especially MNAs, who will be able to vote for things that affect Québec and for things that affect Eastern Canada as well.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Mais est-ce qu'il ne faudrait pas que vous ayez le même genre de situation? Nous étudions l'asymétrie par rapport au symétrique.

**M. Edmonston:** Oui.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** «Les représentants élus du Québec pourraient voter pour des situations différentes des leurs.»

**M. Edmonston:** Oui, je comprends.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Y voyez-vous un problème ou pensez-vous que ça peut vraiment fonctionner? Vous siégez à la Chambre des communes.

**M. Edmonston:** Je ne vois pas de problème, parce que le Québec est asymétrique depuis longtemps. Je peux vous dire que M. Duplessis en a eu assez du gouvernement fédéral et qu'il a instauré son propre... son heu... impôt sur le revenu, je m'excuse, c'est ça. Et nous avons eu de même, pendant un certain temps, nos propres programmes dans d'autres domaines. Je suis né aux États-Unis, où j'ai vu certaines régions,

certaines États choisir de se désister, ou avoir des pouvoirs combinés et jouir d'une certaine, je dirais, souveraineté dans certains domaines... Par exemple, la Californie, qui ne représente que 10 % des États-Unis, peut réglementer le contrôle des émissions polluantes plus strictement que le gouvernement fédéral afin de répondre à ses propres besoins géographiques.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Donc, vous dites qu'il y a un précédent, qu'il y a eu un cas avant et que vous voyez une possibilité d'examiner la situation.

**M. Edmonston:** Je le pense. Si le cas de Grande-Baleine peut être négocié entre le fédéral et le provincial, je pense que dans certains domaines, on pourrait coopérer et travailler ensemble, garder des députés à Ottawa et maintenir le Canada.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Merci.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaumier, who will be followed by Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Edmonston, I have tried to summarize and extract the main idea of your document. What you propose is, in fact, renegotiation of the federative pact. That's it. For 10 years, we have tried to make concessions. The Constitution has been watered down in so many ways. Can you tell me in a few words, if we begin the process you propose, how much time it will take to get results?

**Mr. Edmonston:** I personally believe... I cannot give you a specific timetable, but if we say to the people with whom we want to negotiate that they have two weeks... I have never started negotiating by saying: You have two months, you have two years. I negotiated with a number of companies in the past on behalf of consumers, and I was prepared to negotiate until almost all the parties were exhausted, but we arrived at an agreement in the end.

I believe that, if we want to take a step backward by saying: Listen, Meech Lake didn't work, therefore all negotiations are destined to fail. I don't believe that. I can tell you that we have a country with creative people, people of good will, I believe. Here, around this table, I am proud to have witnessed the calm and sincerity of the people who have spoken. As a Quebecer, I am proud and confident, and I think we can do it. There are people here who will call me naïve or confused, or worse, but I think we can negotiate. But the question is: Will the rest of Canada listen to us? Will they take us seriously? And even to that question I answer "yes" because one of the direct consequences of

this Commission is not the consensus we are seeking, is not the fact that there are very well known people on the Commission. It isn't that. It is that this sends a very clear message to the rest of Canada that there is now a clear consensus here in Québec that profound changes must be made. Neither Mr. Wells nor Mr. Filmon nor other Canadian provinces can deny that. I feel that this is one of the most important consequences of this Commission.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Dufour, who will be followed by Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Dufour:** I must say, Mr. Edmonston, that I am, first of all, very happy to hear you ask yourself a number of questions. I am pleased to hear you question the division of our assets, the division of our debt and the eventual value of the dollar. No one can accuse the NDP of using scare tactics. When we talk about these things, we always have that reaction. My question is a very specific one. You say, on page 7, that you are much less pessimistic than those who have appeared before this Commission about Canada's willingness to negotiate. I know that you travel across Canada. Your colleagues, with whom you discuss these matters a lot in Ottawa, come from all the provinces. I would like to hear you change somewhat the perception that has been conveyed since the start around this table that Anglophones will in no way want to discuss the matter with us.

**Mr. Edmonston:** I am an Anglophone and a Quebecer. I am a Member of Parliament. I am part of an Anglophone caucus in which I insist that French be spoken. I believe that if I, in an NDP caucus, can manage to convince them that Meech Lake is important and that I manage to do this with others, that they have to vote in favour of this (I have to admit that I have not spoken with Elijah Harper, for example, but with my fellow caucus members), I think we can succeed in regard to the rest of Canada. I admit that it is not easy to sell Québec elsewhere. I saw very few of the members of the present federal government go out West to sell Meech Lake. I have to admit that. I went out West. There are problems in explaining Québec elsewhere when you say: Listen, Meech Lake is important. The people in the West respond: Yes, but the Parti québécois says that there is nothing in Meech Lake. But people out West say: This doesn't increase our wages; it's for you that we want Meech Lake to pass. But if it's for us, the people in the West, why does Québec have five conditions? In any case, it was not easy, but we succeeded in the NDP caucus in convincing 94 % of those who represent the population, the politicians, the women politicians, and I think that they can still be convinced, particularly after the deliberations of

this Commission.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is an excellent answer in my view.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Poissant. If he takes the five minutes, he will use up all the time. If not, it will be Mr. Holden's turn.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you have answered part of my question, Mr. Edmonston. I was going to ask you, you say that your national party was for Québec self-determination even 40 years ago. I believe this was well before we even thought of it!  
(10:15 a.m.)

Now what is happening today? What is your party's reaction in Canada, not your own personal opinion, but what the people of Canada in your caucus are saying about Québec?

**Mr. Edmonston:** Firstly, they are still asking: What does Québec want? The whole of Canada has always asked that and I turn the question around and ask: What does Canada want? Qu'est-ce que vous voulez? Parce qu'à mon avis, il y a, dans ce que le Québec veut et ce que le Canada veut un grand nombre de similitudes et de "similitudes" comme on dit. Je vais vous donner quelques exemples. The NDP has long been an extremely centralizing party. I am proud of that because it has counted quite a bit on the government to help the underprivileged. This is why we have health insurance today. This is why we have support for the cooperative movement in the West. And I am certain that Mr. Béland will recognize that the NDP has always been very close to the cooperative movement.

But this trend has changed over the past few years. I know that Quebecers still see the NDP as very federalist, very centralizing. But this was not always the case and is especially not the case today. I can tell you that... What does centralizing mean today? The GST, the Goods and Services Tax, to be levied on books and all other aspects of culture because the federal government needs money. And this comes from a government that is supposed to defend Québec's interests, a government that is supposed to be a decentralizing force. You can't get more centralizing than that.

Free trade has a centralizing effect. And I was here in Saint-Hyacinthe yesterday for discussions on agriculture. And farmers have a lot of problems with free trade. The reforms, the so-called reforms, unemployment insurance. The NDP was against that but it can't be more clear than for unemployment insurance. This was a way for the government to really centralize what it was doing.

Therefore, in response to your question, the

NDP, what it often asks me is: How can we convince Québec that we as social democrats and Quebecers as social democrats are on the same wavelength?

And as regards national issues, we, too, would like to have an increasingly decentralized government. And with the election of Bob Rae in Ontario, when Bob Rae talks about a Canada that is less restrictive in all regards, this is exactly what he is talking about.

**A voice:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Holden, you have half the normal time left, if you want to use it.

**M. Holden:** Je voulais juste saluer M. Edmonston. Nous pouvons tous les deux remonter à l'époque où il défendait les droits des consommateurs et avait organisé un piquet de grève devant la compagnie d'assurance Allstate. Je l'ai défendu parce que Allstate voulait obtenir une injonction contre eux et nous avons perdu. J'espère que nous ne perdrons pas le Canada comme nous avons perdu en cour, M. Edmonston.

**M. Edmonston:** Oui, je ne vais pas mâcher mes mots aujourd'hui. Je suis un peu inquiet du fait qu'à la suite de ma présentation, les tenants du fédéralisme parlent de moi en bien. Je ne suis pas sûr d'avoir bien fait mon travail ou d'avoir été très clair. J'aurais pensé que mon intervention irriterait les deux parties.

**Le Président (M. Michel Bélanger):** Tout n'est pas fini. Il reste deux groupes qui veulent vous poser des questions.

**M. Edmonston:** J'ai hâte de voir...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It is now time for the group of questions from the Government party. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Allow me, first of all, to say, on behalf of the government, how pleased my colleagues and I are to be in the Montérégie region today. I have with me my colleagues from Montérégie, Mrs. Christiane Pelchat, who is part of this Commission, as you know, Mr. Charles Messier, of Saint-Hyacinthe, and Mr. Khelfa, from Richelieu, Mr. Yvon Lafrance, from Iberville, Mr. André Chenail, from Beauharnois-Huntingdon. They are MNAs from Montérégie, an historic region, an extremely dynamic region from a cultural as well as an economic standpoint. We are particularly pleased to be in Montérégie today.

Mr. Chairman, we are here to listen to the various representations. I was very pleased to hear Mr. Edmonston's explanation of his very

interesting and very clear brief, which proposes a renewed, asymmetrical federalism, if I may call it that, since Québec would have certain powers that other provinces would not necessarily have. It is a federalism in which, Mr. Edmonston believes, we can keep the rooms without necessarily destroying the whole house, and I wholeheartedly agree with him. But this asymmetrical federalism you propose, you tell us that we have to negotiate with Ottawa to get it. Not with the 10 other partners, but with Ottawa alone. You even say that union leaders do not discuss matters with all these people at the table.

Then you say: You negotiate with Ottawa. And you refer to the Canadian Constitution of 1982. You tell us: It contains a section, section 43, that could enable us to do that. But section 43 of the Constitution says that, to change certain sections of the Constitution that concern only one province, in regard to language or territories for example, you have to have the agreement of that province, and that could be negotiated between the federal government and the province. But be careful, Mr. Edmonston, this is not the cure-all, as you yourself said a moment ago, and some people during Meech saw in this section the possibility of doing all sorts of things. I would simply like to tell you that, unfortunately, from a strictly legal standpoint, this section would not enable us to do what you propose in your brief. Do you have any other means?

**Mr. Edmonston:** When I told you this isn't a cure-all, I was aware of the limits of this section. This is why I asked you to consider other means, such as administrative agreements with repatriation of certain powers, especially the residual power that Québec would retain and the power to opt out.

I think the federal government will accept the power to opt out of the program and I will tell you why. The government is composed of politicians and, in order to win, they have to at least respond to the needs of each province, and in the Province of Québec, even Mr. Mulroney can count on seats. If the Prime Minister does not respond favourably to Québec in future negotiations, he will lose a huge number of seats in Québec.

**Mr. Rémiard:** Mr. Edmonston, you said a moment ago that you were a Quebecer and one with great conviction, as I know, since, during Meech, we worked together informally and I greatly valued our relations. You are perhaps more of a Quebecer than many of us because you chose Québec. You came here as an immigrant; I know you are a Quebecer in your heart and by conviction.

In regard to immigration, which you referred to a moment ago, you mention

administrative agreements between the federal government and Québec. Could Mrs. McLaughlin make a speech tomorrow asking Mr. Mulroney to sign such an agreement with Québec so that we have the minimum required to control our immigration and to integrate our immigrants into our society?

**Mr. Edmonston:** This has already been done in that I have already asked for the same thing in a statement to the House of Commons. I should tell you that others, the Bloc québécois and the NDP, have asked for the same thing. We can work together as Quebecers, despite our different political allegiances, Mr. Minister. We can do this because we have a number of things in common. As Quebecers, we know that we have to do certain things through consultation and this has already been done. But I agree that you ask me this question because you will see the NDP and Ontario do more and more things in tandem with Québec, because they must.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mr. Edmonston, you say that you are not in favour of independence. On the one hand, you are not in favour of the status quo. You are also not in favour of renewed federalism. You favour a radical decentralization of federal powers, to quote what you said in response to Mr. Libman.

I would like to know how the NDP of Canada will be able to sell decentralization as such in the other provinces.

**Mr. Edmonston:** It is interesting when a federal party wins in a province like Ontario with a provincial party. It has a tendency to enlighten many people and we begin to see to what extent the federal government can harm us with programs that are poorly administered, that are not tailored to the needs of the various provinces. There has been a great change in the NDP in this regard since the election and just before the election of Bob Rae in Ontario.

Now, in answer to the question about whether we can continue just negotiating in the framework of renewed federalism, I don't think so. I believe that renewed federalism, like federalism itself, that means, as I told you, a small tune-up for a car. I feel that we have to change automobiles, but I am not yet ready for independence and I emphasize the word "yet". But I swear to you that if Quebecers, if we voted for independence in a referendum held tomorrow, I would stay here because this is my country, this is my province.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** The objective is, nevertheless, to favour a radical decentralization of powers. What I would like to know is how you think the

other provinces would react in this eventuality?

**Mr. Edmonston:** In answer to that question, I believe that we have much in common with the other provinces. When I travelled in other provinces in the West, for example, I found that the people there also wanted to have programs they can really tailor to their needs. For example, in regard to immigration in Québec, I don't think there is a serious problem in the other provinces. The administration of justice, for example, opting out, residual power. There are some people who say: Yes, the residual power that Québec will have, we would like to have that too. OK. What will that do? Some people have said: Yes, but that will Americanize Canada. I'm not certain of that. What I think this will do is make the programs much more coherent for the provinces, which will design and apply them.

We cannot keep those we now have. Madam, it isn't efficient and it's extremely costly.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, when you completed your presentation, there was little time remaining and you concluded by saying that you were in favour of maintaining the "notwithstanding" clause in order to protect linguistic rights.

**Mr. Edmonston:** Without a doubt, but not just to protect linguistic rights. The "notwithstanding" clause was given to us by people in the West. It is there especially to protect us from the excessive zeal, if you will, of the federal government in some of its interpretations of the law.

I feel that corresponds correctly to the parliamentary system in which we parliamentarians can, in a way that changes society, use the "notwithstanding" clause to reflect how society has changed, to reflect what we consider most important in a society that is constantly evolving.

People have said to me: Yes, but we have to have a foundation like the Charter of Rights, that cannot be abridged, that cannot be amended, like the United States.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now proceed with a block of questions from the Official Opposition. Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, I, too, would like to mention that permanent members on the Commission from the Parti québécois are accompanied by colleagues from Montréal: Mr. François Beaulne, Mrs. Luce Dupuis, Mr. Denis Lazure. We are, of course, very pleased to have joined you all here in the region which, we must not forget, is that of "les Patriotes".  
(10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Chairman, like many other neo-

federalists, Mr. Edmonston possesses, in very large measure, what we used to call the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity, in favour of the renegotiation of a federative pact. However, you and others who share your way of thinking do not always manage to provide us with what businesspeople call a feasibility study for such a project. You say that we have to negotiate one on one, as equals, with the federal government. But the Minister, I believe, was very clear about this. I need not repeat what he just said about section 43, for it is obvious that if section 43 could be interpreted as you claim, it would have been used in the case of Meech. It would have been used to pass Meech. This was not done because section 43 does not have that meaning.

You talk about opting out, the right to withdraw, but I would like to point out to you that section 40, which provides for the right to withdraw does so in only one situation, that is, when the federal government encroaches on the powers reserved for the provinces, not in any other way. Powers cannot be recovered from the federal government in this situation, through the right to withdraw, not even in Meech. Meech provided for withdrawal in only one sense, to stop the encroachment of the federal government on Québec's powers and jurisdictions. The opposite cannot be accomplished by opting out.

As for administrative agreements, I would like to point out that there are several of them, but they have broken down. They don't work. They can't be applied. Therefore, negotiating one on one seems to me to be extremely difficult in regard to the federative pact, virtually restricting us to negotiation among 11 parties, as provided for in the Constitution. But you reject this automatically, saying that it won't work. And I think you are right, for a survey conducted last July by the *Globe and Mail* showed that 60 % of English Canadians were pleased that Meech had not been ratified. So it is false to say that 94 % of English Canada was in favour of ratifying Meech. It isn't true. It doesn't reflect reality or the opinions of English Canadians at all. We therefore have to return to negotiations among 11 parties. If we prove to you, Mr. Edmonston, that we have to go back to negotiating the federal pact among 11 parties on the basis of the amending formula, will your opinion change?

**Mr. Edmonston:** My opinion will change if, as you said, I see that there is no possibility of accomplishing this in such a Québec, through a cumbersome process, a process in which the dice are loaded. I do not share your opinion. Perhaps because I am not as well informed as you, but I believe that, in Meech Lake, it was Mr. Mulroney and the other participants who decided on unanimity. They themselves decided on unanimity instead of 7-50. They accepted it, as

they did a three-year period, precisely to ratify Meech Lake. I will not be able to accept such an approach in the future because I believe, Mr. Brassard, that it would be disastrous for Québec.

On the issue of opting out, there is an expression that says: When Parliament is in power, neither your life nor your wallet is safe. I believe that, with a majority government like the one we have at the federal level, with a Prime Minister who claims that he is defending the interests of Québec and Quebecers, we have nothing to lose in the short run, and I cannot give you a timetable because I, myself, know that it is very difficult to give you one, to specify a week, a month or a year. I believe we have nothing to lose in seeking negotiations, and if we see that the negotiations are going nowhere, then I want Québec to ask the question, and not a question in which a "yes" means a "no" and a "no" means a "yes". A clear, precise question. And I will go out and vote confidently and proudly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Lazure.

**Mr. Lazure:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is with respect that I address my MP from Chambly...

**Mr. Edmonston:** I am fortunate.

**Mr. Lazure:** ...and old buddy. It started out well. You began your brief on the right foot, sir. An independent Québec could very well join the ranks of those small nations. At the beginning of your brief, you demonstrate that an independent Québec would be likely to make it. But, unfortunately, you go off on a tangent at one point, when you suggest a formula that I feel would be a dead-end, would lead to a stalemate. On the one hand, you say that there must be more and more decentralization. You are correct in saying that the federal government apparatus is too cumbersome, too costly and too inefficient. But on the other hand, you say that the federal government must be preponderant in environmental matters because the St. Lawrence River affects many countries. And the St. Lawrence does, but the North Sea, in Europe, also affects many countries: Holland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and England, and each of these countries is sovereign, is completely independent politically and has its own environmental legislation. But they have signed agreements. This is why I cannot see how you can come to the conclusion that the federal government should be preponderant in environmental matters while, at the same time, you advocate decentralization.

You also say that renewed federalism is an old wreck, that it has to be abandoned, that we need a new automobile. And you say that we are

going to negotiate. This is a tall order since we know that it was impossible to negotiate the strict minimum. So, Mr. Chairman, I believe that Mr. Edmonston is trying to satisfy both the sovereignist constituency of the riding of Chambly, which has a sovereignist majority, and his NDP colleagues, who are obviously very federalist. And I have great sympathy for Mr. Edmonston. I have great sympathy for him because he is in an impossible, an extremely difficult situation.

And I will conclude by asking him very simply: When you say there is no use for Canada to negotiate anything, do you mean that, if Québec were sovereign, if it wanted to become sovereign, it would not be to Canada's advantage to negotiate anything; do you mean that it would be more to Canada's advantage to resume negotiations similar to those of Meech Lake? Don't you think that Canada will respect a clear verdict of the people demanding Québec's political sovereignty? Don't you think that Canada will then be obliged to negotiate?

**Mr. Edmonston:** First of all, if Québec holds a referendum and the people say they want independence, Québec, the Québec government should then declare independence. Just imagine such a scenario, the complexity of the negotiations. And if you feel that there was bad faith with Meech Lake, wait and see the bad faith there will be after a declaration of independence. But, as Quebecers, we have the right to do that. And I do not believe that we will see the Army enter our territory to control us. But I don't think that we have come to the point where we should declare independence or be obliged to hold a referendum immediately. I feel the Commission will continue to deliberate and we will then see what the position of the governments, of our Québec government, on the future of Québec will be. Whether it will be a supranational organization or a supranational structure, I don't know, but I am eager to find out what our government will propose.

But I just want to respond to one thing that was said about me as a representative of my riding, that maybe I am trying to please the NDP and my voters. No...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I was going to interrupt you to tell you that your time is up, but please finish your sentence.

**Mr. Edmonston:** ...no, no.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The sentence is clear. Thank you. All that remains is to thank you, Mr. Edmonston, Mr. Garcia and Mr. Lusignan, for this interesting brief and the presentation you made. I now ask you to quickly

leave the table so that the next person can make his presentation rapidly since we only have a half an hour for the next speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Michel Dupuy will now take his seat at the table. We will now hear Mr. Dupuy. The presentation will last 30 minutes, which means that, Mr. Dupuy, you have five minutes to give the main points of your brief, each of the parliamentary groups will also have five minutes, the Chair will have five minutes and there will be 10 minutes for the members of the Commission generally, who may each speak for no more than five minutes. We have to move along quite quickly. You have the floor, Mr. Dupuy.

#### Mr. Michel Dupuy

Mr. Dupuy (Michel): Thank you for inviting me to meet with you here today. I represent no group or business firm. I hope that the only limit to my freedom of speech will be common sense. I am not inspired by preconceived ideas or by any doctrine. Therefore, do not expect me to support a cause this morning. Rather I would like to share with you a few thoughts drawn from my approximately 35 years of experience in international relations. For 35 years I have observed world development, I have participated in the drafting of a number of policies and I have negotiated on behalf of Canada. And with this sum of experience, my first observation may perhaps seem to have a professional bias.

When I think about the future of Québec, I am less likely to define it in relation to Canada than in relation to the rest of the world. We Quebecers are inclined to consider our future either within the Canadian federation or outside it. Federalism versus sovereignty, this is a familiar debate that can have political overtones, a debate I could almost say could be conducted with our eyes closed after so many years of practice. However, I do not believe that the debate is tackling the fundamental problems of our future.

The first issue, and the most serious, is whether a decline lurks in Québec's future, as well as in that of Canada and North America. I do not intend to analyse here the reasons for decline, but you would have to be blind not to see its manifestations all around us, whether it be in regard to roads, hospitals, education, unemployment, pollution, drugs, racial intolerance, the failure of scientific research, the breakdown of our judicial institutions, the appearance of violence, the fragility of our industrial fabric, the public debt, the discredit of our governments, and perhaps the most pernicious manifestation, the acceptance of mediocrity.

Like business firms, societies that cease to grow fall into decline. And the success of certain firms may well mask the decline of a society. For my part, I hasten to add, I am

optimistic when I see the aptitudes of Quebecers, but I do not believe that constitutional discussions provide a response to the threat of decline. I feel the response is to be found elsewhere, in our ability to find our proper place in the evolution of the world, an evolution that is going to drastically change the international order and relations between societies.

Two age-old phenomena are at work: interdependence, and the progress of human rights and democracy. As for independence, it is irreversible. But in an international society whose cornerstone is the State, independence benefits the powerful and the rich, to the detriment of the weak and the poor. After the disappearance of empires, including the Soviet empire, interdependence may become a springboard for new systems by which the weak are dominated by the powerful, unless the international community is reorganized. Fortunately, the end of the Cold War has provided us with an opportunity to innovate and to reorganize. And as the world is reorganized, we will see, I believe, a double attack on the modern sovereign State, on the one hand, through the creation and growth of multilateral institutions that will little by little drain away the sovereignty of the State and, on the other, through the progress of universal human rights, which will erode the internal sovereignty of the State.

(10:45 a.m.)

It seems to me that the sovereign State, as we know it in the 20th century, will have to transform itself, perhaps even to disappear in the relatively long term. The world will be populated with new international organizations. The sovereignty of the State will give way to community sovereignty. Every day I am staggered by the extraordinary acceleration of the phenomenon. The events in the Soviet Union show what the individual can achieve when in conflict with the State and, as we speak, two military alliances, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, symbols of the might of the superpowers, are on the point of disappearing at the Paris Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, where new international institutions are being created. This evolution in the organization of the world is occurring to the benefit of individual rights. It is necessary in order to enjoy the advantages of interdependence rather than suffer its disadvantages. I hope that...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The five minutes are almost up. Time is slipping by. You must come to your conclusion.

Mr. Dupuy: I'm coming to it, I'm coming to my conclusion. I hope that your Commission will keep this perspective in mind when you formulate your recommendations regarding Québec's future. In the short term, because our

geopolitical position means that we are particularly affected by a neighbouring society, we must keep all our points of support, including those we find in Canada, so that we do not lose our say in our own destiny. And, in the longer term, we must be in the vanguard of new societies, that is, societies that are pluralist, innovative, tolerant and open to the world. I want to stress this last point. We must do this with very limited means, without breaking with the present or retreating into the past.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Rémillard, the first group of questions.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to welcome Mr. Dupuy here today. Mr. Dupuy, you are a distinguished diplomat, you have been a distinguished Canadian diplomat. You know, Mr. Dupuy, I have made the acquaintance of few Quebecers who, when abroad, are not proud to show their Canadian passport. In this context, I know that much has been done. We have little time; I would like to ask you a question: Do you agree, for example, with what is known as the Gérin-Lajoie theory, of Minister Gérin-Lajoie, that Québec must be able to exercise, from an international standpoint, the jurisdictions it has internally? Would you agree with such a theory?

**Mr. Dupuy:** Well, it is very clear that the internal jurisdictions of the provinces have an international scope. In fact, they use these jurisdictions, they have used them and will use them. To my mind, this is not a point of contention. The question is how various elements in Canada can ensure that the international jurisdiction they pursue is not contradictory, vis-à-vis others, that it does not drain our strength in relation to foreign powers.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Do you believe that there could be a federal-provincial committee, for example, to handle foreign affairs, or should foreign affairs be centralized, as it has always been, with no relations with the provinces?

**Mr. Dupuy:** I have always believed that it is extremely important for foreign policy to be directed in cooperation with the provincial governments. If I were the Canadian Minister of External Affairs, the first trip I would make would be to all the provincial capitals. When I was appointed Canada's ambassador to France, where there were major provincial interests, the first thing I did was, in fact, to visit all the provincial capitals. I therefore believe that, in a country like ours, foreign policy cannot be properly devised without the cooperation of all the provinces of Canada.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr.

Beaulne. Yes, your five minutes... Well, just a minute, I'll check. Excuse me. You have two and a half minutes. I apologize for my impatience, Mr. Rémillard. Go ahead. You are entitled to a few more minutes out of the Chair's time.

**Mr. Lafrance:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dupuy, I read in your biographical notes that you served as the Canadian ambassador in Paris. I also noted, when comparing dates, that we missed each other by a few years, since I had the great pleasure of also serving there, with Mr. Gérard Pelletier, who, I believe, was your predecessor.

**Mr. Dupuy:** I arrived back a few weeks ago from an official mission to Mexico City, where, as you know, Québec has a delegation. In fact, I think it is the only Canadian province that has a delegation in this country, which is in economic and political turmoil. It was my clear impression after discussions with the Delegate General stationed there that, although relations with the Canadian Embassy are cordial, he is convinced that progress could not have been made in many issues that are important economically if our few Québec diplomats had not been stationed there. Mr. Dupuy, my question has two parts: First of all, in the present system, in which, you say, the federal government agrees with the opening of Québec delegations abroad, what effort has Ottawa made in the past to improve the status of our Québec delegations abroad and, next, do you not feel that, in its delegations abroad, Québec would be better served if it were represented directly rather than by a Canadian delegation, in which, obviously, the interests of the different provinces must be considered?

**Mr. Dupuy:** In response to the first part of your question, I feel Québec should ask for what it wants, that is, if Québec wants a general delegation, it has to ask for a general delegation. If Québec wants an immigration office or a commercial office, it can ask for it. I believe it is entirely normal for the Canadian government to grant these requests. And I think that the best way to serve the interests of both Québec and Canada is to see the two levels of government work together rather than contradicting each other. But I am not acquainted with the specific situation in Mexico. If the ambassador does not do his work, he should have his ears boxed. However, I have always thought that you can get more done as a team than when you work alone.

Your question also involves the idea of a solitary Québec operation and very often Québec runs the operation on its own. Take, for example, Bécancour, which involved France. I had excellent relations at the time with the President of Pechiney, who, sadly, was murdered. But I was never involved in negotiating the agreement between Québec and Pechiney because

everything was going very well. But I was involved in other matters that were not going very well. I worked on some of them in the end and we achieved good results.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We shall now hear from Mr. Beaulne.

**Mr. Beaulne:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, Mr. Dupuy, for coming to speak before the Commission. As a former diplomat myself, I hope you will allow me to ask you a few questions. I read your brief carefully; but you will agree with me I'm sure that there are in Ottawa, and particularly at External Affairs, a number of ambivalent views on Québec's place in the world. You said so yourself, in your brief.

For example, you said that at the Department of External Affairs there is much less, and I quote, openness to the expansion of Québec's international relations. That was on page 23 of your brief. On page 19 you explain why the explicit consent of Ottawa is required to open a Québec general delegation. I feel that, ever since Québec began trying to become known on the international scene, it has been obliged to do so against the wishes of the federal government, insisting on the validity of its point of view. I do not subscribe to the thesis that the federal government should take precedence when it is a matter of promoting the interests of Québec. In this matter, given your insistence in your brief, do you recognize that, in the present circumstances, Québec's place in the world as well as any agreements it might sign, not only as part of its present competence but in areas where agreements seem desirable, this possibility for Québec is, for all practical purposes, at the mercy of Ottawa?

**Mr. Dupuy:** I don't believe so. I know that the viewpoint I presented is not the conventional one. What I believe is that there are moments when the policy of the federal government and the policy of the Québec government in the field of foreign relations coincide. Take for example the present policy at the Agence francophone in Paris, in which the two policies converge and work well together. They even worked against the interests of France at one time, but there are other cases where there are conflicts.

What I tried to show in my brief is that, on occasion, when there is conflict, the results are better than if there had been none. I know this is not a conventional assessment, but the reason I say so is that in international life, there is perpetual conflict.

Therefore, what may seem shocking to us is not all that shocking when you work on the international level. It is thanks to conflict, as long as we are eventually able to resolve it, that we are more successful than if it had all been

no more than a letter in the mail.

Then again, I know what I say shocks people, but if we look at what happened in the past, nothing, in the conflicts between Canada and Québec, in the domain of Francophonie has prevented Québec from attaining its objectives. Not only has it attained them brilliantly, thereby gaining international credibility, but this has also involved Canada as a partner and, eventually, Canada and Québec became partners in these organizations, which is an additional success.

**Mr. Beaulne:** Yes, with all due respect, Mr. Ambassador, nonetheless in many specific cases where Québec wanted to enter into relations with other countries... I mention Senegal in particular and also the request made by the Québec government to open a delegation in Seoul, a request that in the case of Dakar went back to the 1970s and which the federal government never approved for fear that Québec would establish political ties and, above all, since the Parti québécois had come into power... the question that comes to mind is that, given the increase in support for sovereignty in Québec, in whatever form, it seems to me that Québec is not at all in a position, on the international scene, to go ahead in promoting its own interests, if we take, for example, the special ties it tried to establish with other French-language countries, Senegal in particular in the case of the delegation at Dakar, which is still in abeyance.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Will you give Mr. Dupuy a few seconds to reply?

**Mr. Beaulne:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Dupuy.

**Mr. Dupuy:** You mention Dakar. I believe that, quite simply, your information is incorrect. It is true that the Canadian government, under Pierre Elliot Trudeau at the time, was opposed to the initial manoeuvres that led to the establishment of a Québec delegation. He was beaten in the general election and a Conservative government came into power that gave its approval for the opening of a Québec delegation at Dakar.

End of story. From the federal side, it is positive, but the Québec government never followed it up. Those are the facts and I believe you will find documents to confirm this. Therefore, I don't think that what happened at Dakar is a good illustration of what you are saying.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now go on to another group of questions. First, Mr. Poissant, who will be followed

by Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. In reading your brief I found things that I was unaware of and that came as a breath of fresh air, because it is being said that the federal government has not served us well. I, for one, share this opinion to a certain extent. However, knowing what went on in the corridors... This brief is quite original and highly interesting. The question I want to ask you, what you seem to be telling us is that this was not so harmful as that, and even that there are fairly favourable economic spinoffs for Québec. I would like to know if, in a different context, we would have been better off, or would it be better if the context were, let's say, one of a different Québec within the Canadian Constitution rather than what it is today? Would that have been more economically favourable?

**Mr. Dupuy:** I believe the big change would, of course, be the independence of Québec. There are constitutional arrangements, and I spoke a few moments ago about the possibility of involving the provinces in the development of international policy, including international economic policy.  
(11 a.m.)

Of course, if Québec becomes independent, that is another matter. In this question, I want simply to confine myself to saying that here too we are inclined to see problems from the inside rather than from the outside. But for foreign countries, the problem is not that Québec is becoming, or not becoming independent, but one of recognizing an independent Québec and in what manner. This is what happens on the international scene, and if you look at the experiences of countries that have gained their independence, you can see that, if the change is carried out harmoniously, that is to say if, after negotiations with the country from which independence is won, the new country is quickly recognized internationally and fits in rapidly, not only into the international community, but it becomes eligible for international organizations. On the other hand, whenever there was unfortunate conflict, recognition took years, and these conflicts, this lack of recognition caused a great deal of harm to the new international political entities.

Therefore, in answer to your question, I will say that certainly there are ways of improving the present state of affairs. I am not at all one of those who say foreign policy is the best path. I believe there are ways to improve things, formally or by creating consultation mechanisms which will facilitate development of Québec's interests. But that is another story, another, very different way, if we engage in a process leading to the creation of an independent country.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Bouchard, who will be followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to welcome Mr. Michel Dupuy, who represented our country during his international career. We know that Mr. Dupuy is carrying on the family tradition, for his father played a role familiar to us in Paris and elsewhere.

That said, Mr. Dupuy, we know that you have the credentials to speak with authority about international affairs. On page 33, you wrote something that surprised me a little and that perhaps requires an explanation. You said that those who understand the irreversible progress of independence in the world "work for integration and the creation of large political entities rather than for disintegration into small sovereign units". Do you not believe that the creation of economic entities, like those we are witnessing at present, is necessarily accompanied by the creation of political entities? Even, on the contrary, are we not seeing a resurgence of nationalism which has, for example, produced the reverse phenomenon? In the USSR we have seen the Soviet empire disintegrating under the impact of nationalism. Germany has become one for the same reason. Basically, there are two converse phenomena at work: the creation of larger economic units and attempts to bring political units closer to the decision-making powers. In this respect, the sovereignty of Québec is part of a positive historical trend towards true political dynamism.

**Mr. Dupuy:** About the formation of large entities, as you put your question, I think we share the same point of view. I believe that mutual dependence is going to push countries to form groups, so as to be able to resist what I spoke about a little earlier, that is to resist the natural tendency towards interdependence, to favour the strong at the expense of the weak. Therefore, you have a defence mechanism, and I believe that it could even be said that it has entered into the action of Western Europe. Western Europe united and integrated, not only to resist the Soviet threat but to ensure maintenance of its independence, its capacity to act vis-à-vis the United States. You therefore have a double phenomenon at work. It is a result of independence.

Now, are there ways of forming large units without resorting to the mechanism of sovereignty? Here I believe I would make a distinction between nationalism and sovereignty. That may surprise you, but if we look at the progress of history, we see that sovereignty came well before nationalism. It began with Machiavelli, one sees it in Bodin, it developed

during the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries; but don't forget that sovereignty at that time was conceived of essentially as an international law. It did not affect the inner workings of countries, and the word "sovereign" comes from king. There is nothing less democratic, nothing less sympathetic, I would say, to the idea of national, popular sovereignty than the idea of a sovereign.

This is how sovereignty developed internationally. And when we look at those who wrote about it, we see in fact that, sovereignty, they talked about it from the international standpoint but, internationally, they spoke of powers and jurisdictions. Must we take the path leading to the formation of a State or must we go through several stages in order to achieve integrated economic units? I don't think the Soviet Union did that. It's true that that was done in rather terrible circumstances. I don't think that China did it either. We'll have to see what happens in China.

But the question, I think, is: Do we have to tear down to rebuild? And it is there, I won't hide it from you, that I am ill at ease because if we tear down, in the stage of tearing down, things stop, and even move backwards. Whatever the determination to rebuild afterwards, quite simply we risk losing time. That wouldn't bother me at all if the world were to wait, but the world is developing at such a pace that, to lose time now, I find this very disturbing. This is the reason that I said earlier, in concluding my presentation, that we must take care to avoid disruptions, because disruptions are time wasters.

I think, to conclude, and up to a point my ideas concur with yours, we are entering, as a nation, an inevitable period of negotiation. Whatever the path we choose, we have before us years of negotiation, and they will be difficult.

Perhaps there is a question I could ask you, one I could leave you with to think about: Is it better to negotiate apart from the team before you, that is to say, to have bilateral negotiations between two countries in which you do not know what they want, what the other team wants or what it would like to do, you are alone facing this team, or is it better to become part of the other team so to speak? I have done it both ways. I have negotiated bilaterally with the United States, with France and with other countries and I have negotiated through international organizations of which Canada was a member. Well, it was always much easier to negotiate with an international organization of which you were a member because, at that time, you could go and work in the opposite camp, the camp with which you were negotiating, to form alliances and strike desired balances.

In other words, a period of negotiation that is going to be very long and difficult, but there are two different negotiating techniques available: the one you advocate, where you are

alone before the other, and the one others advocate, in which you stand before the other but at the same time behind.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Is my time up Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Unfortunately, yes. Mr. Hogue, yours has run out too because we have finished our ninth and you have not even begun. If you have something to say that would not take long, we could give you 30 seconds of the next minute.

**Mr. Hogue:** Your are too kind. I'll take the 30...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The time is up.

**Mr. Hogue:** I'll take the 30 seconds. They are already gone? That's great, fantastic!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Dupuy, for the interesting brief and, especially, the detailed way in which you answered the many questions put to you. Thank you again for coming here this morning.

We are now going to welcome the Conseil culturel de la Montérégie, whose turn it is to come to the table.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:09 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:11 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The changeover of groups is carried out so rapidly that there is barely time to welcome you and say good morning before you leave.

Mrs. Céré, would you like to present the people with you and then, since we sit until 1 p.m., you have 10 minutes to give your verbal presentation. Mrs. Céré.

#### Conseil culturel de la Montérégie

**Mrs. Céré (Maude):** Good morning Mr. Bélanger, Mr. Campeau, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, Members for Montérégie. Before introducing my colleagues, I would like to welcome you to Montérégie. Perhaps others have done this before me, but I think that all of us have points we would like to make.

A land occupied for six millennia, the site of several Iroquois encampments, colonized from 1642 on by the French, who settled along the rivers, the St. Lawrence, the Richelieu and the Yamaska, a region intimately connected with our debate, for it was the principal seat of the rebellion of "les Patriotes" in 1837-1838, a land I would ask you to take an hour to see, today if possible, in order to visit the Maison nationale

des patriotes which, under another form, is a brief in itself.

The Conseil culturel de la Montérégie has been in existence for 13 years, as have the 10 other regional cultural councils throughout Québec. Designed, shaped and developed by Mr. Jean-Paul L'Allier in 1975, it became a reality a year later.

Our duties, as affirmed at our orientation meeting of the Conférence des conseils régionaux de la culture, last weekend, are representation, consultation, cooperation and, of course, regional cultural development. It gives us pleasure to hand out our *Montérégie Relief* kit, which is evidence, both by the symbol on its cover and the accompanying texts, of the wealth and vitality of professional cultural activities in our region.

We are proud and happy to be taking part in this exercise and we thank you for your invitation to hear us, hoping our contribution will prove effective enough to ensure that culture transcends all other aspects of the new Québec constitution.

I hand over to my colleagues for the reading of the brief. Mr. Marc Laplante, sociologist and professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal and secretary of our corporation; Mr. Richard Blackburn, artistic director of the Dame de coeur theatre and member of the administrative board; Mrs. Carole Boucher, art historian and art manager, administrative assistant to the Conseil. You have the floor.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You remember that you have a total of 10 minutes for the presentation?

**Mrs. Céré:** Yes, of course.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Go ahead.

**Mr. Laplante (Marc):** Since presentations to this Commission will be making many claims for more powers for Québec in economic and social development, the Conseil culturel de la Montérégie has prepared a brief focused on questions relating to culture. The Conseil's mandate concerns specifically the arts, letters and patrimony, but these areas of activity are indissociable from a broader concern encompassing the entire cultural domain.

Our presentation will first make the claim that the history of Québec is truly to be understood only by reference to the history of its culture. It will therefore recommend that cultural development should receive as much attention and resources as economic and social development. Finally, to enable Québec society to pursue the affirmation of its own cultural personality, as well as the development of

relations with the rest of Canada and the world, it must have full powers in several fields over which jurisdiction is today divided between the two levels of government, with all the inconsistencies and waste that such division entails.

A country is first a people and its history. Quebecers can justly claim to be a mature society with power to determine its own future because they have had, over the past two centuries, an original collective experience of affirmation and development of a culture that belongs to them alone.

This culture, which is now recognized above all in the specific fields of language, literature and the arts, also finds expression in its original approaches to economic and social questions and is manifest in all aspects of collective life. It has been the guide in all settlements on the land and in the conquest of Québec's space. It has engendered special institutions. It has marked the relations of Quebecers with the rest of the world and with the other cultural communities that have come to settle on our territory.

During the gravest of periods, when this burgeoning culture was in danger of disappearing, Quebecers rallied around their vision of the future and symbols of their identity to strengthen their solidarity. The persistence of the people of Québec in North America is a mystery to those who do not know the extraordinary power of the ideology of survival, which was the hard core of the Québec culture for more than a century, from 1840, the advent of the Union Act, which caused Québec to disappear constitutionally, until the Quiet Revolution, which revealed to Canadians and the rest of the world that this Québec people was more vital than ever.

Quebecers have survived through their culture, even though they risked alienating themselves at any moment in taking part in a world of work, trade, business and politics that in large part escaped them. They gave evidence then of a twofold quality: great loyalty towards their ideals and a vast ability to adapt, compromising in situations that were often distressing. Ingenious, imaginative, mutually supportive, these Quebecers knew how to make out well with few means.

Since the beginning of the 1960s, these same people, now sure of their survival, engaged feverishly in modernization, motivated by the urgent need to catch up, a new element that became central to their culture. And it has been by redefining their culture that the people of Québec, during the past 15 or 20 years, have gradually rallied to leaders at last committed to the road towards national affirmation. Their determination to acquire political sovereignty is therefore neither a whim, the fruit of collective frustration nor the result of base calculation.

This determination follows in the direct path of Québec history.

Considering this historical summary, the Conseil culturel de la Montérégie has made a vow, in the form of a recommendation that questions of culture and cultural development be regarded as strategic and important as those related to the economy, in any blueprint for a Québec constitution.

Culture, the keystone of Québec's development. To survive, even to quickly catch up with the 20th century, Quebecers have put their talents to work to take advantage of certain powers that the Canadian Constitution, 1867, gave them and that the Canadian government has continued to usurp for 30 to 40 years.

In order to complete the phase now under way, with its claim to be a distinct human community, Québec needs to invest maximum effort in cultural development and, to do this, it must have complete authority in this domain. This requirement is particularly important, at a time of integration of economies and industrialization of culture and therefore at a time when markets are becoming globalized, which threatens to envelop a great portion of culture treated as a cultural industry.

Today we hear strong pleas that the development of culture should be shown to be profitable. Culture is certainly profitable, since it is through culture, essentially, that Québec society has endured and found a place in the world. But that has little to do with economic profitability, which led to the disengagement of the State and to deregulation, which transformed culture into a product that could be managed and accounted for, like any other product.

Québec needs to have full control of its own cultural development so that all Quebecers will be able to pursue, in keeping with their history, their search for expertise, an expertise proper to them, their experiences of exchange among themselves and with the rest of the world, their way of doing business, of playing a role in the world of science and technology, their manner of designing and running their economic, social, political and religious institutions, among others.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, we maintain that every sovereign people is strong culturally, has its own way of developing its human and material resources, of creating institutions and enterprises for its own purposes. It is therefore important that the Québec of tomorrow maximize its means to ensure its cultural development and so that culture, the keystone of its development so far, remains the driving force towards new frontiers.

The Conseil culturel de la Montérégie therefore asks that the future constitution of Québec contain all the guarantees needed for

research into and development of Québec's distinctive character in all fields of activity.

**Mr. Blackburn (Richard):** Controlling the ways and means of affirming Québec's culture. Without attempting to cover everything, the considerations that follow stress many of the cultural difficulties arising from the unilateral interference of the federal government. These difficulties generally arise from the incompatibility of the ends pursued by each decision-making power.

Favouring cultural diversity through regional development. Increasingly, many decisions, several of them taken mainly by the central government, favour the development of Québec's urban centres at the expense of the regions. This concentration in the large cities may be advantageous economically, but it is costly in other respects, notably for culture. This is certainly true for Québec, as a brief reference to its history shows.

Québec is a varied land, both physically and in its resources and regional characteristics. This territorial coloration is indispensable to the understanding of Québec's distinctiveness. A country is not a city, however interesting it may be with its ambition to become an international city. Québec is, above all, its human geography, with its settlements along its waterways and continued penetration into the back country, often associated with the great works that have marked Québec's economic development.

The history of the settlement of Québec's regions is remarkable for the qualities of strength, courage, ingenuity, cooperation and adaptation of the people, thus forging the character of Quebecers in all corners of our land. It is sad to watch the present decline of the regions to the advantage of the city, to observe the abandonment by the State of current regional development initiatives. The regional cultures are today being dissipated because of the departure of the young people, the lack of resources for regional cultural facilities, the weakness of the major cultural media, the absence of other cultural communities most of which are concentrated in Montréal, thereby depriving the regions of new ideas and new talent.

All of this demands that Québec be the master artisan for the development of its regions economically, socially and culturally. It will also have to allocate a large portion of new resources to developing an open, diversified culture in all its regions. The people of the regions, because they live close to nature, can take pride in living in a healthy global environment. The Conseil culturel de la Montérégie, with a view to enabling the regions to recover their vital character, makes the following recommendations: that Québec exercise sole control over the development of its regions; that as much

attention be paid to and as many resources allocated to affirming regional cultures as to economic and social development in order to strengthen cultural diversity, a gauge of a vital culture; that Québec alone have the powers needed to welcome and integrate immigrants, not only to allow them to take part in the economy but so that they will be able to make their contribution to cultural development and, especially, to the enrichment of regional cultures. This last recommendation requires, as a prerequisite, that the future constitution of Québec explicitly recognize the value of immigration for cultural development and for economic development. It also requires that Québec's future policy for the regions favour the settlement of ethnic communities in the regions to balance the present concentrations in the Montréal Urban Community, and that Québec explicitly include in its future policy for regional cultural development all the measures needed to foster better relations with the aboriginal peoples.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Time has already run out, but for better understanding, could I ask you to go on at once to your final recommendation and then we can pass on to the questions?

**Mrs. Boucher (Carole):** Without the supporting arguments?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Without the arguments, since the time has run out. In any case, you are going to have some of the Chair's time to present the final recommendation.

**Mrs. Boucher:** I'll read the recommendation. It is that Québec, to safeguard its sovereignty on the cultural plane, make a decision as to its participation in Canadian communications institutions and businesses, and as to assistance for creativity and cultural diffusion, and negotiate its participation with the rest of Canada on an equal basis. That the future constitution of Québec recognize both the power of Québec to be sole arbiter in these matters and its interest in taking part in these communications networks which extend throughout the cultural domain in Canada, and, one could add, internationally.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We shall now pass on to the first set of questions, which is that of the Official Opposition group. You have the floor, Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I first want to thank those who have presented this brief, and congratulate them for the

presentation. The members of the Commission should note that this is the first contribution from a regional organization, one that is part of the region and which concerns itself with regional matters. I say bravo to this very significant presentation.

You have spoken about a Québec sure of its survival. You have also spoken of the repatriation of powers. I am going to quote you. At the end of your brief you said in your recommendation, and I believe that the last sentence in your brief summed up the whole. You said: "The Conseil culturel de la Montérégie, by concentrating on matters of culture, must wish for Québec the repatriation of all its powers and resources in this domain which have come under its jurisdiction since 1867." This means all powers in the fields of communications, culture and immigration. Do you believe that control over these fields would be sufficient to ensure a Francophone future for the people here? That is my first question. The second is: Given the saga of the constitutional debate, do you think it possible to proceed to repatriation in the present circumstances with the traditional means at our disposal?

**Mrs. Céré:** I'll let Mr. Marc Laplante answer that.

**Mr. Laplante:** Control is already power. But power to decide as to our participation in the instruments of communication would mean for us that, since politically independent countries must pool such instruments as satellites and other means of communication, there are networks in Canada. It is not a question, for us, of designing a Québec system, even with full political sovereignty, and designing independent systems would be to scorn networks that already cover Canadian territory and even go beyond. The problem for us is to ensure that, in a sovereign Québec, our manner of taking part and the level of participation are decided by two partners, working together as equals. Then there is the implication. Even if this is not stated in black and white, there is an implication in the brief, of course: political sovereignty for Québec will make it possible to become more than capable of controlling what is done, but being able, if need be, to make decisions alone.

**Mrs. Marois:** You have, in fact, if I may put it this way, renounced the use of the traditional means of negotiation with the tools one has available now. You say that Québec must affirm its sovereignty, and obtain the tools while maintaining of course a sound association where necessary with the rest of Canada. Is that your meaning?

**Mrs. Céré:** We are really advocating cultural

sovereignty for Québec. Then, I think that equal negotiation depends on sources. To negotiate cultural sovereignty we must have all the necessary political levers.

**Mrs. Marois:** Agreed. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Dupuis.

**Mrs. Dupuis:** My thanks first to the Conseil culturel de la Montérégie for reminding the Commission of our main goal or, if you prefer, the purpose of its creation, which is cultural development and the means to achieve it. Thank you too for reminding us that a country is first and foremost its people and its history, that culture is the mainstay of development in Québec and that Québec must have control of the ways and means of affirming itself nationally and culturally. One of your recommendations was that Québec must be the master artisan of the development of its regions. Could you give us some examples showing that intervention by two governments is detrimental to Québec's regional cultural development?

**Mrs. Céré:** Generally speaking, the two governments, those of Québec and Canada, in all their policies, are prejudiced in favour of the great national institutions. First, the federal government, through its main national institutions, has federalist propaganda as an ulterior motive, that is to say it is implicit in all its actions; whether it is a question of Parks Canada, the CBC or other institutions. As for the Québec government, for about 10 years it has chosen to strengthen its main centre, Montréal, at the expense of the other regions, and that is very clear. We made a few quick calculations. Of course we can always be accused of not using the correct figures in our calculations. But we estimate that not even 10 % of the funds allocated to culture go to Québec's regions at present. Take for example the main national museums or the great museums of Québec. The Musée de la civilisation receives \$ 3 000 000 annually and the Musée d'art contemporain, \$ 17 000 000, whereas there is less than \$ 4 500 000 for all the accredited museums in the regions. How can we speak of Québec culture throughout Québec if we do not have the tools in the regions to disseminate culture? That is only one example among many.  
(11:30 a.m.)

There is also the question of decisions that are made arbitrarily. We have just had a tragic case in Montérégie; this was the demolition of the Collège des Frères Saint-Gabriel in the parc du Mont-Saint-Bruno, where the decision of our own government, one can say that it actually went against the affirmed wish of the community that it not be demolished. All of the proposals

made by the people were not only to save the building but to maintain it and keep it indefinitely. There are other examples at both the federal and provincial levels. It is easy to see why. All the departments do it. They try to cut down on their expenses. Imagine, then, all the waste in offices that are duplicated, the duplication of policies, which do not often meet real needs in any case. Programs standardized at the federal and provincial levels have to be adjusted constantly. We are always overlooked because we do not have the main national media in our region to cover our activities. Then, our artists, when they go to the Canada Council, they are always penalized because they do not have as support the press portfolio that artists in Montréal may have. In several areas of this kind, I could quote them for several days, they are often penalized, obviously because of the two-headed, two-policy system which, in any case, does not correspond to our needs in the regions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We pass on now to the next set of questions from the other members. Mr. André Ouellet will be followed by Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the representatives of the Conseil culturel de la Montérégie for their presentation and for the very interesting document they have submitted to us. I was particularly interested in a recommendation you made on page 5 of your brief in which you speak about immigration and, in particular, in which you recommend that Québec have exclusive powers in the matter of receiving and integrating immigrants, but more important, to enable them to contribute to the cultural development of Québec, especially to the enrichment of regional cultures. I find this a highly interesting suggestion. I would be grateful if you could give us some examples of policies that would favour the settlement of immigrants in the regions. What type of mechanism could be devised to achieve the harmonious integration of immigrants in the regions?

**Mrs. Céré:** I think that encouraging immigrants to settle will require real incentives; a grant might be offered to them. I haven't given any thought to how this would operate, but there really should be incentives for at least three years, from the time of their arrival, encouraging them to come and settle in regions throughout Québec. There will doubtless be some who will return to Montréal, but there will be many others who will stay in the regions.

Recently I spoke to people from the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec who, for example, have a mandate to engage, for the regional fruit and vegetable harvest, people from several cultural communities. Most of these

immigrants would like to live more in the regions, because they find more aspects of life that attract them. Often, farm workers in particular come from agricultural regions in their own country and would prefer anywhere other than Montréal. But since they come without a penny and have no means of transport they prefer to stay in the city where everything is accessible, more easily reached.

Then, if there were financial help, if only to enable them to settle in towns and villages throughout Québec, I think, and the exact methods of doing this we have not worked out in detail, this would be less costly for Québec and very advantageous for all Quebecers, if this could be done.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you for your reply. Time presses. I shall therefore go on to another area that you mention in your brief, having to do with the recommendation you make on page 6: "That Québec explicitly include in its future policy for regional cultural development all the measures needed to foster better relations with the aboriginal peoples". How do you envisage such a possibility?

**Mrs. Céré:** Perhaps my colleague would allow me to finish up. Cultural development cannot be conceived of without the integration and daily, intimate work of the aboriginal peoples. However, even though this may be the case in several aboriginal communities, we have many connections. For example, I am a specialist in museology and Québec know-how in this new field is highly integrated with the Amerindian cultural communities.

But to really have the respect of the aboriginal cultural communities, the aboriginal communities that is to say, I think we must be a strong people in order to earn respect for ourselves. At the moment, the aboriginals talk to the Canadian government, because it is their official contact. If we were a strong contact we would be respected as such. And I think we would find a better way to improve, to harmonize our relations with these people.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Do you consider them a people?

**Mr. Laplante:** We consider them...

**Mr. Ouellet:** Do they in your opinion constitute a nation? How do you look upon them?

**Mr. Laplante:** Since our brief focuses on questions of culture, the contributions of the aboriginal peoples to Québec culture mean that that we consider them a people, a society, since only a society can produce a culture. In this sense, the answer is yes.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Do you recognize their right of self-determination?

**Mr. Laplante:** In a Québec policy of harmonious relations with the cultural communities, one must recognize their right to self-determination.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want first of all to mention the vitality and enthusiasm of the Conseil culturel de la Montérégie, which is certainly in the front line in this world of regional cultures. You do well to point out that culture defines a people. You speak, of course, of language, and, of course, literature and the arts. But it is more than that. Culture is a way of doing business, a way of living in a society and all that concerns it, it is, finally, all aspects of our collective life.

This is as it should be, and this is why I give the interpretation that Mrs. Marois gave earlier, in the name of what you say about Québec's repatriation of all necessary powers and means. Up to that point it seems to say: We want sovereignty. But there appears to be a doubt somewhere. Then, one of your recommendations which, to me in any case, arouses a doubt in my mind, and I am going to ask for some clarification.

When you ask that all these things be repatriated to safeguard our culture, you say: At the same time, it will be necessary to make decisions as to our participation in Canadian communications businesses and institutions. This means "maintaining a certain tie". What I am asking you is this: Is this a step forward or a step back? Or is it just marking time? Or is it not an impure sovereignty, to please Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Laplante:** Certainly not a sovereignty! The difficulty on this particular point, for us, in the present state of our deliberations, we have not, as a cultural agency, worked out in detail the goals and principles underlying this problem in the present Canadian relationship with regard to the major means of communication. But, because of the very nature of the communication phenomenon, it seems to us that, while hoping and asking for political sovereignty and working in the cultural field with a view to the greatest possible authority in the matter of culture, we must nevertheless keep in mind that, in a new constitution, for example, we... by negotiation or by declaration followed by negotiation, have not tackled the question of the manner in which it is to be done. We must nonetheless find a way of participating in communications instruments. The point that bothers you most in this brief is

perhaps the specific reference to the Canadian cultural era. We could have added "North American" and even "world", since by satellite, for example, we can now reach out great distances.

**Mr. Turgeon:** In fact, you say that Québec must not be closed in on itself but must be open. Do we agree on that?

**Mr. Laplante:** Yes.

**Mr. Turgeon:** But must we have all the fields of competence? Must that be exclusive and, in plain language, what status do you propose?

**Mr. Laplante:** It must have jurisdiction over all the cultural fields, for this is our main thesis, and that includes jurisdiction over the existing major means, those that were not mentioned when Québec's jurisdiction was recognized. It was said in 1867 for example, that with regard to culture we did not have mass media means, but we must talk about them today because they are pervasive and absolutely necessary to the dissemination of our cultural creations, our cultural expression.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Therefore, we repatriate Radio-Canada, Telefilm, we repatriate...

**Mr. Laplante:** Of course we repatriate them.

**Mr. Turgeon:** That is what it means.

**Mr. Laplante:** But if they are also communication media, we don't necessarily have to consider reinventing everything as though these means were not already operative in Québec.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Have I time for another question Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Only one.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Briefly, when you say that the regional cultures are disappearing today, when you say that, I wonder: What are you putting on trial? Is it the federal system or the Québec system, the Québec government, you are criticizing?

**Mrs. Céré:** I think we are doing a bit of both. It is more than that because even if Québec were totally independent, sovereign at every level, but with the same view of cultural policy which normally should transcend all other sectors, if we have the same view we are going to be in the same situation in the regions. It must be said and it is mentioned in our brief,

these are the absolutely necessary, basic ingredients if we are to have a strong Québec culture. This idea must be expressed and developed, because we are suffering from this situation and it must be said.

Of course, if we want a cultural policy that transcends all the political, economic, health, work and educational aspects, as Mr. Camille Laurin's White Paper put it some years ago, it is truly a comprehensive social policy which must be a constant preoccupation. For the regions it must be said, reiterated, and I hope Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission that, when it comes time to draft the constitution, and I hope it will come to that, this will really be provided for in every paragraph, in everything you say, in every chapter of this constitution.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now go on to the Government party's set of questions. Mrs. Hovington has the floor.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Boucher, Mr. Blackburn, Mrs. Céré, Mr. Laplante, on behalf of the government, I must first thank you for receiving us in Montérégie. We are very happy to be in your beautiful region. Thank you for your brief, which was very interesting on all levels. I might mention that its focus is exclusively on culture, as you clearly indicate at the beginning. I might point out, too, that the entire content and texture of your brief are actually inspired by various cultural policies that Québec governments have implemented over the past 30 years. For example, allow me to take you back to the creation of the ministère des Affaires culturelles by the government of Mr. Lesage in 1961. Many times he spoke of his desire to create a context that would favour Québec's full development as a group which has a language and culture of its own. Shortly after, the determination of Mr. Johnson's government: that Québec become solely responsible for its cultural policy within its territory; and, in the 1970s, the declaration of Mr. Bourassa's government that Québec must now have sovereignty over its culture and the pursuit of this, even since 1985. You also examine this in your brief, in the framework of an economic federalism, and call for an extensive reworking of the constitutional powers in the field of culture in favour of Québec.  
(11:45 a.m.)

Would I be mistaken in saying that you are pursuing and in fact support the objective of the current government, which is to possess cultural sovereignty within the framework of economic federalism? Would that be in line with your final recommendation, in which you seem at once to hope that Québec will have exclusive powers in the fields of culture and communications and to somehow suggest, at the same time, that perhaps these powers could be shared with the central

government? Would it be along those lines? Could you explain this to me a little further?

**Mrs. Céré:** No. In no uncertain terms, clearly, Québec's cultural sovereignty, to be in control of all those aspects... When we speak of negotiations, as my colleague was just saying, it is like France, Italy and Germany; they also have negotiations concerning the satellite waves over Europe. It is in the same way.

Therefore, in any case, when there are negotiations, even so, it is necessary to speak as one equal to another, to be very strong, to be independent and to attract the respect of the person to whom we are speaking. I think it is clear that we want full and complete cultural sovereignty.

I would like to say that your government, the Liberal Party, has done a lot for Québec culture, except that, in effect, in spite of people's efforts, like Mr. Lapalme. We went over all this business with Lapalme when he stepped down because he could not take it any more. It must be said that, by the Parti québécois as much as the Liberal Party, great steps have been taken for Québec culture. Except that these are steps which have not... But, now, what we are noticing is that there is a real lack of cultural policy in Québec, not only in the standardized programs that apply to the artists, diffusers and practitioners of the culture and to those involved in the various regions, but also throughout the departments in general, whether it be health, education or transport. That vision does not apply in the case of the ministère des Affaires culturelles, but we still have to remind ourselves of it, and we currently feel there is a void, that it is not a concern. Even in the selection of the Commission's composition, there has been so much debate, for example, regarding the representative of the cultural sector. So, this is really a concern that should be as important as economic ones.

This is the message I am sending your government.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Yes, Mrs. Céré, I hear the message. On April 30, 1990, which is still quite recent, on the prompting of the Liberal Montérégie MNAs, the Québec government provided Montérégie with a regional division of Affaires culturelles, to which you belong, I believe.

You have the mandate to promote regional development of the arts, letters and heritage. With this new regional division of Montérégie, you in fact administer the regionalized financial assistance programs in the development, creation, production and diffusion of the arts and in the preservation and even the development of the cultural heritage. How would a new constitution or a new sharing of powers give you more powers in Montérégie? Have you considered

certain structures or methods that would have to be used in this new constitution you are talking about in order to ensure greater decision-making powers?

**Mrs. Céré:** First, if there is only one head making the decisions instead of two, which means the views of two heads, which is why we have a big problem now. Whereas, if there is just one head, and these are Québec heads, I imagine that would be a step towards greater rapprochement. If there is in this new constitution the intention to develop the regions, not just culturally but every aspect of all the regions, it will already promote this, which is not the case at present, we must tell you, because, constantly, we have to keep repeating, and we are really concerned about this problem.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But, what new structures would you set up to ensure harmonious regional development at the cultural, economic and social levels? What would the structures be? Have you thought about this, have you really considered it?

**Mrs. Laplante:** At the moment, it must be said that Montérégie is happy with the recognition shown by the creation of its regional cultural affairs office. This is our first chance for a little distinction in the vast Montréal region. But this department and the action it will take in our region deal with one aspect of the culture, not all of its dimensions. Now, to think of organizations and structures is perhaps a bit more complicated. But a council on regional cultural development, in Montérégie or elsewhere, which is concerned with cultural development, will have to do more. It should still concern itself with the creative work of professionals in the arts, and must do more. It should have us thinking, when constructing highways or roads in our territory, that building a road is also a cultural thing; when we create health services in Montérégie, we are not in Montréal, but neither are we in a very outlying, far-off region.

There is also a cultural dimension involved. When we think of the school system and educational needs at all levels... I am at the Université du Québec, and my colleague kindly reminded me that it is the Université du Québec en Montérégie, so I am, for the moment, one of the only representatives, but again, university research is concentrated in a few big cities. Therefore, in that sense, the concept of regional cultural development, when a region is able to say: I am in charge of my culture with the Québec government, which attributes to these regions the power to be in charge, we will have reached our goal, and this is not a short-term process, regional cultures. And the Montérégie culture will contribute to the Québec culture. And, parallel to this, there will be a culture in

the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean, there will be a culture in Abitibi, there will be a culture somewhere else, and it is this diversity that will simply create a drive from within and allow us to continue to be culturally strong in Québec, and, in so doing, to be as we were in the past and have been for a long time now, ourselves, ourselves as a social group and as a society.

**Mrs. Céré:** I would like to maybe add something. For two years, we have been writing reports, conducting studies, preparing briefs, holding meetings of varying importance with our public employees, but there is a word that we do not even dare to say any more. This word has been said repeatedly today, it has been mentioned frequently, and the word is development. We were told by many public employees that the word had become a mortal sin, that the word should no longer be used because there is no money left in Québec. So, development, more cultural development, you can imagine, is pointless. At this moment, we, the cultural councils, are even being challenged, because we are working on the cultural development of our regions. So, this word is currently a mortal sin. So, if, in the new constitution of Québec, on the other hand, we could open the valves of development, I think we would all win.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you. Therefore, we agree that the sharing of constitutional responsibilities in cultural matters must really be redefined to respect the distinct character of the society that we are, the French fact in Québec. On this point, we are in agreement, constitutional responsibilities must be shared.

**Mrs. Céré:** With whom?

**Mrs. Hovington:** Between the federal government and Québec.

**Mrs. Céré:** No. Not at all. That is not at all what we are saying. For us, sharing is out of the question.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But, what is it? What is the political and constitutional status that you envisage for Québec?

**Mrs. Céré:** We want Québec's cultural sovereignty, this is what we repeat in our brief, but we cannot apply it, obviously, if we do not have all the political levers to attain it. So, that is the message. You can read between the lines as much as you like, but I believe that this is absolutely indispensable. We are unable, with two heads, to defend Quebecers, and I think that only one should make the decisions.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But how, in that case,

could Québec's cultural sovereignty provide you with a better means of ensuring development, when you have said that it has become a mortal sin to ensure the cultural and economic development of the regions?

**Mr. Blackburn:** But, clearly, the federal government has the control over funds. There is a lot of interference among those not involved in politics, and it is very, very unclear. Often one hides behind the other's interference or waits for the other to interfere. And, obviously, in regional development, this is particularly catastrophic, because we know that the federal government is worse than worst. This government focusses solely on the large centres. Therefore, when dealing with the regions, you come across an incredible nihilism. Certainly, if you repatriate those energies, those funds, and if, at that time, you reinforce the organizations already in place, if you give them the means to work effectively, in concert with the milieu, you increase the culture, you take control over... We have the whole of Québec to occupy, and that is what must be understood through our culture.

**Mrs. Hovington:** We are dealing precisely with the problem of the federal government's spending power, in essence, because, if we rewrite a constitution for Québec, do you want us to integrate into it everything that concerns education, we have it already by section 93 of the Constitution, and the cultural aspect, which is not dealt with anywhere in the Constitution, we are not protected in it. If we rewrite a Québec constitution, how do you want us to work, as it were, all those issues into it? I would like you to really reach a verdict on the cultural future of...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédard):** Mrs. Hovington, your time has run out, but I think it would be interesting to have them answer the question, out of the Chair's time.

**Mrs. Céré:** So, you integrate it entirely, I mean, as we were saying, at once by a strong ministère des Affaires culturelles and by the general concern of the other departments. I will give just a short example, if you will allow me. For example, obviously, overnight, when we no longer send our taxes to Ottawa, I imagine that they are going to want to negotiate and that they will no longer give us the services of Radio-Canada or Parks Canada, but Parks Canada is established in Québec and has developed an exceptional expertise that is recognized internationally. I think that we will negotiate to keep the expertise for ourselves. However, rather than developing a Pan-Canadian propaganda giving prominence to George-Étienne Cartier, Laurier and Mr. Saint-Laurent at the Domaine Saint-Laurent in Compton, we will also

be able to pay homage to our own national heroes here. This is because we will have both the desire and the money to do so.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, thank you Mrs. Céré, Mr. Laplante, Mrs. Boucher and Mr. Blackburn. The list of questions which was compiled for you has now been exhausted. I thank you again for this very interesting presentation. As it was pointed out, this was the first regional cultural presentation, and we thank you for it.

I now declare the sitting adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:56 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:07 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I would ask the Commission members to please take their seats. I declare this sitting of the Commission reopened. I will repeat the program for the afternoon, the agenda for the afternoon. First, straight away, we have the Corporation professionnelle des médecins vétérinaires du Québec, for a maximum of one hour, then the Association des retraités de l'enseignement (Longueuil sector), a 30-minute discussion, then Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau for 30 minutes, then the Citizens of Saint-Bruno de Montarville for 30 minutes, then Mr. Yves Beauchemin for 30 minutes, then the Association des anglophones dans un Québec indépendant for 30 minutes and, finally, Mr. Jacques Saada for 30 minutes, before adjourning for dinner.

I would also remind the audience that, since this is a Parliamentary Commission, even an enlarged one, it has the same rules as those that prevail in Parliament, that is, no comments or applause are to come from the gallery. I now give the floor to Dr...

**Mr. Desrosiers (Paul):** Paul Desrosiers.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Dr. Paul Desrosiers, who is going to introduce his colleagues and then take 10 minutes to present the association's brief. Dr. Desrosiers.

#### **Corporation professionnelle des médecins vétérinaires**

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Thank you. I am representing Dr. Jean Plérard, Chairman of the Corporation, who, unfortunately, could not be with us today. To my right, Dr. Raymond Roy, Professor at the faculty of veterinary medicine. To my left, Dr. Marcel Bouvier, Director General of our Corporation.

Let me start by saying that we are very happy to have you here in Québec's agro-food capital. In our profession, we always like to get

close to the subject. We always get a better picture when we see the animal in its natural state. Traditionally, the 1400 or so Québec veterinarians are very involved in their milieu; they are on the board of directors of the Caisse populaire, on the school board, at various educational institutions, on municipal councils.

The veterinary surgeon practitioners alone, not including those working as public employees or as employees of paragonmental agencies, come in contact with some 2 000 000 clients annually. The Corporation professionnelle des médecins vétérinaires du Québec could therefore not stay on the sidelines of a debate on something as important as the constitutional future of Québec. Because of the little time available to us, however, we were not able to hold a vote within the profession. For this reason, the brief will be short and limited to statements of principle.

Given the failure of the accord proposed at Meech Lake, the National Assembly has been seeking a new constitutional path. For obvious reasons, the status quo seems to have been rejected. The alternatives available to us range from absolute sovereignty to sovereignty-association, although this concept is not entirely clear. The corporation will restrict itself to briefly outlining the impact of the possible constitutional choices on the practice of our profession. Veterinary medicine is defined as the guardian of animal health with respect to the society's needs and demands.

Our analysis will focus on the various aspects of the profession. First, training in veterinary medicine. In Québec, training in veterinary medicine is the responsibility of the Faculté de médecine vétérinaire of the Université de Montréal. It is the only French-language faculty in the Americas. The great majority of Québec's veterinary surgeons are graduates of this faculty. This faculty's teaching is jointly approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. The Corporation professionnelle des médecins vétérinaires takes part in the assessments that are carried out. This international recognition of the faculty is essential to its influence and to the recognition of the diplomas of its graduates, who are as competent as the graduates of the 31 other veterinary medicine faculties in North America.

Whatever constitutional option is chosen, one can assume that we should and could continue to operate as we are operating now. The faculty's resources should not be changed in any way, either, unless they are expanded.

Animal health research. Research has always been the driving force of societies that have had the ability to stimulate it. The Faculté de médecine vétérinaire of the Université de Montréal is responsible for approximately 90% of Québec's collective effort in animal health

research. It should therefore be one of the university leaders in its category in Canada. Not very long ago, it had access to only about 10 % of the research funding distributed among the four Canadian veterinary faculties, in spite of the fact that, as well as bringing together the great majority of Québec's veterinary specialists, it also admits students from every country and is still the only French-language centre in America. In fact, for postgraduate studies, the faculty is the focal point and the landing place for the world's French-speaking community.

The practice of the profession is governed by the Professional Code and the Veterinary Surgeons Act. Québec's Professional Code, the only one of its kind in North America, seems, in terms of fundamentals, to provide full satisfaction in the practice of our profession. Here again, whatever constitutional option is retained, the Professional Code and the legislation enacted under it, including the Veterinary Surgeons Act, must be preserved, since they are under a provincial jurisdiction which allows our profession to develop and the quality of services to be maintained.

The practice of veterinary medicine is further divided into several fields of activity. We will analyse the impact of the proposed constitutional option on the most important of these.

There is a pet clientele, and most of these veterinary surgeons practise their art treating dogs and cats. They represent approximately one-third of Québec's veterinarians. The practitioners' standards comply with North American criteria. A priori, it seems unlikely that the choice of either of the constitutional options would affect the practice of this type of veterinary medicine in any tangible way. In any case, this field of activity will continue to meet the same requirements of its clients.

Practitioners who have clients with large animals represent around 40 % of the profession and, for the most part, work in rural areas and in the agro-food industry, mainly performing duties aimed at improving the profitability of animal breeding. In general, their activities are concentrated in dairy, cattle, hog and poultry production. Québec has very high quality livestock. It is the envy of most countries in the world, thanks to programs already in place, notably that to improve animal health, which has a preventive aspect, control of the use of veterinary drugs. Although it may appear that the activities of these veterinary surgeons remain independent of the political option chosen by Québec, they are still related to those of their core clientele. In fact, maintaining healthy and economically viable animal production is related to Québec's status.

(2:15 p.m.)

Here, the concerns of Québec's veterinary surgeons are those of agriculture in general,

particularly when it comes to defending it in agreements such as those on free trade and, especially, in the GATT agreements. The constitutional option chosen should ensure the protection of the best interests of Québec farmers. At present, the development of Québec agriculture is in great jeopardy and dependent on the outcome of the GATT negotiations, in which we are represented by the Canadian committee. Canada produces a variety of foodstuffs of animal origin, which is different from what is produced by the Western provinces, excuse me, it is Québec that has a production that differs from the other provinces, especially the Western provinces, and that has had to defend its interests during the most recent GATT negotiations. Very well organized veterinary activities in Québec would risk being sacrificed.

Veterinary surgeons in public health. Here again we find a good many of the veterinary surgeons practising in Québec. Most of them work in the federal and Québec public service, seeing that the federal and Québec laws on animal health and on the inspection of meat products are enforced. Without necessarily establishing an ideal, this sharing of responsibilities has produced positive results which ensure Canadians of a supply of healthy foods and a sound international reputation for the health quality of its animal products, which should be taken into consideration in future constitutional planning. Whatever the constitutional option retained, the overlapping of jurisdictions and legislative lack of precision should be eliminated, and we should ensure that current services continue to be provided at least as effectively. Here we are referring to food inspection and the control of imports and exports and of infectious diseases. Still in the legislative framework, but in reference to all of the fields of activity of veterinary surgeons, public protection is also increased by strengthening the cohesion between the Québec and federal legislation on the use of veterinary drugs.

To conclude, the Corporation professionnelle des médecins vétérinaires du Québec is not making a specific recommendation on the constitutional option available to the Québec of tomorrow. The Corporation is suggesting, however, that the Commission consider that, along with other elements influencing its choice, maintaining a socially and economically viable rural environment should be a priority. In addition, the Corporation is requesting that the coherence and integration of the current federal and Québec legislation on animal health, particularly with regard to veterinary drugs, be the subject of a specific study. We would emphasize that the human and financial resources presently devoted by the two governments to animal health in Québec should continue in the future, since it is important to maintain the

quality of farm produce, which is a point of pride for Québec agriculture.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Dr. Desrosiers. We are now going to move on to the question period. The first question period, since this was a one-hour presentation, will be 25 minutes for the members who have registered, who will have five minutes each. We will then go on to the Government party, which will have a 10-minute period, and then the Official Opposition party, which will also have 10 minutes. First I will begin with Mr. Jacques Proulx, who will be followed by Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, I imagine you are giving me the floor because this is my field.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We thought that you knew something about it, Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** I will try not to disappoint you. I have three or four questions. The first is directed to Dr. Roy, possibly because of the school of veterinary medicine. You say in your brief, and we have also spoken about this on several occasions, that, first, it is the only French-language school of veterinary medicine in the two Americas, and I think that in itself this is already a feat, that you receive 10 %, in fact, of the funding provided by the federal government. I do not know if I read this correctly, but, in any case, of the available assistance. What I would like you to tell me is this: Do you consider that to be equitable, or is there really a great distortion there?

**Mr. Roy (Raymond):** Mr. Chairman, I think that the point raised by Mr. Proulx is very interesting, especially because it has been the subject of negotiations, studies and demands in which the faculty has been involved over the past few years, notably the past five years. And the figures cited there are ones that have appeared in various documents in the past three or four years. Since then, because of the support we received from the agricultural community as a whole, as well as from the governments, of course, particularly from the provincial government, things have improved. It is estimated that we now receive about a 20 % share of the funds allocated for research, which is used for research projects at the faculty of veterinary medicine.

**Mr. Proulx:** The second question is, everyone knows that agriculture and immigration are about the only two areas, in fact, in the Constitution, where responsibility is shared by the two governments. Still, this has created the

problems you have brought up for one party, particularly as regards the whole question of the overlapping in animal health, food inspection and various other facets. Do you think that... First, we cannot continue this way. What is the best solution to allow in future, because we know that Québec, in most of those areas and particularly the ones mentioned, has set much more exacting standards, in a manner of speaking, and many more for inspection and for quality; furthermore, this is recognized worldwide. Given the upheaval that is taking place right now, from the free trade agreement to the agreements that will most likely be made with regard to GATT, we know that internationally we will have to coordinate some, if not many, of the rules that are already established.

What is currently happening with free trade? Here, Québec runs a high risk of losing, since it has to reduce its requirements to meet those agreements at the bipartite level. In your opinion, can that create problems for us in terms of future agricultural and agro-food development. Second, do... Regardless of its future status, which of the two parties would be in a better position to administer, or to be alone in defining, in determining, future policies on that?

**Mr. Roy:** The question is very important, especially since Québec has developed very important tools, over the past few years, making its livestock one of the cleanest, if you would allow me to use the expression, in terms of its sanitary quality. In particular, Québec has regulations and laws governing the use of veterinary drugs and a program, which is unique in the world, for the care of farm animals. It is animal health insurance, but one in which farmers participate, of course.

Therefore, with those tools, we are very concerned about the sanitary quality of our herds, and, in the framework of those negotiations, I think it is important to maintain the option we chose in the past, because, you know, Québec livestock is not extensive and, in terms of numbers, competition is quite difficult, owing to economic conditions and to social conditions, which often raise prices. We must therefore compete at the level of the quality of the products we market, and countries such as Japan have clearly understood this.

As a result, in the constitutional negotiations and in all the other avenues, we must maintain those assets that have been developed, I admit, in the present framework and with legislation that was finally developed with the participation of Quebecers and Canadians.

**Mr. Proulx:** So, can I conclude that the coordination of inspection policies...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your five minutes are up, but, since this is your field,

I will allow you to continue for a little while. I do not have a great list of questions. If the members are in agreement, I will let Mr. Proulx continue. They agree. Go ahead.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I conclude that the coordination of policies in the various, very specific fields would be to Québec's disadvantage?

**Mr. Roy:** That is to say that the system works in such a way that Québec's presence must be felt in negotiations with its international trade partners in order for us to be able to maintain that position. Now, if I take the example of food inspection, there are three levels of interaction. The first level affects the inspection operations themselves, which are governed by a division of Agriculture Canada which is quite decentralized and which is functional. It therefore does not cause any problems in applying the legislation. In addition, there is a policy and policy-enforcement organization for national and market analysis policies which examines our major partners' needs. Therefore, at that level, I think there is a very important point to be made, and we must be present at that level, because, if we decide, for example, to completely eliminate one surplus or another, that is the zero standard in the case of any particular surplus, then this is a policy that may greatly affect our markets. We know very well what happened in the cases of pork and of sulphadiazine.

**Mr. Proulx:** So, to keep pride of place, it is Québec's duty to have the entire responsibility, that is, to find the means of having not only the bilateral authority, but also the multilateral authority.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Actually, Québec's agricultural production is centred on the quality of its products, and there must be control over those products to enable it to maintain the choice position it currently holds, if not, it could easily drown in the...

**Mr. Proulx:** But, do you think that with its current status, it can retain authority over that, or must it acquire further powers to keep its worldwide reputation.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** With the free trade and GATT agreements, there is the possibility of barriers, not monetary but sanitary ones, with regard to animal health. In this context, it is important to have a strict control over the quality of our products exerted from our home base.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Proulx, you have used up your time and mine.

So, we will now go on to Mr. Hogue, who will be followed by Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I suppose I will not be allowed to cut into your time.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I have no more to give.

**Mr. Hogue:** We give what we can. Mr. Desrosiers, you have a nice brief, well presented, short but well done, very well done. I would come back to the question Mr. Proulx brought up a moment ago concerning point 2 and animal health research. In your presentation, you said: Quite recently, the answer came to us, the shift from 10 % to 20 %. But in this paragraph, you tell us it is 10 %, so it is now 20 % of the funding that is allocated to research in the four Canadian university faculties. Would you say that this 20 % originates from the federal government, from Ottawa?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Yes. Thank you for giving me the chance to be more explicit on a point. Concern for exactness forced us to conduct last minute research. The figures that we mentioned in the document were from 1985. A document which originated from the Québec government.

The Canadian government provides grants, that we could tell you about here. Dr. Roy got them out for us today. In the universities, the Canadian government provides some \$ 1 800 000 in grants to Guelph University, \$ 1 000 000 to the Université de Montréal, \$ 800 000 in Saskatchewan and \$ 800 000 in the Atlantic provinces.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you very much. This enables us and enables you especially to put forward an important point: the quality of research, the importance of grants and the fact that you are recognized worldwide and, necessarily, within Canada. Therefore, you must be treated well, in a manner commensurate with your worth. So, if this were \$ 1 000 000, it would soon need to be much higher.  
(2:30 p.m.)

This brings me, however, to page 4. On page 4, you seem to be saying, as did a speaker who preceded you this morning, Mr. Dupuy, that the synergy of two cultures and of two different groups is sure to produce positive results in the teaching process, in the process of training veterinarians. You say, finally, on page 4, that the different ways the levels are organized would allow for more coherency and a raised level of excellence in the profession. You remain logical and professional. You maintain a high quality, one that suits you, and this clashes advantageously with the speaker who gave his presentation before you, Mr. Dupuy, who, by

reading his document, truly revealed to us the lack of seriousness in the NDP's document. But, I do not want to get into politics, I simply want to commend your presentation by comparing it. Your answer to that would be: this notion of synergy and exchange and contribution to... not mixing, not a cultural blend, but the synergy that the school of veterinary medicine can create on the national scale as well as on the international one.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The time is nearly up, but would you like to answer as correctly and succinctly as possible?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** The Saint-Hyacinthe École de médecine vétérinaire is the only, the leader in the French-speaking world in the teaching of veterinary medicine. I would go as far as to say, false modesty aside, that it is the best in French in the world and that its origins are in American technology, the great leader in technology and the acme of modernism. Moreover, this is why the faculty and the university want to have their school approved by the American Veterinarian Medical Association. So, yes, there is in fact a synergy which benefits the world's entire French-speaking community and which gives the Université de Montréal a unique responsibility as far as teaching is concerned, since it also speaks on behalf of a very special culture, one, you have said, that lives in French on American soil.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Béland, who will be followed by Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Desrosiers, like many other speakers who have come before this Commission, cites examples of overlapping and incoherence. This has been seen in several other areas. I would ask you: If you had to make a choice, because there is overlapping, there is double jurisdiction or more than two jurisdictions, at which level, in your opinion, could the services you are looking for be provided most effectively, since one must be chosen if we do not want to have double jurisdiction? But, in the same breath, I am surprised that you pose that question in your brief, when, in the preceding paragraph, you say, and I would like you to explain this to me: We are currently taking on enormous risks (enormous is a big word) with regard to agriculture, by trusting the federal government. By attempting to tie the two paragraphs together, I would like you to clarify this for me.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Yes. I will begin with the first point you raised in reference to overlapping. One example in particular that comes to mind is control over veterinary drugs.

The provincial law gives us control over veterinary drugs and allows us to insist they be used in accordance with a prescription. In practical terms, for us, this means that when we prescribe a product we become somewhat responsible, at least for giving the necessary indications for its use. This has the effect of reducing the quantity the consumer is left with. But, the laws are not identical across Canada. To be honest, Québec is the leader in this regard, and interprovincial trade gives us access to sources of medication which should normally be prescribed by ignoring provincial borders. And in this respect there is at least a problem of concordance and of jurisdictional overlapping, since, outside Québec, in the rest of Canada, the federal government issues regulations that are not as strict.

**Mr. Béland:** How do you solve this?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** I would tend to prefer regulations that give complete power to our regulations, since ours are safer and stricter. Now, we did not think of making a constitutional choice, among our members, but of explaining to the Commission what could happen in the event of a choice that some would see as fortunate and others, catastrophic. In these matters, I say: Those jurisdictions can easily be exercised by Québec, since they are being exercised now, and the disadvantages we find, with respect to interprovincial trade, are a lack of harmonization, of concordance of legislation. In terms of the GATT risk, my colleague, Dr. Bouvier, has studied the question and can tell you more about what we call the risk.

**Mr. Bouvier (Marcel):** The sentence to which you are referring, naturally, on page 4, included parties on the agricultural level. It is clearly understood that we are supporting the cause of Québec's agricultural producers with regard to involvement in the GATT negotiations. That sentence naturally meant the negotiations as a whole; we know very well that the Canadian government must consider the country's entire territory in these negotiations. With regard to the various matters to be negotiated, the fear that we felt, or, let's say, the apprehension that we shared, and still share with farmers, was that the type of agriculture which Québec has developed could be sacrificed, shall we say, for other products, particularly grain products from the West, because of the different interests. For instance, farmers in the West need export markets, whereas Québec makes very little use of these.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Béland stole my question, ha, ha, ha! I was coming to exactly the same point.

**Mr. Béland:** I'll give him the answer.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** It is the same answer, sir.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Beaudry:** I would, however, like to add something. Were you not in fact reassured, since you mention that problem in your brief: We are currently taking on enormous risks. You answered Mr. Béland's question; however, you do not take a stand on it in the brief. If you do not declare yourself, either for a sovereign Québec or for a renewed federalism, do you not actually feel reassured about these risks you had envisaged, which are associated with the free trade and GATT treaties, and, if you ended up with two jurisdictions, one federal and one provincial, with systems that could be improved, you would naturally feel more secure in your rights, and this system would perhaps be a better one for you, rather than a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** The question was asked a moment ago in the same way, and I am going to try to eliminate it as skilfully as before. Our members are going to be... From what I can tell, the people would like to be consulted very soon by way of a referendum on the political future of their land, of Québec. From there, it is up to... The objective of our brief, the objective we are aiming at in our brief is to shed light on what could be done. And, if we were at a GATT negotiating table, we would probably be in a better position to defend our interests than we are now. Those are the two extremes which are examined in the brief, and that is why I say, no, I would not say personal preference, given that I do not feel morally authorized to say: For reason x, y or z, I want sovereignty, sovereignty that is a somewhat renewed, a great deal, passionately or with restraint.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Campeau, you had a question.

**Mr. Campeau:** You said a moment ago that the Montréal Faculté de médecine vétérinaire was one of the best, thereby bring out my pride in Québec. Where do you rank in Canada, and then, where do you rank in North America?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** There are 32 faculties of veterinary medicine in North America that are approved by the AVMA, the American Veterinary Medical Association, which is becoming the American standard. In Canada and the other faculties, the standards are the same for

everyone, and, of course, some have areas of excellence which are not seen in others.

The point I wanted to make was that, in the world's French-speaking community, it is the faculty that stands out as having the highest standards, verified internationally, since the standard in Europe, in Africa and around the world that is aimed at and aspired to is the American one.

**Mr. Campeau:** Should I conclude that you are 32nd in North America?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** No, far from it. But it is not a competition in which each faculty has a percentile rating. Rather, it is an elitist club that we are proud to belong to and that places the faculty, that forces the faculty, to play the role of bridgehead for the French-speaking community in America.

**Mr. Campeau:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Nicolet.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These gentlemen have already invaded the territory I wanted to question. To return to the problem area that has already been discussed, that is, the overlapping of jurisdictions between the federal laws and the Québec laws, have you, in the current legal context, made an effort or tried to obtain clarification and a progressive withdrawal of the federal presence in the jurisdiction that concerns you?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Yes, regularly. The veterinary associations from the various provinces come together at a round table every year. And we have attempted to coordinate those matters. But, of course, what suits one party does not always suit another. For example, it is in the interest of the small provinces to be under the umbrella of federal control, whereas this is not worthwhile for Québec. For this reason, our presentations on this matter are received with varying degrees of warmth. And the provinces, the small ones, the maritime provinces, for example, benefit from a strong control. The western provinces quite easily support the same position, one in favour of federal law. So you see that it is hard to get the show on the road.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Do the differences in production, the emphasis that is placed in the West on grain production and perhaps on beef cattle in contrast with what is produced in Québec, does this come into play in that balance of forces?  
(2:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Desrosiers:** To a certain extent, yes.

Actually, what we are attempting to preserve is the originality of Québec's products, and these products are of course very, very diversified here, so we cannot... and there is a link between the market rules here; our market here in Québec is self-sufficient, or just about, whereas in the West they count very heavily on exports, such as grain exports, so that if we speak of a country's balance there may be a tendency to neglect a diversified production and to emphasize the export market or vice versa, but it is rarely vice versa.

**Mr. Nicolet:** And, so far, have you found in your activities and negotiations with the federal government, that the Québec government, and I am not pointing any fingers here, over the past 10 or 15 years, has become involved in rather technical and specialized cases that you defend by perhaps contrasting them with other cases that have attracted more attention from the media and public opinion?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** No, to tell you the truth, I cannot sum up the situation of departmental negotiations in reference to your question, although I can tell you, unless one of my colleagues is aware of any departmental moves toward coordinating that legislation, but, for our part, we have taken it to professional forums and the requests we have put to the various departments have thus far gone unanswered.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Are you in fact all alone in confronting democracy on both the federal and provincial levels?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Without complicating things, I would say that to us this has not seemed to be on their list of priorities, to start with.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This is all the time we have for the question period. We will now go on to the representatives of the Government party, and Mr. Messier will begin the questioning.

**Mr. Messier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should like first to thank the members of the Steering Committee for choosing to hold the hearings in the Montérégie region, more specifically in Saint-Hyacinthe. We are very grateful... Yes... I wish to tackle this aspect as MNA for the agri-food capital, as Dr. Desrosiers mentioned, we are recognized for our institutions, our research centres, our producers, associations and corporations. I think Dr. Desrosiers fully demonstrated this in an answer to Mr. Campeau; ours is one of the few French-language veterinary science faculties recognized by major associations and, not so very long ago, we celebrated 100 years of veterinary education. Dr. Roy, who was formerly Dean of the Faculty,

enabled us to have certain exchanges with the French, who consider us highly as a faculty of veterinary medicine. We enjoy a very good reputation over there.

I should like to ask the members who are here a few questions. The first, which is dealt with specifically in your brief... In your brief you say that the constitutional option selected should assure the defence of the best interests of Québec agriculture. And I think you talked a little about that with Mr. Proulx a moment ago. My references are quotas and marketing boards, subsidies, stabilization insurance, let's say the whole touchy issue of the milk quota. I believe Québec has about 40 % of the Canadian quota, the national quota, even if we represent 20 % of the population. In a redefinition of Québec, how do you see that? Do you have any apprehensions about the thorny problem of quotas?

**Mr. Bouvier:** Yes, of course you are asking me a question that would be more appropriate for the Union des producteurs agricoles. Nevertheless, I must say we think the mechanisms developed by Québec producers with regard to management of supply appear to be essential to the viability of Québec agriculture. Whether we speak of milk quotas, import limits based on volumes, not on tariffs, or commodity prices set in terms of production costs and not international prices, from our point of view, they are essential to the preservation of Québec's agriculture.

**Mr. Messier:** So the prerequisites we have at the moment, you agree, or at any rate you want to maintain them as is in respect to quotas and marketing boards because you make a reference in your brief to the fact that we must preserve the status quo, not necessarily a constitutional status quo as you say in your brief, but rather in relation to GATT negotiations. You also refer to everything pertaining to agriculture, not strictly culture itself, but agriculture, when we talk about livestock it could be slaughter herds and so on. Do you wish to keep the status quo as is? You feel satisfied with that?

**A voice:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouvier:** Yes indeed, we wish to keep the same safeguards.

**Mr. Messier:** The same safeguards, good.

**A voice:** Agreed.

**Mr. Messier:** On page 5 of your brief, you recommend bringing Québec and federal legislation respecting animal health into line. What are the federal jurisdictions in your specific sector?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** We touched on one a while ago, the control of medications.

**Mr. Messier:** Yes.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Regulatory matters, food inspection and at the present time the two levels of government overlap. Jurisdictions also overlap with regard to the regulation of horse racing, so that the province, or the provincial racing board is responsible for applying federal laws. Funds collected at race courses return to Ottawa, while the laws are applied by the provinces involved. Technically, these are areas that would benefit from decentralization.

**Mr. Messier:** Yes, Dr. Roy.

**Mr. Roy:** We must understand that there has been a fair amount of harmonization of policies between the levels of government, particularly with respect to animal health. Therefore, fields of jurisdiction may appear to jurists to be clearly defined and the legislative texts are quite clear as well. On the whole, irritants exist at the level of the application of the laws or how far Québec wishes to go with regard to the quality of its products. For example, in 1987, the provincial food inspection authorities decided, after studying the matter, not to allow honey from other provinces into Québec because it contained too much sulfa. Québec decided that the zero standard was the minimum acceptable, whereas this regulation did not exist elsewhere. It has been adopted by the federal and other provincial governments more recently. It is such minor irritants that are the main problems in this regard.

**Mr. Messier:** Perhaps for Dr. Desrosiers. Are you demanding the repatriation of these federal jurisdictions to the province? Does this prevent you from living or do you feel fairly comfortable with that? Do you expect a redefinition? Do you demand that these fields come back to Québec?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Depending on the constitutional solution chosen, we thought it our duty to emphasize that there were overlapping jurisdictions which must be considered because they may be stumbling blocks. But I shall give the same answer as before. If we repatriate all the jurisdictional fields held by either one or the other level of government, you are asking me to state my position on sovereignty.

**Mr. Messier:** Not necessarily, I wouldn't go that far, Dr. Desrosiers. You indicate in your brief that the school of veterinary medicine is recognized by the AVMA and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, that this recognition is absolutely essential for your

graduates. What must the Bélanger-Campeau Commission think about when it makes its report? What must it remember? May that put... Is the recognition really essential? When there is a redefinition, if there is a redefinition, do you think you will lose such accreditation? Is this a basic prerequisite?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** The accrediting body is the American Association on which Canadian examiners sit as a matter of courtesy and equity, the prime mover being American. I see no difficulty in Québec's having its inspection done in the same way, by appointing a member to the committee.

**Mr. Messier:** OK.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** That does not create a problem then.

**Mr. Messier:** There is a relation between (you spoke of 20 %) the amounts given for research by the federal government. I think there is a close tie between the amounts paid for research and development, by both federal and provincial governments, and that recognition. I think you almost lost it perhaps four or five years ago. You almost lost that recognition. The Québec government invested almost \$ 1 000 000 in the faculty a year or so ago. That enabled you to acquire and step up your research and development work at the school here in Saint-Hyacinthe. This is no longer called into question. Is everything alright from that point of view?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** It is essential, well, we think it essential that we be accredited and, in order to ensure this, we must have sufficient appropriations at every level, including research.

The figure you suggest for federal investment in research in Québec is, to all intents and purposes, half of what is invested at Guelph, that is \$ 1 800 000 for Guelph, \$ 1 100 000 for Québec.

**Mr. Messier:** That's all for me, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That uses up almost 25 seconds of overtime. Are there any other questions for your group or... Seconds have gone by while you made up your minds. Now it is the other side's turn. Mr. François Beaulne has the first question, I think.

**Mr. Beaulne:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the rules of procedure for this Commission are not quite the same as for a Parliamentary Commission, I would like to take 30 seconds to clarify a statement made this morning by Mr. Michel Dupuy.

At noon, I made the necessary inquiries to

check...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** M. Beaulne, it is true that we do not function exactly like a Parliamentary Commission, then that allows me to ask you if by any chance it would be possible to get directly to your point.

**Mr. Beaulne:** Yes. OK. Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'm pushing a bit, but not insisting.

**Mr. Beaulne:** You're not insisting, but, I get the message. After checking, I found that the federal government never authorized the opening of a Québec delegation in Dakar. I wanted to confirm this point.

Now, I wish to thank you for your brief. You stress very clearly the problem of overlapping, particularly in the field you are concerned with. You have also indicated that there are fields that are shared, those that are federal and those that belong exclusively to the Québec government. I also understand that you do not have a mandate as such or you do not feel you have a mandate to take a stand on the options open to Québec, but let me ask you the question from another point of view.

Since you consider you work in the field of veterinary medicine training, which is under Québec jurisdiction, in research, which is a shared jurisdiction, in professional practice, which is a Québec jurisdiction, and in the application of laws and regulations governing animal and public health, which is also shared, can you tell us whether the fact of grouping all these jurisdictions under the range or scope of the gouvernement du Québec, how that could improve your activities and make good, or at least compensate for the shortcomings in the present system? You have outlined the problems. I would now like you to explain what the advantages would be if there were a single jurisdiction.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** The advantages of maintaining a sole jurisdiction in respect to the practice of the profession of veterinary medicine are obvious. It is a jurisdiction that corresponds to the training of a veterinarian and those laws give Québec an original professional system centred on protection of the public; we are very comfortable with that.

In matters of health and hygiene, the farm health and prevention programs are carried out by the provincial government as well. This jurisdiction must be kept here for the good and simple reason, as I explained earlier, that agriculture in Québec is different from agriculture in other provinces, and that we are already far ahead in relation to the quality of our products. Why not keep it that way with

those programs.

(3 p.m.)

At the present time the federal government exercises jurisdiction over the safety and wholesomeness of food whenever it comes to exports. It is exercised here in Québec on the basis of established programs, and the inspection of meat is necessary for exports. If Québec were to become independent, we would have to repatriate those powers, but we do not have to make Québec a sovereign State to do so, but if Québec does become a sovereign State, it would be necessary to repatriate them because we'd need access to international markets. In the absence of local policies, we would have to negotiate associations in those sectors. In other words, food must be inspected and judged safe to eat for three reasons: first, to protect the people who eat it, second, to protect other livestock, and third, of concern to economists, to gain access to foreign markets.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, welcome to our Commission. In fact, I must tell you quite honestly and simply that I was a little surprised, as were others probably even though they did not say so, to receive the Corporation des vétérinaires. I asked myself what they could possibly say to this Commission? Finally, I decided that my astonishment was inappropriate, since your Corporation is well established in Québec society and therefore a reflection of that society, experiencing the same problems we do at another level. This morning we saw cultural organizations which came and defended a point of view very similar to yours in many respects. Because we believe we form a distinct people, we have, I imagine, developed tools and institutions that belong to us, and I would like to be able to gather them together. My intervention is more of a commentary, gathering together the points you have contributed in your brief, which in essence bolster what a fair number of other groups have come and said before us.

On the one hand, in research and development, you say we have 10 % of the financial resources, when there are four faculties in Canada. I imagine we should have a much more significant proportion. You say your objective is 20 %. The Québec Professional Code, altogether unique in North America, and I quote, "seems essentially to give satisfaction in the practice of our profession", again to mark the difference. In the case of GATT, we take enormous risks when we trust the federal government with regard to agriculture, and you say your production is different, as you reminded my colleague. We would benefit from the elimination of overlapping jurisdictions and

imprecise legislation, so that we would have at least the same efficiency as we do in other sectors in which you work. Greater consistency between federal and Québec legislation on the use of veterinary drugs and, in this regard, you are the image of what is defended by many groups experiencing the obstacles, difficulties and contradictions of federalism.

I shall ask you just one question, and I know that in all likelihood you will not necessarily be able to answer, but, at the same time, perhaps that will help you ask your members: How can we achieve this in the current context and in view of the failures we have experienced to date?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** If I had wished to answer that question, I would have sought a political mandate from our members and, among the members I represent, some think it would be the worst possible catastrophe for Québec to separate and others that it would be the greatest happiness for the people if Québec were to become sovereign. Under those circumstances, you will allow me to respect both groups and give you the points to which attention must be paid if there is any negotiation or repatriation. We must be careful not to betray the will of the people of Québec.

**Mrs. Marois:** I agree. You said you had not consulted your members and I understood all that except, let's suppose that you do not make a choice about the option but remain convinced of what you defend in your brief. How can we politicians manage to meet your demands?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** I think you will hold a referendum soon?

**Mrs. Marois:** OK. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I assume you have finished your questions, Mrs. Marois?

**Mrs. Marois:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Then that uses up our question time. I wish to thank the Corporation professionnelle des médecins vétérinaires for its brief and its presentation. I especially wish to thank Dr. Desrosiers, Dr. Roy and Dr. Bouvier. Please leave your places at the table as quickly as you can, since we have a large number of presentations this afternoon.

I invite the gentlemen of the Association des retraités de l'enseignement (secteur Longueuil) to come to the table... or rather the ladies and gentlemen of the Association, since the list shows at least one woman. Mr. Leclerc, Mr. Patenaude and Mrs. Lecavalier.

Mr. Leclerc, please introduce the persons who are with you. Then, since this is a half-hour presentation, you have five minutes to present the essence of your brief, which has already been sent to members. There will then be five minutes for questions from the Government parliamentary group, five for the Official Opposition, 10 minutes for members registered with the Chair, five minutes each, and five minutes for the Chair. You have the floor, Mr. Leclerc.

#### **Association des retraités de l'enseignement (secteur Longueuil)**

**Mr. Leclerc (Paul-Étienne):** Mr. Chairman, on my right is Mr. Jean Patenaude of the Board of Directors of the Association des retraités de l'enseignement du Québec.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we wish to thank the two Chairmen and the members of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec very much for kindly agreeing to read the brief feverishly written by the Association des retraités de l'enseignement du Québec (secteur de Longueuil). Mr. Chairman, I should like to read a summary and, if possible, after giving you the chapter headings, read a couple of pages of the full brief.

Since the origins of our history, traditional values have been transformed and the French Canadian identity has gradually been reinforced by establishing as a consensus of basic values the French language, French law and the Catholic religion, as well as the development of an economy at the service of the interests of the nation. In the 20th century, these traditional values have been particularly challenged, except the defence of the French language in conjunction with the broadening of democracy.

Then came the Quiet Revolution and the appearance of new values, while economic success ties in with Québec society and its culture. During the 1960s, individual action was valued in private life and the whole of collective life, which was strongly influenced by nationalism, feminism, and trade unionism. It appeared that the participation of French Canadians in the mainstream of humanity further solidified the national identity. Finally, a new awareness of the environment, of the quality of life and of the relations between men and women came into being. This consolidation of the national identity meant that self-determination became a word in vogue, while the centralizing federal government would not listen and interfered in fields reserved for the provinces, weakening the Québec government. And in 1982, English Canada cut Québec off from the Canadian family.

Obviously, the dilemma of pan-Canadian

French Canadian cultures is still present, insofar as there is an interaction between the Francophone majority of Québec and the Francophone minorities outside Québec. But, on the other hand, it is certain that the fundamental character of Canada will always take precedence over the distinct character of one of the societies making it up. Québec can no longer live under the blind menace of an interpretation by the courts of a fundamental law that is so obscure and full of contradictions. We live in a country of the mad, as René Lévesque was wont to say. The impasse seems insoluble. Québec, principal home of the French Canadian nation, must therefore devise a constitution, its very own democratic constitution. If you will permit, Mr. Chairman, I will read...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is almost entirely used up, but if you have something to add, please be brief.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Mr. Chairman, as you say, I have just about finished. Mr. Chairman, what must be done, as soon as the Commission's work is complete, is first, a declaration of sovereignty by the Québec government; second, a vote by all the people of Québec to approve or reject the proposed measure; and third, the drafting or completion of an interim constitution. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Leclerc. We will now go on to the question period, starting with the Government party. Mr. Michel Charbonneau has the first question.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Saint-Jean):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I should like to thank you and your team, Mr. Leclerc, for your presentation of this brief here today. The group you represent has of course played a very important role in the development of Québec and we are, moreover, most appreciative. May I return to page 9 of your brief, where you mention that the Canadian Constitution is a legislative straitjacket no longer appropriate to the normal, healthy development of the people of Québec; you add that it is an impediment to Québec's dynamism. I should like to hear you elaborate on this matter. Do you believe that at this time Québec has not developed or not been able to develop within the current Constitution as you would have liked?

**Mr. Leclerc:** Mr. Chairman, I certainly think it would be difficult to explain that Québec has not evolved since 1867. There has been a certain development, a fair amount of development. I feel quite incapable of summarizing the issue here in just a few minutes. In any event, I know we have wasted a lot of time and energy

in recent years in sterile discussions with the federal government. Of course, it is hard to evaluate the time our governments have wasted in futile discussions.  
(3:15 p.m.)

I should like to quote you a remark of Sir John A. MacDonald, who wrote to one of his friends in 1865... I'm not sure if that answers the question, if it is pertinent to the question, in any case. "If Confederation is accepted," wrote the former Prime Minister, "you will probably see in your lifetime the local parliaments absorbed by the central power. It is as clear for me as if this had already happened, even though this point of view is obviously not a matter to be aired in discussions with Lower Canada." What I have just quoted is taken from Me Pierre Patenaude's report to the Commission on the gradual reduction of Québec to the level of folklore in Canadian federalism.

I do not wish to repeat what I said a moment ago, but I believe that Québec has been held in check in a number of fields.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Saint-Jean):** OK. Since we do not have much time, Mr. Leclerc, I would also like you to tell us about your vision of the public consultation you spoke about just now. In your group, how do you see it, in what sort of way? A few minutes ago, at the end of your presentation, you mentioned that there would be a public consultation. How do you see that? You also refer to it on page 12 of your brief.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Yes, well, I'm thinking about a referendum. I am no expert on referendums, but, as far as I am concerned, it would be a referendum for all the citizens of Québec, as we had before in 1980. It would be that type. I cannot say anything more precise than that.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Saint-Jean):** That's what I wanted to know.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time, your five minutes, are up, Mr. Charbonneau. Now we go on to another group of questions from the party that forms the Official Opposition. Mrs. Vermette, I believe, has the first question.

**Mrs. Vermette:** Thank you, welcome to this Parliamentary Commission. Your brief is very agreeable to read, because you raise important points in our history we are unfortunately too often inclined to forget. And you have helped us see a real situation, that we have all the elements essential to an identity. But we have difficulty in defining that identity because of certain existing alliances with federalism. And you call into question, and what you want is that everything should take place as serenely as possible, but on the other hand, that we

preserve that cultural identity proper to ourselves, since we have all we need to do so.

I should like to know, in the view of your association, which has 12 000 members throughout Québec, and is thus a very representative association... And of your association, you tell us in your brief that Québec should democratically develop the political means to complete the truly national powers it lacks.

Could you, first, elaborate on the political powers to which you would give priority? And second, what national powers should be repatriated?

**Mr. Leclerc:** Mrs. Vermette, Mr. Chairman, I do not really, I do not claim that I really represent the members of the Association des retraités de l'enseignement du Québec. As I said a while ago, our brief was composed in febrile haste. I would not like to boast that all our members came to tell me in committee what they had to say. I come here quite humbly. And you ask me to say what measures Québec should take to obtain the powers it needs. I think that in a sovereign Québec, the government should have all the powers. I imagine that in discussions with Ottawa, there could be a common currency, well, things that would remain in common. I am not, we have not, considered the matter at any length.

**Mrs. Vermette:** Because I am referring to page 10 of your brief, if you could look at it, I wanted to know if for you, in fact, since you have written... You talk about deciding on its international policy, entrusting its own judges with the interpretation of what comes under civil law and criminal law, constitutional law. Does this form part of the political means to which we should give priority in fact on the political plane?

**Mr. Leclerc:** Of course, there would not be a Supreme Court any more, at least the Supreme Court would be in Québec. It would not be the Supreme Court in Ottawa that decided. Do you have something more to add?

**Mrs. Vermette:** Perhaps Mr. Patenaude has something to add?

**Mr. Patenaude (Jean):** What we want in fact is purely and simply to look after our own affairs. We are caught... we mentioned a straitjacket a while ago, well, we are part of Canada without really belonging. We pay taxes, but we don't belong. We are outside. No one wants us. Well, what shall we do? It is up to us to decide, it is our turn to say: "Listen to us". We'll sit down and what shall we do, everyone together? You have a Commission here that hears the opinions of us all. We are presenting

our opinions. When you are retired, you no longer have the concerns of a working life to think about, you sit down, you look at things and you say: "What's happening? What is going on? How does it fit in?" Fear is no longer a factor, a major factor. We look at things and think: Business tells us that an independent Québec would be viable. That's already a lot. To prepare that document, we did not consult all our members; nor, moreover, did the caisses populaires consult all theirs, of course...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Patenaude, that uses up the time for this group of questions. You may continue when answering others. Now it is the turn of the general membership. Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier is first. Mr. Beaumier?

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, there is someone ahead of me who asked the first question. I shall quickly go on to the second, which was something of a jest, Mr. Chairman. On the last page of your brief, you say: "A law of such importance should be submitted for direct approval by the people who, in any republic, hold the supreme power through the exercise of their right to vote". I wished to ask you: Were you making a comparison with that sentence, or is this the political system you would want for the constitution you desire?

**Mr. Leclerc:** Mr. Chairman, I don't really understand the question. I'm sorry.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Ha, ha, ha! I repeat. Ha, ha, ha! And yet we are in the same club, I too am a retired educator. Ha, ha, ha! You say at the very end, before your conclusion, you say: "A law of such importance should be submitted for direct approval by the people who, in any republic, hold the supreme power through the exercise of their right to vote". I wished to ask you whether the word "republic" that you have used there is simply by way of comparison or the political system you would like to see so that...

**Mr. Leclerc:** Yes, yes, it's a comparison...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Alright, Mr. Beaumier?

**Mr. Beaumier:** Fine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Lorraine Pagé?

**Mrs. Pagé:** Yes...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pagé will be followed by Mr. Libman.

**Mrs. Pagé:** ...we often hear that the people who work in the field of education are preparing the future. I think you demonstrate that this is true even when they are retired and I find it very interesting that today we welcomed a group of retired people, because I believe that the choice we have to make as a society should be a choice made by all age categories within Québec society.

I greatly appreciated in your brief your review of our values, the evolution of values in Québec society, because I feel the way you look at those values is entirely serene, not at all nostalgic, and full of hope for the future. I find this most attractive. I would have one question for you. On page... near the end of your brief, you discuss the constitution that should be voted for by the Québec Parliament and ratified by popular referendum; this is an approach commonly used by countries in terms of ratification of a constitution, but I would like to know whether you have ever stopped to dwell on how the constitution should be elaborated. Do you see this as being done only by Parliament? Or have you considered the possibility of a Commission formed by Parliament, an extended Commission, with a mandate to work on the preparation of the constitution? Have you thought about an assembly elected specially to prepare such a constitution, and draft it? I would like to hear your point of view on that aspect.  
(3:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Leclerc:** As for me, I had thought more of a commission, perhaps, well, like this Commission.

**Mrs. Pagé:** A commission of an extended nature then, consisting of both parliamentarians and others, entrusted by Parliament with the mandate to prepare a constitution which would, in turn, be submitted to the people by referendum.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Representative of the people; which would be a working document.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Perfect.

**Mr. Leclerc:** But it seems to me we already have part of a constitution just the same. We can complete it, remove what is no longer any good, and add what suits us to replace what is not good.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Perfect, thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Libman, to be followed by Mr. Turgeon, who will be the last speaker for this group. Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 9, you say that Québec makes laws in fields

under its exclusive jurisdiction, as it did with Bill 101, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is there to justify declaring null and void a large number of laws it needs to live with its distinct character. The Constitution of Canada is an impediment to the dynamism of Québec. I must remind you, Mr. Leclerc, that the Québec Superior Court and the Québec Court of Appeal found unanimously, even when interpreting the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms, that the prohibition of other languages on signs violated freedom of expression. It was not only the Supreme Court. Then, in the light of this, and of the fact that you speak on page 2 of your report of a Québec constitution, without saying much about the importance of the 20 % of Québec's population that represent the minorities, I wish to know whether you would be in favour of formal guarantees for the minorities in a Québec constitution? And when I talk about guarantees, I am talking about safeguards for education, safeguards for health care and social services and safeguards for freedom of expression in a possible Québec constitution?

**Mr. Leclerc:** I believe, Mr. Chairman, that we have already broached the rights of minorities indirectly in our brief. Of course, we are in favour of the minorities enjoying their respective rights, whether they be English-speaking, allophone or aboriginal peoples.

**Mr. Libman:** Then, when you speak of that, you are ready to recognize, in a Québec constitution, these rights, or guarantees or safeguards for these rights of the minorities.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Rights for minorities, of course, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes, well, a little along the same lines as what Mr. Libman asked, you say, then, in your report that in the Québec of the future, we have to regard as a Quebecer everyone who lives in Québec. I think that is self-evident, in fact, but it implies that the new culture of Québec must establish new ties with Anglophones and other language groups. I should like you to tell me what the new culture would be and what the new relations with the Anglophones would be as compared with what we experience with them at the moment and the rights they have and we already respect.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Would you please refer me to...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes, well, in your report,

page 7.

**Mr. Leclerc:** New relations with Anglophones, well...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Last paragraph.

**Mr. Leclerc:** Yes, obviously, since Québec is changing a lot, we often speak with a feeling of rejection of the older generations, the attitudes of Quebecers are changing, of course our relations must always, to be of value, adapt to the present, adhere closely to life as it is today. It was undoubtedly in that sense we mentioned things like that.

**Mr. Turgeon:** You don't mean that today, for example, we mistreat our minorities, or the allophones or...

**Mr. Leclerc:** No, not at all, not at all.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Then, I have only to thank you and the Longueuil section of your Association for your presentation of this brief. Thank you, Mr. Leclerc and Mr. Patenaude, for answering our questions and allowing us to interrupt you from time to time.

And now I would ask you to...

**Mr. Leclerc:** ...your kind attention.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I now ask you to leave the room quickly because, unfortunately, we have a rather heavy program. You will be followed by Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau.

You have 30 minutes for your presentation, 5 for the main points of your brief and, as was the case just now, 5 minutes for each of the 2 parties and 10 for the rest of the group. Mr. Charbonneau will begin, then it will be your turn, yes. Mr. Charbonneau.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau**

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To begin with, I would like to thank you and all the members of the Commission for agreeing to hear me on this rather unexpected and premature return from Africa.

Straight away, I must tell you that I prepared a document one night this week which, in fact, summarizes the preliminary documents I sent, but since time is short, I will try to summarize the main features, in the hope that there will be time to do so in the five minutes allotted to me.

I think what is important, first of all, is to realize that, in the new political framework sought, there are three options open to us. To clarify, there is, first, the more decentralized

federal union, or what is called renewed federalism, there is true confederation, that is, sovereignty-association, and there is sovereignty without maintaining Canadian economic union. The first two involve maintaining the present economic union, that is, monetary union, the common market and the Canadian customs union, and the third involves political and economic separation.

The first option, that is, renewed federalism, we must make it clear, involves no change in political status: Québec will remain a province, a federated State subject to a central power in which English Canadians are the majority group, and will be increasingly so. Whereas "confederal" union, or sovereignty-association, and even sovereignty without economic union lead to a true change in political status because they imply that Québec would become a country, a sovereign State, a country... We must agree on these terms, understand the vocabulary we use, and stick to a uniform one. I say this in my presentation and don't want to belabour the point... maybe we can come back to it; for myself, I reject renewed federalism for a variety of reasons, the most recent being the failure of Meech Lake. For 30 years now, we have been trying to renew federalism, to decentralize political powers in favour of Québec, among others, and it hasn't worked. In my opinion, it is time to opt for a major change, that is, for a Québec country. But between association and separation, since both options imply that Québec would become a country, I, myself, choose an associated country. How can we ultimately transform the Canadian federal union into a "confederal" union? Basically, it is a question of changing the relationship between the political institutions of this federal union.

We must be clear: What is a confederation? It is an association of sovereign States. René Lévesque's "sovereignty-association" as proposed in his document "Option Québec", as proposed by the Lévesque government in 1980, was just that, a true confederation, an association of countries. And its fundamental difference with federalism is that federalism supposes an association of States which are not sovereign, which are not represented at the United Nations. And when they talk to us about a supranational superstructure, it must be clear, when they propose to us the political and economic model, particularly the European political model, they are, in fact, proposing sovereignty-association; they are proposing a veritable confederation, an association of sovereign States, of countries. That is what is being proposed to us. And I think that, on one side or the other, the militant politicians in Québec, whether from the Parti québécois or the Liberal Party, who use a certain vocabulary, will, at some point, have to come to some understanding on terms and use

the same vocabulary.

Today in *Le Devoir*, I saw that the Québec Liberals have a video they are showing around the province which distinguishes between five constitutional options; but three of these constitutional options are the same. It speaks of true Confederation, it speaks of the sovereignty-association of the Parti québécois, and it speaks of the European model. But in all three cases, it is talking about the same thing. It even talks about the association of sovereign States in a "confederal" system with political union. How can the Canadian federal union be ultimately transformed into a "confederal" union? It can be done in two ways: We can separate, declare ourselves independent and then say to our neighbors that we want to negotiate a new agreement. But that isn't the only way to do things. We could also negotiate a new agreement before declaring ourselves sovereign, having obtained a clear mandate for sovereignty beforehand. And I think there is only one way to get that clear mandate, and that is through a referendum. But with a clear mandate, we can propose that Canadian economic union be maintained. We can enter into negotiations before declaring independence. It is not correct to say that there is only one way, which is: Let's declare independence and negotiate later. If we want to avoid the break-up of the union, the severing of economic union for a certain period of time, if everyone agrees and there is a broad consensus in favour of maintaining this basic economic union, then it must also be maintained during the period of negotiations.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your five minutes have expired but you may continue by answering questions.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Very well, Mr. Chairman. That's what I'll do.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have no choice. Ha, ha, ha! But thank you for being so gracious about it.

So, we begin with the party which forms the Official Opposition. Mr. Chevette has the first round of questions.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, welcome to Québec, Mr. Charbonneau. Circumstances change quickly. I read on page 2 of your brief that the referendum or the mandate you are seeking is unequivocal; it is a mandate for sovereignty. Not a mandate for sovereignty-association, not a mandate for maintaining ties of one kind or another, but a clear mandate for sovereignty. Do I interpret your statements on page 2 correctly?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Yes. It must be clear. When the people take a stand, they

must understand the consequences of their choice, which is that, finally, Québec becomes a country. This does not preclude that, in the question asked, reference could also be made to our intention of proposing continued economic union with Canada. But it must be made clear that the result of the vote, unlike 1980... what we should be asking for is, not a mandate to negotiate, but a mandate to achieve it. But once we have a mandate to achieve it, we do not have to declare political independence or sovereignty right then, or immediately after, because it's the same thing. We can, at that moment, because we have the necessary position of strength, which we did not have at Meech Lake and which we will never have in a new dynamic of constitutional negotiations on renewed federalism; we will have the position of strength we need to say to English Canadians: Look, we have the mandate to achieve sovereignty, but we propose to you that economic union with Canada be maintained. Can we sit down at the table and discuss this? And if you don't want to, we are telling you right away, we're going to do it anyway.

**Mr. Chevette:** So. You have a very clear mandate, 70 % to 72 % of Québec has given you a clear mandate to achieve sovereignty; so you go to the federal government and say: I offer you economic association but my declaration of independence is not conditional to an agreement.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** It's clear. If you voted for sovereignty, you voted for it to be achieved some day, in one way or another. I think it should be clear. We are moving toward a position of strength. The message to be given to our English Canadian partners is not that we are offering them a new association, but that we already have one that should be maintained. That's what we want. If all those who have come to the Commission had said: We want to maintain an economic union; very well. Then, we said it clearly; but we say to them: Negotiations, they must lead to something. We could, at that moment, fix a time limit, and, one way or another, whether it suits you or not, we are moving in that direction. I think it should be clear.

**Mr. Chevette:** We want to maintain economic ties but not under any conditions. An economic link or association or economic treaty that is mutually advantageous. Not necessarily an economic association at any price. Do we understand each other?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** We understand each other well, but we must agree. Sovereignty... a country can negotiate different kinds of partnerships with any country. What we

are discussing now is somewhat more than that. What Mr. Lévesque proposed was more than that. It is maintaining, not any economic association, but the present one, this present monetary union, this particular customs union and common market. That is the one we want to maintain. A free trade treaty with the United States is another thing.

**Mr. Chevette:** Following your reasoning, we have a referendum, we negotiate, we offer the possibility of maintaining economic ties... do you see any time limit for this? For example, will the negotiations last 10 years, 15 years, will they be conducted as they are now, or do you see time limits to this? If not, we can't keep frittering away our time... Meech Lake took three years and led to nothing.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I said on the first page of my brief that we have two objectives at this Commission, and for all of Québec. We need to articulate a new political framework, but we also need to articulate the means by which this new framework will be put in place within an acceptable time limit. I think that we've lost enough time, energy and money over the last 30 or 40 years that we should decide on an outcome. People who come to this Commission say to everyone else, to the government, as to the Opposition, as to the groups represented here: It must be settled quickly. Quickly does not necessarily mean three months. It could be six months, one year, but there are time limits. Look at Germany, the two Germanys were reunited within the space of a year. Extraordinary things are happening on the international scene, which should inspire us; if we read a bit and follow what is happening elsewhere in the world, if we're not entirely wrapped up in our own particular situation... What is happening elsewhere in the world is that people are determined to make things materialize in the right way for one another. They also set time limits so that this can be accomplished relatively quickly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Time has run out for this block of questions and we carry on with the group of other members. We call on Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant, who will be followed by Mr. Bouchard and Mrs. Pagé.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had many questions to ask you. What I like about your brief is that you have a meaningful formula suggesting how to arrive at this. It doesn't mean that I agree with everything written there. I would, nonetheless, like to bring up one small point. When you talk about speed, you talk about Germany, the reunification of Germany (this is the second time we are being

told about this), there is a fundamental difference between reuniting two sisters or two brothers of the same family. I call that finding a long lost loved one, and it can't happen too quickly... When it is a question of separation, it is much slower. It must be done step by step, and then again, my partner doesn't always completely agree with what I would like, so it is speed... There is a proverb, for that matter, which says that speed can lead to undue haste. I think we should be careful; we will have to proceed...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** You are correct, but what we are discussing is exactly that, how to avoid separation, how to avoid a break-up. The economic union we want to create is already there. Unlike Europe which started out with separate countries, whose people killed each other in one of the most notorious wars ever, we are starting with a situation in which an economic alliance has been in existence for one hell of a long time. What we must do is maintain this economic union, but change the decision-making framework, the control of this union. It's not the same. The point of departure is different.

**Mr. Poissant:** No, our point of departure is certainly not the same. You mention, in the process, I would like you to clarify... Assuming that you have asked a straightforward question, which is not easy because it will still have to be explained to Quebecers, who are ten times more knowledgeable than in 1980, who are ten times more demanding, if you will; they will have to be given clear explanations. You sign a document based on essentially valid information. The question, therefore, will not be as easy (in my own mind, at present) as one would like to think. Because we are asking them to make a big decision, the question will have to be precise. That being said, assuming that we come up with a question that is both valid and acceptable, my first question is: What proportion in the referendum do you think will be needed to make the new country option valid?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I, myself, I am hoping for a broad consensus.

**Mr. Poissant:** What proportion?  
(3:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I don't want to say today whether it would be 53 %, 55 %, 60 % or 75 %. But what we can say is, if we already had 51 % of the population... We must realize that more than two-thirds of French Québec have already voted in favour of sovereignty. That's one thing. Secondly, I think if we reject the idea of choosing the option we should choose, and create a country by means of an election, in which we choose all kinds of

things, governments and ideas included... Then, the referendum, the democratic rule is that 50 plus one is already sufficient. But everyone is hoping... And I think if we are conscious of what is on the table, I will end my brief by saying: Let us examine the differences which, in fact, now divide the one who proposed sovereignty-association (he used a new term to speak about something that was already in existence), and Mr. Bourassa, who is the Prime Minister of Québec today, and the reasons they parted ways 22 years ago. You will realize that, today, there is no longer very much dividing them. In that sense, if we are trying to clarify things at this Commission, and I am trying to make my humble contribution, I think we can arrive at an understanding.

Whereas the Québec Liberals are now talking about sovereignty-association, they are still confusing a certain number of things, but it does mean something in its evolution. For myself, I think that, as far as the Parti québécois is concerned, if we also meet them partway so that when the Prime Minister of Québec says that political union could and should exercise control over economic union, maybe we should come to the realization that, finally, it would not be a tragedy, even for orthodox sovereignists, if there were a central community Parliament, even elected by universal suffrage. Does the existence of a European Parliament make France, Germany, or Great Britain less of a country? Do they have a seat at the United Nations or not? A Québec country means a seat at the United Nations. I, myself, am not too upset by a certain number of jurisdictions being shared so that, at some point, there might even be a community Parliament where members could be elected by universal suffrage. If the European Group of 12 can do it, I don't see why Québec and the rest of Canada couldn't. I understand...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Mr. Charbonneau, we will continue where you left off. If Europe can do it, why can't we? Europe has a Parliament but it is not a Parliament with powers. The powers of the Community are exercised by a council...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** That's correct.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...where ministers sit as delegates of the different countries...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** That's correct.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...of national governments.

So, basically, the case of Western Europe is not comparable to a true confederation. You say it's a true confederation; it is not a true...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** No, no. We must understand each other, Mr. Bouchard. A confederation, according to the dictionary, is an association of sovereign States. There are several kinds of confederations possible. I maintain, and I'm convinced of it, that the European Group of 12, the European Economic Community is a confederation, is an association of sovereign States of a particular kind. There is no confederation in existence in the world with the same formula.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Yes, but the classic model... We took some courses together, with university professors...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Yes, but I have been an MNA for 13 years, and have written a book on it, and...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Far be it from me to compare myself to you when it comes to knowledge...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** No, no, nor I to you, for that matter...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** We won't bring our respective courses into play here.

**Mr. Bouchard:** No, no. But "confederation" is a generic term meaning that the members, the States who are members, remain sovereign.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** That's correct. We agree on that.

**Mr. Bouchard:** They put their eggs in the same basket, but reserve the right to remove them if they wish to do so.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** That's it.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Do we agree, that is what Europe does?

**Mr. Bouchard:** Well, that is to say, yes, that is what Europe does...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Good, what I'm saying...

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...but we also agree in saying that...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** ...that Europe is a confederation.

**Mr. Bouchard:** But we agree in saying that... It's dangerous, because a great many people compare the present situation to the one in Europe, and we know that one party in particular whose Leader, the Prime Minister, has often wanted us to make the parallel, so that the new framework, the potential superstructure is comparable to the European Parliament. It must be remembered, then, to be precise, that the European Parliament has no powers...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** That's correct.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...that the real powers are exercised by a council of ministers who are appointed by each national State.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** That is why, Mr. Bouchard, I was so anxious to come to this Commission, because I think it's important. What I regret is that the Prime Minister of Québec, for months now, has had us in a state of confusion. And it's this confusion we must clear up, for the sake of the citizens as well as for the Liberal political militants...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Yes, but, Mr. Charbonneau, I think...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** If we think of a superstructure...

**Mr. Bouchard:** I think we all learn together. We are all learning together. I don't think we should blame Mr. Bourassa for that. He referred to the European framework, now it is a question of being more explicit about what he means. Basically, what he means is that he is a sovereignist when he says that we will adopt the European framework. So, Mr. Bourassa is a sovereignist now.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** What I'm saying is, if Mr. Bourassa wants to be consistent in his choice of words, he should indeed come to the conclusion that sovereignty-association is the model he is proposing; it's the same thing, and that, ultimately, Québec should be a State. If Mr. Bourassa arrives at a proposition that amounts to a superstructure, with Québec remaining a federated, provincial State, subject to the jurisdiction of a central Canadian Parliament in which Quebecers are in the minority, nothing will have changed. We would have the status of a renewed federated State, that's all. There will have been no change. And we will not be able to talk about a truly supranational structure. Look, when we talk about "supranational", we are saying "over and

above countries". If Québec continues to be a province, there is no Québec country. We will not be speaking of a supranational superstructure, but of federated provinces under the authority of a central Canadian Parliament.

I say, let us be clear. If Mr. Bourassa and the Liberals want to go on talking about a supranational superstructure, let them tell us what it is, and stop backing two horses, pleasing the sovereignists, old and new, and pleasing the federalists who sincerely want the renewal to be profound and far-reaching. I think that, at some point, we will have to settle the question. We can't use the vocabulary to suit all purposes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** But they must be taken at their word; we must accept what they say, that what is said is true.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Yes, but I think that the task of your Commission is one of clarification.

**Mr. Bouchard:** That's what we're doing today, particularly with this. You are helping us do it.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I hope I'm of some help.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Yes, confusion reigns indeed. Mr. Bourassa is a sovereignist without knowing it.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I didn't say that really!

**Mrs. Pagé:** No, but I was showing those on my left, the Canadian federation rests on an ambiguity, since we talk of the Canadian confederation, which it is not.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Exactly. That's correct.

**Mrs. Pagé:** It's really a federal system. I want to pursue the line of reasoning in your text, while addressing something which is not in the text, but which could follow from it. You mention sovereign States which can share a certain number of jurisdictions, and I would like to address the specific aspect of international relations. You say to us...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I am very happy that...

**Mrs. Pagé:** ...to return from Africa, among other things. I want to know, do you see international relations as a field of jurisdiction that should be shared? And in other respects, do

you think the role of a sovereign Québec, on an international plane, could have beneficial effects on Québec as well as on Third World countries, and here I'm speaking of, I'm referring more particularly to international cooperation. I know that you are somewhat involved in this. So I would like to hear what you have to say about this.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** To begin with, let's speak clearly: a sovereign Québec, a Québec country, with or without sovereignty-association or a Canadian confederation, means a seat at the United Nations. It means that Québec chooses its ambassadors, negotiates and signs its treaties. But there could well be, as is the case in Europe at present, community mechanisms for international cooperation. There are European funds for international cooperation. We could even think of CIDA becoming a community organization. Maybe we're not ready to do that. Maybe that isn't what must be done. But it wouldn't be out of place to say that CIDA could, for instance, become a community organization. But it's evident that the CIDA administration would change so that it would be under the jurisdiction of both countries.

That being said, it is regrettable that Québec has not made a place for itself on the international scene, which it could have done, even as a federated State, particularly in the field of international cooperation.

And I take the occasion to invite the Commission to listen to the Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale, which has presented a brief to you. I read that brief. Since I am a member, employed by a non-governmental organization belonging to this coalition, I was also asked, if I had the occasion, and you give me an excellent one, to tell you that these people would like a hearing. What they want to tell us is... Yes, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Unfortunately, the difficult aspect of my role is having to tell you that the time for this question period has run out. We will carry on with the other group.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I presume that my message has been heard.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, you have been heard. It is now the government's turn, and Mr. Maciocia has the first question. No, Mrs. Pelchat has the first question. Go ahead, Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, in turn, would like to welcome most warmly the former MNA from Verchères, who, for 13 years, sat as a member of the Parti québécois. And, I

would like you, in this capacity, perhaps, in order to throw a little more light on these concepts, I would like you to tell me the difference between the position of the present PQ, and the one you are advocating, which seems to be Mr. Lévesque's position.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** If I want to be brief, I would say, the hyphen. In fact, what the Parti québécois proposed under Mr. Lévesque was sovereignty-association as a whole concept. But Mr. Lévesque and, I think, all the members of the party at the time also knew that, if it didn't work, what we wanted, in any case, was a country. I believe, there are now two ways of thinking, two tendencies taking shape in the party. There are people in the Parti québécois who say that if we are independent, when we become a country, we will be able to enter into treaties and partnerships with whomever we want, and, in a special way, with Canada, very easily. That's one thing; that's one thing. The other tendency is this: There are people who have always thought, and others (I saw this in the newspapers, even in Africa) who have come back to this way of thinking, who say: Sovereignty-association is a privileged link with English Canada. It doesn't refer to link with the United States, with Europe, with other markets or partners...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** You, Mr. Charbonneau, in addition to the economic ties you advocate in your brief, do you recommend political ties?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I think we could manage very well with political ties, but hear me well. The political link we are talking about is not a Parliament with sovereignty, it is not a Parliament with all the jurisdictions of the present Canadian Parliament...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Would it be...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** It's a Parliament which, like the one in Europe...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** ...elected by universal suffrage?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** ...could...even... It could be elected by suffrage, which is what I say in my brief. I don't say it's an unacceptable position for someone who supports independence, or someone who believes in the sovereignty-association model, but still, let's understand each other well. It's the model with powers and jurisdictions entrusted to that authority, and, in the final analysis, it is up to the member States, which have the right of veto...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** But, precisely, Mr. Char-

bonneau...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** ...the central community Parliament could never impose its will on the member States, that is, on the member countries, any more than the present European Parliament can do so on France, Germany or Great Britain...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** ...but...

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** ...or on any of the other members.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** ...which jurisdictions would you entrust to this Parliament?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** I am not an expert and have not wanted to ponder the list of jurisdictions that could be entrusted or not... There are people who are more knowledgeable than I on this question. We could discuss what should be shared at great length. Should such and such jurisdiction be shared, should such and such powers be given over to a community Parliament? I think, that, clearly, it will be a political authority with much less political room to manoeuvre than the present central Canadian system, and that Parliament will not have the characteristics of sovereignty, which the present Canadian Parliament has. Who represents us at the United Nations? The Canadian ambassador, not the ambassador of Québec.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** But would this Parliament also have a community council, as you seem to allude to in the White Paper?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Well, the community council was proposed, Mrs. Pelchat, in the White Paper of the Parti québécois and by the Lévesque government in 1980, and I think the formula, which Mr. Bouchard referred to earlier, is still a good formula, one in which both countries delegate a number of their ministers to sit on the community council and take over a certain number of jurisdictions and powers. It's done in Europe. We proposed it in 1980; the White Paper said, the PQ at the time said: We don't so much like the idea of a Parliament elected by universal suffrage, but if a proposition ever came from English Canada, we would be ready to consider it. I, myself, say: We could say right now, just as clearly, that we are ready to consider it, because it would not be heresy, and Québec would not be less of a country for perhaps accepting the idea of some central political organization. And that is how, at some point, if there is good faith, if we are determined to see the work of this Commission lead to something, and if there is a will to seize the historic moment, not so much for the Parti québécois or the Liberal Party, but for Québec

itself. There is no great difference, finally, between the position you and others around you promote, and the one proposed by the Parti québécois. But let's make ourselves clear, and it will be up to you to choose: You will have to reject the provincial status for Québec. As long as the Liberal Party proposes that Québec stay within Canada, with Québec subordinate to the federal State in which we are a minority group, there will be no change in political status.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** In that sense, Mr. Charbonneau, how... In your presentation you say that Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Lévesque mirror each other, the two positions mirror each other. Explain to me a little... because I know it makes certain people smile to hear you say that, and I would like to hear your comments on it.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Look, unless I'm mistaken, they parted ways on the issue of monetary union, among others, and on the question of central political institutions, perhaps. But from the moment M. Bourassa proposed a model, which is the European one, and we realized that, really, the European model could very well be agreeable to the Parti québécois because it is a sovereignty-association model... what is the problem?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Charbonneau, time has run out for this block of questions, but for almost the first time since the start of the hearings, there is time left for the Chair. I don't have a specific question, but since you have time remaining to answer, could you answer a question which has not yet been asked?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** It will be a great privilege, Mr. Chairman. Look, what I hope for, finally, is that we come out of this Commission with a proposition to look for an extraordinary consensus in Québec. Historic moments don't happen every day. And if we don't take on these historic and political challenges, we will miss the boat, and we will all have to answer to history for this failure. I think Quebecers are ready to take the big step, and they are ready to take it as masters in their own house, and want to continue to be masters in their own house while, at the same time, maintaining privileged ties with English Canada. Our success is a question of determination.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Since there's a little time left, maybe a question from each side to balance the books. Mr. Brassard, it will be short no doubt?

**Mr. Brassard:** ...Mr. Charbonneau, do you

not agree that the problem with a supranational Parliament as it exists in Europe with its headquarters in Strasbourg... the problem is that we don't know what to make of it because it is elected by universal suffrage and has no true legislative powers; so the Europeans are asking themselves: What are we going to do with this? I wonder if, in a Québec-Canada association, it would not be enough to have a council of ministers to manage the association treaty?

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Maybe you are right, but what I say in my brief is that it's not obligatory, it's a possibility. When Mr. Bourassa says to us: It's obligatory, I reply: It's a possibility. But when you say that it should be rejected, I say: You think so, others think not. I don't believe the historic division should hinge on this question. I think if English Canada, or even a certain number of Quebecers wanted us to explore that avenue, we could do so. From the Parti québécois' point of view, from the sovereignists' point of view, from my point of view, there would be no heresy in doing so.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pelchat, you had the last turn. Do you have a last question?

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Well, a comment...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Always on the Chair's time, of course.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, you are so generous.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It won't last.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I would like to tell you, Jean-Pierre, that you too want an historic compromise. Several people have spoken about it. There are others who will speak to us about it this evening. I tell you that we can perhaps go partway in that direction, toward historic compromise, but when we look at the polls, this solution will really have to be used to enlighten the population; with polls in which 73 % are in favour of sovereignty and 65 % are in favour of ties with Canada, you might well be the one with the solution. Thank you.

**Mr. Charbonneau (Jean-Pierre):** Well, Madam, an historic compromise is perhaps possible, but there is a minimum condition: a country.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** On that note, Mr. Charbonneau, thank you for presenting the brief which you sent us. May I remind the audience, as we explained again when the day began, since we are almost in Parliament, there is to be no applause from the

gallery. I make no comment, I am simply reminding you of that. Thank you, Mr. Charbonneau.

We carry on now with the Citizens of Saint-Bruno group, and Mr. Bowles, who will present a group also comprised of Mr. Tobin, Mr. Machnik and Mr. O'Dowd. Are these people available to come to the table?

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:03 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:04 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Order, please!

If you would kindly introduce your group. Then, since it is a half-hour presentation, you will have five minutes in which to present the main points in your brief; then we'll carry on with questions.

#### **Citizens of Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville**

**Mr. Bowles (John):** Thank you. Mr. Plamondon will make the presentation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Introduce the group; then proceed as you wish with the time given to you.

**Mr. Plamondon (Charles):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me a group made up of two allophones, one Francophone, three Anglophones and one who belongs to both races, which proves, all the same, that different ethnic groups can get along if they want to. If you wish, I can introduce them by name: There is Mr. John Bowles, a research and development engineer, Mr. Gartshore, a businessman now away on a trip, Mr. Machnik, a retired educator, Mrs. McCormack, secretary at St. Augustine's in Saint-Bruno, Mr. Bernie O'Dowd, a group insurance director, myself, a retired engineer, and Mr. Tobin, another retired educator.

We have taken counsel together because we have fears about the future of both Canada and Québec, and have prepared recommendations which are listed in our brief. I won't mention what they are as I don't think there will be time to do so in five minutes. I will simply summarize them, if you will.

First, we express the wish that institutions serving Anglophones be protected, as in the case of... With the elimination of the protection afforded by the British North America Act, schools are entirely at the mercy of political whims. It is, therefore, vital that this protection be replaced by constitutional guarantees.

With respect to universities and hospitals, it is important to clarify the mechanism used to identify Anglophone institutions, and to entrench their protection in the Constitution to prevent possible changes motivated by politics.

Second page, social services. As praiseworthy as its objectives are, Bill 142 leaves a lot to be desired with regard to its application. We give a few examples: Employment in the public service. We would wish that Anglophone candidates who are truly qualified have easier access to the public service.

We cite, then, in paragraph b) the advantages for Québec in maintaining a viable Anglophone community with its own institutions and services.

On page 3, we express the wish to retain our status as Canadian citizens. We believe there are many advantages to this and we list them in the brief.

Then, we believe that, in the context of the protection of individual rights and acquired rights, it is unacceptable that the "notwithstanding" clause be used to undermine acquired rights, as was the case with Bills 101 and 178.

With regard to the mechanisms allowing the expression of divergent opinions, which is related to the preceding paragraph, we believe that, if the "notwithstanding" clause undermines the role of tribunals, there are few ways left to express differing opinions.

Obviously, this brief is in very abbreviated form because of lack of time.

We then discuss the development of the federal-provincial Constitution. Those who are as old as I know that democracy has had its dark moments in our history and we mention a few. We believe, therefore, that minorities greatly need protection under the Constitution to guard against what we call the tyranny of the majority. Evidently, it is a question of making democracy work. The best possible solution must be found.

We also share, of course, the concern for safeguarding the French character of Québec. We are in agreement that Québec should take over immigration, among other things, as long as it does not in any way affect Canadian citizenship.

The recent events observed in Europe and Asia demonstrate that the most serious threats to democracy in times of social upheaval do not always come from ideologies, but from attitudes such as chauvinism, xenophobia, religious fanaticism, demagoguery and authoritarianism. That is why we ask that the Québec Charter of human rights and the Canadian Charter both be entrenched in such a way as to protect against the passions of the moment and changing politics.

And in concluding, we add the following, which is not in our brief: Our group hopes for, within the present boundaries of Canada, a secure and prosperous society. The challenge is to know how to hold on to the opportunities we now have, while at the same time assuring and improving the situation for the Francophone people. In addition, we wish to submit to the

Commission our concluding statement that we have, in Canada, two of the great cultures of the world, and, with these, we believe that it is still possible to build, in the manner of a superstructure, a superculture. So that is our brief, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Plamondon. We will begin with questions from the group of non-elected members, and I call on Mr. Gérald Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will refer, first, to page 4 of your brief. You have good reason to mention certain weaknesses in the democratic system in Québec over the course of history, but I would like to warn you that federalist propaganda is, perhaps, most contemptible when, if you just look at the facts, it never mentions that the federal government itself assailed, I would say, or rather, attacked the rights of individuals and the rights of different groups in our own time in history. And when it is insinuated that a sovereign Québec would risk or move toward totalitarianism, it seems to me that you discredit yourselves, since the federal system itself... I remember it because it was said before the Commission... I think it is unfortunate that groups such as yours, which express valid demands, and I think they can be dealt with, should lend themselves to this sort of cheap propaganda.

I simply want to remind you that the federal regime imprisoned thousands of Japanese, Italians, Ukrainians, and Quebecers, not in the Middle Ages, but in 1970; it set fire to barns, it stole lists from political parties, issued false communiqués, infiltrated the unions, and, for decades, kidnapped the children of aboriginals and held them in school commissions to integrate them, to assimilate them. And if we look at the outcome for Francophone minorities outside Québec, the score is quite even. So, please, you must not discredit yourselves by mentioning this sort of situation, and this goes for D'Iberville "federal" Fortier, who, after insulting Québec... he should have been congratulated, I suppose...

In regard to page 3. I was going to ask the question...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** If you ask the question, of course, they will be able to use their time.

**Mr. Larose:** Yes. Then, on page 3...

**Mr. Plamondon:** I can't see who is speaking to me at the moment.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It's Mr. Larose who is over there. The third from the left.

**Mr. Larose:** Here.

**Mr. Plamondon:** Excuse me, sir. I thought it was coming from... that's why...

**Mr. Larose:** OK.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose, you are still unknown to the group. Question, please.

**Mr. Larose:** I hope that isn't said mockingly, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of those here before us. On page 3, in your second paragraph, when you say that, among the many advantages of Québec remaining within the Canadian federation, you mention the diversity of available resources across Canada, resulting in greater security, unlimited access to Canadian oil and gas. Maybe you are not aware, but the free trade treaty signed a year and a half ago gives exactly that, unlimited access to Canadian oil and gas, and to electricity by the Americans. Do you mean to say that if there were a sovereign Québec, Canada, or what would be left of it, would not want to be as liberal with regard to trading with Québec, and would, therefore, want to discriminate against Québec, one more form of it, compared with Americans? That is my question.

**Mr. Plamondon:** Compared with...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Theoretically, your time is up, Mr. Plamondon, but you can take the Chair's time. Go ahead.

**Mr. Plamondon:** OK. Thank you. In any case, for my last question, nobody knows right now what will happen if the relationship between Québec and the rest of Canada is changed. Nobody knows at the moment. We don't know what relations will be like between Québec and what remains of Canada. Consequently, if we don't know, we cannot know what friendly ties or business relationships will exist between these two countries. If relations deteriorate anything is possible, in our opinion; in any case, maybe we will always have access to oil and gas, but maybe not at the price it is now. That's what we mean. And that, we don't know...

**Mr. Larose:** The treaty provides for the same price.

**Mr. Plamondon:** The treaty applies to Canada and the United States, and I don't know what will apply to a sovereign or independent Québec. I don't know, I haven't been told. Nobody has told me yet. That is why we mentioned it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You

may have the opportunity to answer other questions during the next 20 minutes. Now Mr. Robert Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Au paragraphe B de la page 2, vous parlez des avantages pour le Québec du maintien d'une communauté anglophone viable avec ses institutions et services. Beaucoup ont parlé d'un autre exode majeur des anglophones si le Québec devenait souverain. J'entends ces préoccupations. J'entends régulièrement ces commentaires. La communauté anglophone du Québec, comme vous l'avez dit, a toujours été un partenaire essentiel de la majorité, tout au long de l'évolution de la société québécoise; elle reconnaît la nécessité de maintenir le caractère français du Québec. Il est donc crucial de préserver la viabilité de cette communauté.

(4:15 p.m.)

Un commentateur d'une station de radio a dernièrement posé la question suivante: "Pourquoi faudrait-il s'en faire si les anglophones quittent la province?" Et j'aimerais avoir votre opinion à ce sujet. D'abord, croyez-vous que les anglophones seront nombreux à partir si le Québec devient souverain, premièrement? Deuxièmement, pourriez-vous préciser ce que vous avez dit à la page B, énumérer les avantages réels, pour le Québec, du maintien d'une communauté anglophone viable, avec ses institutions et services?

**M. Plamondon:** En réponse à votre première question, je dirais que je ne crois pas que notre mémoire mentionne... Would you rather I answered in French or in English?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** As you wish; it's up to you.

**Mr. Plamondon:** We don't mention in our brief that we believe in a necessary exodus of Anglophones out of Québec if anything were ever to happen.

**Mr. Libman:** We often hear these comments and questions. The first part of the question is: do you believe there will be an exodus?

**Mr. Plamondon:** Everything will depend, in my opinion at least, on the type of bonds that could ultimately exist between a new form of Québec or a new Québec/Canada structure. If it is a structure like a confederation, where there are the same advantages we have now, I can't see why Anglophones would leave. If there were an extreme situation, but we shouldn't talk about that since it frightens people; if that were the case, though, I couldn't say what might happen...

**Mr. Libman:** Now if you could elaborate on

the second part of the question...

**M. Plamondon:** M. Libman, M. Bowles aimerait ajouter quelque chose.

**M. Bowles:** Évidemment, l'éventuel exode dépend beaucoup de la façon dont les institutions et services anglophones seront protégés dans cet éventuel Québec souverain, et de la façon dont nous présentons la situation pour attirer plus d'immigrants anglophones dans la province. Je pense que nous devons relever un très grand... a huge challenge at this time, a huge challenge caused by free trade. Now all our barriers are being broken down, between Québec and the Americans, or between Canada and the Americans. When these barriers are down, we will open up a vast market. At the same time, though, we are making our market available to the Americans. We must have the expertise, we must develop the means for offering better goods and services at lower prices than our trading partners. To do that, we need expertise. We have to create a situation here in Québec that creates expertise for development, for research and development, for supplying goods and services that will give us the means to penetrate markets elsewhere.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This is the end of the time available for this series of questions. It is now the government party's turn. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good afternoon. Mr. Chairman, I feel slightly uncomfortable in front of this group. First of all, there are friends here with whom I have defended my position at other levels, for example at the Saint-Bruno town council with Mr. O'Dowd and Mrs. McCormack, who was a good friend and whose involvement in the community of Saint-Bruno is known by all and appreciated. These are extremely sincere friends who have always staunchly defended their positions and stood up for their convictions. I owe them respect because I know them well and I know that they are totally sincere in their approach.

Obviously, too, I am reluctant to accept a proposal telling us to maintain the status quo. As a Quebecer, a member of a minority in Québec, of a majority in Québec but of a minority in Canada, I feel that we must take steps to protect this community, to protect our rights, our language, our culture, and all that. When I see what is being done to Francophones in the other provinces, I tell myself... I find it difficult to accept certain claims of the Anglophone communities here.

For example, we have McGill University, which is an object of pride even for Francophones. When we refer to McGill, it is with pride, and it's an English university. There

are others, for example Bishop's, Lennoxville... English hospitals... we have excellent English hospitals, and one of the biggest hospitals in Montréal, one of our biggest hospitals is English, the Montréal General. We also have the Queen Elizabeth, the Reddy Memorial, the Jeffery Hale in Québec City... we have them.

And you also tell me in one chapter (I apologize for this long preamble, but I'm getting there)... you tell us that, as far as social services are concerned, you receive poor services in Montérégie. Now that shocks me a little bit, and I'm going to tell you why. I was the general manager of that before, and I am well aware of the situation. Unwillingly, with a minister who (there, for example, I have to be honest) always supported me in that area, there were no problems. But, at the Longueuil office there is... I'm going to take you around it, not all 14 offices, but some of them. At the Longueuil office, there are at least 15 Anglophones who provide services in English, and I have always insisted that those employees be native Anglophones or bilingual Francophones. I told myself: you really have to understand the culture. Therefore, they were truly Anglophones dispensing those services. At the Châteauguay office I had several, too. And, on a comical note, I must admit that it was the opposite at the Cowansville office; I had nobody providing services in French. Out of the seven employees, everyone was unilingual English at the time; moreover, I have received complaints. Therefore, when you tell me that there is half, a half-time position, I think: that's not it at all; that's not our real situation. And I know what I'm talking about, unless things have changed drastically over the last five years, which wouldn't overly surprise me, because that wasn't the trend.

But, returning to the debate, you tell us that the present status quo is advantageous for Québec. I would like you to prove that because, at the end of these hearings, we will have to produce a report, and we will have to take stands, and it is important that we know your position. There are very few who have dared (that's right... dared) defend federalism here, and the status quo. That takes a fair bit of courage and, in that respect, I certainly respect you. So, I would like to know how the status quo can be beneficial to Québec, if we take the last 30 years into consideration.

**Mr. Plamondon:** You asked two questions; the first concerning social services. Recently, in Saint-Basile, we had a meeting in which we met with persons responsible for the implementation of Law 142. What we found out at that time is that, as we mention in our brief, first of all there are very few services available - I believe that there is only one CLSC in our group in Chambly, we are talking about Chambly - that could perhaps offer its services in English. One

CLSC. O.K. Secondly, the person whom we met with told us that out of a population on the south shore - obviously in Montréal - it's different - of 50 000 Anglophones, there was one person who could devote two and a half days a week to answer these people's questions.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** If you will allow me, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the confusion comes from the fact that there is half a position, or a person working half time, at the CRSSS to "dispatch" the various applications. In that sense I would understand that person. But, as far as services are concerned, there is certainly more than half a position; I am absolutely convinced of that.

**Mr. Plamondon:** We agree that there is more than half a position if we refer to services, but working to direct the public, to inform it, there is one person, one half-person-week for 50 000 Anglophones. Now for your second question...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have gone beyond the time limit, but I beg you to answer the second question, on the Chairman's time. This is to urge you to be brief, but not to prevent you from answering it.

**Mr. Plamondon:** I had the opportunity (I'm going to try to do this as fast as possible)... I have travelled a great deal in my lifetime, and I've lived outside Québec: France, Belgium, Mexico, in several countries. And I've had the opportunity to see how these people live. And, everywhere I went, people envied me because I was Canadian. Obviously, Canada isn't perfect; it's far from perfect, but it is still one of the best structures that exists at this time. I don't mean that there's no room for improvement. I spent four years in the United States and, when I gave lectures there for the Québec government, I was told (and this was during the 1980s) at the beginning: you're crazy, you Quebecers; you have one of the best countries in the world and you want to break it up. You see. Whereas, for some people, it's a horrible place. But I think that those people have never truly looked at what was outside.

In my opinion, and I have seen others, even if our country isn't perfect, I think it is an excellent place. But we agree that it needs to be improved. I don't think that, in there, anywhere, we mentioned that we required or demanded the status quo. Maybe you understood it like that, because we wanted to preserve certain things. But I don't think my colleagues and I were demanding the status quo, in short, to change nothing. Nothing at all. We want a Canada...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Chevette now, please.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a series of questions. I'm going to ask them all, and you can answer them afterwards. Don't you find it unfair that, under the pretext that you want to save Canada, you feel obliged in this forum to put Québec alone on trial? Question number one.

Second question: you have travelled a great deal. You have probably visited the Western provinces. Last week, on television: for children in Saskatchewan, the parents are obliged to pay so that their French minority in Saskatchewan can be educated in French. Don't you feel there are situations that are tyrannical enough for you to have the obligation, objectively, at least, to stress that outside Québec there are more aberrant things that are going on there, even if our system isn't perfect here? Don't you feel it is unfair to come and tell us that we are acting like tyrants, when we consider an educational system from kindergarten to university? Don't you think you're carrying things a bit far when we look at our health system, that is marvelous here, when we compare it with that of any other country in the world, vis-à-vis its minority? Any other country, going from health services to social services... I still remember that, even within the framework of the sharing of health and social service centres, we maintained Montréal Ville-Marie, we maintained the Jewish social service centre; we agreed that we absolutely had to have employees who spoke the language of the minority.

And you, don't you think it's possible, objectively speaking, if we want to stay calm, for you to be objective in your analysis? Is it important for you to diminish Québec to try to sell your Canada? (4:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Plamondon:** Mr. Chevette, I should tell you this. We have half an hour in which to present a brief, and the problem right now is that of relations between Québec and Canada. We regret as much as you do what is going on in other provinces, and what isn't right, of course. We are not trying, if you like, to show Québec in an unfavorable light. That is certainly not our objective. Our objective is, for example, in the case of the hospital services of which you were speaking, the medical services of which you were speaking... it's true we have a good system. But there are shortcomings in it as everyone knows, of course. But the point that we raised in particular is that of the Anglophones on the south shore. And, as we certainly pointed out, we are referring to Saint-Bruno, and that is in the riding of Chambly.

We have not condemned everything that is going on in the rest of the province. We don't know what's going on there. We have spoken of Chambly and alluded to a situation that we know is true. Now I don't believe it was our role to comment on what's going on in Alberta or

Manitoba. If the goal of the Commission had been to study what was going on in the rest of Canada, we probably would have studied it and presented something on it to you, but not in half an hour.

**Mr. Chevette:** The question that I am asking you is: you are allowing yourself to judge very severely, to justify your staying within Canada, and your brief... When you spoke of the tyranny of the majority, I didn't understand that you were speaking of the citizens of Chambly. I understood that you were speaking of the tyranny of the Québec people vis-à-vis minorities. If you allow yourself to make such severe judgments, it seems to me that you could have gone into all aspects of the matter. We live in a country that has shortcomings; maybe there are systems in Québec that have shortcomings, but to justify your option... Someone who has an option, I respect that, but what I don't respect is that one can feel an obligation to denigrate the most hospitable people in the world, the most responsible people in the world... I haven't seen... I too have travelled a bit and I have never seen a land that is so respectful of its minority or that has given it so much. This is our source of pride as Quebecers, a complete educational system, a complete health care system, and every time we have the chance, we remind people that, on both sides of the fence, we have to avoid letting ourselves go so that we don't develop any forms of racism.

Last week, there was a group that preceded you that went even further than you have, but when I see the words "tyranny of the majority", with what we are experiencing in Québec... I'm going to read it to you. I am not making anything up. You wrote: "Therefore, the minorities have a great need for constitutional protection against the tyranny of the majority". To hear such things in a Québec that is so open and eager to respect the rights of its minorities, just between you and me, it's a bit of a shock. I'm keeping my cool right now, but I would certainly like to tell you something.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Congratulations, Mr. Chevette. A few minutes for the answer... Congratulations for keeping your cool, of course.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Plamondon?

**Mr. Plamondon:** Mr. Chevette, Mr. Chairman, when we speak of the tyranny of the majority, we are not speaking only about Québec. We are making that claim wherever a democracy exists, because this is precisely a problem of a

democracy. How can you be democratic, and vote for the majority, and still protect the minorities? What we are asking is that a formula be found. Bill 178, for some people, is entirely fair. For me, it's... at any rate, I prefer not to qualify what I think of it, but, in any event, it is something else. But that is an example of where the majority, in good faith, of course, has to a certain extent removed a few privileges from a minority. Well. Obviously, there, it's going to be hard to agree, because it depends on how we define privilege, how we define this, how we define that. But when we speak of democracy, we still have to admit that it has its advantages. It's probably one of the best systems in the world. Democracies have their problems, but there's no other system. That's how we define it. So...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The time is up for both groups, but the Chair still has some. Mr. Bélanger wanted to add a final comment. Mr. Chevette, you may rebut briefly if you'd like. Mr. Bélanger?

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to simply reassure our guests, to tell them that I don't think you are denigrating Québec to promote the virtues of federalism. At any rate, I didn't get that impression, and I noted, for example, that on this Commission, every time a group calls itself federalist, there's a propensity from time to time to give them flak and sock it to them. I described you as being very courageous for participating in our proceedings and for expressing that viewpoint today and, in that sense, you are doing us a big favour and I appreciate it. But you should know that I, for one, do not share this way - I think you are entitled to that opinion and... - Plus the fact that anyone who knows the town of Saint-Bruno well knows how the Anglophone and Francophone communities live together in peace. There have never been any language problems there; I have never seen any racial wars, never, never, never; never have I heard about any Anglophone who was beaten up by Francophones or vice versa. That problem doesn't exist. There is true harmony there, a very interesting phenomenon that I hope you will continue to protect. I think that it bears witness to the fact that Québec can live easily with two communities. In that sense, I am very grateful for your remarks.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** And now, Mr. Chevette, carried away as you usually are by your moderation...

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Chairman, I don't think I've beaten up any of our guests so far. On the contrary, I feel we are exchanging opinions,

exchanging our views on texts, and I feel that it is even a matter of our perception of Québec. What I wanted to underscore, Mr. Chairman, was that we are often told that in Québec we are less than perfect in the way we treat our minorities, whereas I can tell you that, after having seen the rest of Canada, and even several other countries, there are minorities that envy Québec, that really and truly envy Québec. Go speak to the Francophone minorities in the rest of Canada; they would exchange their system for our Québec system in a minute if they could.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now the Chair's time is up. On that note, where we have a consensus of modesty on all sides, I must thank you for having been willing to submit your views to us. Mrs. McCormack, Mr. Tobin, Mr. Bowles, Mr. Plamondon, Mr. Machnik and Mr. O'Dowd, I must now ask you to leave the floor to the next person, since we have quite a busy schedule. Thank you. We now welcome Mr. Yves Beauchemin.

Hello, Mr. Beauchemin. You now know that in a half-hour presentation you have five minutes to present the crux of your brief, following which there will be a question and answer period. I shall immediately leave you the floor.

**Mr. Yves Beauchemin**

**Mr. Beauchemin (Yves):** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I will endeavour to be as concise as possible.

My brief is entitled "Conditions for Developing French in Québec". To examine this question, I feel it is important to have in mind some basic information. In my view, if we wish to understand the situation of French-speaking North Americans, we must keep four things in mind. (1) French-speaking North Americans account for 2 % of the population. In other words, the proverbial mouse and elephant. (2) The current sociopolitical system has resulted from a military defeat in 1759. This is perhaps unpleasant to remember, but it is true. (3) The rights of the English-speaking minority, of Anglo-Quebecers, are privileges conquered by arms. (4) Canada is not a federation as English-speaking Canadians do not perceive the sharing of powers as a fundamental need. To the contrary, they want a unitary, centralized State which reflects their interests.

In my opinion, there are five conditions on which the development of French in Québec depends. The first one is cultural. It centres, among other things, on education and assistance for the arts. Our cultural development strategy is, to a large extent, out of our hands because it is directed by Ottawa and tied to its power to spend, or rather, as some would have it, to go into debt. Invasion has become a tradition. One has only to think of Ottawa's constant interfer-

ence in the field of education. Indeed, one could say, in a few words, that the motto of the ministère des Affaires culturelles is "I have no money", while that of Ottawa is "How much do you want?"

A people that loses control of its thought and culture ends up, in my view, by losing control of its destiny. It is therefore important for Québec to fully control its cultural development.

The second condition is demographic. For a language to develop in a country, it must be spoken by a sufficient number of people. Now, as everyone knows, Québec is suffering from a seriously declining birthrate. A language spoken by a people which fails to renew itself will, like the people, die out. To develop, the language also needs properly integrated immigrants, who are like food. Even the best ones, if they are not properly digested, become useless or, occasionally, dangerous.

However, in the case of Québec, immigration is not a magic remedy, a Fountain of Youth. I do not think it very prudent to entrust to subcontractors the procreation of our children and the transmission of our cultural values.

To assimilate and integrate immigrants, Québec needs the political power and the necessary funds. Until now, immigration has always been controlled by Ottawa, that is, by the English-Canadian majority, and it appears that Mr. Mulroney is awaiting your report before reaching a decision in this respect.

The third condition for the development of French in Québec strikes me as being economic in nature. I do not think that a healthy culture can thrive in an ailing economy or that an autonomous, dynamic culture can flourish in a dominated economy. The reason for this is quite straightforward: culture is simply the expression of the economy. Québec is not in charge of its economic development. I have only to cite one highly topical example, the dispute between Québec and Ottawa concerning the Grande-Baleine hydroelectric project. Québec may well lose \$ 26 000 000 000. I do not think that such losses would improve our language and culture.

The fourth condition is linguistic. To me, it is very clear that Québec must use only French if the language is to develop. Why? Quite simply because Québec is not elastic. Two cultures cannot develop in the same linguistic space. If French takes up more room, English will have to take up less; if English takes up less, French... and vice versa. Bilingualism is our worst enemy. Why? Because it simply makes French useless in North America; with bilingualism, English becomes the common denominator, the all-terrain vehicle that lets you get by under any circumstances wherever you are. Under the circumstances, French becomes like an oil lamp next to an electric light, a pretty object, but one which has lost its utility and belongs in a museum.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beauchemin, we are going to run out of time. Perhaps you could mention all of the conditions - there is one remaining - before we move on to the questions.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Yes. I now come to the last condition, and it is political. Indeed, controlling the levers of demographics, the economy, culture and language means enjoying the full range of political powers. Obviously, the question of power has been discussed at length over the past three years and it led to the failure of the Meech Lake Accord which is, in essence, the refusal by English Canada to share power with Québec and to acknowledge, even symbolically, Quebecers and Québec in Canada. To put it another way, Canadians are prepared to accept us as we are, provided we are identical to them.

The conclusion, in my opinion, is that to ensure the long-term development of French in Québec, sovereignty is absolutely essential if we are to move away from the permanent state of anxiety and tension inherent in the entire history of Canada. There it is.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Beauchemin. We will now proceed with a series of questions from the Government party. I believe that Mrs. Bégin has the first question.

**Mrs. Bégin:** First, I would like to thank you on behalf of my party for submitting a brief...

**Mr. Beauchemin:** I can hardly hear you, Madam.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The microphone wasn't there.

**Mrs. Bégin:** The microphone wasn't on. I wanted to thank you, on behalf of my party, for submitting a brief. One notes in reading your brief, Mr. Beauchemin, that the emphasis is placed above all on the development of the French language and that, to this end, you go so far as to advocate French unilingualism. I will even quote you to the effect that bilingualism is a Valium which, taken in small doses, ends up poisoning us and putting us into an irreversible coma. This is, in essence, what you say on page 11, Mr. Beauchemin.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Yes.

**Mrs. Bégin:** In the sovereign Québec you advocate, could you tell me what status you will grant other Quebecers who do not speak French, but speak English?

**Mr. Beauchemin:** I think that the indépendantistes have always been very clear about this.

The remarkable privileges of the Anglo-Québec minority are deemed to be vested interests. This situation of Anglo-Quebecers... you know, I hear them complain, but I find they are the healthiest martyrs ever born on earth. They have 300 elementary schools, 10 Cegeps, three universities and their own health system, the highest average wages in Canada, their own communications network, made up of three dailies, 18 weeklies, 11 radio stations, and three TV stations. Mr. Chevette said earlier that many French speakers outside Québec envy the Anglo-Quebecers and I understand why.

**Mrs. Bégin:** But under a Québec constitution, because you say that Anglo-Quebecers enjoy privileges, not rights...

**Mr. Beauchemin:** That's right.

**Mrs. Bégin:** ...are you going to accord them these privileges or not?

**Mr. Beauchemin:** That seems to be in keeping with the history of Québec, which has always been recognized for its tolerance. But from there, for the French-speaking majority to put its culture at risk because of its minority, that strikes me as contrary to common sense.

**Mrs. Bégin:** No. That's not where my question was leading. I was simply asking about Anglo-Quebecers.

Second question, Mr. Beauchemin. You know, Québec is, all the same, the home of the French fact in North America. By adopting a policy such as French unilingualism, in what position do you think that may place French speakers outside Québec? In what position, do you think, should Québec in a sovereign country declare itself unilingual French, what consequences do you think such a gesture may have on French speakers outside Québec?

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Mrs. Bégin, at the risk of seeming cruel, French speakers outside Québec have always made me think of a warm cadaver. The assimilation rate in British Columbia is over 90 %. In Newfoundland at the other end of the country, it's the same. Elsewhere, it is always above 75 %. Only New Brunswick has an assimilation rate of 27 %, which is terribly high. In my view, the fate of French speakers outside Québec was settled long ago. I do not say that joyfully, but, to the contrary, with deep sadness. It is one of this country's failings.

**Mrs. Bégin:** But don't you think, Mr. Beauchemin, that Québec has a role, at least, to save the few French speakers outside Québec in Canada? Do you not think we have a role to play in this respect?  
(4:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Beauchemin:** A sovereign Québec would have infinitely more power to help French-speaking minorities outside Québec than Québec as it is now, which is compelled to fight for its own survival.

**Mrs. Bégin:** How...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This concludes the question period, Mrs. Bégin. We will now begin another period with Mr. Roger Paré.

**Mr. Paré:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, welcome and thank you for your contribution to the Commission. I'll go quickly but I don't want to neglect anything and will take advantage of this opportunity to congratulate you on winning the first Prix Jean-Giono, awarded to the best novelist writing in French.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** It's always a pleasure to hear praise.

**Mr. Paré:** Well, we're also pleased that a Quebecer won it. In your brief, you talk about the five conditions on which the development of French depends. I will repeat them very quickly: There are cultural, demographic, economic, linguistic and political conditions. It is a way of life, in the end, and you are right because it is not just talking among ourselves in French, but being able to work, carry on business and present our cultural identity to the world. That is important.

Upon reading your brief, one realizes that Ottawa, far from helping us with respect to each of these conditions, hinders us. At one point, you even dub the current situation "Quarreling as a way of life". In light of these observations, what type of association might you favour with the rest of Canada?

**Mr. Beauchemin:** I don't think one's hand can be given in marriage when one is not free, as there is a risk of engaging in bigamy. To negotiate with Canada, I think we must proceed as equals, and the only way to go about it is to negotiate between sovereign States. This is what we observe in the Common Market, often used as an example, but, in my opinion, very injudiciously. A Québec which enjoys the full range of powers of a modern State would be in a position to negotiate its place, to negotiate agreements with Canada, the United States, Mexico, or the Common Market.

**Mr. Paré:** I'll pursue this because you very frequently draw a parallel with the Common Market, given that the Common Market is first and foremost an economic market which has resulted in a political structure. Don't you think that if we could draw an even slightly valid

comparison, given that our common market is North American, if we want to draw a comparison with the current European Common Market, we would have to have a North American structure in which Québec would participate as a country? That is, the United States, Canada and Québec, otherwise it doesn't make sense to draw a comparison between the European Common Market and Canada, when we got involved in free trade in order to have a North American common market.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** The two structures you are referring to are quite dissimilar. The Common Market is made up of small and medium-sized powers, all of which are sovereign. Québec, in relation to the rest of Canada and the United States, accounts for only 2 % of the population of North America. When we look at the matter in terms of economic and cultural values, the disproportion is obviously enormous. I believe the more powers Québec possesses - this has been apparent for several years - the more it will tend to open itself to the world and conclude agreements with all corners which reflect its interests.

**Mr. Paré:** I cannot overlook the French fact. Obviously, given that your brief focuses extensively on it, you discuss bilingualism at great length. You make a distinction - an important one - about individual and collective bilingualism. Indeed, it is significant and you also give reasons for which collective bilingualism is baneful. I would like you to elaborate further on this question.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Yes, I do feel that the distinction is an important one, because only uncultivated people are opposed to individual bilingualism, that is, the more languages you know, the better it is, the more you can communicate with all manner of people. Collective bilingualism, on the other hand, is the sort imposed on an entire people. Had Adolf Hitler won the war in 1945, Paris would be bilingual (German and French). Collective bilingualism always suggests that a society has lost something. The inability of a language to impose itself throughout a country is proof that the country's inhabitants are incapable of occupying it politically.

**Mr. Paré:** You speak of five conditions for survival and the development of French, which leads us to sovereignty, about which you speak directly in your brief. Can you suggest to the Commission a procedure for achieving sovereignty?

**Mr. Beauchemin:** My feeling is that the matter of "why?" is already settled in the minds of most Quebecers. What we have to answer is

"how?". I think, with the support of a number of external observers - Merrill Lynch, David Laird, and all of the comments made outside Québec which show that an independent Québec would be economically viable all come to mind - this has been so much grist for our mill and I think it has convinced many Quebecers.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This concludes the group of questions. We now turn to the questions of other members of the Commission. Mr. André Ouellet, followed by Mr. Gérald Larose and Mr. Roger Nicolet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Beauchemin, I read your brief attentively and must say that it pleads strongly in favour of French language and culture.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** I hope I have convinced you.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I do not share your conclusions and am going to tell you why. You have obviously established your credentials in a striking manner. But when you say that it is absolutely necessary to achieve Québec's sovereignty to ensure the development of French, it is clear and obvious that the history of Canada reveals that there is a living, thriving French language and culture in the province of Québec, in Québec. There are also over one million French speakers outside Québec; another million English Canadians speak and respect the French language. You alluded to assimilation statistics. Mr. Chairman, I will not refer to a brief which has not yet been submitted to the Commission, but I hope the authors will be heard. They are the French speakers outside Québec who largely contradict the data presented last week concerning the assimilation of French speakers outside Québec.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** You're talking about Statistics Canada, Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** No, but you can make statistics say anything and I think that the group which appeared last week played around with the figures somewhat when it spoke of intimidation, which is far from reality. I hope that others will testify and set matters straight. I would like to return to your observation concerning demographic conditions. You talk about a problem of numbers and state that, with regard to demographic and linguistic conditions, Québec must be sovereign. It strikes me as obvious that the number of fluent English speakers outside Québec and in the United States will always be the same and the demographic issue will necessarily be closely tied to immigration. How, precisely, in your mind, can a sovereign Québec advance its immigration policies? I agree with

you that it would be useful and even important and urgent that the agreement governing immigration be renewed. I hope that we will soon have a McDougall-Gagnon-Tremblay agreement in the wake of the earlier agreement. Independently of that, how can a sovereign Québec attract more French-speaking immigrants than under present circumstances?

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Because a sovereign Québec will function like any other country in the world, that is, immigrants who settle here will know full well when they arrive that French is the language used in the country. The message will be clear, while - perhaps you will allow me a small caricature - the matter is far from clear under Bill 178. Yesterday, I was at the Hôtel Bonaventure. All foreigners stay in hotels and it is far from clear that Québec is unilingual French. Everything is bilingual, thanks to the Bill. The same thing can be said every time you cross the pont Jacques-Cartier: Québec becomes bilingual.

**Mr. Ouellet:** But your mouse next to the elephant will always be the same.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Of course! That is part of our collective destiny, and it is one more reason for Québec to dispose of as many political powers as possible in order to stay ahead.

**Mr. Ouellet:** But in that perspective, you...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I believe your time is up, Mr. Ouellet. This is the fourth time I have interrupted you, we must keep track, but your time is up. We now turn to Mr. Gérald Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Overall, the brief is very clear and you do seem to call a spade a spade. I repeat your remark concerning French speakers outside Québec where you compare them to a still-warm cadaver, although you do apologize for the crudeness. It seems to me, having worked with French speakers outside Québec several weeks ago, that there is a myth which we absolutely must shatter in Canada and Québec. A bilingual, bicultural country is a political artifice, whereas multiculturalism is the reality for Canadians. When we say multicultural, English culture dominates, followed by the others, sandwiched between folklore and a few ethnic associations, which is about all that is tolerated. The political objective is to reproduce the same thing in Québec, precisely in order to neutralize the French-speaking majority. Is it conceivable in a sovereign Québec where policies that make people comfortable are adopted? You speak of privileges. I say that they are rights. I would like the English-speaking minority to acknowl-

edge that we recognize their rights. We are going to fight their privileges, which may jeopardize our own rights. Is it possible to have an overall policy in a sovereign Québec which has weight, and exemplary weight, for the rest of Canada or Canada? In such a way that the majority which recognizes the rights of some — we can hope, but there will be no constraints in this regard as we will be in a sovereign country — we can hope that our neighbours will do the same. That is perhaps the best fate to reserve French speakers outside Québec.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** The negotiating power of a sovereign Québec would obviously be infinitely greater than the power it enjoys at present, and we could... I think it is the St. Andrews agreement, or something like it which, under the Lévesque government, was negotiated, at least it was an attempt to help our French-speaking brothers outside Québec. The weaker Québec is, the less it is able to help those living outside its borders.

**Mr. Larose:** I would like to point out, for example, that the reciprocity agreement was designed to enable English speakers from outside Québec to frequent English-language institutions in Québec. There was no question of bargaining the rights of English speakers for those of French speakers outside Québec.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Of course.

**Mr. Larose:** Second, when you say, jokingly, that Mr. Chrétien, André's friend, has one obsession in life and that is to see Canadian flags flapping...

**Mr. Beauchemin:** It's no joke, he has repeated it several times.

**Mr. Larose:** But it is perhaps an obsession. Remember that he mentioned flags on the hood when speaking about Québec's international policies during the referendum campaign.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Mr. Chrétien is keenly interested in the flag.

**Mr. Larose:** I would like... you made me forget my question. I beg your pardon, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** I beg your pardon.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You forgot your... You're entitled to a final answer. You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Larose:** No, that's alright.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well then, it's Mr. Roger Nicolet's turn.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Beauchemin, you were questioned earlier on your vision, your condition respecting Québec's possible unilingualism, people may make a great deal of this statement, but while rereading your brief, I notice that what you have actually done is present your vision of unilingualism in opposition to a policy of bilingualism which my colleague, Mr. Larose, mentioned. Let me ask you what such a policy of unilingualism would be in a sovereign Québec.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Well. It is essentially the initial policy spelled out in the Charter of the French language before the Act's demolition began in 1979. I cannot create a new French language charter on the spot. I think there were many excellent things in the charter which English Canada destroyed with admirable tenacity. Essentially, it is a matter of giving the French-speaking majority, which is a minority on the continent — and God knows how small a minority — the power to be happy while respecting its English-speaking and other language minorities. This does not pose a problem. I have never felt threatened by Thai or Japanese.

I don't know whether I have properly answered your question. In my view, the guidelines for the solution to this problem were largely established in 1977 with the adoption of Bill 101.

**Mr. Nicolet:** If I understand correctly, this is where we should clarify matters to avoid a misunderstanding. The definition — I repeat what my colleague, Mr. Larose, said — the definition of the distinction to be established between unilingualism and the rights of the majority, as opposed to minority rights, is essentially defined by policies which Québec has already decreed in recent years.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** And which could be improved and refined because in Bill 101 there are, in my view, many... It's a beginning. There are many fields on which it has not focused. One simple example I can give you, with respect to signs, the definition in one of the clauses stipulating that the generic must be in French but the specific may be in English. This gives us Red Lobsters, World Gyms and Color Your Worlds, which strike me as disturbing because they are so widespread. Many, many businesses are chain stores.

These are details which are far removed from sovereignty. For me, these are small details.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Without wishing to think that a storyteller like you will reduce everything to small details, Mr. Beauchemin, time is up. It remains for me to thank you for coming here today and to ask you to leave the room as another group is waiting.

**Mr. Beauchemin:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Beauchemin.

We will now hear the Association des anglophones dans un Québec indépendant. Messrs. David Payne, Kevin Hanley, Gary Caldwell and Henry Milner.

Mr. Payne, I believe it is you who are going to introduce the people with you and who will take 5 minutes to present the essential details of the brief, as this is a 30-minute presentation.

#### **Association des anglophones dans un Québec indépendant**

**Mr. Payne (David):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Kevin Hanley, Secretary of the Association and a noted economist, and Henry Milner, an expert on questions related to schools established on linguistic and denominational lines; on my left is Gary Caldwell, a researcher and sociologist. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parliamentary Commission, the Association des anglophones dans un Québec indépendant represents a small but growing minority of English-speaking Quebecers who, without necessarily being in favour of sovereignty, are here to stay, regardless of future constitutional changes. They are not threatened by a sovereign Québec. The English-speaking community of Québec, rich and diverse through its language and history, has made a significant contribution to contemporary Québec. To a large extent, Anglo-Quebecers respect the nationalist aspirations of millions of French-speaking Quebecers who feel it is perfectly normal that growing numbers of Quebecers want to achieve independence. Surveys show that a small minority of Anglo-Quebecers support the Québec sovereignty movement.

The key factor in the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord is not that seven of the nine provinces signed the agreement, but that, despite the support of all the elites and the pressure they exerted, a majority of English Canadians spurned the agreement. One dramatic facet of the entire process was that the original, precarious unanimity of the provincial premiers quickly dissolved when regional, partisan interests prevailed over the common interests of Canada. Since the 1980 Referendum, we have witnessed the emergence of what might be dubbed an English-Canadian identity. Premier Wells accurately reflected the feelings of English

Canada. There is an English-Canadian nation and it can express itself clearly, even if it does not have a simple institutional home equivalent to the government and political institutions of Québec.

Moreover, it has become obvious that this English-Canadian nation does not need Québec as a distinct province within the country to remain in Canada. Various remarks by the premiers are eloquent. They cite 10 distinct provinces where a single province, Québec, should not counter the wishes of the other unified provinces. To achieve any sort of durable constitutional link with English Canada, Québec must clearly, democratically demand its national sovereignty. And with the force of this political declaration, make a concerted effort to develop new arrangements at a negotiating table where there are only two participants, not 11. Meech Lake has shown clearly that the rest of Canada no longer maintains the notion of renewed federalism except where Québec's distinct character is reduced to a symbol. One remarkable facet of the post-Meech situation is that the so-called national question can no longer be identified with a single political party. Moreover, the constant support of 60 % of Quebecers for sovereignty includes, it should be noted, 8 % of the English-speaking community, according to the surveys.

**Mr. Milner (Henry):** Most English-speaking Quebecers accept the principles of the Charter of the French language, recognizing its inevitability if not its legitimacy. Many of them do business in French and deal with public institutions in French. They participate in various cultural activities of the French-speaking majority. Often, they send their children to French-language schools; they have immersion classes. A number of them have come to appreciate the current relative vitality of the Québec economy, to contribute to it and benefit from it. For a number of them, business opportunities are sound and will remain so, regardless of constitutional arrangements. Economic fears have given way to guarded optimism, and such optimism is not the sole preserve of the French-speaking business community. While a number of Anglo-Quebecers may argue and vote against a constitutional reform, they will remain in Québec when the inevitable occurs.

**General recommendations:** The Association des anglophones dans un Québec indépendant supports the notion of a Québec constitution. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms curtails Québec's authority in the realm of language. The "notwithstanding" clause is fragile and English Canada detests its use in the language conflict. Various interests are incompatible. Québec has no choice but to adopt its own constitution and maintain absolute autonomy to legislate in favour of the French language; it

must obtain the same autonomy in telecommunications and cultural development. Moreover, Québec must seize the opportunity to guarantee the rights of Native peoples in a new Québec, along with freedom of expression, civil rights, and workers' rights. It would also be a good idea to include an environmental charter in this constitution.

Obviously, we support and encourage the guarantee of the legitimate rights of the historic English-speaking minority, to the extent that this in no way threatens French. English-speaking Quebecers have made a contribution to contemporary Québec and they wish to maintain viable education, health and social welfare systems. It strikes us that Québec's traditional demands in conjunction with which it maintains that it is capable of protecting its linguistic and cultural minorities must be tested on the strength of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We believe that there is no objective reason that our community cannot find better constitutional guarantees in an independent Québec. School boards based on language are an example.

The Association strongly urges the Commission to resist the temptation of proposing a constitutional solution halfway between the status quo and sovereignty. Instead, it must analyse the means by which a sovereign Québec could improve its economy and what sort of ties should exist between Canada and Québec in the future. The mandate of this Commission is not to attempt to achieve what Meech failed to accomplish. The time has come to elucidate the true significance of a sovereign Québec and specify its meaning and content.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We will now begin the first group of questions. It is the turn of the Official Opposition party. Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for testifying before the Commission. I do not know whether we must consider you as exotics or eccentrics, but it is noteworthy that there are English-speaking Quebecers who serenely accept and contemplate Québec's independence, Québec's sovereignty. As you have quite rightly noted, Mr. Payne, successive opinion polls - I have one in front of me conducted by our party - continue to show that between 8 % and 10 % of English-speaking Quebecers are prepared to vote "yes" in favour of a sovereign Québec. They are a minority - you pointed this out and do not claim to represent the majority of English-speaking Quebecers - you are very realistic and objective. You represent a minority, but I think that it is important that you express yourselves.

My first question is: Do you think, as some people maintain, that the rights of the

English-speaking minority in Québec are being trampled?

**Mr. Hanley (Kevin):** At present?

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes.

**Mr. Hanley:** No, not at all. Despite everything, an attempt was made in Bill 101, which English-speaking Quebecers deemed to be the most drastic legislation, to reconcile a number of individual rights, the rights of the English-speaking minority in general, both in the preamble and the body of the Act. However, the problem with Bill 101 is that, especially in chapter III, centred on basic principles, despite its "no", Québec was unable or decided, for its own reasons, to counterattack Ottawa's attempts to eliminate through the courts a number of the Act's basic provisions. This has resulted, if you will, in a certain precarity in the sociopolitical situation where the majority did not have the necessary power to confirm its own linguistic sovereignty. The facts remain and it is obvious, as my colleague, Henry Milner can testify with regard to language rights in the education system, but almost everywhere, whether in the hospitals... Beauchemin said earlier and we confirm - everybody is aware of it - everybody who is objective can confirm that, yes. (5:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you. Consequently, as the rights of the English-speaking minority are now respected, what you are proposing is that these rights in a sovereign Québec also be recognized, and that they be recognized within the framework of the Québec constitution. This is what you are demanding, because I know, Mr. Payne, I am pointing it out in passing, that you have been interested for a long time in the constitutional question. I remember that in 1984 you demanded that Québec have its own constitution. Are you demanding that the current rights of the English-speaking minority be enshrined to some extent in the constitution of a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Payne:** Yes, because the rights of the English-speaking minorities, for example with regard to the denominational school system, are rather fragile in relation to the Canadian Constitution, especially the British North America Act.

This was apparent last Thursday, I think, when representatives of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montréal appeared. They urged maintaining a system which, to all intents and purposes, is outmoded. More and more English speakers feel that the rights of the English-speaking minority - this is a fundamental need - would be better protected in a Québec where we have our own constitution. Now, we will have a veritable constitution in a sovereign Québec.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you. I would like...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thirty seconds, Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes. Could you simply tell me, or confirm, that by enshrining the rights of the English-speaking minority in the constitution of a sovereign Québec – this is entirely compatible with and does not contradict the initial objectives of Bill 101 aimed at making of Québec a French-speaking society, at making French the language of government, legislation, business, commerce, and signs – there would be no incompatibility between the rights of the English-speaking minority thus enshrined in the constitution and Québec's desire to be a French-speaking society.

**Mr. Payne:** Indeed. Once independent, Québec will have the right to legislate in its own interest in terms of language. Bill 101 as it now stands has been completely dissected, especially in chapter III. It is rather surprising to note, for example, that current provisions in the Canadian Constitution prohibit the legislative formulation of the right to a judgment in French. Not many Quebecers are aware that this right simply does not exist. In an independent Québec, things would be rather different.

To the extent that French-speaking Québec is protected, and with a constitutional base to defend ourselves, there is obviously no risk in constitutional or political terms to prevent increasing and enshrining the interests of the English-speaking minority.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let us now move on to the next group of questions. Mr. Robert Libman will be the first to speak.

**Mr. Libman:** Mr. Chairman... I don't think the microphone is working.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now it is.

**Mr. Libman:** Very sincerely, last week when I read the unsigned brief, I was astonished that there are Anglo-Quebecers other than David Payne, Gary Caldwell and Henry Milner who support Québec's independence. Today, when I saw the agenda and your names, last week's astonishment disappeared.

One other thing, to reassure Mr. Brassard. Most English-speaking Quebecers support the preamble of Bill 101 and certain origins of the Act, but my question is something else. I will quote a sentence on page 3 of your brief, one which has often appeared in the other briefs we have received. I will read the English version: "To achieve any kind of long-term constitutional relationship with English Canada, Québec will

have to clearly and democratically claim its national sovereignty, and on the strength of this political assertion make a concerted effort to make new constitutional arrangements." Or, l'échec de Meech est dû en très grande partie à l'utilisation, par le Québec, de la clause "nonobstant". Et si vous pensez que Meech a été difficile à négocier, comment diable pouvez-vous penser qu'il y ait la moindre chance que le reste du Canada veuille négocier ne serait-ce qu'un peu avec le Québec si le Québec déclare sa souveraineté? Qu'est-ce que le reste du Canada aura à gagner une fois que le Québec aura déclaré sa souveraineté? Comment les gens peuvent croire qu'il négocierait avec une province qui a déjà déclaré sa souveraineté, qui en fin de compte conduira au démembrement du reste du Canada?

**Mr. Milner:** I'd like to respond, Mr. Libman, because you do not understand the situation very well. The reason Canada refused Meech Lake is that Mr. Wells convinced everyone that Québec is bluffing. And not only Mr. Wells, but he did convince everyone that, well, we're going to reject it and that will be too bad. This time, Québec must not bluff. Québec must propose a clear consensus representing not 40 % or even 50 % of the population, but 60 % or 70 %. That is the difference. This is what we clearly advocate. At that time, English Canada, the other regions, will not wonder whether or not Québec is bluffing. At that time, they will start to think about their own interests. Is it more in their interest to negotiate or not negotiate with Québec? At that time, an entirely different dynamic will be established, whereby genuine questions will be asked: Would it be better for Canada and Québec to work together or not work together? I think the answer will be much different.

**M. Libman:** Eh bien, quand son bluff ne sera plus un bluff, quand la souveraineté sera un fait accompli, comment pourrez-vous décrire la différence entre la volonté du Canada de négocier avec le Québec? Pensez à l'avantage que représente tout de même le fait de négocier avec une partie du Canada. Comment pouvez-vous comparer les deux? Pensez à la différence entre la volonté du Canada de négocier avec le Québec pour le garder dans la fédération et le faire une fois le fait accompli, quand le Québec sera souverain.

**Mr. Caldwell (Gary):** I would like to suggest, Mr. Libman, that in the longer term, English Canada will probably realize that the "notwithstanding" clause protected part of our political culture of parliamentary sovereignty. It is this political culture and everything related to it that has enabled Canada to maintain itself as a distinct society. English Canada and you, and

others in your entourage, by dwelling on the Charter of Human Rights, which imitates American political culture, you are losing sight of the possibility of maintaining a distinct society. Perhaps English Canada will, one day, imitate what Québec is doing now. Québec is pursuing Canada's political blueprint, which is to maintain a distinct society in North America, within the geopolitical constraints posed by the American presence. I humbly submit that the day will perhaps come when English Canada will want to join Canada, which is Québec.

**Mr. Libman:** But we know that the Prime Minister...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Once again, I beg your pardon, but may I remind the audience that this is a quasi-Parliamentary Commission and we have agreed that there will be no applause in the room. Mr. Libman, a few more seconds, your time is almost up.

**Mr. Libman:** To conclude, it is clear, as Prime Minister Bourassa said, that Québec is already a distinct society within the rest of Canada. This recognition must not jeopardize the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that, in the end, is the only factor that killed the Meech Lake Accord.

**Mr. Payne:** I would like to add something for Mr. Libman. I should perhaps pose a rhetorical question but the rules prevent my doing so, but all the same. Is there a provision in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which gives the English-speaking minority more protection than it had before?

**Mr. Libman:** I don't understand your question.

**Mr. Payne:** What privileges and rights have been bolstered by the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms? None.

**Mr. Libman:** I don't understand your question. It has nothing to do with what we are discussing.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I beg your pardon, but I must interrupt your discussion. Your time is up, Mr. Libman. The question was asked, and the answer has yet to be given. Next is Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mention has been made of negotiations. Some people wonder what interest English Canada would have in negotiating anything at all once Québec achieves sovereignty. What difference is there between the following situations? In the

first, Québec would content itself with attempting to negotiate a new form of federalism, without a balance of power, leaving English Canada a choice limited to the status quo, which it likes; this would more or less please it but it could live with it and the changes it doesn't want. Compared with the situation in which Québec declares its sovereignty, putting, as Mr. Libman noted, English Canada before an accomplished fact, then making itself available to negotiate basic arrangements such as who is going to pay the debt. Will English Canada agree to pay the \$400 billion debt on its own? Will it not ask Québec to pay its fair share? English Canada will have to discuss the matter. How will people travel from the Maritimes to the rest of Canada? What right of way will English Canada have on the St. Lawrence? Will it continue to have access to the Québec market? The list goes on. Are there not fundamental interests that English Canada will want to broach with Québec and that it will be compelled, then, to negotiate?

**Mr. Payne:** I think, Mr. Bouchard, that geopolitical reality... public debate is often not clearly focused. The question is not: What is Québec going to negotiate? Will Canada agree to negotiate? Some agreements, it is recognized, already exist. It is a question of eliminating these agreements, or enshrining them, to some extent. Some agreements exist, for example rail transport agreements governing the shipment of potatoes from Port-Joli to Sudbury. In our opinion, it is simply a matter of renegotiating or renewing these agreements. I think that is perhaps the gist of Mr. Libman's original question: What do you think of a Canada which refuses to negotiate? For us, that is not the question. The question is: Are we going to dismantle what already exists? What will be more tendentious, my colleagues and I feel, lies at the level of fundamental questions concerning, for example, regional development. Here there is an untenable incursion in the current constitutional context, in the post-Meech period, in which Québec, with each passing day, ratifies the repatriation of the Constitution and its perception of the sharing of power.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Do I still have some time left?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, a minute and a half or two minutes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. As I see it, Quebecers ardently want their English-speaking fellow citizens to stay in a sovereign Québec, or whatever form it will take. Many people suggest, at least in some circles, that an exodus could take place. You are well acquainted with your compatriots, your English-speaking friends, what do you think of the risk of an exodus?

**Mr. Milner:** I do not feel that there really is a risk. I think the exodus has already taken place. Among those remaining who are really not willing to adapt to a new situation are the very elderly. I think that most people who have lived and been active over the past 10 or 20 years are prepared to stay and participate. I think that something will be done for them. I address myself to you and to all Quebecers, even the English-speaking minorities, it's a good thing that they, too, clearly understand things. When things are clear, when concrete issues are discussed and the situation is not a vague one in which anything is possible, I think that it's not very hard to find the concrete means of adapting. When everything is possible, when things are vague and so on, people don't know where they're headed. This is when misunderstandings arise and this is what must be avoided.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Dufour, followed by Mr. Ouellet, who will be the last intervening party in this group.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to greet Mr. Payne and thank him and his group for their reflection, even though I obviously do not share their conclusions. I have two brief questions. I have the impression that there is a very clear political blueprint in Québec, that is, sovereignty-association, promoted by the Parti québécois. At the end of your brief you note: "The Association strongly urges the Commission to resist the temptation of proposing a constitutional solution halfway between the status quo and sovereignty". Does this mean that you reject sovereignty-association? (5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Payne:** Not at all. Not at all. This is implied but not obvious. What we meant was that the only possible avenue open to Québec is, in our view, to build the balance of power now. The post-Meech period is now. Everyone, in the social, economic and business communities... There was a consensus in Québec that it was now or never. When we observe that, among members of our own community whose mother tongue is English - we are excluding the cultural communities - 12 % are highly or fairly favorably disposed to sovereignty-association, we feel that the question should be asked so that we obtain a clear answer.

**Mr. Dufour:** That's clear. The answer is clear.

**Mr. Payne:** But association, of course...

**Mr. Dufour:** Except that your conclusion doesn't leave much leeway between the two. I would like to turn briefly to a question that you broach, that of demographics. I will reiterate in

part a question asked earlier. There appears to be a consensus that, among the powers that should be repatriated, if a form of modern federalism is adopted, is the question of immigration. As we more or less control policies affecting the birthrate, with the exception of what is included in the unemployment insurance fund, I would like to understand in what way, were we to recover this power, we would enjoy more leeway in a sovereign Québec.

**Mr. Payne:** What is essential in terms of immigration is that, under the current constitutional situation, Québec will never enjoy full autonomy because - how do people put it? - the human factor is 100 %. Anyone who travels extensively abroad as you do... I was in Hong Kong recently, and have often visited Europe in recent years. Even when I was an MNA, I had the opportunity to meet many immigration officials the world over, and Québec's interests in purely pragmatic terms are not truly represented. This means that information is given in English and the atmosphere is prejudiced by English.

**Mr. Milner:** What is very important is how immigrants define themselves. It is not a question of power, it's a question of definition. If an immigrant defines himself as an immigrant to Canada... this is what he does now, because it is Canada that welcomes him. Even if Québec has something to say, and so on, he is an immigrant to Canada and defines himself thus. With the move to sovereignty, we may see that the immigrant defines himself as an immigrant to Québec. An important change will take place through this simple act of definition.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of those listening to us, I would like a clarification. In your brief, you state that you are an association representing a small but growing minority of English-speaking Quebecers who, not necessarily being in favour of sovereignty... Are you in favour of sovereignty or aren't you?

**Mr. Caldwell:** ...our association includes people who discuss these issues, as does everyone in Québec, who try to see matters clearly, and who think about the future. We are not all in favour of sovereignty. I am not in favour of sovereignty, but I think that it may well be, if English Canada continues to distance itself from the Canadian political blueprint that Québec will have no choice but to opt for sovereignty in order to maintain a distinct, Canadian society in North America.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Payne mentioned earlier

that he was an MNA. In which party?

**Mr. Payne:** I was a Parti québécois MNA. If you were in Ottawa then, you remember...

**Mr. Ouellet:** Yes. We have already met, but I think that it is important for people listening to us...

**Mr. Payne:** I think that the public also...

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...to know exactly your true colours. You are, I presume, in favour of sovereignty.

**Mr. Payne:** Yes I am, certainly. But I think it is important to stress, Mr. Ouellet, that English speakers do not engage in the profession of faith you are asking us to at present. We do not define Québec's blueprint that way. We are a minority in a Québec where a broad consensus has developed in recent years and we deem our interests to be better protected if we are part of it, through the language we share with you, even with our accents, but with a desire and a conviction that we can harmoniously integrate into schools, hospitals, and political and public life. As for myself, I do not feel that a political party should necessarily be associated with one language group or another, to the contrary.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I congratulate you because this is precisely my reasoning, but I apply it to Canada. I think that it is good for French speakers, Quebecers, to be associated with and to assume their place in Canada, in the best interest of Quebecers. In my view, if we take into account numerical strength, it is certain that, in Canada, the place and role assumed by Quebecers nationally largely exceed their numerical strength in Québec. I have no objection to your trying, as English speakers, to take your place and play a role in Québec. I think doing so is entirely legitimate and I hope that French-speaking Quebecers will continue to do as you are doing, but within the Canadian framework.

**Mr. Caldwell:** But, Mr. Ouellet, can you appreciate that there are English-speaking Quebecers who are aware that a civility exists in Québec, along with parliamentary or British freedoms, and that these freedoms are being undermined in Canada? That, with our human rights charter, we are instituting a dominion of judges and lawyers in which individuals would find it hard to maintain respect for their cultural and social uniqueness, as has been the case in the history of Canada? Or perhaps it would be hard to make a special place for the Inuit or the Indians because the logic of the charter is far removed from the political culture which made possible Québec, Canada and Québec

today? In other words, it is Canada which is evolving toward a political culture, for example the idea of a transcendent constitution which is above Parliament and which may even put an end to Canada?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I now call on Mr. Russell Williams, representing the Government party, who will conclude this presentation.

**Mr. Williams:** On behalf of my party, I would like to thank the Association des anglophones dans un Québec indépendant for its brief. I would also like to thank you for your positive approach and perspectives in the discussion, without supporting your recommendations, although I do appreciate your positive approach. Parce que nous sommes à la Commission pour écouter les Québécois et ce qu'ils pensent de l'avenir, de l'avenir politique et constitutionnel, sans les entraîner dans un débat ni les défier. J'apprécie donc votre venue, même si je ne suis pas d'accord avec votre façon de voir les choses. It is true that English-speaking Quebecers support the aspirations of their French-speaking neighbours, perhaps more so when we are talking about power. I do not like the notion that all English speakers do not understand Québec society, and I think you have tried to show that this evening. As a community, I think we can proudly protect our language, but we can also work with and in the majority. I think that Québec has the same obligations and responsibilities toward the rest of Canada. I find that your brief is full of contradictions. I do not necessarily mean this to be negative, because I think our lives are full of contradictions. You say that you do not necessarily favour sovereignty, but you have emphasized a model of sovereignty. I would like to go back to the same line or phrase that Mr. Libman requested, but perhaps with another question. You stated: "To achieve any kind of long-term constitutional relationship with English Canada, Québec will have to clearly and democratically claim its national sovereignty".

It seems a major contradiction to have constitutional ties and sovereignty. Would you like to clarify this evening what I feel is an imbalance. After that, I have two other questions.

**Mr. Milner:** To respond briefly, in my view, a consensus is being established in Québec with regard to that sentence. This means that – and I trust this reflects what people here think – it means that, following the failure of Meech Lake, the only agreement possible is one between two nations or two sovereign countries. If Québec is not sovereign, what is it? It is one province among 10. It can never be recognized as the society it is. Thus, it is said that there can be

no halfway solution. Either we are a province in a federal system, or we are a sovereign country which can negotiate at several levels but which is recognized as a sovereign nation. That is the distinction we are trying to...

**Mr. Caldwell:** In my experience, the failure of Meech is a given. Meech failed. There are various agencies and groups who took a stand against Meech, who wanted the agreement subordinated to the Charter, who were opposed to the "notwithstanding" clause. We will have to live with the consequences.

**Mr. Williams:** There is a time limit, so I would like to ask the other questions, because it seems that several members of your group reached a decision well before Meech Lake failed. I don't want to dwell too long on this point.

I would like to put a question, perhaps to Mr. Caldwell, who has a high reputation in Québec because of his studies of the English-speaking community. In your opinion, when we talk about how to best protect the culture, language, economy and a whole range of questions in the English-speaking community, would things go better in a Canada and a Québec which respect the needs of Québec, or in a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Caldwell:** I firmly believe, Mr. Williams, that what is best for English-speaking Quebecers is to carry on, that is, preserve the political culture that has made Canada what it is, a political culture in which, for example, we have a notion of our parliamentary rights and where parliamentary sovereignty is important. It is one in which we have a notion that we must, necessarily - this is hardly glorious but it is our fate - be non-Americans and that we cannot allow ourselves to assume an American culture, of which the law of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is an expression, and put all that above our ability to adapt and react to this geopolitical constraint which has always been present in the history of Canada.

To summarize, I believe - obviously this is a caricature - that what English-speaking Québec needs is British liberties and that it is Québec that guarantees them best at the moment. And...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Williams...

**Mr. Williams:** I have a very brief question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Williams, we've stretched the limit. Try to find a short one. If you have a short one, it will be answered.  
(5:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Williams:** Very, very short. We know there are four members in your association. Are there any others?

**Mr. Payne:** Roughly 450, and I would like to refer...

**Mr. Williams:** Pardon?

**Mr. Payne:** Pardon? Roughly 450.

**Mr. Williams:** OK.

**Mr. Payne:** Perhaps I could draw your attention one last time to the fact... The question is not so much how many we are but what we represent. Traditionally, over the past 10 years or so, but more markedly in recent months, when you say that 12 % of English-speaking Quebecers are in favour of sovereignty, this is very high. It represents about 55 000 people. We are not speaking on their behalf, we do not have a mandate, but it is something to think about.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Payne, Mr. Milner, Mr. Hanley. You have answered our questions abundantly, I might say. We have exceeded the time allowed but it is the end of the afternoon. I would ask you to leave quickly as we will hear Mr. Jacques Saada next.

**Mr. Saada,** you also have half an hour. Please present the main points of your brief in not more than five minutes, after which we will have questions. You have the floor.

**Mr. Jacques Saada**

**Mr. Saada (Jacques):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Before I get to the heart of the matter, I would like on behalf of the Montérégie region to welcome the Parliamentary Commission. One thing that very few people know about the region is that it is here that the celebrated immersion classes started in Saint-Lambert in 1965, before various language laws were adopted. That said, I will now turn to my brief.

I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you. Eminent experts in the economic, social and constitutional fields have spoken or will speak to you. I am not one of them. Other people will present politically partisan viewpoints. Although I am a proud member of the Liberal Party of Canada and this text allows me to further develop the resolution that I submitted to the General Council of the Québec wing of our party last October 27, it strikes me as important for our collective future to rise above our immediate political interests. I do not claim to formally

represent anyone, although numerous discussions suggest that, basically, my viewpoints might be fairly widely shared in Québec society.

Of course, the entire question of constitutional arrangements, a technical question if ever there was one, is far from new. Debate surrounding the issue arouses passions, not necessarily on the true merits of various proposals, but above all on interpretations of the proposals. Canada does not have a monopoly on more or less permanent debate about the Constitution. France has had three constitutions in 80 years. In Canada, we do not have a monopoly on the tension between confirming our identities and the need to group together to face globalization, which is not solely economic in nature. The example of Europe has been cited on many occasions. Various nationalities within the Soviet federation are seeking a new balance.

More specifically, what are the axes of the constitutional debate in Canada? In what I admit is a rather simplistic manner, I see three. First, there is a compelling need for the outlying regions of Canada, especially the West, to overcome their profound alienation, given their limited economic and political influence in relation to Ontario and Québec. Second, there is the normal need for each province to defend its own interests, which has two consequences: the distribution of powers is never entirely satisfactory and the federal government is cast in the role of a not always impartial referee. Third, what for me is a deep, basic concern on an emotional level, is the pressing, eminently legitimate need for French speakers not only to survive but to clearly, safely develop in economic, cultural and social terms.

How can we reconcile these viewpoints or needs which, a priori, appear highly divergent? At the outset, it seems obvious to me that the demographic and economic differences between the provinces can only cause disparities. A grouping of regions would reduce such discrepancies. Québec, which is only one province out of 10, would perhaps gain by representing one region in four. Its population and uniqueness would amply justify its doing so, especially if, in concrete terms, this led to increased representation for Québec in an elected Senate, for example.

In my view, it is almost essential to adopt an elected Senate. I would like to point out that the notion of a Senate could be advantageously replaced by a more modern concept, about which I could talk at length, but will confine myself to indicating the name I would like to give it: An autonomous regional parliament.

The notion of an upper chamber rests on the basic democratic principle of checks and balances. Some people in Québec would perhaps prefer to simply abolish the Senate, but it seems to me that a legitimately recognized upper chamber would enable the population to better

control the conduct of its governments. Legitimate recognition would be derived from the fact that, because it is elected, it would be accountable to the people. Moreover, it would perhaps be advisable to grant it areas of jurisdiction or specific regional roles. In the context of Canada and its regions, equal representation for each region in the Senate might reduce the feeling of political alienation in the West and the Maritimes while increasing the real powers of Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Saada, your five minutes are almost up. Perhaps you could summarize in order to get to the end of your presentation.

**Mr. Saada:** Very well. In essence, what I have written in my brief are three or four additional elements. First, I think it is clear that duplicating fields of jurisdiction is not necessarily desirable. Second, it strikes me that there are responsibilities which naturally belong to the regions, which are best suited to taking care of them. This is clear. We could dwell on this at greater length if you wish. I think that if powers are divided or redistributed logically – I repeat, logically – there is no reason for the division to be unacceptable from the outset.

I think that Québec's role in promoting its language and culture is so very essential and basic that I cannot imagine a Canada in which Québec would not enjoy full powers in the realm of culture and immigration. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Saada. We will begin with a series of questions from members of the Commission. Mr. Jacques Proulx will be followed by Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A very brief question. I would like to know how, in light of Mr. Saada's proposal to have four regions instead of 10, what would actually change in our minority situation. We know that the basic problem is the non-recognition of the difference in the broad meaning of the term. I would like to know how, through a new structure – I am not talking about your entire proposal, but a new structure involving four regions instead of 10 – how Québec would enjoy more power, and how the rest of Canada would better understand our demands and, above all, understand and accept that there is a difference.

**Mr. Saada:** Well, first, I think there is a mentality, a state of mind that we must absolutely eliminate. This is essential. I think that until very recently, with the Meech Lake Accord, or the lack of a Meech Lake Accord, we have adopted the attitude that Québec was

rather like a newly wealthy man waiting for admission to an exclusive golf club. I think that that time has passed, it has to stop.

The four regions must not be regarded solely as an autonomous block, if you will. It seems to me that it is important to understand that it is not a dab of reform here, a dab of reform there that will change things. When I speak of the four regions, I think we have to consider the matter concurrently with the question of an autonomous regional parliament, in which case we must understand one thing. If the powers Québec requires need to be repatriated here, the fact that Québec is democratically a minority — we can do nothing about that — but the fact that Québec is in the minority will no longer affect those fields of jurisdiction. It will have exclusive control over them. Period. Québec will not need anyone else's consent.

The second thing that strikes me as important is the notion of an autonomous regional parliament. The reason I say this is that Québec would have more power in this regard. If we begin with the principle, for example, that the autonomous regional parliament is elected by the region, for the region and that Québec is one of those regions... If the autonomous parliament also had... or if these autonomous regional parliaments combined made up the upper chamber of the federal government, it would be possible for Québec to exercise greater control over the conduct of the central government. Moreover, as the members would be elected, Québec would automatically have an upper chamber which would be accountable because it is elected. This would provide a sort of double guarantee.

This upper chamber could enjoy specific powers and its members could have very clearly defined areas of jurisdiction. I think we have to move beyond the situation in which people say: "What Québec gets it will have to take from somewhere else". This is not true, we must abandon this perspective. We must abandon the principle that the Canada of tomorrow — I do believe in a Canada of tomorrow even though this may occasionally seem like going against the current... The reason for which I believe in a Canada of tomorrow is that I think that we must display creativity to obtain an upper chamber, a regional structure, a method of functioning which is not necessarily that adopted in Europe, Germany, or the United States, but an original Canadian formula. I am confident that this is possible. It is this challenge which interests me.

**Mr. Proulx:** Have I understood correctly that you are saying that there will be four sovereign regions in Canada?

**Mr. Saada:** No, I have never spoken the word "sovereignty". Mr. Proulx. I am speaking of

four autonomous regions with clearly defined powers, which is not the same thing as being sovereign. Let me give you an example. Obviously, in Québec, the question of culture is essential and Québec wishes to retain these powers, quite rightly, as I have already said. However, if, for example, the three other regions — when I say three other regions, that could be four or five, I don't know — decided that the federal government take care of cultural matters, they could opt in and entrust this responsibility to the federal government. This would be their prerogative. What I am proposing is that the Canada of tomorrow be an asymmetrical Canada.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now turn to Mr. Marcel Beaudry, followed by Mrs. Lorraine Pagé.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To follow up on what Mr. Proulx has just said, how could we organize the regions in light of our current constitution? Meech has just been rejected, along with Québec's minimum conditions and you are proposing a complete restructuring of Canada to achieve a system in which there are four regions and an elected Senate. How are you going to achieve all this?

**Mr. Saada:** Listen, I will not answer in legal terms because I am not qualified to do so. Let me point out one thing that strikes me as noteworthy. Had there been four regions at the time of Meech, the agreement would have been accepted.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Yes, but there aren't four regions, there are 10 provinces at present and a federal government.

**Mr. Saada:** There are 10 provinces at present, but in the West various groups have begun to form to defend common interests. In the Maritimes, there are common problems which are likely to encourage the establishment of a region. It is not up to us to force the issue. What I am proposing, I think, is not something that is to be imposed; I think it is an avenue to be explored with respect to the Canada of tomorrow.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Under the circumstances, are you saying that you have information regarding Canada to the effect that certain provinces or politicians in various provinces appear to be interested in examining a solution such as the one you are submitting today and which it would be advantageous to explore, before a final decision concerning Québec is reached?

**Mr. Saada:** Mr. Beaudry, you flatter me by suggesting that I have information that you do

not have, but I read the papers like you and have noted, over the summer, for example, that the Western premiers met to discuss matters of mutual interest. I don't think that a Canada made up of regions is a new idea. At the outset, the establishment of the Senate should take into account the regions, as was the case at the beginning of Confederation. This is not a new concept. What I am saying is, instead of throwing in the towel, although we know that some things are going poorly and that other things have not gone so badly, I feel that we should say: Look, before you throw in the towel, perhaps it would be worthwhile to examine what I feel would be an exciting project.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Well, Mr. Saada, the least I can say is that you show unrestrained optimism, because you calmly propose more powers for Québec in conjunction with an asymmetrical federalism of the regions, all this in a very short time, because everyone says that we must get out of the constitutional rut. I'm impressed...

**Mr. Saada:** That's because I don't have much time in which to talk.

**Mrs. Pagé:** It is your sense of a challenge and your optimism which impress me.

**Mr. Saada:** I'm very happy about it.

**Mrs. Pagé:** First, I would simply like to comment that I am beginning to think that we need a lot of balances in our democratic system. Some people feel that we need a federal level to offset the provincial level; others feel that the courts counterbalance Parliament by interpreting its charters; finally, it takes an elected Senate, a House of the regions, to offset the lower chambers. I find the system we want to adopt will need a lot of counterweights.

I understand the theory of checks and balances, but I find that three levels of checks and balances is a lot for a system of government. I have a question, related to an observation you make on the last page of your brief. It concerns French speakers outside Québec. I do not understand why you maintain that a sovereign or independent Québec would necessarily abandon French speakers outside Québec. Having worked fairly regularly with associations of French speakers outside Québec, I can confirm that this is a possibility about which they do not think. They do not believe that Québec's status will alter collaboration and various ties. To the contrary, at present, Québec is unable to intervene and conclude cooperation agreements with French speakers outside Québec. I would like you to explain on the basis of what

analysis or information you maintain with such certainty that Québec's independence or sovereignty would result in its abandoning to their fate millions of French speakers outside the province.

**Mr. Saada:** Listen. To start, I think I can only answer your last question. I did not say what Mr. Beauchemin said scarcely 10 minutes ago. I think the answer is extremely clear. With respect to your question concerning checks and balances... but I would like to answer your questions...

**Mrs. Pagé:** I beg your pardon, Mr. Saada. Yes, it's because Mr. Beauchemin did not say what you claim he did.

**Mr. Saada:** No, no, but he put forward an argument which...

**Mrs. Pagé:** He told us they were in difficulty. He said that a sovereign Québec would maintain broader, steadier, firmer ties with French speakers outside the province.  
(6 p.m.)

**Mr. Saada:** I'm afraid you've only heard what you wanted to hear from Mr. Beauchemin.

**Mrs. Pagé:** No, not at all...

**Mr. Saada:** I distinctly heard Mr. Beauchemin claim that French speakers outside Québec were slowly dying. I don't think this is really an argument. In any event, it seems important to me to perhaps correct you on one point: You say that there are many checks and balances; you say that there will be three levels of government. For my part, I maintain that in the Canada that I am very humbly proposing, there would not be three levels of government but two. Allow me to explain. If the federal and provincial governments share powers in a clear cut fashion, there will be no reason to maintain three levels of government, in which there would be overlapping. In a given field, only two Parliaments would intervene.

Now, let me warn you about the risk of asking me how I will organize all that in legal terms. I repeat, I am not a legal expert. I cannot tell you how. My feeling is - and correct me if I'm wrong - that all Québec wants is an ironclad guarantee concerning culture, even before economic matters are dealt with. I think that this is legitimate. Next, Québec, like Ontario and the Western provinces - this is where Québec and the other regions of Canada come together - want to have power much closer to them; this is the principle of decentralization. They feel better suited to defining their own needs. I could offer two or three brief quotations. Do I have much time left, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Time is already up for this group of questions.

**Mrs. Pagé:** I would like an answer to my question on French speakers outside Québec.

**Mr. Saada:** I have answered it twice, madam.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Well, I don't understand you. You quoted Mr. Beauchemin and that's not what I want to know.

**Mr. Saada:** I gave you an answer and I think it is fairly clear.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Your answer consisted in quoting Mr. Beauchemin.

**Mr. Saada:** Yes. There it is!

**Mrs. Pagé:** Ah!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now turn to Mr. Claude Dauphin who... on behalf of the Government party.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the government team, the government parliamentary team, I would first like to welcome Mr. Saada to the Commission. Mr. Beaudry asked my first question, but I would like to repeat it. It is... Obviously, you theoretically propose a Canada made up of four regions, in which Québec would form a region. You also propose an elected Senate, a topic in the news last year. A sort of triple "e": elected, efficient... I beg your pardon? You don't understand?

**Mr. Saada:** I beg your pardon. A simple detail, if you will allow me. To avoid attaching labels, could you drop "Senate" and use "autonomous regional parliament"? What is behind it is important to me, that is, the concept, and I'm afraid that when "Senate" is used, we tend to confuse it with the current notion of the Senate. If you please.

**Mr. Dauphin:** I have no objection, Mr. Chairman. Well, it's rightly... Let's go back to the period of negotiations which would follow, because we obviously have the experience of Meech Lake where, as Quebecers and a society, we were asking to be reintegrated into the Constitution Act, 1982, on the basis of five reasonable, minimal conditions. This was, as we all know, rejected. I was wondering how we could embark upon 11-way negotiations which would work and whether regional power – a new regional power – what power we would ascribe to it? What would English Canada's reaction be to a regional power or to a new Canada

comprising four regions, where Québec would enjoy special powers, taking as an example the Meech Lake Accord, which was rejected, as we all know, not so very long ago?

**Mr. Saada:** Well, I feel that we are entering somewhat into the realm of the speculative because, if I had a magic formula, it would have been adopted long ago. I don't have such a formula nor does anyone else. It seems to me that it is important to understand one thing, that is, if we speak of a Canada of regions before undertaking 11-way negotiations, I think it will be important to negotiate region by region. The regions will have to reach agreement among themselves to ascertain whether this is the formula they want. I am not saying that this will be easy, but I think that it is in the interest of all the regions concerned to do so.

Second, this negotiation – here I am perhaps returning to Mr. Proulx's question, because it struck me as very relevant at that point – it is important to understand that it will no longer be a question Québec's demanding something, but of the four regions' having common needs. In that light, I think there would be more likelihood of negotiations succeeding than if there were a block and one small part of the block sought to obtain something. The entire problem of constitutional negotiations must be reviewed in depth. A Canada of regions would make it possible to broach constitutional questions from an entirely different, new, hitherto untried angle. In my opinion, if we haven't attempted to do so before, we should at least have the foresight not to say outright: It won't work.

**Mr. Dauphin:** To return to my earlier question concerning the powers Québec would need to maintain its identity, guarantee its survival, achieve self-determination, and ensure its economic future, aside from the fight against poverty, and immigration and cultural affairs, do you see other powers we should seek?

**Mr. Saada:** Well, listen, perhaps to give you a better idea of my underlying philosophy, I could offer a short quotation: "Decentralization is the only road leading to the spirit of enterprise." I didn't make that up, De Gaulle said it. When I talk about the division of powers, I am talking about decentralization. The fact that cultural matters are essential does not mean that there are not other matters. Obviously, in terms of regional development, for example, it seems to me essential that the provinces have the powers.

What I don't want to do is fall into the trap, if you will, of drawing up one list of things that should be there and another list of things that could be elsewhere. We must, I think, proceed logically. If the regions are better suited

to dealing with some matters, we must not be dogmatic about preventing them from doing so. If the regions are better suited, for instance, to overseeing regional development or to combating poverty, there is no harm in contemplating the regions' assuming such powers. I really cannot draw up a complete list of all possible fields. However, I do think we must be very open and, above all, logical. We must be logical. Decentralization occurred in France in 1982 and I think it worked marvelously well. Nothing is preventing us from proceeding in this way. Ultimately, we will find a growing interest among all the regions in Canada, and Québec will be able to develop, too.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Saada, we will now proceed with the last group of questions. Mr. Chevette, on behalf of the Official Opposition party.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will tell you what I understood in your brief. You can tell me if I understood properly. First, 30 years of discussions have resulted in a refusal, in the failure of Meech Lake, and I asked myself: What is he proposing? I understand that you are first proposing that, under the current constitutional amending formula, we seek the unanimous consent of the 10 provinces and the federal government in order to create four regions. You also propose that we negotiate and obtain the unanimous consent of the 10 provinces in order to establish a House of the regions, a Senate or an upper chamber, as you will, but that the Senate must be elected. This would require unanimous provincial consent.

What I also understand is that you don't know which powers the elected Senate or the regional governments would obtain, but you do acknowledge that the region comprising Québec, were it to obtain the unanimous consent of the 10 provinces and the federal government, could be sovereign with regard to cultural matters. To obtain its sovereignty in cultural matters, Québec would still have to proceed under the current amending formula whereby a minimum of seven provinces representing 50 % of the population must approve. However, you note that everything, even Québec's cultural sovereignty, must be subject to the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Frankly, I have attempted to simplify all that and said to myself: If it has taken us 30 years to achieve the failure of Meech Lake, it will take us 90 to untangle all of that. You are asking the provinces to commit hara-kiri then you ask them to be unanimous. You are asking people to form four groups, then you add five or six others. Under the current constitutional amending formula, unanimity will still have to be achieved to reach a consensus when the 10 provinces and Ottawa agree unanimously to change structures. It will take

unanimity to change boundaries. Do you really believe that, under the current formula, you're not dreaming a bit in colour?

**Mr. Saada:** No, let me explain. First, I would like to correct you: I never referred to six regions because that would simply recreate the problem of the provinces.

**Mr. Chevette:** Earlier on, sir, you said: That could be five or six.

**Mr. Saada:** No, I said four or five. I beg your pardon. You didn't hear me properly.

**Mr. Chevette:** I misunderstood. I stopped at five, first of all?

**Mr. Saada:** Exactly.

**Mr. Chevette:** Well, that makes one more.

**Mr. Saada:** No, I said we could choose between four and five, if that is so important. I doubt that the Commission is interested in knowing whether there will be four or five when I myself have not settled on a number. It seems to me that it is important to understand one thing: When we are talking about negotiations to redefine boundaries, I think you misunderstand the spirit of my brief. In my mind, there is no question of eliminating the provinces.

**Mr. Chevette:** In addition...

**Mr. Saada:** Listen. If you ask a question, I would like to have a chance to answer it.

**Mr. Chevette:** No, no, but there... it's because I made a mistake in my interpretation. I acknowledge that there is one additional level of government.

**Mr. Saada:** No, I beg your pardon, but you really have not understood my brief at all, not one part of it.

**Mr. Chevette:** Ah!

**Mr. Saada:** Listen, I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to be brusque. I beg your pardon. I withdraw what I just said.

**Mr. Chevette:** Have no fear. I'm used to it.

**Mr. Saada:** It's just that I would like to be a bit more original. No. What I mean is this: there is no question of abolishing the provinces. It is a matter of ensuring that the provinces group together with respect to the upper chamber. In terms of what I am contemplating, provincial boundaries would not be redefined. The upper chamber would represent the regions,

and the provinces would remain as they are. There would be provincial governments and an upper chamber. There would be no need whatsoever to negotiate provincial boundaries. This would not apply.

Second or third: It strikes me that it is important to understand that the regions themselves realize they have things in common. Earlier I gave the example of the Western provinces, which may well be interested in examining this principle. In this perspective, I feel that as long as we have not ascertained what may result we cannot claim from the outset that it will not work. I am confident that it will work because there are needs which are specifically regional.

One example is the Maritimes, which are experiencing regional development problems with respect to fisheries, for example. It is obvious that these are common problems. The Western provinces have common problems, whether in the realm of agriculture, or grain shipping or whatever. I think there are many common points; there is reason to be optimistic about the possibility of regional groups, without eliminating the identity of the provinces.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Saada, your time is up. If you have one last sentence to add to sum up, please go ahead.

**Mr. Saada:** Well, I thank you for listening to me. I am somewhat distressed that, as an individual and not an expert presenting important concepts, there is so little time to present and discuss them, but I realize there are constraints and I respect them. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, all the same. The members of the Commission have your brief and can continue to discuss it among themselves, or with you in private. Thank you for coming today. The sitting is adjourned until 7:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:15 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:40 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We resume our work tonight with the examination of Mr. Maurice Giroux's brief. Mr. Giroux, this is a one-half hour presentation; you will have five minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Maurice Giroux**

**Mr. Giroux (Maurice):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the steering committee for having allowed me to come and expound my woolly theories in person.

By way of introduction I would tell you that my brief consists only of one page: It is

the chart I distributed to you a short while ago, in a better printed version than the one you already had. It is an exercise of summarization and comprehension of the various constitutional options that are available to you and to all of Québec in this important debate.

There are rules of the game, however, that must be applied in reading this table. There is a way in and a way out; you cannot read it from top to bottom. On the right-hand side of the table you will see the various options. I have listed eleven, to date, which are set out along a continuum going from the most centralized to independence pure and simple, and not pure and "hard". Why do we always say "hard"? There can be pure and hard centralism, too. So, it's a continuum. But to get to one of the winning boxes, if I may speak this way, we have difficult choices to make at the very outset. At the beginning of the game, we must choose among the basic options: the federalist option, the sovereignty option. And the definitions that accompany these expressions and these options seem clear enough to me to try and understand a little what has been going on here the last few days. Even this afternoon, for instance, we heard someone claim that Mr. Bourassa's option and Mr. Lévesque's option were pretty similar. You will see that in my table there are nevertheless huge differences between the two options. We'll come back to this shortly.

So, in the obstacle race which consists of going across this table, there is obviously, with the federalists, the problem of knowing whether we want symmetrical federalism or asymmetrical federalism, and, in the sovereign camp there is also the difficulty of knowing whether we want a political union or not. Now, for the time being, I will skip over the sub-options because you have them in front of you.

I would still like to take advantage of this occasion to tell you that there is the possibility of a historical compromise, like we mentioned this afternoon, if you look at, for example, what has been defended by Mr. Bourassa and what is being defended by the Parti québécois. I had great difficulty in placing Mr. Bourassa's option in my table because, on the one hand, he is talking about complete autonomy for Québec, but, on the one hand, he reintroduces a federalist option by the back door, saying: We will have a government, a supranational parliament elected by universal suffrage. Therefore, in my own definition, this is a new sharing of powers between a new governmental level and that of Québec. I placed it in "special status" because the end result of such a system would be to give Québec a special status because Québec would have increased powers, different from those of the other provinces, but, on the other hand, there is another governmental level which would be the supranational parliament which would also have sovereign powers applying

to a given population since it would be elected by universal suffrage. And what's more, in proportion to Canada's population. Another House of Commons above the one that already exists. And to illustrate that there is a possibility of bringing the two parties closer together, the ministerial team and the Opposition; I simply say this to you, and this could start off the debate: if the supporters of Bourassa's position were to give up the parliament with universal suffrage, they would fall into the sovereignty camp. On the other hand, the sovereignists could agree to have a political union of a confederal type, therefore with two equal, sovereign states, with a parliament composed of delegates, not elected through popular suffrage, but delegates from both States. A little like the Montréal Urban Community. So then, I think that both groups could establish a dialogue on the basis of this working hypothesis.

Well, I'll stop right now to allow for questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This is a good time because the five minutes are almost up and you have stopped at just the right place where questions can be asked even more easily. We will begin by the block of questions from the government party. Mrs. Pelchat, I believe is taking the floor.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Giroux, I would like to thank you for having presented your brief which is both original and certainly not uninteresting. You have made a table for us, in fact, of the options that we have before us and from which we may choose at the end. In your directions, to a certain extent in your rules of the game, you speak to us of a historical compromise at which moderate sovereignists or reasonable federalists could arrive. Explain to me, then, how we could arrive at that? Perhaps that would enlighten us, perhaps it could even help us reconcile the two options.

**Mr. Giroux:** Well, like I just explained, what is needed, on the one hand, is that the supporters of the federalist option, along Mr. Bourassa's line of thinking, give up the notion of a parliament elected by universal suffrage. Because I believe that that puts a two-storey structure back into position. As soon as we say that a parliament or an institution has a direct right, is elected by the population, we fall back into a federalist system.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I'll stop you there, Mr. Giroux. Regarding the E.E.C., are you prepared to say that it is a federal system? I think that the block of 12 European nations is still a confederal system, everyone recognizes that. They have a parliament elected by universal

suffrage.

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes, but that parliament is not... There is a clear separation between the elected parliament which has no power, and the Council of Ministers. In a true confederal system, the Council of Ministers would stem from the confederal parliament with relations of responsibility. At present, there is a beginning of confederation in Europe, but it is not yet at the stage of a confederation. We are witness to a system of associated States, with a Council of Ministers coming from the sovereign States. But the parliament is underneath and there is no connection between the Council of Ministers and the parliament.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I think I'm getting lost in your table.

**Mr. Giroux:** I didn't put the Common Market in my table...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** But you put in the associated State, though.

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes, you're right.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** And you refer to René Lévesque's option of 1967. I would like you to explain to me how you see confederation in relation to an associated State, the distinction between the two.

**Mr. Giroux:** Well, in a confederation, you have a political institution which is permanent, a confederal parliament, a confederal Council of Ministers. Whereas in an associated State, like the one Mr. Lévesque mentions on page 64 of his book, he assumed there would be only sporadic meetings of a Council of Ministers for Canada and Québec. Therefore, it is not a permanent institution, it is an ad hoc institution to settle certain problems. I don't have the list of subjects that can be placed in common among associated states. But, along his line of thinking, the 67 option meant occasional or sporadic meetings of a Council of Ministers between the two States. It wasn't a confederation yet because there was no permanent political institution.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Your historical compromise, where would that be located in your diagram?

**Mr. Giroux:** It would be a confederation with two parties, Canada and Québec, with the possibility of a confederal parliament, with delegate members, both States, on an equal basis, with a Council of Ministers with equal representation as well.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Is it on purpose that beside

the circle there is no name, in contrast to the other circles that are well identified? Is it due to your modesty that you didn't want to put your name beside that suggestion?

**Mr. Giroux:** I am not here to suggest options, only to try to understand what is going on. Because if this continues, we are going to be in a real tower of Babel. I must also point out that my opinions expressed here are my own and do not reflect my employer which is the Conférence des maires de la Rive-Sud.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** But this form of a two-party Canada, doesn't it resemble a view that has already been suggested, or people who...

**Mr. Giroux:** It has been mentioned at various times in the last 30 years or so, but no one identified a specific solution for it. There has been talk of sovereignty-association, which obviously includes two parties, but the concept is already indicated in the table as being purely an economic, and not a political, association.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** In closing, if we ever arrive at a type of consensus, a historical compromise, which is what I hope, I think that we can all have a lot of hope following the work done by this commission. Because, in any case, we will have to go back to the people regardless of the changes that will be made. Are you in favour of a referendum-election, or a referendum per se?

**Mr. Giroux:** If there is a consensus here, at this Commission, let's say, 25 out of 36, in favour of an option, obviously the government then won't have any choice and must go on the basis of a referendum. There's no doubt about that. Everyone is talking about it because, and excuse me for being direct, but after the 1980 experience, a referendum now, when we hold one, it's to win it, not to lose it. So, to hold a referendum on two options, like the FTQ brief seems to have indicated, is a little masochistic. That there might be two options arising from this debate, and holding a referendum on it, I don't agree with that. But that there be a referendum on the condition that there is a large enough consensus and especially between the two political parties present here, who still hold the balance of power in the commission... I would like to add another...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Giroux, we have used up all the time on that, but I think this can very well, possibly, be linked with the next questions. Mr. Brassard?

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes. First of all, I think that your chart is interesting because it well illustrates that the Québec political landscape is

a pretty cluttered one, isn't it?

**Mr. Giroux:** It's the Champlain Bridge at 5 p.m.

**Mr. Brassard:** Pardon?

**Mr. Giroux:** It's the Champlain Bridge at 5 p.m.

**Mr. Brassard:** There is a traffic jam of options.

**Mr. Giroux:** So we'd better find a reserved lane.

**Mr. Brassard:** That's right. Well, first of all, let's go back to the very beginning. You say that you followed the constitutional conferences from 1967 to 1976 as a journalist. You surely also followed everything that happened during the 1980s and, recently, the Meech Lake saga. Starting from there, drawing on your observations of the Québec and Canadian political scene, as well as your past experience, is it your opinion that Canadian federalism is now in a cul-de-sac, an impasse? And, finally, that there are perhaps two options, but one of them will inevitably lead to a dead end...

**Mr. Giroux:** I don't care to answer...

**Mr. Brassard:** ...in view of past events and history.

**Mr. Giroux:** I wouldn't care to answer in any specific way because it's not... I didn't take on a mandate to favour one option in particular, rather to try and see where the possible areas of cooperation are. But as much as I find that the federalists have... There is much talk about the burden of proof these days. The federalists have the burden of proving that, whether in a symmetrical or asymmetrical way, or regardless of formulas, that it's feasible; and the sovereignists also have the burden of proof of ensuring an economic and political stability to the solutions proposed in the sovereigntist camp.

So I don't wish to make a value judgement on either one, whether there is a dead end to either option, but there are conditions to be met on both sides. And it is the camp that will be able to solve... that will be able to bear the burden of additional proof, or that weighs the heaviest in the scale that will win. So, to say that federalism is at a dead end, maybe, except for a perhaps impossible miracle from our Canadian interlocutors. But there may be other dead ends as well in that chart that must be avoided. But cooperation from the two major political parties can lead the way out of this cul-de-sac.

**Mr. Brassard:** This afternoon, Mr. Charbonneau, in his exchange with Mr. Bouchard, indicated that, in his opinion, a confederation could suppose a supranational parliament elected by universal suffrage as some propose whereas, and if I understand you correctly, in your chart, a true Confederation can include a parliament, but it is constituted of delegations from the national parliaments that make up the confederation.

**Mr. Giroux:** Precisely. I heard Mr. Charbonneau on T.V., and I almost fell off my chair, because I find it inconceivable that someone thinks that a parliament elected by universal suffrage can ensure the sovereignty of the participating States. He said at one point: in a Confederation like that, sovereignty would not exist. As soon as a parliament is elected by universal suffrage, it possesses sovereignty in the areas that have been conferred onto it. So then, we are turning around in circles.

So if we want a true confederation, that would be it: delegates. And both States would do what they please. If we have a parliament elected by universal suffrage, with powers devolved on it, we fall back into federalism. The definitions in the handbooks are very clear on that.

**Mr. Brassard:** Unless the parliament in question elected by universal suffrage does not have any powers. That is the case of the European parliament of Strasbourg.

**Mr. Giroux:** It is a deliberative assembly.

**Mr. Brassard:** Which votes motions, as we saw during the native crisis, without knowing too much what it's all about.

**Mr. Giroux:** It is a parliament that is deliberative, and it does not have a control over the Council of Ministers.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, we will continue with the third group of questions beginning with Mr. André Ouellet, who will be followed by Mr. Bouchard, and then Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I find this presentation by my friend Giroux interesting. This is not the first time he has presented a text like this. He was already doing it at the time we were studying together at the Université de Sherbrooke and it hasn't changed much. The ideas he is presenting are still somewhat the same, but I would like him to be more specific about his remarks on an answer he gave a few minutes ago to Mrs. Pelchat. Isn't the European parliament in the process of transforming itself and becoming a parliament which will take on more responsibilities in the

future? Isn't there already a certain evolution finding way in Europe and a delegation of power to those who will be elected directly to the European parliament? Am I mistaken in seeing this evolution coming about?

**Mr. Giroux:** I believe that your idea is just as good as mine. As for the evolution, we'll see to what extent it goes, but for the time being we are not witnessing what you wish...

**Mr. Ouellet:** But you admit that it is being discussed?

**Mr. Giroux:** It is, but it might be discussed for years and years. Anyway, this comparison with Europe is getting tiresome because it is sovereign states which decided to get married together; well, we're not at that point yet. We would have to get "unmarried" to be able to remarry with that State. So the comparison rings false from several points of view, and even on the government side, we are starting to realize it.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Well, that depends on what your viewpoint is. Isn't what is quietly being done in Europe not what currently exists? And what is being built over there, according to your suggestions, could that be built over here?

**Mr. Giroux:** The problem is here, it's not there. And I think that there is no way out in wanting to compare all the time what is happening in Europe with what is happening here. We first of all have to solve our problems, and those countries have been dialoguing with each other for 30 years. Just that historical point is enough to stop comparing us with Europe. It's been 30 years...

**Mr. Ouellet:** But you have...

**Mr. Giroux:** ...that those sovereign States have been talking with each other and now they are starting to talk of marriage. So, are we going to take that example ad infinitum?

**Mr. Ouellet:** No, except that, according to the European example, whereby long discussions are valid over there, I don't see why they wouldn't also be acceptable in Canada. You have just illustrated the fact that constitutional discussions can be carried out without penalizing the people involved. And European economical prosperity has increased dramatically despite the fact that these constitutional discussions are taking place, and, in Canada, Canada is part of the Group of Seven, and economically benefits from substantial advantages, despite the fact that we have been talking about the constitution for a certain number of years. Is the fact that we are talking about the constitution so serious

and so disadvantageous for the economic life of Canada and Québec?

**Mr. Giroux:** The businesspeople sitting beside you will tell you that it creates a lot of economic instability.

**Mr. Ouellet:** What instability? Talking about the constitution or talking about separation?

**Mr. Giroux:** Both.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Obviously, if you push for the separation to the extreme, of course that can create instability.

**Mr. Giroux:** Myself, I'm not pushing for anything. I'm trying to see whether the participants here could... on what ground they could come together.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Why didn't you, in your federalist option, put in the confederal block?

**Mr. Giroux:** I'm sorry?

**Mr. Ouellet:** When I follow your lines...

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes, yes.

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...you put the confederal component exclusively in the sovereignist option.

**Mr. Giroux:** Ah! That's obvious, Mr. Ouellet. You have to be sovereign to be able to go into a Confederation. That is something we learned at the Université de Sherbrooke.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Yes, yes, I know but...

**Voices:** Ha... ha... ha!

**Mr. Giroux:** Were you at the pub?

**Voices:** Ha... ha... ha!

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...this afternoon we were talking about the possibility of changing and allowing for new concepts within Canada.

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes.

**Mr. Ouellet:** So why couldn't that be done?

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes, we agree on that. That is, whether we can transform a federation into a confederacy, yes, on the condition that we have sovereign states present.  
(8:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Ouellet:** But don't you think that Québec which is responsible for its powers in a substantial number of areas, isn't already

sovereign?

**Mr. Giroux:** It is half sovereign. There is one part...

**Mr. Ouellet:** Half?

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes.

**Mr. Ouellet:** That's not bad.

**Mr. Giroux:** Oh yes!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Giroux:** That's not bad.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Basically, Mr. Giroux, you have already listened to several people who have expressed their views here. You read the briefs, you see a dispersion of a great number of hypotheses, and you have made an effort to summarize, to try and bring everything together to what could be a solution of compromise. And the compromise that you ask, for example, regarding the Liberal Party's option, is to give up the idea of a confederal parliament elected by universal suffrage to create a true confederation with delegates, and the compromise that you ask of the Parti québécois, is to accept the existence of a parliament that wouldn't be elected. Is that right?

**Mr. Giroux:** That's right.

**Mr. Bouchard:** To get to that point... that is a model that is respectable in itself, that can be analyzed... but how can we arrive at that in the context we are in? What are the steps, according to you, that would lead us first to sovereignty and then to confederation, because we have to start with one to get to the other, right? So, how do you envisage that: arriving at sovereignty? Do you see it being negotiated by 11 parties or by 2? How can it be done?

**Mr. Giroux:** Two parties would negotiate it.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Two?

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Good. Then, well...

**Mr. Giroux:** Well, yes. If we take the confederation option based on two parties, would confederation with 10 parties or with 5... would the other provinces of Canada be interested in that? We would have to ask them. But, for the time being, I think that if we are talking of defining Québec's status in relation to Canada, we begin on a one-to-one basis. But would the

other group of provinces, possibly the Maritimes, be grouped together in only one province, etc.? That is so hypothetical that...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Yes, but perhaps we would have to ask ourselves if we are interested in being one against ten in a confederation.

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes. Exactly.

**Mr. Bouchard:** We would reproduce a model whereby we would be in an extreme minority position. It's not in our interest to do that.

**Mr. Giroux:** However, in a confederation, you could have voting procedures which would be able to respect that specific character.

**Mr. Bouchard:** But that gets very complicated.

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes, but for the time being, I find that the Québec-Canada discussion is one avenue to envisage.

**Mr. Bouchard:** One-on-one then, outside of the current constitutional framework, since the amendment formula wouldn't allow it.

**Mr. Giroux:** Ah! Obviously.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Which means that Québec must first make a gesture of sovereignty.

**Mr. Giroux:** That's right.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Therefore, a prior declaration of sovereignty...

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...which I imagine would come after a referendum. Is that your way of thinking?

**Mr. Giroux:** Before that, Mr. Bouchard, I would like to make a remark that I haven't had time to make because the right question hasn't come along yet. I believe that if this Commission arrives at a consensus, a preliminary notice must be given by the commission before January because the...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Before January?

**Mr. Giroux:** I'm worried of the sequence of events for next spring. I mean to say by this, that both political parties here... I always speak of both, but, we've got an eye on them...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Well, there's not just political parties here.

**Mr. Giroux:** No, but the two provincial parties hold the key. And if we wait for the conventions to take place, a convention in January for the Parti québécois, a convention in March for the Liberal Party, will the commission be in tow behind all that? My position is that you should give a preliminary notice in December, at the latest January 15th, so that the political parties are able to react to your preliminary notice. That is the first condition for arriving at a consensus here.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You don't want the parties to go and set anything in stone before coming to negotiate here, coming to discuss with us here. Is that it?

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes, because then...

**Mr. Bouchard:** But, regardless of the timetable in the process, would there first of all be a referendum?

**Mr. Giroux:** If there is a consensus.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Yes, yes. Of course. O.K. Let's start with the commission.

**Mr. Giroux:** ...that. If there's no consensus, two options are eliminated.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Let's start with the Commission making a recommendation based on the broadest possible consensus.

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Let's suppose that it's submitted to the government, which adopts it.

**Mr. Giroux:** That's right.

**Mr. Bouchard:** And then, a referendum.

**Mr. Giroux:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Followed by a declaration of independence.

**Mr. Girard:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** And then, we invite our future partner to come and sit at a table to lay the foundations of the kind of confederation you propose.

**Mr. Giroux:** That's right.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Have you rejected the idea of a cabinet appointed directly by the national parliaments?

**Mr. Giroux:** Well, earlier, I talked about a

confederal parliament....

**Mr. Bouchard:** Yes. I know.

**Mr. Girard:** ...based on equal representation. And, at a higher level, there could be a cabinet based on equal representation as well.

**Mr. Bouchard:** But, according to what you said, the ministers would come from the confederal parliament.

**Mr. Giroux:** Oh no! The ministers would come from the two constituent governments.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Oh! Directly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to clarify the marriage analogy. As far as I know, we were never married. That was a figment of our parents' imagination. This makes it easier, I think, to reflect cool-headedly. If we correctly interpret what has happened in Canada over the past 30 years, the past three years and, probably, the past three months, don't you get the impression that, to categorize legal status as you do, and this also applies to those who support decentralized federalism, it seems to me that, contrary to what you said in your brief, they will nevertheless have to exercise the sovereignty option, also in order to reopen negotiations for those who want decentralized federalism? If I correctly interpret what has been said by a certain number of people who have spoken to us, antagonism in Canada isn't Wells, Filmon or Harper, but rather the clash of different peoples. The people of Canada want a strong government; they want the government proposed by André Ouellet. The people of Québec want a strong government; they want a Québec government. Therefore, I would say that, to break the impasse, I think it's a question of balance of power, and are you one of those who think, and this also goes for those in favour of decentralized federalism, that they will be obliged to confront their counterparts with the sovereignty option?

**Mr. Giroux:** It's hard not to agree with that. For to give them a jolt, let's say, and make them realize that, even to reform federalism, we have to be prepared to tear the house down, yes, I almost agree with you. Others have said this before me, but an eminent former minister like Claude Morin said that, even to do that, to change federalism, sovereignty would have to be declared. By then, however, it would be too late. Therefore, it's a valid argument.

**Mr. Larose:** O.K. Of all the models that exist, for there you have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight... I think your analytical framework could be refined and...

**Mr. Giroux:** In select circles, there are 11.

**Mr. Larose:** Oh! Well, O.K. Yes, that's true.

**Mr. Giroux:** By the way, it might be considered a ballot. You mark your X and I'll collect the sheets of paper.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Larose:** Yes. It's true. I think you're very practical, Mr. Giroux...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Larose:** ...while you make it easier for us to understand the situation, we'll set up an economy at that level. Do you agree with the comments made this afternoon by Mr. Charbonneau, who said that, ultimately, what distinguishes the different models, which are somewhat variable, is where they locate the seat of sovereignty? In other words, there's a family. It's located at the supranational, confederal or federal level... well, it's up to those in power to make that distinction... or else it's in Québec. Isn't this what differentiates the two camps?

**Mr. Giroux:** This is the first question: federalism or sovereignty. Quebecers must decide once and for all whether they want to give full authority to one or two levels of government. This is the first question that must be answered.

**Mr. Larose:** Therefore, if we're here to act as strategists...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Would someone like to make a final comment?

**Mr. Larose:** Yes. If we've been given a mandate to tell Québec something, we will have to be concerned with strategy, and therefore, with telling people what should be done to reach our objective. If it's sovereignty, we know exactly where we're going; if it's federalism, I have the impression we'll be using almost the same approach.

**Mr. Giroux:** That's right.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, thank you, Mr. Giroux. You suggested that we form a preliminary opinion before January 15 in case the others come to a decision before we do. To be fair, would you please go and tell them that they should also wait until we have expressed our opinion before making any

decisions? It might be helpful to have all the time we need. Thank you for your brief.

### Joint presentation

We will now listen to several briefs that discuss approximately the same topics and that we have decided to hear together. First, the group formed by the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil and others, including the Parti québécois de Taillon, the Parti québécois de Marie-Victorin and the Société historique de Longueuil, plus the Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-Hubert, and the Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-Yamaska, including Mr. Jean Babin and Mr. Réal Brais for the group from Longueuil, Mrs. Denyse Desjardins and Mr. Pierre Paquette for the group from Saint-Hubert and Mr. Bertrand Desrosiers and Mr. Benoît Duchesne for the Richelieu-Yamaska group. Even though you discuss fairly similar topics, it has been agreed, since you form three different groups, that the ten minutes will be divided among you, as you have decided. It has also been agreed that this will mean around three and a third to four minutes per group, rather than ten minutes in all. Well, who speaks first? Mr...

**A voice:** Mr. Chairman, when we contacted the Commission this week, we were told that the three groups as a whole would have fifteen minutes. Has this been changed?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** All right, the information you obtained must be correct. You therefore have fifteen minutes for the three groups as a whole. The advantage of being the last speakers of the day is that it facilitates scheduling. Go ahead.

### Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-Yamaska

**Mr. Desrosiers (Bertrand):** My name is Bertrand Desrosiers, president of the Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-Yamaska. Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, I would first like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak to this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

The brief that we have tabled is designed to show that Québec is stifled by the federal system, that this situation has prevailed since the Conquest and that it is getting worse. Throughout the history of Canada, this non-country, two philosophies have gradually emerged and taken root in Ottawa. The first, the assimilation of Québec, began with Lord Durham's report in 1840. The second advocated a strong central government uniting provinces entrusted with municipal powers. It is on the basis of these two philosophies that the federal

government began interfering in spheres of authority that, until then, had been reserved for Québec. In rapid succession, we saw Ottawa grab control of pension funds, television and radio. Then, in 1941, to be exact, Ottawa appropriated taxes, crying "there's a war on". The war came to an end, but Ottawa never returned the taxes. Unemployment insurance was next on the list. As the saying goes, eating whets the appetite, and the federal government is insatiable. Ottawa has interfered in the administration of public highways, in education, university subsidies, adult education, family allowances, cable television and day care centres. All these intrusions by the federal government have diminished Québec's power accordingly, since it is Ottawa that makes the decisions with regard to priorities and budgets.

This centralizing trend became more marked under Trudeau's government. He waged war more openly against the members of the independence movement or, as the Acadian from Shawinigan says so well, the separatists. Ten years ago, when the federalists wanted to demonstrate their attachment to Québec, Ottawa invested \$ 17 000 000 in the referendum campaign and promised reform. The reform amounted to the unilateral patriation of the Constitution and the exclusion of Québec. Then the king of national reconciliation cast his net on the shores of Lake Meech and caught ten first ministers in order to conclude a constitutional agreement. While Mr. Mulroney was talking about an enthusiastic and honourable return, we were honoured by Sault-Sainte-Marie, and the Québec flag serving as a doormat, and enthusiasm was aroused by a last-minute arm-twisting session. Despite all these encouraging events, English Canada rejected Québec.

Throughout all these negotiations, Québec has lost powers in addition to being duped on important economic matters. During the referendum, we accepted the F-18 affair without question. With the Meech Lake Accord, the frigates contract slipped through our fingers. However, Québec has not only been belittled on the constitutional issue, but also with regard to the economy. Consequently, our brief gives examples that illustrate the federal government's policy of developing Ontario and the West to the detriment of Québec. We don't want to start a war of numbers, and the examples in our brief have been taken from newspaper articles covering the various issues. Although our sample is incomplete - we would have had to write a 100-page book - it is quite varied and clearly illustrates how Québec has been left out not only with respect to transfer payments but also research grants, and how, in the GATT negotiations, western wheat has been favoured at the expense of the textile, leather, shoe and automobile industries.

The Union des producteurs agricoles is

better equipped than we are to tell you about their constant problems with the federal government. Ottawa has spent billions of dollars to subsidize Ontario and the West through a number of Crown corporations that were in deficit and were sold to the private sector once they became profitable. Meanwhile, Québec has developed its own financial institutions, such as the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, at its own expense. But when it tried to implement more ambitious measures, the Commons got all excited and introduced Bill S-31.

As for the interest-rate policy pursued by the Bank of Canada, it can be noted that, over the past few decades, it has been adapted to the economy of Ontario. Of course, this is without anticipating federal interference in the language issue... Bill C-72, Ottawa's latest invention, which will accelerate Québec's assimilation. While Canada is on the decline, if not bankrupt, Québec is undergoing rapid growth. Independence is essential to the future of our state. We have all we need to secure our cultural, linguistic and economic future. Let's make the decisions in Québec first; Canada will be obliged to negotiate. As Felix Leclerc said so well: People respect a man who respects himself.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We will now hear from the next group, Mr...

**Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de  
Longueuil and others**

**Mr. Babin (Jean):** Jean Babin, of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Go ahead, Mr. Babin.

**Mr. Babin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. Basically, the question of Québec's political and constitutional future is related to a blueprint for society. This brief proposes that Québec sovereignty is a prerequisite for the realization of a blueprint for society. It should first be specified that the recommendations do not concern either the particular way in which Québec should achieve sovereignty or the specific form of government a sovereign Québec should have. The political and constitutional future of Québec depends, in fact, on a Québec blueprint for society, capable of meeting the challenges of tomorrow and the aspirations of Quebecers. The Anglophone community still has deep roots in the territory of Québec. Concerted efforts by the inhabitants of a sovereign Québec to find ways of living together could lead to the introduction of guarantees for the Anglophone community in the areas of language and education. The challenge of building a new Québec identity resides in the

harmonious integration of the various groups that live in the territory of Québec.

The building of a new Québec identity must be based on conditions that are mutually acceptable. It must be understood that federalism hampers Québec's efforts in this regard. Québec does not have a sufficient share of power in this essential consultative process. The members of the various cultural communities have problems integrating the population of Québec, because they are receiving a double message on the language issue. Québec must be able to introduce a coherent and comprehensive policy on the immigration and integration of cultural communities. Therefore, Québec should be given jurisdiction over immigration. The language, culture and civil law of long-established Quebecers is in a precarious state in North America as a whole. Québec must have exclusive jurisdiction over language and culture. As for the effects of the declining birth rate, they cannot be offset until Québec has full jurisdiction in areas related to the family and immigration.

The maintenance of Québec's distinctive character is dependent on such measures. In addition, the development of Québec's collective wealth can only be achieved by gaining control of the various economic levers of a sovereign nation. Canadian federalism prevents Québec from taking full advantage of its human, natural and financial resources.

Although Québec has a vast supply of dynamic entrepreneurs, large gaps must still be filled with regard to manpower training, on the one hand, and research and development, on the other.

The current chaos in federal-provincial manpower training programs makes it impossible to develop a full-employment economy. Québec must be able to devise policies for research and development and manpower training that are adapted to the particular needs of its economy.

Although Québec has abundant natural resources, federalism hampers their orderly exploitation. The federal government's lack of cooperation has led to the stagnation of this sector of economic activity.

Québec must formulate and implement, on its own, a coherent policy for the exploitation of its natural resources. In addition, to control the Québec economy, full jurisdiction will have to be acquired over the management of financial resources. The stakes are high in the current context of the globalization of trade. Given the pitiful state of public finances, it might be wondered how much longer Ottawa can fulfill its obligations with regard to transfer payments in the areas of health, education and social aid.

Québec, therefore, urgently needs to control all fiscal policies that apply to its territory. Federalism does not meet the expectations of Québecers, whether with regard to the

development of collective wealth or to its distribution. Sovereignty is thus a prerequisite for the introduction and application of the principle of social justice.

Québec must, at all costs, reconcile economic growth with respect for the environment through a durable policy of development and pollution control. However, a coherent environmental policy will require that several powers currently under federal control be exercised. Durable development policies are based on the preservation of our natural resources. The impact of human activity on the environment requires a series of policies designed to control current and future soil, water and air pollution. To implement a coherent and comprehensive environmental policy, all the attributes of a sovereign Québec will have to be exploited. Québec must also be able to participate in an international experience of peace, cooperation and development. Québec can no longer allow itself to be half a state in international relations. Canadian federalism does not offer Québec the means needed to meet the challenges of the future through a coherent blueprint for society. The experience of Canadian federalism is merely a lamentable series of failures. Like other peoples throughout the world, Québécois have the inalienable right to control their own destiny. Fully exercising this right to self-determination will lead to sovereignty.

The authors of this brief therefore propose the following recommendations to the Commission. As soon as possible, Québec should engage in a brief political and constitutional process that will result in the Québec government levying all taxes collected in Québec. All laws applying to Québec citizens and the territory of Québec should be brought in by the Québec National Assembly. All international treaties, agreements or accords should be negotiated and signed by representatives of the Québec government. Québec may discuss mutually advantageous modes of economic association with Canada or any other partner in the framework of its attainment of sovereignty.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Babin. We will now hear from the third group, from Saint-Hubert. It's ....

#### **Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-Hubert**

**Mr. Paquette (Pierre):** My name is Pierre Paquette. I am accompanied by Mrs. Denyse Desjardins. Mr. Chairman, and ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, I would first like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the members of this Commission for having agreed to hear our brief.

The Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-Hubert wanted to comply with the

instructions of the Commission and submit a short brief to establish, of course, its position on the constitutional issue, but also and, above all, to remind the members of the Commission, the Québec government and Quebecers of the importance of the language question in the current sovereignty debate. Leaving other speakers the privilege of discussing the economic viability of an independent Québec and accepting the brief presented on this subject by the Mouvement Desjardins as its own, the Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-Hubert would like to take a few minutes to remind you that the history, institutions and language of a people are what make it a unified national and political force capable of overcoming all kinds of obstacles. In his brilliant works, and in particular, in "Notre maître le passé", our lamented canon, Lionel Groulx, discussed the avenues that would inevitably lead to our full sovereignty.

However, to underscore the urgent need to make choices regarding the viability of our language, let's recall that the force and power of a people are derived above all from its demography. During the years when we ranked first or second among our ten federal partners, we could perhaps allow ourselves to experiment one last time or take the beau risque. But, now that we have lost this demographic advantage, now that our partners have started talking about reducing their numbers from ten to five through regionalization, by uniting strength and numbers, there can no longer be any salvation for Québec and the primacy of its language and institutions other than the total acceptance of its distinctive characteristics. We can no longer procrastinate. With every passing year, we are becoming increasingly limited by the constraints imposed by our political isolation and marginality. Isn't it precisely the strategy of our opponents to gain time by having us participate ad nauseam in projects of renewed federalism? Such precious time will no longer be available ten years from now when we will represent less than 20 % of the Canadian population, and when we will perhaps be the smallest of the four or five regional governments in a renewed federal system.

In conclusion, may we remind you that in a country, in a democracy with a stable political and economic policy, a self-sufficient people imposes its language and customs. It attracts decision-makers and newcomers. It has the long end of the stick, so to speak, and gains time by making decisions rather than asking questions. The Société nationale des québécois de Saint-Hubert requests a constitutional project for Québec that includes a declaration of independence and will allow Quebecers to assume their national independence through the full exercise of democracy. Since we feel strong economically, as shown by the Mouvement

Desjardins and the Chambre de commerce de Montréal in their respective briefs, our pride will manifest itself, we hope, for most people, through a constantly developing, individual and collective expression of dignity. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now hear the first series of questions from the party forming the Official Opposition. The time allotted is ten minutes. Mrs. Pauline Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to congratulate you on the presentation of your briefs. Please understand that I will address my questions primarily to the Société nationale des Québécois Richelieu-Yamaska, given that other people, whom I know well, presented the brief endorsed by the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste de Longueuil.

In your brief — and it's interesting because you talk about language legislation from the outset — in your brief, on page 10, you mention Bill C-72. Since the deliberations began, I think this is the first time an organization has mentioned this Bill, since, inevitably, we have lingered, from the start, over the Charter of the French language, Bill 101, etc., to decry, in some cases, their negative aspects. You say here that Bill C-72, passed, of course, by Ottawa, is the most assimilating law that Québec has ever known. And, through its immigration practices and official languages legislation, the federal government has demonstrated its aim to eliminate French in Québec.

Well, I would first like you to tell me what you feel justifies such an opinion about this Bill. Second question: you talk about Francophones outside Québec, and you're also quite critical of federal measures concerning Francophones outside Québec. Do you think that a sovereign, independent Québec would be able to help or support Francophones outside Québec? Would it accelerate, as it were, their assimilation, or make it possible to step up support for them?

These are our first questions. My colleague will, in turn, ask others later.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** I'm pleased to answer your question on this Bill, mainly because I also feel that we don't talk enough about it. And it's just about the most pernicious law passed by the federal government, probably since Confederation. In Ottawa, they came up with the original idea of saying that they would protect minorities, and they will revive, to a certain extent, Trudeau's obsession with bilingualism. They said: We'll protect minorities. All that's been done is to declare that the definition of territory, in regard to minorities, isn't Canada, but rather the provinces or regions. This means one thing: French is not a minority language in Canada and, therefore, we don't need to protect it. English, on the other hand, is a minority

language in Québec. Therefore, the federal government, being extremely generous, is obliged to protect English in Québec. As if this were a problem. Even Pierre Elliot Trudeau acknowledged that we offered our minorities the best protection in the world. And this says a great deal.

Bill C-72 has also allowed the central government to interfere in spheres of authority that, so far, have been reserved exclusively for Québec. We have heard half-hearted mummings by the current Québec government, which said to us: Oh! We don't agree with that. However, contrary to what should have happened, we haven't seen any major reaction to the present situation in which we have no control over immigration. We don't control who enters. We don't control how these people are assimilated, and we don't even control our own language, since we tend to eliminate it, for example, with Bill C-178.

Bill C-72 is the worst possible law, since it will allow the federal government to give money to day care centres so that they can offer services to companies and unions in English. I hope that existing centres will refuse the money. However, this will achieve only one thing, namely, that the federal government will finance English directly here, simply on request and without necessarily having received the consent of the Québec government.

**Mrs. Marois:** Francophones outside Québec?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** As far as Francophones outside Québec are concerned, it's obvious that, at present, the central government is merely using their situation to protect the Anglophone minority in Québec. They say: We protect Francophones outside Québec. Now that's nonsense. When we consider the existing Francophone population outside Québec... Manitobans were largely Francophone and they have been assimilated. The situation of Francophones in Québec is now the same as that of Francophones outside Québec. In North America, 15 % of the population speaks French; outside Québec, 15 % of the population speaks French. The latter will disappear because they don't have the means to introduce laws to protect themselves. We still have the means; we must use them without delay.

**Mrs. Marois:** All right. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Paré?

**Mr. Paré:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will read the second-to-last paragraph of the conclusion from the brief presented by the Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-Yamaska: "Canada is bankrupt economically;

Québec is unable to protect its language properly because Ottawa controls immigration and interferes in the language question. Québec has paid a high price for belonging to Canada. Will we allow our language and economy to deteriorate for much longer?" Why am I reading this? I want to add to the comments made by my colleague from Taillon. Some people imply that others want to achieve sovereignty with regard to culture, and my colleague just discussed this. In fact, the last group that spoke this afternoon focused its presentation on cultural issues by saying: Ultimately, Quebecers want almost foolproof protection for culture, as if the rest were unimportant. Yet, when we read your brief and hear many others, the issue is also economic to a large extent, and it is this aspect that I would like to discuss briefly with you tonight.

When we skim through your brief, we read about agriculture, research and development, finances, the pharmaceutical industry, free trade, interest rates, automobiles, F-18s, frigates... all the economic, rather than cultural, sectors are dealt with, and the system works to our disadvantage. You're not the only ones who have said this. If we repeat what almost all Québec ministers have been saying over the past year alone, the economy is deteriorating in Québec on account of federal government decisions. Whether we look at housing, immigration, fisheries, the shipping industry, or read the budget and inaugural speeches, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have been saying that the budgetary, financial and economic decisions of the federal government are harmful to Québec. Therefore, I feel it is important to mention that, even the Société nationale des Québécois, which is frequently only associated with cultural issues, has devoted a very large part, if not most, of its brief, to saying that it is the economy which is threatened. We now see the effects of this in Québec. Sovereignty is an economic issue; if we straighten out the economy, we will put the social and cultural sectors back on their feet as well.

After hearing the criticisms you have expressed... and the conclusion... I said to you, based on the conclusions you have drawn from examining the current system, that federalism isn't profitable, whether at social and cultural levels or with regard to the economy; on the contrary, it is harmful economically. My question is: Do you propose some kind of association with the rest of Canada once sovereignty has been achieved?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** I feel that as far as the economy is concerned - if you refer to the experience of the 1980 referendum, when the fear mongers crisscrossed Québec saying Canada won't negotiate with you, plants will close... If you recall, back then, leading personalities,

opinion leaders - not the politicians, they scared people - those heading businesses, in the business world, the first question they were asked in Ontario was: had Québec been independent, would you have negotiated? Obviously, there isn't an entrepreneur alive who would close his plant simply because Québec changes status. Really! Pepsi is doing business in the USSR and so is MacDonald's. Why would people here stop doing business with an independent Québec? It really doesn't make sense. That's why, in economic terms, that's nothing but scare tactics. Nobody in business will leave Québec because it's independent. When people make threats like Mr. Bronfman, it's probably because Mr. Bronfman has decided that, in five years, his business would be more profitable in the United States. He's already started doing the groundwork and he's used this argument to tell people that if Québec becomes independent, he's leaving. In 1976, he used the same scare tactics with the Expos and there, we've had to buy them. We'll probably buy his plant when he's gone.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Paré:** Looking at the briefs that have been submitted - at any rate, I'll limit myself to those we received today - there aren't many people left who defend federalism as such, the status quo at any rate. Nobody. Sovereignty has been talked about a lot, quite a lot, and the sticking point is whether there should be association and, if yes, what kind of association? Did you hear the preceding intervenor who, finally, presented the range of possibilities? One of the fears, ten years ago, was the restricted market...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have half a minute left, Mr. Paré. Perhaps a short question.

**Mr. Paré:** ...that was Canadian. Now, with free trade, we have the U.S. market. To return to my question: Compared to what you've just said and to the current agitation, do you think any sort of association with Canada would be useful?

**Mr. Duchesne (Benoit):** An association would certainly be useful. We're in a global free-trade market. I think Quebecers demonstrated that clearly in terms of the issues of the last federal election campaign, since they were in the forefront as far as free trade was concerned. I repeat that Bombardier sold to New York before Toronto. In fact, have they even sold to Toronto yet? I wonder. They signed a \$1 000 000 000 contract in New York while they couldn't even bid in Toronto. I think it's obvious that if we can do business with Canada, we'll continue to

do so, but we've got to realize that there are 250 000 000 people south of us and another 60 000 000 a bit farther south. So, if western Canada or eastern Canada aren't ready to do business with us, Ontario is interested and the United States is interested.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, we now move on to another block of 25 minutes of questions from the other members of the Commission. Mr. Beaudry to start, followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is for the Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-Hubert. I read the three briefs submitted to us with great interest, and it seems to me that your brief is less radical and less categorical than the others. Specifically, I'm not saying that you don't mention in your brief, that you don't talk about sovereignty, you certainly do, and on page 4 you say that sovereignty is necessary for us to control our political and economic energies. You then go on to add that a draft constitution, including a declaration of sovereignty, must be put forward. So, my first question is how do you think that can be offered to Quebecers?

You continue in the following paragraph by saying that, as a minimum, this draft must include the repatriation of our taxes, exclusive control over immigration, manpower, education, international trade. You start your sentence with as a minimum. Does that not imply that this could be achieved, these repatriations of jurisdiction, within, for instance, a renewed federalism or a sovereignty-association, or those powers could be deemed within Québec's exclusive jurisdiction, and the other jurisdictions left either to a federal government or subject to some form of joint jurisdiction?

**Mr. Paquette:** We certainly aren't constitutional experts, so we didn't pursue that very far in our recommendations. But the important thing for the Société nationale des Québécois was to highlight a little more concretely the specific problems we have to deal with in terms of evolution, regarding our linguistic institutions, obviously, but regarding our rights and our institutions in the broad sense of the term. When we mention a certain number of areas of jurisdiction as a minimum that, for us, are radically opposed to our social and economic development, we want to indicate the things that have harmed us most in those developments in recent times. But we don't think, for now at any rate, and that's why we didn't include it in our presentation this evening, we don't know and have no recommendation to make on the type of sovereignty Québec will need to ensure its full development.

It's sure, though, that the minimum

elements represent the minimum. And when you live with the minimum, it's quite certain that it doesn't take long for things to get out of hand because, if you recall the sixties and the Quiet Revolution of Mr. Lesage and his followers, people talked about a great upheaval that, for that time, represented the minimum elements of a restructuring toward a modern society. But we soon realized that those minimum elements were totally insufficient. Now today, in our brief, we've stressed the most vital elements. But you can be sure that, like anyone who is ambitious, we're aiming a little higher than that.

**Mr. Beaudry:** So, I wasn't wrong when I said you were less radical than the other two briefs presented to us, today at least.

**Mr. Paquette:** That's a perception.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Now, I asked you a second question. You say you offer... "must be offered to the people of Québec". How do you say that should be offered?

**Mr. Paquette:** What is absolutely essential for us and what we wanted to mention in the brief is that the people of Québec must play a very concrete part in the decision making, whether by referendum, or a referendum election method or any form of consultation whatever, provided it's democratically legitimate. We feel it is absolutely essential that the pulse of Quebecers be taken and that they take part in the decision. Otherwise, regardless of the imposed solution submitted to us, whether a kind of renewed federalism, full or partial sovereignty, in brackets or whatever you want, with or without a hyphen, I think that if the people of Québec are not fully associated with the undertaking, not just associated with an answer to be given to a short sentence, but also associated with the preparation and understanding of the issues of the entire undertaking, we won't get too far.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue now has the floor, followed by Mr. Turgeon and Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be speaking mainly to the representatives of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil.

I think your brief strikes a positive tone, a moderate tone and displays an openness to the cultural, anglophone and aboriginal minorities. That's a credit to us. Based on this statement, I would like to ask a few questions. I'll keep it short, and I'd ask you to keep your answers as brief as possible. I'd like you to explain the notion you raise on page 2: the blueprint for Québec society. How and who would write this blueprint for society? I don't want anything too

involved. Just a few broad parameters.

Then, on page 6 and page 7. On page 6, you say Québec must be able to develop its own research and development policy that meets the specific nature of our economy. On page 7, you continue with full powers in terms of management of financial resources. Don't you think you're significantly curtailing the mobility the economy must have for access to international markets? In the reality Québec is building, don't barriers have to more open rather than trying - and I don't say you are doing this - to than make them more restrictive? And finally - and this is an observation - when you look at the gouvernement du Québec's phone book, you see there are something like 28 missions of the province of Québec throughout the world. That means that Québec has been able to develop itself significantly through federalism. Please, what's your answer?

**Mr. Babin:** Significantly, but not enough, at any rate. Clearly, even if Québec has not been as present on international markets as it should be, it's obvious that we have to continue developing Québec's presence on all economic markets throughout the world. For Québec to penetrate these markets with Maisons du Québec, whether in Ontario or the United States, in Africa or in Europe, it's essential that Quebecers develop their economy on all markets. One reason why Quebecers are for free trade with the United States is that the Canadian market is not big enough. You also spoke of the blueprint for society.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes. Quickly.

**Mr. Babin:** O.K. The blueprint for society, among others, could be established... Besides, that's what we're doing at the moment with the Commission, we're establishing a blueprint for society, eventually. Whether it's established by means of a parliamentary commission, or - our preference - through estates general, it's clear that in any event, Québec society, in all its ins and outs, will have to give practical consideration to everything it will have to do in a blueprint for sovereignty.  
(8 p.m.)

**Mr. Hogue:** Just a little question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Quickly.

**Mr. Hogue:** I heard you speak in your presentation of the notion of position of strength, and position of strength equals power. So, there's a notion of power and a notion of strength. Would you explain how an independent or sovereign Québec would be stronger than a Québec that, at present, is in a Confederation? And I'm not being pejorative in asking this

question, but how do you explain that because we're sovereign, given the orders of magnitude, we'd be stronger to make use of a power that, in any event, we have?

**Mr. Brais (Réal):** I don't think it's a question of... That can be taken in a slightly wrong way. We're not trying to explain a position of strength by confrontation, but by complete possession of powers to carry out a negotiation. And I'll give you the example of an event that took place this summer. Had the gouvernement du Québec had the full power to negotiate what it wanted, what it wanted to negotiate with the aboriginal communities, the Oka crisis could not have lasted more than two or three weeks. But because we had to wait for Ottawa to make decisions that took months to reach, the crisis became more bitter. So it's in that sense that we feel the position of strength is important, in the sense that, when you have complete power to do something, you have the strength to do it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Turgeon, followed by Mr. Dufour and Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Yes. Thank you. There's one question that's of great concern to this Commission, namely how, for instance, a sovereign Québec will act in regard to its minorities. Now, since the Commission began its work, we've heard a lot about the term integration of cultural communities. I think you talk about that, at the Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil. I imagine integration as opposed to assimilation. What in fact is integration of cultural communities? That's the first question.

**Mr. Brais:** Integration of cultural communities means giving all these communities the opportunity to express their own specific natures. We find ourselves in a Québec where - in fact, we say so a little before this notion you raised - cultural communities, people, immigrants who come to Québec are faced with the choice of two language possibilities, which is an ambiguity they have to come to terms with. Here in Québec, we've always had the problem of seeing, when we promote something to build society, other groups that can come and destroy that by appealing to the federal government or the Supreme Court or things like that, to destroy what we want. We believe that if Québec were sovereign the language of communication that would then be maintained throughout the province would be French. The cultural communities established here could develop within their own specific nature, but in the realization that there is no longer a struggle between: Are we anglophone? Are we francophone? We're Quebecers, period.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Good. There's a report that says that centralization of political power does not favour the linguistic development of minorities. My conclusion is then that it's the linguistic development of minorities in their language. I conclude from this that in a sovereign Québec, you would be in favour of this development. But how do you promote that and at the same time protect French?

**Mr. Brais:** Let's say that as a sovereign state, the French language must be protected. For us, that goes without saying. We were perhaps forced to bring in things like Bill 101 and other similar legislation to try to defend ourselves in a sea of anglophones. Everyone realizes that. We're drowning in a sea of anglophones in North America, so we have to defend ourselves. If we're a sovereign state for which the language of communication with every citizen of the state is French, that language will quickly become everyone's language of communication, a major working tool.

However, the reason we have language problems in Québec is precisely the possibility of choosing either one and the confrontation that has always been maintained between the two. So, by eliminating that possibility, you allow the cultural communities to develop within their own specific nature, and to do things. After all, there are cultural communities that are already doing things. In Longueuil, there's a small Tibetan community that gives courses in Tibetan to its children and continues to nurture its culture. I think those are things that we can... and Mr. Lévesque helped that community to get started and install its school and the rest. So, I think we can do things in that sense.

Frequently, we've been accused, as francophone Quebecers, of being against the cultural communities when that's not true. We are for the French language, the defense of our language because it's threatened. But we're absolutely not against others. On the contrary, we realize they're a minority and need help. I think we're perhaps the most open to giving them the help they need.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Dufour, for the next questions.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to address Mr. Babin and I also want to underline the moderate tone of the brief and perhaps even go further and say that there are a number of items in your brief with which we agree. For instance, when you talk of occupational training and repatriation; when you speak of family policy, we also discussed that in our brief. Similarly for immigration. So there's a series of items on which we can easily agree.

We are also in full agreement in the chapter where you speak of Québec's place in

the community of nations. We obviously support as much room as possible for Québec in the international community. So much for where we agree.

We disagree mainly on economic issues, which you don't talk about much in your brief. Other briefs pay more attention to them, particularly the Saint-Hubert brief. You say that that place has to be ours alone. My question is very practical. I'm going to talk about free trade. Assuming we become independent, and Canada cancels the free trade treaty, which it can do, and Québec would have to negotiate with the United States and Mexico - because that kind of negotiation is well under way, I think - how can you think that Québec will be stronger, particularly in our soft sectors - I'm thinking of Mexico - than if we were with Canada as a whole?

**Mr. Babin:** Alone in the sense that Québec has to be master of its economic works, master of its power to decide, in terms of the things it wants to negotiate with Canada, the United States, Mexico, the rest of the planet, Europe, the European Economic Community. Alone in the sense that it is sole master of the decision it must take to develop its economy. Not alone to live, Québec won't live in isolation.

**Mr. Dufour:** You're absolutely right. I think that's settled. Obviously, we won't build a wall around Québec. When I look at Gerald Larose, I also see his negotiating power. And clearly, in the North American context, 6 000 000 is a weaker negotiating position than 25 000 000, 26 000 000. This is so regardless of our ability to negotiate agreements with other countries, because we could do that, but isn't our negotiating strength then weaker?

**Mr. Babin:** How is it weaker? Today, our negotiating strength with the rest of Canada is what it is, because there's no will to negotiate anything...

**Mr. Dufour:** No, but with the United States, for instance. If we negotiated tomorrow, on our own, a free trade treaty with Mexico, wouldn't we be weaker?

**Mr. Babin:** The free trade treaty does exist. There's no question of tearing it up or cancelling it.

**Mr. Dufour:** No, but I've asked you to put yourself in a sovereign position when, at that point, Canada could cancel it and we would have to renegotiate it. Final question, Mr. Chairman. You also speak of the environment, and you're one of the few groups to deal with that issue, the environment, and you speak of sustainable development. There again, we readily agree with

you. My question is this. Last year, we had a serious environmental problem, with what was called the PCB saga, here in Québec and, in fact, in this region. What would a sovereign Québec have done to prevent the problems we had last year? Because we had full decision-making power.

**Mr. Babin:** I don't think Québec's current constitutional status would change anything when it comes to a government's lack of will, whether independent or not, to deal with that problem, that kind of problem. I think it's more a matter of - excuse the expression - having the balls to deal with that kind of problem. It's not susceptible to a constitutional solution.

**Mr. Dufour:** No, but I can appreciate that in the case with which Mr. Bouchard is very familiar - in the case of Grande-Baleine, there are problems caused by jurisdiction. But in the case of the PCBs, there was no jurisdictional problem. So, that means we could have dealt with our problem, and we could list a whole series of problems like that.

**Mr. Babin:** The issue you raise is a government problem, not a constitutional problem.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Dufour:** That's what I wanted to hear you say.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** Mr. Chairman, what Mr. Dufour just said, on the free trade treaty, I don't think makes much difference: 6 000 000 or 25 000 000 against 250 000 000, I mean. We weren't negotiating about the number of people, but rather the ability to produce as inexpensively as possible to offer the highest quality product. You raised the economic side, and mentioned agriculture as an example, that injustices have occurred over the years. I understand. Being in the capital of the agri-food industry, you don't really have a choice. You omitted a certain number, just to remind certain members that the injustices go back to 1974, with the inequity in grains. The Crow's Nest had an enormous effect, in which the federal government, which wanted to correct a transportation problem, used agriculture because that allowed it to kill two birds with one stone, that is to diversify, allow western agriculture to diversify on the back of the eastern part of the country; the free trade battle, where we made a "melting pot" and then, the push to globalize everything without taking into account specific traits; and the GATT,

where again, we had to fight constantly to start to gain a little recognition for the specific nature of Québec agriculture.

You advocate independence. Within that option - and since you live in a region with a high agricultural production under quota, producing far more than it needs for self-sufficiency - have you looked at what would be the best approaches starting from that? Would it be discussions to try to reach accommodations with as they say East-West, or North-South? With Canada or look more to future North-South trade?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** I think that, first of all, in an independent Québec, the first thing to do would be to define exactly in terms of agriculture what we, what sector we want to maintain, check our priorities at that point, our needs, and then see who our best economic partners would be in agriculture as such. That's clear. That's one thing we can do once we're sovereign, that we can't do when others are negotiating for us. And you're in a better position than me to know that.

**Mr. Duchesne:** I think we already export carrots to the United States. The Americans certainly enjoy better weather, you can't deny that. But when I see the fiddling of the rules at federal level - as you mentioned earlier for western agriculture diversification - I say that as far as negotiating goes, we wouldn't be much worse off afterwards than at present. I think it's better if you negotiate with two arms in front of you than with one arm behind your back.

**Mr. Proulx:** Yes, but the question I am asking, do you, in the work you do - for you do a certain amount of work, you look, you do more than merely advocate the independence of Québec you look around you to see how, the adjustments and so on - is it a matter of concern to you at present to look at such factors just the same? They are extremely important for dairy production. For example, in your region, this is a very large industry. And certain other operations that are subject to quotas at the moment. We produce 140 % of Québec's consumer needs. So, is that of concern to you at the moment? Or have you not yet looked very specifically at how we could... In the event of a referendum, if people approved it, if it were put in place, it could not be done within a month. But have you even looked, begun to look at that? Undertaken studies at least to reassure the people around, in your region, in the area you cover?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** We, what we advocate in an independent Québec is obviously a very strong agricultural sector, because, if people cannot feed themselves, there will be hardships. If

people are within the range of another country's agriculture, they will pay dearly at that time if the Americans have a monopoly and there is no more agriculture in Québec. Of course, that will have economic repercussions, whether we like it or not.

(9 p.m.)

Then there is a price to be paid to preserve agriculture in Québec. As far as conducting studies is concerned, I think we would rather leave that to specialists like you, who are in the field, and know what you must develop in agriculture, in the agricultural sphere that will be profitable both for those who push it and those who have to receive that agricultural service. But one thing is definite and that is, for us, agriculture in Québec is of the utmost importance.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now we'll go on to the last group of questions, those of the Government party. Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mr. Chairman. My questions are addressed to the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil and the SNQ de Saint-Hubert, and my colleague, the MNA for Richelieu, will query the SNQ de Richelieu-Yamaska.

First, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil and others, which includes the author of the briefs, and the Association du Parti québécois de Taillon, the Association du Parti québécois de Marie-Victorin, whose MNAs, both women, are present (we are well represented in Montérégie), and the Société d'histoire de Longueuil. I should first like to congratulate you, Mr. Babin and Mr. Brais, on speaking about the environment. A little bit like what Mr. Dufour said... because I think it is inevitable. From now on, the question of sustainable development should be part of our thinking, whether we are discussing economics, social issues or the constitution. You caught my attention, more specifically on page 3, when you say that the concerted action of the people of a sovereign Québec in searching for a way to live together may thus lead to the establishment of guarantees in linguistic and educational matters for the English community. This afternoon, one of the representatives of the Association des anglophones pour un Québec indépendant told us that in his view he would go so far as to entrench the rights of the Anglophone minority in the constitution.

My first question on the subject is: Are you in agreement with entrenching the rights of the Anglophone minority in a future Québec constitution and, if so, I will ask the question already asked by my colleague Mr. Brassard: would that not undermine the primary objective of Bill 101, which was to protect the French face of Québec, establish French in every sector, in education, at work, and so on? I should like

perhaps to hear Mr. Brais on the issue.

**Mr. Brais:** Yes, thank you, Mrs. Pelchat. Whether or not it should be entrenched in the constitution is perhaps a formula that could be applicable precisely to give the Anglophone minority of Québec the assurance that it will still be able to develop freely and autonomously in a sovereign Québec. We are not, at the outset, for or against that formulation. We, as we said at the beginning of our brief, did not advocate any formulation such as how we should do things like that. We dealt rather with broad, general ideas.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** But when you say, Mr. Brais, that we would perhaps talk about establishing guarantees in linguistic and educational matters, when we speak of guaranteeing minority rights, if they are not entrenched in the constitution, they are at least included in the Charter of rights and freedoms?

**Mr. Brais:** I continue my answer. If the governments in place, the people who are at that time the decision-makers of society, decide after consultation...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I want your opinion, Mr. Brais, I want to have your own opinion.

**Mr. Brais:** My personal opinion.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Yes.

**Mr. Brais:** Ah! You want to have my own personal opinion. Mine, that of Réal Brais, and not that of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** No, you represent the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, the Parti québécois in Taillon, the Parti québécois in Marie-Victorin...

**Mr. Brais:** That's right, so it is in that sense that...

**Mrs. Pelchat:** ...the Société d'histoire de Longueuil.

**Mr. Brais:** ...I will answer you, madam. We are not telling the Commission how it should do things or how a government should do things, as such. On the other hand, we are saying that they should see to it that the rights and freedoms of the Anglophone community are adequately protected.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you.

**Mr. Brais:** There is probably a better way than enshrining it in the Constitution. We still don't know what that will be. The future is not

clear to us.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mr. Paquette, I would like to hear your comments on this question because I know we've already had discussions, notably on Bill 178, that infamous Bill 178 which allowed half of all signs to be bilingual.

**Mr. Paquette:** For the Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-Hubert, the protection of minority rights, be they Anglophone or rights of any kind, that certainly goes without saying, and the draft constitution submitted to the Québec people should somehow provide for this protection, in an adequate way; and my opinion on "an adequate way" ties up with my colleague Brails; but I am not in a position to say what the most adequate way would be. In any case, it would allow minorities to see their right to education, their right to health, their right to freedom of expression acknowledged.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** OK. I interrupt you there as well, Mr. Paquette. I simply wanted to tell you that the Commission des droits de la personne told us almost two weeks ago that if we proceeded in such a way, by referring to a brief of 1980, we could not, in that case, forbid the posting of bilingual signs in Québec, precisely because these rights would have been recognized, particularly if they were enshrined in the constitution. Are you telling me that, in that case, in an independent Québec, you would be in favour of bilingual signs?

**Mr. Paquette:** Well, listen. There are a certain number of, how shall I say, prerequisites that should be insisted on. Certainly, in an independent Québec in which the French language, in which the French character of the people is clearly identifiable, in which there is no risk of this being overturned, Québec's policy should be the same as that of all the European countries, in any case. In situations where legislation puts restrictions on a certain number of elements, on individual freedoms, in quotation marks, it is done to counteract a real danger of extinction, of assimilation, and so on. Within the present federated system, our language, as was said in our brief, is very clearly threatened. Precautions must therefore be taken, or real measures that go beyond one element or one milieu, so that the realities surrounding us present no threat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Very well.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Khelifa, a last round of questions.

**Mr. Khelifa:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to point out that the brief of the Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-

Yamaska is a very interesting one. Most of all because it links the cultural aspect to economic dimensions, which I find very pertinent and very interesting. I congratulate you on your presentation.

You will allow me, as a follow-up to that, to dwell for a moment on the economic dimensions of profitable federalism. (power fallure)

Well, I will speak louder. I hope it stays.

I said I wanted to dwell for a moment on the economic dimensions of profitable federalism and unprofitable federalism that you mention. Certainly, in my capacity as MNA from the Comté de Richelieu, I am following, you will understand, the issue of shipbuilding with great interest. I am somewhat surprised at the factual errors contained in your brief.

If you will allow me... I know that my friends in the Opposition will acknowledge that I know the issue very well... on page 19...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Khelifa:** Well yes. Did you speak? Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please, Mr. Khelifa.

**Mr. Khelifa:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to stress that on page 19, you allude to a submarine contract in 1987. After checking with the firm and here and there, I found out that the contract concerned frigates, not submarines. And it was in 1983. So no connection can be made between this contract and Meech Lake. My question does not deal with this; it is only an observation. You mention here that there was a loss of 3200 jobs as a result of that. If I have understood correctly, shipyards such as MIL Tracy have always survived on federal government contracts. If I have understood correctly, you can affirm that, at the time when there were more than 5000 jobs, 5000 workers at MIL Tracy for the Ottawa contract... Can you affirm that at that time federalism was profitable?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** There is one thing that I will affirm first of all. It is what you, who know the issue so well, have found out about it. You should have understood that, at that time, frigates, not submarines were involved. What I can tell you about it is that, in regard to frigates, Manitoba...

**Mr. Khelifa:** So there is no connection. If frigates were involved, then there is no connection with Meech Lake?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** No, not with frigates, with submarines. With frigates, yes, because at that

time... It was in 1987 that this happened.

**Mr. Khelifa:** No, sir, it was in 1983.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** Is that so?

**Mr. Khelifa:** Yes.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** But why was it stated in the Friday, November 20, 1987 issue of Montréal's *La Presse* that Québec had known since the summer that Saint-John had been chosen?

**Mr. Khelifa:** Check the signature on the contract.

**Mr. Desrosiers:** But check your notes, too.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I remind you that, however important the dates are, time is passing and is almost up, Mr. Khelifa.

**Mr. Khelifa:** A second question, Mr. Desrosiers. You are, of course, thinking of the constitution of a sovereign Québec. In your opinion, in the constitution of a sovereign Québec, is the Charter of human rights and freedoms a charter of individual rights and freedoms or one of collective rights and freedoms? Which would you protect, individual or collective rights?

**Mr. Desrosiers:** A question like that one could drown a fish, if I may say so.

**Mr. Khelifa:** That depends on the answer, Mr. Desrosiers.

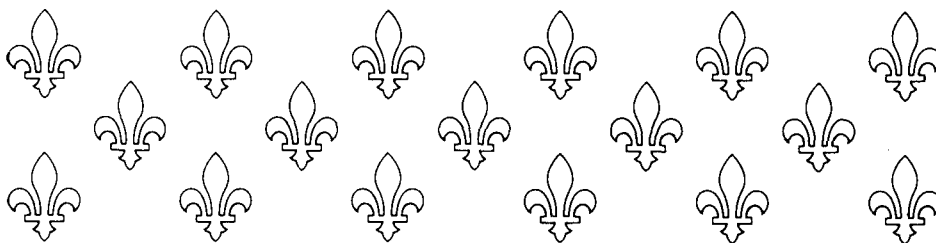
**Mr. Desrosiers:** Individual rights must never prevail over collective rights. So, on that basis... I am not a constitutional expert; there are people who are in a better position than I am to draft one. However, what I can tell you is that a charter of human rights and freedoms is still a charter of rights. We use it as we wish. There are always holes, traps in it that people, cunning lawyers, will be able to find. There will always be an improvement to be made, depending on the cases to be presented. Then which do we favour? We favour one that is going to emancipate Québec in regard to language, that is going to protect language and that will not enable others, through a collective right, to encroach on a right of the Francophone majority.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Ladies and gentlemen, we have used up our time for today, unfortunately or fortunately as the case may be. First, I want to thank the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil and the others, the Société nationale des Québécois de Saint-

Hubert, the Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-Yamaska, Mr. Brais, Mr. Babin, Mr. Desrosiers, Mr. Duchesne, Mr. Paquette and Mrs. Desjardins for their presentations this evening.

In conclusion, I think it would also be appropriate to thank all the people from the Montérégie region who have come before us today. This is our only day in the region, our first day outside the main urban centres, and it has been fruitful. I remind the members of the Commission that we resume our work tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. in Montréal at Le Windsor, and the members of the Steering Committee that they resume their work at 8 a.m. Thank you and good evening.

(End of sitting, 9:13 p.m.)



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# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



**COMMISSION ON THE POLITICAL  
AND CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE  
OF QUÉBEC**

**Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau**

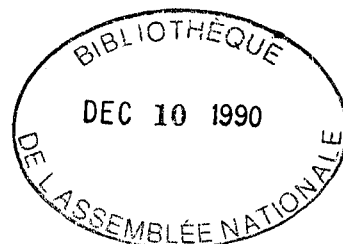
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- \* Mr. Pierre Pâquet, idem
- \* Mrs. Nicole Boily, idem
- \* Mrs. Madeleine Blais, idem
- \* Mr. Claude Lemay, YMCA
- \* Mr. Marcel Côté, idem
  
- \* Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Montréal, Wednesday, November 21, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations and One Individual

(9:38 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen, I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May I remind you of the Commission's mandate, which is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon.

Today's sitting will be devoted to hearing various groups and one individual who submitted a brief to the Commission. The agenda is: we will begin with the Association des économistes du Québec, for an hour; at 10:30 a.m., the Association des notaires de Laval, for 30 minutes; at 11:00 a.m., the Canadian Centre for Architecture, also for 30 minutes; at 11:30 a.m., the Congrès hellénique du Québec; at noon, the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India (Montréal Chapter); at 2:00 p.m., the Conseil québécois du théâtre; at 3:00 p.m., the Executive Committee of the Equality Party; at 4:00 p.m., André de B. Leprohon; at 4:30 p.m., the Fédération des CLSC; at 7:00 p.m., the Mouvement national des Québécois; at 8:00 p.m., the Canadian Institute of Adult Education and, finally, at 9:00 p.m., the YMCA. As you can see, we have a full day ahead of us.

Our first sitting is the Association des économistes du Québec and will last an hour; I will read the rules for one-hour briefs. Our guests have 10 minutes to present their brief, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, and 25 minutes for members registered with the Chair, each of whom are entitled to a maximum of 5 minutes. And finally, 5 minutes for the Chair.

Mr. Claude E. Forget, if you would be so good as to introduce your colleagues and present your brief.

**Association des économistes du Québec**

**Mr. Forget (Claude E.):** Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. I would first like to thank you on behalf of ASDEQ and on behalf of its members, particularly the committee who drafted our brief for this hearing. As the chairman of this sitting indicated, my name is Claude E. Forget. I am this year's president of the Association des économistes du Québec and also, as perhaps you may know, vice-president of The Laurentian Group Corporation. I have with me John McCallum, an economist and director of the McGill University economics department, and Pierre Fortin, an economist and professor at UQAM and director of the Centre d'étude sur les politiques économiques.

The brief that has been submitted to you was prepared by a committee formed at the end of the summer and composed of the following people: Léon Courville, Marie-Josée Drouin, Pierre Fortin, John McCallum, André Raynauld and Norman Wale. Unfortunately, in general - I believe, in every case, without exception - a full schedule has kept the other committee members from being here this morning to take part in the hearing of our brief. They asked us to convey their apologies to the Commission. ASDEQ is a voluntary association, with a membership of approximately 300, which has been in existence for about 15 years. When your Commission was formed, we immediately asked ourselves whether we should prepare a brief and, if so, what significance it would have.

This morning I want to stress how our brief should be interpreted and, above all, how it should not be interpreted. A voluntary association of some 300 persons necessarily includes individuals with widely differing personal inclinations. That situation is common, I believe, to most associations of whatever nature. Consequently, we asked ourselves the question: Was it possible for such an association, without splitting up or provoking interminable debates, to say something useful to your Commission on the matters under your consideration?

I think that it is obvious, from our brief, that the committee, like the board of directors of the Association, did not wish to express an opinion, in a direct way, as to the main options you are considering. We regret that since, to a certain extent, it is going to make your task perhaps more difficult, or less difficult, depending on one's point of view. But clearly our goal is not to encourage the Commission to go in any particular direction with regard to the major political options. However, we were struck by the fact that much of this debate, now and in the past, has consisted of argumentation of an economic nature. And we asked ourselves the question: Is it possible for people of one profession to understand or try to understand our economy? Is it possible for such a group, despite the numerous different tendencies and leanings existing within the group, to agree on the interpretation to be given to its arguments and its concerns, which are, I might add, legitimate ones, and widely recognized as such. So that is the interpretation to be given to the observations contained in our brief as well as the comments we are going to make this morning in reply to your questions. I have nothing to add by way of introduction except to ask first John then Pierre to add a few words to my presentation. Pierre?

**Mr. Fortin (Pierre):** In a few words, I

believe that the central message of the ASDEQ brief is to say that, in the medium and long term, for all practical purposes, whatever constitutional future Quebecers may decide to map out for themselves, we must look to the future with confidence. We have decided, John McCallum and I, to share the task of dealing, on the one hand, in my case, with the future in the medium and long term, and in his case, with the questions of transition during the constitutional adjustment phase involving Québec and Canada. From my point of view, there are three main reasons for which a change in Québec's constitutional future would, in the long run, have relatively little impact on the economic performance of our province or region. The first reason is that the progress of the Québec economy in the past two decades has been quite remarkable, first in terms of narrowing the productivity gap separating us from the rest of Canada – for in the last 20 years, we have made up about two-thirds of the productivity lag we had – and second, in terms of a certain number of indicators. For example, there are reports that tell us that 27 of the best performing business firms in Canada, the fastest growing ones, are in Québec; that, in Québec, as a Price Waterhouse report said just recently, the business sector accounts for a larger share of total research and development activities than is the case anywhere else in Canada. Everyone also knows that financial innovation in Canada came first and foremost, in the 1980s, from the financial firms and the financial circles of Québec.

There remains, of course, the employment dimension to be improved, but as Québec completes its transition towards a productivity level comparable to that of the rest of North America, employment should normally follow.

The second reason to be confident in the future, whatever Québec's constitutional future may be, is that, in today's world, economic boundaries increasingly transcend political boundaries, largely because of, first, the near-total freedom with which capital moves across political borders, and second, because of the existence of bilateral and multilateral treaties which have brought trade barriers between political boundaries down from their previous levels of 40 % to 50 % to no more than a mere 5 % or so.

And finally, there is virtually no correlation between a country's size and its living standard. If you take the 24 member countries of the OECD, the correlation is exactly 0.08, which is about zero.

The third reason for which constitutional change must be viewed this time with confidence is that most Quebecers, regardless of their personal political choices, are of the opinion that Canadian economic federalism no longer works very well. Others go so far as to say that it has

been an economic failure.

There are a number of reasons for that. I will mention only four very briefly. The first reason is that federal finances are completely out of control and most of the businesspeople with whom I've worked recently are of the opinion – they even go much further; they're a bit radical – that Canada is in the process of becoming another Argentina. Now that is obviously not only a Québec problem but a Canadian one as well.

The second reason is the monetary instability that federal policies are creating for the whole country, including Québec. When you have the Canadian currency swinging from US \$0.65 to US \$0.88 within the space of 10 months, it becomes extremely difficult for our business firms to plan international expansions, particularly expansions to the United States, because sharp changes in the exchange rate can erase overnight years and years of sustained effort to raise productivity.

The last point I wish to make is that there are some rather incredible overlappings in the various sectors of economic policy, including those which affect mainly business firms, such as research and development, and manpower. Finally, in conclusion, things have reached the point where the Sun – Les Affaires survey published last May in *Les Affaires* revealed that, four to one, Québec's businesspeople said that, in a politically independent Québec, the Québec economy would turn in a better performance. I think that "the gang" is going a bit too far. As you know, businesspeople are fairly emotional people who get carried away by their enthusiasm; to say, four to one, that Québec is going to perform better under independence than under the current system, let's say that it indicates that they are so deeply concerned about the future of the present economic federalism that they are prepared to go to very considerable lengths to improve the situation.

In short, the message I believe the brief is sending is that all constitutional options are open: from an economic standpoint, we could easily live with some form of renewed federalism or with a form of independence that would, of course, entail normal economic ties with our Canadian partners.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. McCallum, you have about one and a half minutes left.

**Mr. Forget:** I request the Commission's indulgence for two and a half minutes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** It's a deal.

**Mr. Forget:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. McCallum (John):** O.K. I would like to use the two minutes allowed me to focus on just one question. At the time of major changes to our constitution, it is unlikely that the rule of plain economic common sense will apply. By economic common sense, I mean the logic according to which people or governments will never act in a way that will be disadvantageous to them economically. In real life, it is obvious that economic common sense or logic is not always the determining factor. If that were the case, there would never be any strikes or wars. And yet, strikes and wars do exist, even though everyone would be better off avoiding them. It seems to me that in order to preserve economic common sense, the following three conditions are fundamental: a willingness to cooperate; a good knowledge of the intentions and resources of the other party involved; and problems to resolve which are simple. In this case, I would venture to suggest that it is these very three conditions that would not be met. First and foremost, I believe that many Canadians are deeply attached to the notion of a continental country from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and that, when the rest of the country suddenly realizes that Québec is actually considering "Pakistanizing" Canada, it could react with anger and hostility. And that would create, without a doubt, the worst atmosphere imaginable for the negotiations to follow on a number of issues which are both highly complex and contentious, such as territorial problems, the apportionment of the federal debt, etc. Such negotiations would, at best, be long and difficult and would become almost impossible if the general atmosphere developed into one of distrust.

It would be extremely dangerous and even naïve to assume that the economic costs will be low, simply because it is in everyone's interest that they be low. Therefore, I think that we agree — Pierre, Claude and I — that the long-range prospects for an independent Québec are very favourable, but it is the transition problems that would probably pose major economic problems for us. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. McCallum. We shall now move on to the period reserved for comments and questions and will begin with Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your brief indicates that this shouldn't be an economic debate, it shouldn't be a balance sheet or anything that balances, because, on either side, figures can be interpreted. However, as we read further on in the brief, we realize that, in the end, whether we like it or not, we are obliged to evaluate certain things, and that translates into dollars and cents. On page 5, you mention the production problems we have in Québec. Further on you say, on page 10: It's a

golden rule of interdependence with other states, with the other provinces. On page 12 there is an important passage where you say that Québec is four times more dependent on the other provinces.

Finally — and there are more examples I could cite — you speak at the end, and that is where you say... between the supposed power of communication or power that we would have to negotiate with the other parties, that rationality would perhaps not apply, that is, in the end, the other provinces, the federal State are going to sit down with us, that they can't dispense with Québec, whereas you seem to say, and it's interesting, the way you put it: "When two or more parties find themselves in a situation — I'm reading on page 40 — where the result of the strategic choices of each depends in part on the behaviour of the others, rationality, or, if you like, ordinary common sense, takes on two entirely different meanings. This proposition, which has almost the value of a theorem, is most often illustrated by the prisoners' dilemma".

In one case, to simplify, you say that, in the end, he who is going to seem to gain the most is the one who is probably going to want to throw the most weight into the negotiations, and when one considers what you say — that Québec is four times more dependent on the other provinces in terms of its exports and imports and that we have been told, Gentlemen, for several days that we are defining Québec's self-determination and we will negotiate after... If I read your document, what I think, which is why I point it out, is that it won't be so easy after if we haven't been able to do it before, and do you have a solution that would enable us at that time to, as you say, try and come to an agreement. I do think that is the message you want to get across to us: Try and come to an agreement; that's still the best thing to do. Perhaps I'm mistaken but in previous paragraphs you seem to indicate that.

There's the dilemma. But if we do it before, we are going to have to have negotiations of some kind if we nevertheless want to define a new constitution for Québec. But how do we manage it? What suggestions do you have for the Commission that might be helpful? It's a long preamble for one question, but I tried to summarize your brief.

**Mr. Forget:** Listen, what is taking place here right now is clearly, from a global Canadian perspective, one of the world's best kept secrets. And that is rather strange. We can see the television cameras here; we read in our newspapers daily reports of what you have done and what has been discussed before your Commission. Therefore, here in Québec, it is easy to believe that everyone is well informed about what is happening, but that's not true. The amazing thing is that, outside Québec and

even in certain segments of public opinion in Québec, all this will possibly turn out to be a huge surprise. There is an evolution that you have observed in your proceedings which, again, will come as a tremendous surprise to our current and future negotiating partners, whatever political options you may agree on. Machiavelli once said: One is always ill-advised to take the sovereign by surprise. In the democratic context in which we live, the sovereign is the public, the voters, if you like. Clearly that public, outside of Québec, may well be tremendously surprised by what is now taking place within these walls.

You ask for suggestions. The first thing to do is to reduce the degree of surprise, to inform, and to be aware that, in the context that we all experienced a few months ago, the context of the Meech Lake debate, we could all see that there is not too much generosity in the air; the absence of generosity added to surprise makes a pretty explosive mixture. It's a risk. John has described the nature of the risk but, without going into further detail, is it possible to manage the risk? It is possible to minimize it, there are efforts which must be made to minimize it and, once again, whatever option you decide on, it will not be enough to simply declare it in order for it to become a reality. That transition, whatever it may be, must be managed; preliminary steps must be taken; and, provided we are able to assume this responsibility, we can be more or less optimistic.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Forget. I would point out to the other members that there are several persons who would like to ask questions. So perhaps the preamble could be shorter, unless your question is an important one, in order that we may give Mr. Forget time to reply. Mr. Bouchard is next, then Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. This is a brief that can be looked at in different ways. On the one hand, one can read indications that, yes, sovereignty is possible; it is a matter of being prudent; we must do it right; it's all in how you go about it. It's a different brief one can read from the angle: Be careful; don't you go trusting the Anglophones of English Canada because they are not going to give away anything to you; on the contrary, they will not be rational; even if it would be in their own interest to negotiate with Québec after in order to make acceptable arrangements, it is possible and maybe even probable that they will not do it. Therefore, as I see it, there are practically two briefs in this brief. And I would like to talk about this assumption that one cannot base a political decision, at this time, on the expectation that English Canada will react in a rational manner. It would be a strange and vicious syllogism to

say, wouldn't it...

Anyway, let me know what you think, and here I am getting into noneconomic factors, because I agree with you that there will be a lot of noneconomic factors. It shows a strange attitude to say, "They have just said no to Meech; they were not very generous — we really weren't asking for very much — but as they are going to be still less generous if we decide to become a sovereign State, we must not do it". There is something a bit skewed about that reasoning, which condemns us to a sort of political inertia, a kind of paralysis that I would describe as a paralysis marked by fear, pure and simple.

**Mr. Forget:** The conclusion that you suggest is yours. That is not what we say in the brief. In the brief, we say that here is a situation which is, as we see it, a de facto situation. Forget the arguments or the use of these facts as an argument for or against a particular option. The fact remains that this reality deserves to be respected. One can respect it by deciding to carry on regardless. In everyday life, we do it all the time. We are advised that there is such and such a cost, such and such a consequence and we decide that, in spite of everything, it is worth it. Therefore, saying that there is a risk, that there are ties of interdependence, does not necessarily or directly imply any particular conclusion. But it would also be, in my opinion, reprehensible to say, "Because we favour such and such an option, there is a reality which exists nonetheless, and we must put it out of our minds".

What we are doing is quite simply calling to mind that yes, there are some very positive elements in Québec's evolution: there are factors of strength; there are factors of confidence in the future which Pierre has dealt with briefly and could expand on. These are real elements but we must not believe either that all is for the best in the best of possible worlds, that everything is easy, that there are no obstacles, because that would be an illusion.

The conclusions one draws will depend essentially on the objectives that are not of an economic nature. We maintain — and I think that it is easy enough to reach agreement on this point — that the proposals for a changed political status are not aimed at modifying or improving the functioning of the economy as such. That is not their aim. So much the better if they could have that effect, too bad to a certain extent, and that is a question to evaluate if they had an opposite effect, but that is not their aim. Theirs is a different aim and it is in terms of these other objectives that the decisions will be made. That is what we were saying.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Do I have 30 seconds left?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** One minute, Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** O.K. Mr. Forget, in the brief, there is also a postulate that is expressed, which is that, in the end, what will matter the most is not so much the nature of the objective to be attained as the means that will be employed to reach it. I would like to know, in your view, what these means will be. You say we must be cautious. Of course, but beyond that general term, what would be the sort of means that would enable the objective of sovereignty, for example, to be realized?

**Mr. Forget:** I indicated, in reply to Mr. Poissant's question, that, without a doubt, a broader segment of public opinion in Canada should very soon be made aware of what is taking place. But I think that if we try and look a little farther ahead, it is difficult to outline a scenario but it seems that a certain degree of decision, if you like, is necessary. We are going through a debate which has occupied all of our adult lives, all those who are around this table. There must, at some point, be a certain indication that things are heading in a foreseeable direction and that we know exactly where we stand and that we are determined to carry the operation through to a successful conclusion. I believe that there is a time for prolonging the uncertainty, for speculating on every possibility imaginable, but there is also a time for something a bit more solid, a bit more decisive.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dufour, then Mr. Proulx and Mr. Bédard. Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Fortin summarized the brief very well, I think, when he concluded with the statement that the Association des économistes says it can easily live with a form of renewed federalism that remains undefined or with sovereignty-association. I would like you to tell me if my interpretation of your reply is correct. Moreover, I have the impression that you tend to favour the renewed federalism option. And I refer to your last paragraph which generally contains the true gist of one's message. I will read it to you: "Undoubtedly, Québec can impose its option unilaterally if its population is so determined - I think everyone agrees on that point - but it must also be aware that this way of going about it will, at the same time, determine the cost and, in this context, the cost could be high". If the cost is so high, in that case, do we not have, *a priori*, some sort of choice?

**Mr. Forget:** Listen, at least a choice of the way to achieve this. Once again - I feel a bit

like a broken record - this sort of transition is very difficult to achieve and avoid all damage. But take any problem; there are ways of solving it which are more acceptable than others.

**Mr. Dufour:** But the cost would be high?

**Mr. Forget:** It could be. If we lose interest - which seems to me to be somewhat the case - if we lose interest in managing this transition, because our attention is fixed on the final, long-term objective, it could be high. It could be much lower if, on the contrary, we give this problem the attention it deserves. But I don't think I've heard many discussions or concerns about these transition difficulties.

**Mr. Dufour:** Perhaps a short question for Mr. Fortin. When you make your assessment of Québec's situation today, which is a very positive assessment - I think we all share that opinion; it was mentioned in the opening statements - do you agree that the current positive situation is due in part to the Canadian system?

**Mr. Fortin:** Most certainly. Especially in the period when the trade barriers around Canada were 40 % or more. It is obvious that having a larger economic space than we could have had if we had been, for instance, in 1945, in Québec City, has helped us enormously. However, the questions of the Commission address the future and our position is this: For the future, the dismantling of tariff barriers and, to an increasing extent, non-tariff barriers between countries means that, in a sense, whether we participate politically in the Canadian economic unit is less important now than it was several decades ago. And it's the same with all countries. Moreover, this is not at all unrelated to the fact that, at this time, there is a rise in nationalisms that want to express themselves, in a large number of countries, even very advanced ones.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I get the impression, when I read your brief, that you are saying that Québec's constitutional status will not matter much since, because of globalization or, in any case, wider open borders, we are going to be almost entirely dependent on this phenomenon of wider open borders. It's a bit like being born on the wrong side of the tracks.

But I have three short questions. The first is: Do you not have the impression that the

exorbitant cost of the present duplicate structure is in fact too high and that perhaps we had better see if it wouldn't be advisable to modify that substantially?

The second is why, in your brief, do you confuse economic union - perhaps the current east-west trade - with the virtues of federalism? And the third is a comment and, at the same time, a question: If we carry your reasoning to the limit, does that mean that because of market globalization - I come back to that because you brought it up and also because it is a reality, I agree - we no longer need any government, that it would perhaps be preferable to just have multilateral structures that would be responsible for overseeing the rules that we would have established?

**Mr. Forget:** We must be careful - my colleagues will be able to add their comments, of course - we must be careful not to... I am referring to your assertion that because of globalization, we would no longer need any government - I'm sorry, but we are no closer to that state of affairs. O.K.? There is no... it's going a bit far to say that governments have become completely unnecessary, since there are other elements in life besides the economy.

Even in that field, in any case, we must avoid, I would almost say, stereotyping. It is clear that what we see currently taking place in Europe, for example, does not make nation states completely outmoded, but their importance is diminishing, relatively speaking, compared to the role they played in the postwar period, when they were dominated by a very strong interventionist philosophy, where each country had or developed rival industrial policies based strictly on national considerations, whereas today you have a system where, in a great number of fields, the directives of the European Commission can be found word for word in national legislation.

(10:15 a.m.)

Therefore, clearly there is a major change in the importance - it bears repeating - in the importance of nation states. They have not disappeared for all that. They remain, in certain respects, significant, and the interventionist philosophy which has guided them in such areas as the European agricultural policy that we are hearing a lot about these days shows that they have not vanished. I don't know if that answers your question, but we do not intend to demonstrate that states have become insignificant. But they are less important than they were and it is not clear what significance this has at the political level. They are less important, consequently, sovereignty movements - as in Québec's case, for example - are more possible, it's true, but are also deprived of part of their content.

**Mr. Proulx:** But you don't have the impression that... Let's take your word "sovereignty" - we can use others, because there are several - why could that not evolve in the same direction as economies are evolving at the present time? If economies have evolved in recent years precisely in order to adapt to these new phenomena - and, during our discussion, personally I wish people would reason the same way for the other points related to this - why could sovereignty, or autonomy for that matter, not evolve in the same way, at the same pace, as economies and economic rules are evolving? Because the rules are evolving! If they don't evolve, we are soon going to be in quite a fix. We will have merely transferred outmoded economic rules that have caused problems in restructuring countries, as you say, and that we have experienced since the postwar period. If we transfer them to the international level, we will not have corrected anything. It will only become an even bigger negative factor.

Do you not have the impression that all that could evolve at once? And that to adapt to these different ideas...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Forget, you have just enough time to say yes or no.

**Mr. Forget:** I'll leave it to Mr. Fortin to reply.

**Mr. Fortin:** I would like, Mr. Co-chairman, simply to say: There are nevertheless trends within globalization. There are also trends towards smaller business firms. Technologies are much more flexible now and that allows... In the past, we thought that multinationals were our salvation and now we think that it is the small and medium-sized firms that are our salvation, and not only in Québec. The same applies in the public sector. One of the most important assets for a country to have at the present time is the social cohesion of its economic partners. And you see Germany, Japan, Sweden, etc. which are countries with a very high level of social cohesion.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Béland. Mr. Béland, excuse me but...

**Mr. Béland:** I'm going to ask a question that may seem hypothetical, but we have to make many assumptions here. I want to talk about currency and my question is directed more specifically to Mr. Fortin.

If, because of bad feelings in the rest of Canada, we had to adopt a Québec currency, I'd appreciate hearing your comments. In your brief, you say, like many others by the way, that Québec is in a trade surplus position with its deliveries of manufactured goods, in short we

have a positive trade balance. Others have told us that Québec's savings rate is higher than that of Canada and that its savings pool in relation to its gross domestic product is greater than that of Canada as a whole. Since price and cost changes favour us, compared to the rest of Canada, do you not think these elements are a basis for confidence in an eventual Québec currency? And second, it seems to me I've seen studies that demonstrated that if we'd had our own currency during the last ten years, its value would have been higher than the Canadian dollar. Can you reply to that?

**Mr. Fortin:** I can't speak for all the members of ASDEQ here though, of the 300, perhaps 158 are former students of mine. But, like Freud, maybe they want to kill their father. What I want to say, quite simply, is that generally, members of the ASDEQ, like other economic speakers here, believe it would be preferable to maintain a common currency with the rest of Canada. However, the fundamental principle isn't to have a common currency, but a stable currency. And currency stability has to take priority over currency community. And from that point of view, I think the most serious option Québec could adopt would be to say that, yes, we want to maintain a common currency with the rest of Canada, provided the Canadian dollar stabilizes in relation to the key currency for world trade which is the U.S. dollar zone.

**Mr. Béland:** If not...

**Mr. Fortin:** Excuse me?

**Mr. Béland:** My question is, if that isn't the case?

**Mr. Fortin:** OK. If not, comma, ha, ha, ha! I don't see any problem in adopting a Québec currency. That's always been the view among Québec economists, except for a delicate transition period that would involve establishing confidence. Establishing confidence would mean simply pegging the exchange rate of the Québec dollar in relation to the Canadian or U.S. dollar, as the case may be. Québec economists have always thought that was the case and I think it's true. Since a prophet is never accepted in his own land, and I can mention studies from outside Québec such as the one by Professor Laidler, of the C.D. Howe Institute, or that of the former governor of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Mr. Heller, that have shown that of the 80 countries with a large trading partner, Canada was one of the three, I believe, along with the Philippines and Nigeria, that does not have a fixed exchange rate with its major trading partner. So, I don't think there would be a problem... There would certainly be a transitional period to establish confidence in the currency

but, of course... and people's savings, large or small, wouldn't be in danger, provided the exchange rate system is rigorously applied, fixed exchange rate.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is that it, Mr. Béland?

**Mr. Béland:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Fortin makes good use of the Chair's time. Mrs. Rosette Côté, there are 15 seconds, 15 for your question and 15 for Mr. Fortin.

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes, quickly. I found it interesting that you demystify the importance of determining the choice of economy in Québec's option. I think that's interesting. You say finally that under either status, there is the same room to manoeuvre, but you mention the attitude of the other provinces. Yet, on page 31, you say that Québec draws more from the federal kitty than the other provinces. So, it would stand to benefit by letting us go because it would have more. However, if I were to take part in a negotiation as you describe, what conditions would be necessary to negotiate the difficult thing with the rest of Canada, in other words the distinct character or what people in the theatre call the unique character of Québec, if you exclude a taste for economic performance? You've said nothing, nothing at all about that distinct character.

**Mr. Forget:** Yes, in fact it's beyond our mandate and I'm not sure I understand the nature of the question. I don't know how you'd negotiate the distinct character. I don't know what you mean.

**Mrs. Côté:** That's what Meech Lake was about, wasn't it?

**Mr. Forget:** Yes. So, you mean negotiating an institutional recognition of a political objective like that. I don't know how you'd negotiate that. All we're trying to do here, is that regardless of the choices made in that regard, once again, there is no absolutely clear prescription in economic terms that a particular political structure is needed to save the economy, in quotation marks. However, once again - sorry if I'm repeating myself - there are significant transition problems. My impression is that we often talk about transition problems to say that, yes, yes, it's a detail that we'll deal with at an appropriate time...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The rules force me to interrupt you here. Excuse me.

We now move on to the parliamentary group forming the Government. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Forget, Mr. Fortin, Mr. McCallum, thank you for appearing before us today. You have submitted a very good brief, which I would describe in the first place as realistic, and also wise, I'd say. You refer a number of times to the recommendations of the brief of the Chambre de commerce du Québec, and I think you're absolutely right. The reference is very interesting. It's one of the very good briefs we've received. In your brief, you say that caution is needed in choosing a new constitutional status because we have to protect Quebecers' economic security. You say we need to be cautious because Québec's economic development has to be protected. But a few sentences in your brief really struck me. The first was raised by Mr. Poissant earlier, just a few moments ago, where you say in your brief that Québec is almost four times more dependent on the other provinces, and that sentence has serious implications.

Second, you tell us that while Ontario is by far Québec's largest market in Canada, the reverse is perhaps true, but to a much lesser degree. Third, you say that Québec has no monopoly over any technology or any resource that its neighbours cannot do without. Putting all that together, are you saying independence might jeopardize Quebecers' economic security?

**Mr. Forget:** Mr. Minister, provided it's abundantly clear that, regardless of its political choices, Québec intends to remain an open society from every point of view, including the economic, and provided that affirmation is taken seriously and is reciprocated, there is no necessary implication. In other words, you still trade with people you don't share unbreakable political bonds with. That happens every day. So, that's not an obstacle. However, it reminds us that there's something real there, that jobs are tied to exports and that major upheavals could disturb things.

Is that risk manageable? In principle, all risks are manageable. It's a matter of dexterity, skill, power of persuasion. Persuasion in relation to what? I return to my starting point, to a manifest and shared intention that this part of the world wants to maintain an open society, looking to the world outside, capable of the discipline needed to remain competitive in the international and North American economy, and if we can persuade not only ourselves, but others, there is absolutely no reason to fear catastrophe. I should say, and it's a nuance worth mentioning, that the figure we quote, and it's the only one we can quote at present, is based on 1984 manufacturers' shipments. Why so far back? This type of statistic isn't produced

every year. There's probably been some change. There's change over time. It's virtually impossible to say what the situation is today. It's probably less biased than it is today, but Mr. Fortin could add something to that.

**Mr. Rémillard:** But with your permission, perhaps I could ask Mr. Fortin the same question because in your brief, you mention another aspect, that is, be careful, the rest of Canada may not necessarily react rationally. There could also be emotional reactions. And finally, what Quebecers want to know, is whether these constitutional options, including independence, could jeopardize their economic security, their standard of living. Would Quebecers' standard of living fall if Québec were to become independent?

**Mr. McCallum:** Perhaps I could answer that. Once again, I think we have to distinguish between the situation where Québec is a country and where Québec has always been a country. And in this case, we believe Québec would have no economic problems. But we come back to the transition process, and I think that if the negotiations don't go well and feelings run high, it's quite possible that there could be a long transition period lasting many years, perhaps a decade during which the standard of living in Québec would be much lower than in the rest of Canada, because of such conflicts that are not logical or rational, but would develop, as we see in many situations in the world today. So, my answer to the question is "yes", the standard of living of Quebecers, and of all Canadians, could suffer during a long transition period, if the negotiations aren't a great success.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Sir, may I also address the question to Mr. Fortin? When Mr. Bernard Landry appeared before this Commission, he said, and I quote: "I have the moral certainty that Canada will negotiate an economic association because of one of the most basic laws of economic science: national self-interest, the instinct of self-preservation". Mr. Fortin, can you be so sure? Are you morally certain of that, as Mr. Landry is?

**Mr. Fortin:** Personally, yes. But we're discussing, here, how long it will take before interest gains the upper hand over emotion. We say the length of the transition period is uncertain. That's essentially it. Our message is that, yes, the economic future... In fact, the existence of multilateral and bilateral trade agreements is an insurance policy for Québec in the long run, but in the short run, emotions can overwhelm interest.  
(10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Forget was saying that, as quickly as possible, we have to go explain... The three of

us were at a conference at McGill University last weekend. We said, listen, things are very serious, there's light at the end of the tunnel but it's a big train that's coming and you better keep an eye on it because it's coming fast. Three quarters of the audience were absolutely astounded by what we said.

We're saying that we have to get information out as quickly as possible on what's coming and, on the Québec side, not bury our heads in the sand but prepare for every possible strategy because, right now, there are people at the Bank of Canada already at work on a monetary union and people at the Finance Department working on how the debt is to be divided. That's common knowledge at present.

**Mr. Rémillard:** If I understand you correctly, you're saying that, finally, it's not so much the option, but the transition period that will prove difficult, that could prove difficult. So we have to be very careful about the methods we use. In fact, you say that in your brief. Earlier, Mr. Lucien Bouchard asked you a question. I'd like to return to it because I don't think the answer was clear and I think it's important. You say...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Quickly, Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Very well, Mr. Chairman. You say that the economic consequences of constitutional choices probably depend less on their nature than on the means used to achieve them. So, what methods would be most likely to guarantee Quebecers' economic security?

**Mr. Forget:** Listen, you're asking me to improvise a bit because we didn't set up a committee to look into the problems of transition. It's a set of difficult problems.

We talked about information. That's almost just a prologue to the real exercise. Clearly, everything related to the monetary system, to the existence of a large debt which, as you know, is held in very short-term securities, needs to be studied. If there is any doubt about intentions in this regard, not only among people outside Québec, but among Quebecers themselves, then we know very well that even the most patriotic Quebecers could very well be the first to say: Yes, I'm very patriotic, but I don't want to bear the burden alone. There could be destabilizing behaviour.

So, you have to anticipate those things and have a number of plans, contingencies and clearly affirm a number of things in political terms. While affirming a more or less large... and perhaps a very strong desire for autonomy and sovereignty, there also has to be an awareness and an explicit acceptance of the responsibilities that go with it. That's how I'd answer your

question, Mr. Minister. In terms of the monetary situation, of the debt, etc., there are definitely things we have to think about right away.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, Mr. Jacques Parizeau.

**Mr. Parizeau:** First, I want to thank ASDEQ for saying, at the beginning of their brief, that given the ambiguous, if not contradictory, use of economic arguments, ASDEQ felt it had a duty (...) to remind everyone of the requirements of intellectual honesty. Thank you for this reminder of our duties.

I had a great deal of difficulty reading and understanding your brief. It's not that I didn't try. I'll give you an example by your choice of two scenarios. And here, I think we're clearly talking of a renewed federalism: "Under the new constitutional agreements, federal spending powers are substantially reduced and the central government agrees to cut...". We're still in federalism. And here, in the same paragraph, one of the options you mention is that Québec could mint its own currency. But why would Québec mint its own currency while still in a federal system? I admit that I don't follow, I don't understand the sense of the argument.

Scenario 2: resentment and discord. Still under a federal system, in it yet not in it. For instance, you say: "To end up with what? Some kind of preliminary arrangement, perhaps, along with a considerable number of very contentious issues." And here, for instance, you talk about the distribution of federal debts and assets and the amount of taxes that will still have to be paid to Ottawa. All in the same sentence. If we continue to pay taxes to Ottawa, if Ottawa continues to be a federal government, why would we divide its assets and its debts? You do that when there are two countries, not when there's one. I admit I had a lot of trouble understanding the argument.

Similarly, on page 24, you talk about accounting calculations, what we send to Ottawa and what we receive from Ottawa, and you say we shouldn't be naive, such calculations don't tell the whole story. Another of your sentences says you have to ask whether it is desirable that a federation be based on accounting calculations according to which the provinces regularly question their commitment to the country. And after all that, you give us six pages of tables that essentially provide the accounting breakdown of revenues we send and expenditures we receive. And to highlight the cost, you have a table, an analysis taken from a work on what it would cost a region to withdraw from Canada. And that's for 1981, which everyone knows was a year in which transfers to Québec were huge because, in particular, of oil import subsidies that have since completely disappeared. Clearly,

1981 was far from typical. Why use it for calculation purposes. I don't understand.

I'd now like to deal with the issue of the rationality argument. If we decide to proceed with Québec's sovereignty, we can't necessarily expect economic rationality to prevail. I'm all for supporting that with game theory and the prisoners' dilemma in the conclusion. By the way, I don't know why game theory enters the conclusion of the exercise, but then, that's something else. We've all read Neumann & Morgenstern, fine, but, anyway. We have a number of examples before us that would have to be studied, if we want to eliminate the assumption of rationality. The separation of Norway from Sweden is a very interesting case where rationality worked perfectly well. Isn't it rather remarkable that, at the beginning of the 1920s, when Ireland became independent, after a century of violence with the English, the pound sterling remained Ireland's currency for 20 years. Yet, if there's a place where rationality would be expected to be thrown overboard, it's certainly England and Ireland at that time.

So, I'm all for Neumann and Morgenstern, but we also have things in front of us that we have to look at. I'm going to turn your argument upside down. It's not obvious that rationality won't prevail, quite the contrary, because money is at stake.

Finally, the last sentence... On that score, I wanted to say two things concerning Québec's greater dependence on the Canadian market. First, there's the Canada-U.S. auto pact which ensures that a good share of Ontario's manufacturing production is shipped to the United States. When automobiles are excluded, we all know that in terms of dependence on manufacturing shipments, Ontario is just as dependent as Québec on the rest of the Canadian market. The difference is the Canada-U.S. auto pact.

We also know that for ten years - and this has been mentioned frequently over the past few days - the growth area for manufacturers' shipments, for Québec as for other provinces, has been on international markets. Not the Canadian market. Dependence on the Canadian market is declining. Dependence on the international market has been growing for ten years. The figures we have been shown on the issue are very revealing.

I conclude with the last sentence of the brief, which a number of members before me have quoted, where you say that the cost to Québec could be high if Québec were to declare its option unilaterally. And that certainly appears, to say the least, to be a not very pro-sovereignty conclusion, rather the contrary. But in the second-last paragraph, I am intrigued when you say that if this Commission limits itself to drawing up a list of Quebecers' wishes and aspirations, without considering how they

could be realized in a context other than confrontation, it will be sowing the seeds of many disappointments and ensuring that the cost of whatever option is finally chosen will be higher than it should have been. You seem to be saying that, in any event, there is a cost to any option for change, whatever it is. Should I see that as a plea for the status quo? Does the status quo have a cost?

**Mr. Forget:** Mr. Chairman, how much time do we have to answer all these questions?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Two minutes, Mr. Forget. Perhaps we could invite you again.

**Mr. Forget:** Well, I don't know what I can do in one minute, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have two minutes.

**Mr. Forget:** I've got two, good. We're headed in the right direction. Listen, in two minutes, I think I'd start by letting John deal with this scenario question.

**Mr. McCallum:** O.K., Mr. Chairman. As far as the scenarios go, we wrote that the future will probably contradict one of the scenarios. The important thing is not the details of the scenarios. What's important is that under one scenario you have resentment while under the other, you have tranquillity. Under our proposal, the economic costs during the transition period will depend on the degree of tranquillity. And we maintain that it's quite probable or quite possible that there won't be a lot of tranquillity.

On the second point, concerning rationality, Mr. Parizeau gave some examples where rationality prevailed. But we could give examples where it doesn't. For instance, the United States just before the Civil War. Examples could be given on both sides. But the point remains that there is a great deal of economic uncertainty on that issue.

**Mr. Forget:** On the other points, Mr. Chairman, briefly, the issue of double-entry bookkeeping to decide whether federalism is good or bad, we feel it's obvious that you can't decide, on the basis of such balance sheets, whether or not sovereignty would be a good thing. I think Mr. Parizeau would agree that you shouldn't read too much into these balance sheets. Clearly, it's a bit like saying each year I pay insurance premiums on my house, if it doesn't burn down, I've made a bad deal. You don't insure it on that basis. You don't make commitments of any kind on that basis.

Besides, during the 1980s, we saw the balance shift from positive to negative. The point we make is that it's of no more significance now than in the past. The question you have to ask is whether the basis that justifies the transfers is acceptable or not. And remember also that regardless of the economic community we are heading for, ordinarily, common markets, of any kind, involve certain transfer payments because not all regions of a common market benefit equally from the existence of the market. That was noted in Europe which currently has three regional development funds, financed by the community. So, even at that level, the choice between sovereignty and federalism would bring about situations in which transfers, in one way or another, would still be made.

As to the list of wishes, and the Commission's agenda, we haven't drawn on a conclusion such as Mr. Parizeau has just outlined. In other words, we're saying that the Commission is asking people throughout Québec, a little like Santa Claus, what they would like in the future, without taking into account the constraints, the transition problems and the commitments that will have to be assumed to minimize those transition problems. It's possible to be misunderstood and stimulate and legitimate unrealistic desires, and so generate something that could become a disturbing factor. We've drawn attention to that, which doesn't mean you shouldn't try to find a consensus in what people are saying. But they have to be aware of the importance of the operation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. McCallum, Mr. Forget, Mr. Fortin, thank you for presenting your brief before the Commission. I also want to thank the people of the Association des économistes du Québec for having given consideration to the issue. Excuse me if perhaps I upset you at times during the hearing. I'm afraid I'm forced to impose on you again, to ask you to leave quickly to make room for the other speakers. We're already running a little late.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:48 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:52 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now welcome the Association des notaires de Laval; the sitting will last 30 minutes. I will remind everyone of the time allotments. There will be 5 minutes for the presentation of the brief, 5 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Government, 5 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Opposition, 10 minutes for registered members, the other members, and 5 minutes for the Chair. Mr. Bruno Trudelle, I introduce Mr. Bruno Trudelle and Mr. Henri Vinet. Mr. Trudelle will make the presentation?

Fine, you have 5 minutes, Mr. Trudelle.

#### **Association des notaires de Laval**

**Mr. Trudelle (Bruno):** Thank you. We want to thank the Co-chairmen of this Commission, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the other members of this Commission for having allowed us to present our views. The Association des notaires de Laval has been in existence since 1980. It was incorporated under the Professional Syndicates Act.

The Association was for many years federated with the other notaries' associations in Québec, but is now independent. Its purpose is to study the development and defend the legal, social, economic and scientific interests of its members. There are 125 notaries practising or living in Laval. The Association is very active in social issues and maintains a valued public presence by means of local initiatives or in cooperation with the Chambre des notaires du Québec. The Association helped this committee to consult with the notaries of Laval to find out their opinion on Québec's constitutional future.

As jurists, we focused on the editorial and contractual aspect. The people of Québec have been concerned with their constitutional future ever since New France fell under the jurisdiction of the British crown. Since then, citizens of Québec have contributed to the development of British parliamentarianism, for instance, Pierre Bédard, leader of the House majority who, towards the end of the 18th century, advocated ministerial responsibility. Again, some have contributed, for instance, to clarifying the definition of the concepts of political organization such as "federation" and "confederation" which, at the time, were a bit vague, by establishing a Canadian model in 1867. And today, we can perhaps say that a new type of parliamentary commission has also contributed to this development.

So, throughout this evolution, we believe the opinion of the province's notaries has been important for the community. For instance, when Lower Canada demanded ministerial responsibility, the notaries were in the front lines and four of them gave their lives in 1837-1838. Notaries have always defended the general interest of the people of Québec when presented with a choice, the institution of notaries and the civil law of Québec being the living symbols of our distinct character in North America.

Today, as in 1980, each citizen of Québec realizes the importance of constitutional law and the decisions we will have to take as a people, since the negotiations that failed to achieve a minimum in June 1990 have brought us to a critical point. The notaries of Laval, who meet the people at more than 90 points throughout the island, who draw up the documents for about

50 000 transactions of all kinds each year, and who administer more than \$860 million annually in their trust accounts, also realize this.

We are there for the creation of corporations, partnerships, the merger and reorganization of businesses, the winding-up of commercial businesses that no longer fulfil needs. That is the notary's daily life.

The committee was asked to poll the notaries of Laval on the constitutional future of Québec and to present the brief. The notaries of Laval responded through a survey. The status quo won the approval of 5 % of respondents, reformed federalism 25 % and sovereignty 70 %. The questionnaire sent to the notaries of Laval asked for comments on the choice of one of the political options indicated and scheduled a meeting for discussion. There emerged from the written comments and opinions expressed a form of consensus which I will now summarize.

The great majority of those who indicated their preference for sovereignty also indicated that a referendum should be held on the question. They saw it as a basic principle of democracy, the division, the winding-up of the federal system, or even a possible new bilateral agreement that would only come afterwards. Notaries want the referendum to be held as soon as possible, which isn't surprising because their daily law practice requires first and foremost that they check the consent of the parties that will sign a deed.

The failure of Meech Lake made the need for a divorce with English Canada abundantly clear, so that we can continue, in our own way and according to our own means, to work for Québec's development at every level and from all points of view. It's a simple application of the principle, still valid, that nobody knows what's good for you better than you do. The 70 % of notaries in favour of sovereignty considered that this option was an enormous challenge, exciting and full of promise for the future. As to the drafting of a new social contract, the notaries feel that many of the constitutional problems we have had to live with since 1867 are attributable to the poor drafting of the British North America Act and its amendments. The lack of clarity, the excessive scope allowed for interpretation by the courts, not to mention the omission of amending formulae, a form for the secession of a province, and the grey areas of shared federal and provincial jurisdiction, show the lack of French, particularly European, civil spirit.

As you know, our civil law is based on principles of written law. We can return to this later. A constitutional text would benefit from adhering closely to the principles of clarity and logic absorbed by notaries in their daily practice of private law in Québec. Thank you for your attention.

(11:00 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very good, Mr. Trudelle. We'll now go on to the speakers. First, Mr. Rémillard. Mr. Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Well, Mr. Trudelle, we are pleased to welcome the first group from Laval. We've already met in other arenas, and clearly we weren't on the same side. You're a notary, you produce a pile of notarized deeds, contracts, you're used to that. In fact, you want future constitutional documents to be written more clearly. That will be our second question to you a little later. But, in all these notarized contracts, these professional acts, you belong to a society that's reasonably distinct from that standpoint. You propose a divorce. That's your conclusion. Your diagnosis. And you're telling us that the notaries of Laval advocate that position. Can you explain why they come to that conclusion?

**Mr. Vinet (Henri):** Very well, I think that, initially, the failure of Meech Lake is the first reason. The second reason is everything that's been tried since the Constitution and even before. In other words, these repeated failures have brought us around to the way, you could say, most Quebecers now think: Confederation doesn't work any more. And when it doesn't work any more, you try to get out and organize things so that they work better after the divorce.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** You also say, on page 7 of your brief, that economic values should be subordinated to political, social and cultural values. You are very close to the business community. How did you arrive at this conclusion when other groups of economists come to different conclusions? What's your reasoning for this statement?

**Mr. Vinet:** We think political values should take precedence over economic values, and I think the existence of this Commission is clear evidence of that since it's not a commission on the economic future of Québec but on its political future. We feel politics must take precedence and direct the economy and not the reverse. Here's a concrete example. When it came to implementing reciprocity... the free trade treaty, excuse me, with the United States, for instance, the decision was taken at the political level and in that way, we say that the political level takes precedence over the economic, not the reverse, because if economics takes precedence, then we're headed for a future in which wealth decides things. And from that point of view, we'd perhaps do better to associate with the wealthiest and we'd be more certain to achieve our goal, if that's what it is. But if politics takes precedence, then it takes priority over economics and harmonizes it for the

development of all Québec's potential. And even if, as notaries, we work in the business community, that doesn't prevent us from placing the debate at the level on which this Commission was formed to settle the fundamental problem, which is political.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** But you state, with a great deal of confidence or certainty and aplomb, a position on behalf of the notaries of Laval. I'm a bit concerned because you say that of 125 notaries who belong to your Association, 37 replied to the survey. Do you think that's enough to put forward a clear position on their behalf?

**Mr. Vinet:** I don't think it's a question of 135, I think we're about a hundred. But we sent...

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** But that's the figure you...

**Mr. Vinet:** ...and we contacted...

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** ...that's the figure in your brief, 125...

**Mr. Vinet:** 135, then 135, we sent a form to each notary asking his opinion. We received replies from 37. Those 37 provided the basis for our brief, considering that those that didn't reply or did not want to went along, as in any democracy, with the choices made by those who took the time to answer. And our situation is somewhat like general elections to public office. I mean, if Mayor Doré is elected by 30 % of the population, we assume that the 70 % that didn't take the trouble to vote agree with the majority. That's how it was in Laval with our survey of our colleagues.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thirty seconds, Mr. Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good Lord! So, when you say that in the future Canada-Québec agreement that could be reached, whatever the eventual choice is, what's the premise for your reasoning at that level? How do you reach that conclusion?

**Mr. Vinet:** Well, the main conclusion we reach is sovereignty as the political choice.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Yes.

**Mr. Vinet:** As for the drafting of a constitution, we say it should be clear. As jurists, we're often confronted with French law, which is one of the characteristics of Québec, with the "common law", and we're also confronted with the problem of the North

American invasion of common law and, from many points of view, we have to spend a lot of time defending ourselves, in a way, on that question. And to come to your question of clarity, I think that in general, jurists in Québec find the laws, particularly Québec's Civil Code, clearer than English common law. And in that sense, we say that the wording of many important acts and constitutional documents at the federal level doesn't seem very clear to us, from the standpoint of the thinking and layout of things.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good. I want to thank you, but I'm still a little puzzled when you say that such a high rate of abstention is the equivalent of "silence means consent". And you take it for granted that they support the sovereignty option. If that's true, we're in for some serious problems later. I hope we reach a much broader and more solid consensus to achieve any kind of solution, because, I can tell you, that's not enough for me.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Bélanger. Mrs. Jeanne Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Gentlemen. In fact, your survey is pretty consistent with what other surveys have revealed, surveys that have been published in the papers in recent weeks. So, even if the sample is relatively small, I think it still reflects the situation in Québec and the views of Quebecers. I noticed in your survey, that those who are pro-sovereignty feel it's an exciting challenge, while those who favour federalism or the status quo question its feasibility. To quote you, those who are in favour of renewed federalism "don't quite know how to implement the new federalism after the failure of Meech Lake. This failure crystallized forever the idea that, in the eyes of English Canada, Québec could never be anything other than a province like the others, with the same rights and obligations." I think that's a reasonably faithful expression of the reality we face today. Two questions. First, you suggest that a referendum be held as soon as possible. How soon, and what should the question be? Should it include hypotheses such as renewed federalism or sovereignty with economic association? What's your view on that?

**Mr. Vinet:** I think that as for the timing, it should take place as soon as possible after the Commission's report. I think the Commission's report will probably lead to certain views on Québec's political future, and let's say that I imagine a scenario such as the following: the Commission would support two main themes: sovereignty, sovereignty-association or a new federalism. There could be a referendum on the

two main themes that the Commission would have studied, namely we turn to the people of Québec and ask: Are you in favour of sovereignty or are you in favour of a new federalism?

**Mrs. Blackburn:** According to the conclusion reached by the Commission, you feel the question could have two parts, provided the Commission concludes there are two possible, realizable and realistic options.

**Mr. Vinet:** Yes, assuming the scenario I mentioned, that could very well be the case since, from the beginning of the Commission, two major tendencies are evident within the Commission, and so the population could decide for itself between the two options. But obviously, there could be other ways of putting the question, but the advantage of this one is that it would be settled quickly, and the question would be clear and simple.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Many organizations we have heard and others that have yet to be heard are worried about the absence or low profile of the whole issue of the social contract or blueprint for society in the debates of this Commission.

Do you think, as some have suggested, that we should first consider what the social contract in Québec or the blueprint for society should be before going to a referendum, or should we begin by finding out what the choice of Quebecers is before drawing up the blueprint?

**Mr. Vinet:** For us, it's clearly a question of first deciding on the basic principle of Québec's political future. First, decide whether we'll be sovereign or whether we try one more time - in our brief, we say we don't know how it would be possible to try again, after the failure of Meech - to reorganize a federation that seems to have been hobbled for a long time. So, that's the first thing. Then, you draw up the blueprint for society you mentioned.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Good.

**Mr. Vinet:** With the gains we've made. You don't begin the blueprint from scratch. After all, we're a distinct society with assets. You start with them, there's no reason to think they'll be lost, and, on that basis, you build a country.

**Mr. Trudelle:** Besides, if I may, once the people have spoken, you can imagine a transition system in which all the federal laws and all the provincial laws already in force in Québec would remain in effect, but would be amended or repealed solely by the provincial legislature.

Clearly, the social contract you refer to, we obviously ask that the civil spirit we've had for two or three centuries here be respected and

we could have one or two, perhaps three years to consider that.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** You talk of protecting the rights of minorities, vested rights. To which of these rights would you give priority for protection in a Québec constitution? For instance, Native people...

**Mr. Vinet:** I didn't mention the vested rights of minorities. I was speaking of the vested rights of Québec society as such. In other words, I mean, you don't start from scratch. Let's say that, generally, we have a half-state, a half-government from the standpoint of sovereignty. We're starting from one half. The goal is the whole and we're working towards that. That's what we mean.

As for minority rights, I'm in favour of entrenching minority rights in a Québec constitution.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Anglophone and Native?

**Mr. Vinet:** A distinction would be made between Native people and Anglophones in Québec and the other minorities. Obviously, the Native people have vested rights, even before ours, and Anglophones have been here for long enough to have vested rights, which they have. You just have to see how they're treated in Québec to realize they've got rights. But what I... entrenching them in the constitution.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Unfortunately, your time is up. We now move on to Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue. Then, Mr. Holden and Mr. Bouchard.  
(11:15 a.m.)

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you would do well to take a course in intellectual rigor and scientific rigor but, that having been said, it's two professionals talking to each other. And, in passing, perhaps for jurists and professionals, you'll have to get over the Meech episode. After Meech, the deluge, it's over, finished. Meech is an episode. I've positioned myself like you have. It would be useful to look at it differently for jurists, notaries especially, you know, legal experts.

In the second paragraph on page 2, you've been federated for a long time before becoming independent. That's what you say. The Association is now independent. Are you sovereign or are you independent? Are you still members of the Corporation or the Chambre des notaires? The answer has to be yes. So, please explain your title of sovereign independence in your group of professionals. That might help everyone.

I won't return to page 7 and page...

Perhaps I'll return to page 8. Our colleague Bélanger dealt with page 7. I have trouble understanding your position on civil law when you say a French civil spirit. Notaries aren't found everywhere in the world, and there are jurists and lawyers who draw up contracts, and it seems to me that you're a little hard on our lawyer colleagues. Having said that, for people who produce serious contracts and have to quantify operations in the full light of day, the necessity of a divorce, you quantify that when there's divorce and separation. Don't you think the population is entitled to know, once you've adopted a position as you have, what sovereignty could cost in terms of economic adjustment, that is, in dollar terms? And this isn't a witch hunt, but since you've taken a position so frankly, clearly and precisely, it seems to me that it would be useful to hear your comments on these adjustment costs.

**Mr. Vinet:** To begin with your last question, that is, a position on the cost of sovereignty, of course that's important, and I imagine that, if Québec becomes sovereign, it will work through the exercise. But we feel that the cost of sovereignty is an economic cost to be assumed after a decision called taking our political freedom. And we don't think that at the stage Québec has reached, in economic terms, sovereignty should be evaluated in terms of whether it's more or less expensive.

**Mr. Hogue:** With your permission, that's the crux of my question.

**Mr. Vinet:** Yes.

**Mr. Hogue:** In your offices, your daily work, you don't use this approach with your clients.

**Mr. Trudelle:** I'd like to respond to a question you asked that dealt with the distinction of our law. People may not realize that in America... We perhaps tend to look at what's happening in North America but, throughout the world, all of South America, all of Central America, all of Africa, well, the world is divided into two major schools in terms of law: there's the common law and the civil law. When we mention the civil law that originated in France, it's because in France, under Napoleon, a great stride was taken by codifying those laws. But, in fact, those laws, let's call them continental European, which are the source for Germany, Spain, Italy, it's law that's based mainly on canon law that was taught in the universities, even in the Middle Ages. Whereas English law only started to be taught in Great Britain at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. Of course, English law provided a model for all the other countries or...

**Mr. Hogue:** We don't want a course on it.

**Mr. Trudelle:** Fine. I simply wanted to remind you that we have to stop looking only at North America and start to look around the world a bit and see what's happening.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, I'm sure.

**Mr. Trudelle:** You'll see that these rights, in our law, are derived from, are found in Africa...

**Mr. Hogue:** My question concerned your professional work...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue...

**Mr. Hogue:** ...and your position here.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Trudelle...

**Mr. Trudelle:** ...if you'll allow me to finish...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue, Mr. Hogue, your time is up.

**Mr. Trudelle:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now move on to Mr. Holden.

**Mr. Holden:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to congratulate you for being here, because I'm disappointed that the Bar didn't present a brief, nor did the Chambre des notaires. I may not agree with your brief, but you took the trouble to let us know at least what your group thinks. I wanted to ask you, in your day-to-day dealings with your clients, your colleagues, your fellow notaries, does the constitutional issue really interest them or are people like you the exception?

**Mr. Trudelle:** I'm a bit surprised. I was told at the Chambre des notaires du Québec that a brief was being submitted. We also heard that the Chambre des notaires had conducted two surveys which basically reflected the results we obtained in Laval. Having said that...

**Mr. Vinet:** We think the Chambre des notaires will probably submit a brief.

**Mr. Holden:** It's too late now.

**Mr. Vinet:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Holden:** It's too late to submit a brief here, now.

**Mr. Vinet:** I don't know if it's too late, but I know that... It's too late? Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes. If the brief wasn't in by November 2 or a written intention to submit a brief, it's too late. Was a memo sent?

**Mr. Vinet:** Yes, there was an intention to submit a brief. Still, I want to say that the *Chambre des notaires* conducted a similar survey to ours. So, all the notaries in Québec have been consulted and I must say I was under the impression that they would be coming before this Commission to submit their own brief.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will check with the secretariat of the Commission and we'll let you know. Mr. Trudelle.

**Mr. Holden:** One more short question.

**Mr. Trudelle:** Quickly, I just want to say that we are interested in constitutional law, particularly since we feel that in some ways, we've been wronged, those of us who practice as notaries because, as you know, we are barred from the magistracy, among others. It's well known that basically, it's because all our constitutional law was made in England when the British North America Act was drafted.

**Mr. Holden:** I agree with you that the BNA Act is a disaster as far as its text is concerned. But when you talk of the Civil Code, as a lawyer, my understanding is that the Civil Code is mostly broad principles, like article 1053. And there, the principle is analyzed using specific cases. If I understood correctly, you want a constitution that is much more specific, fewer general rules, fewer broad principles. Am I right?

**Mr. Vinet:** Better written than the example you've just mentioned, as drafting of the Canadian Constitution. You might say that this text is not particularly clear and lucid, but we feel the constitution should be written under the guidance of the French, civil spirit. We simply made a comparison that it wouldn't be too difficult to do a better job of writing than the British North America Act.

**Mr. Holden:** On that point, we agree. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bouchard, if you want to add something, but quickly, one minute.

**Mr. Bouchard:** First, I want to welcome the presence of my notarial colleagues. I also practised law for a fairly long time, twenty

years or so of my life, and I dealt extensively with my notary colleagues. It's no insult to my notary colleagues to say that they tend to be conservative, a little more than lawyers, at any rate. They are very concerned with security in every form and I'm a little surprised at the result of the survey. From this point of view, it sheds even more light on the trends at work in Québec, including within the notarial profession, and I thank you for informing us of that. However, I note that there's still, obviously, that's normal and completely respectable, a percentage of notaries, 24 % I think of those who responded, who want a reform. They would be happy with a reformed federalism. Does the survey allow you to identify the specific points those who express that opinion would like to see reformed? What changes would they want?

**Mr. Vinet:** In general, the changes requested are more or less the same ones we've heard since the beginning of this Commission in other briefs that have been submitted: repatriation of everything affecting culture, repatriation of everything affecting social affairs and the maximum from the economic standpoint. Good. It revolved around that. There's some discussion of the consequences of sovereignty from the point of view of relations with the United States. There was fairly energetic discussion of the possibility that by becoming sovereign, we'd be in a weaker position to face such a powerful neighbour and the possibilities of failure, and that whole issue. On that point, notaries divided into two groups. We included a short excerpt in our brief. However, I'd still like to return to the question: Notaries are conservative. I must point out that in Québec's history, at a very crucial period of its history called "Les Patriotes", I have to say, of the twelve who were hanged, four were notaries. And to accuse notaries of being conservative from the point of view...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Which means all the more credit to you for coming.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Vinet:** To turn to another aspect of your question, I believe...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Were there any lawyers?

**Mr. Vinet:** I didn't find any.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Bouchard:** They managed to sneak away before the end.

**Mr. Vinet:** But the lawyers might redeem themselves when Québec faces its next important decision.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Vinet, Mr. Trudelle, thank you for coming to see us this morning. Thank you for your contribution to our reflection on Québec's political and constitutional future.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:25 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:28 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Our work continues and we now welcome the Canadian Centre for Architecture for a period of 30 minutes. For the benefit of our guests, I'll repeat the rules. You have 5 minutes to present your brief, the parliamentary group forming the Government and the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 5 minutes each, the other members, 10 minutes, with a maximum of 5 minutes per member, and 5 minutes for the Chair.

I welcome Mrs. Phyllis Lambert. Would you please introduce your colleagues? You have 5 minutes to present your brief.

#### **Canadian Centre for Architecture**

**Mrs. Lambert (Phyllis):** Good morning. I'd like to introduce Guy Doré, associate director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture. Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I want to thank you for having me here and allowing me to share some of my reflections on Québec's future. I will begin by reviewing some of the key ideas in my brief, "Québec's Future Linked to Definition and Cultural Aims", and then, I will look at the measures we can implement which are likely to lead to the kind of society we want to build.

First, we have to remember that the goal of an economically strong Québec, an absolute necessity, as some people have realized, cannot be achieved without unshakable confidence in our society. To believe in society, we have to know it, understand it. This is a humanist quest, which must provide a basis for and encourage discussion, cultural expression and creativity.

Second, we have to acknowledge the fact that Canada's weakness, even with a new Constitution, stems from the absence of ethical and cultural understanding founded on humanism. This leads us inevitably to the conclusion that priority must be given to education and the arts from a humanist perspective, and to broadening our minds so that we can play a key role on the world stage and take advantage of the opportunities that language gives us.

We are proposing the following measures: firstly, to arm ourselves, in terms of education, with teaching programs based on an

understanding of history. This is particularly true, and must be rigorously observed, where still-too-uncommon scientific works, analysing and putting the history of our cities, architecture, artists and institutions into context, are concerned. I feel we must make it a priority to produce, in the next ten years, works on our culture which are both exhaustive and accessible to all members, not only of our society, but of neighbouring states and states beyond our borders.

Secondly, we must stop being complacent and adapt to world standards of excellence. It is unacceptable to have such a low level of schooling in a society as advanced as our own. We must work at making our universities among the ten best in North America. We believe that greatly increased support for creativity, research and the arts is a basic necessity.

Fourthly, our society has learned to function behind closed doors, and we are not open to expertise gained elsewhere. But, we must seek out the most highly trained people in various sectors and help them to integrate. When this short presentation is over, we will simply remember that, we will have no choice but to acknowledge that we are made up of a multicultural population whose roots can be traced back to a society with a French culture and language, welcomed to this American territory by Native peoples. All this is part of our collective cultural wealth, but is inevitably a source of conflict. We must recognize, however, that any dynamic society is formed by conflict. It is conflict that refines the soul. A dynamic society is a society open to differences and open to the world.

To conclude, dynamic societies are those in which art, artists, and researchers shine both within and without.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Lambert. We will start with Mr. Jacques Léonard.

**Mr. Léonard:** Yes, Mrs. Lambert, we all know of your interest in architecture, urban development. I've had the opportunity to speak with you about this in the past. In your brief, which is short but very thorough, you describe the experiences of Revolutionary France and the United States and you go on to say that there was amazing growth in all fields.

Do you believe that if a coup were to resolve Québec's status, it could achieve a similar level of growth, bearing in mind the difference in size, of course? And do you believe the complacency that we too often feel about ourselves could be eradicated more easily once these complexes, which we know we have about our past, are eliminated?

**Mrs. Lambert:** I'm not quite sure I understood your question, but I think what

you're asking is if we could eradicate our basic complacency.

**Mr. Léonard:** Yes.

**Mrs. Lambert:** I believe that if we have a goal, if we really want to get somewhere, we can pull ourselves out of this complacency. We have to set ourselves a goal. It's when there's too much... that we don't know where we're headed, that we have a tendency to do this. Again here, I also believe that it's a problem that we don't compare ourselves with others. We are in a completely English-speaking America, and we must forge international links. We must forge links with European countries, Francophone countries, and also Anglophone countries, because English is the international language of business. Therefore, it's impossible to function without it. But I believe that... you know, there are many small countries which are, for example Switzerland and the...

**Mr. Léonard:** The Benelux countries.

**Mrs. Lambert:** ...Scandinavian countries, which have very powerful institutions and are very open. What we need to do is see how we can act within this environment, being a truly distinct society, a society which speaks French and has a culture - it's not merely language as we all know - which has a culture that is profoundly different from the rest of the country. As I said, we need a goal and we need to know how to focus on it and achieve it. And I believe that could bring about enormous change. We've seen it happen elsewhere in the past, in the past 15 years, we've seen fantastic growth in our society.

**Mr. Léonard:** Do you believe that having direct access to other countries by means of international relations could help us achieve this growth or openness to other nations of the world, rather than to continue on as at present, via the Canadian Confederation?

**Mrs. Lambert:** I, myself, see that very clearly in my own organization. For example, there's the ICOM which is an international association of museums; there are groups like ICAM, the international committee of architectural museums. This openness is widespread and fascinating. We also work very closely with organizations in the United States which bring together people in our field. I'm talking about my field because that's the one I'm familiar with. But in architecture as well, there are activities on an international scale which look at all the different ways things are done in cities, in architecture, and we learn a lot. If we don't come out of our cocoon, we won't get anywhere. Society has always worked with people

from outside coming along and waking us up. Everyone, civilization has separated.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now go to Mr. Roger Nicolet.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would, of course, like to take this opportunity to salute Mrs. Lambert, to salute what she is and the very special place she holds in Québec society. Of course, I also have two questions to ask which deal, in part, with your experience and personal development. You have lived in Europe, you have lived in the United States and you have returned to your native land, to Québec, where, in all evidence, you feel at home. This leads me to ask: How can Québec, assuming there is a national affirmation of a Québec identity, formulate a stand with regard to its minorities and, in particular, its Anglophone minority? In all evidence, we are trailing around a load of incomprehension and often distrust. From the viewpoint you represent, how can we collectively establish permanent bridges between the cultural communities? In the second case, you talk about how small communities have shone on a world scale. Aren't you afraid that reducing the means available to the State, severe reductions in terms of support for artistic activities having already taken place, that a reduction in available funding from the State will be detrimental to the growth you are seeking?

**Mrs. Lambert:** O.K., your first question was... could you remind me?

**Mr. Nicolet:** The first question dealt with the bridge to be built between communities.

**Mrs. Lambert:** O.K., you asked me that question on a personal level, so that's how I'll answer it. I consider myself a Quebecer, a Montrealer. I feel at home in an artistic milieu, an architectural milieu, a humanist milieu and in the field of research. I'm comfortable with English, French... my German is a little less fluent, but, obviously... I received my training here and there. I did all my graduate work in the United States and a large part in France. I never really felt uncomfortable anywhere. I returned here because I saw, after having been a part of it, that it was a fascinating culture, and that it was a rich culture, that both sides were incredibly rich, the French culture and the English culture, and then there's the North American culture as well, which only goes to show that we have learned, and we can still learn, from the First Nations, the first people who were here. I believe it's very important, in every society and every family, to have many bloodlines and many avenues of thought. It is diversity that makes a society, as long as we are

quite certain what foundation we are standing on. We mustn't feel we are being buffeted about, but must have a firm footing. Therefore, I believe now is the time to bring about this openness.

As for your second question, the issue is a reduction in funds, you know we have to change the way we act and I mentioned those countries precisely because they are approximately the same size, in terms of population, as ours, and they have large-scale corporations and institutions, universities that are respected world-wide, and incredible museums, founded well before the 19th century. But you know, we have time. And we have to realign our values, change how we act. I believe that if we want to do it, we can. Many other examples show this.

**Mr. Nicolet:** I think my time is up.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes, your time is up. Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Lambert, I think that we must salute and recognize the fact that you are here for Québec, and your testimony today is important because you are an artist and because you are an Anglophone, an Anglophone who has returned, as you just said, to Québec. We have tried to understand very specific things and my question is this: Do you believe in a sovereign Québec, I mean a Québec open to the world of course, not closed in on itself, open to the world, but sole master of all cultural policies, no more overlapping with the federal government, no more dual jurisdictions, do you believe that would effectively promote a development of arts and culture based on a humanitarian form, humanist, as you called it?

**Mrs. Lambert:** I believe it would promote it as soon as people here, all Quebecers, firmly supported it. I believe it is our will which makes things happen. Take Japan, for example. There's a country which basically has nothing in terms of raw materials. Lots of fish perhaps, but that's all. And they have maintained a culture, but it through will, discipline. And I believe that that sort of discipline is what we need for our future, it will lead us, spur us to the necessary action.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Discipline, call it self-confidence... we can, as Quebecers, develop it. (11:45 a.m.)

**Mrs. Lambert:** It is self-confidence, but it is also discipline, self-discipline. We are not incredibly self-disciplined here. Our publications on the arts, criticism in the papers, where we stand with regard to universities... We're content to be 17th, or something like that. That's unacceptable. As I said in my brief, the

education situation here is appalling and it's becoming more and more impossible. I believe we have to really look at what needs to be done so that we become a self-confident society.

In Montréal, in many ridings, 20 % of the people have only nine years of schooling. That's shocking, it's impossible! We have to put forth... and I believe we must be committed to what we are doing... The question was even a bit complacent, and I think it's always like that. We have to know what we want and where we are headed. That's what gets people motivated. That's...

**Mr. Turgeon:** Another question. You're an architect. You're an Anglophone. Our friend, Robert Libman, is also an architect. He's also an Anglophone. This is a very specific question. Do you believe, and are you afraid, that a sovereign Québec will do appalling things to its Anglophone minority?

**Mrs. Lambert:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Turgeon:** Do you believe, do you think, that a sovereign Québec is something to worry about in terms of how it might treat its Anglophone minority?

**Mrs. Lambert:** Look, Québec is a minority in Canada right now. For the time being it is not a Francophone State.

**Mr. Turgeon:** And if it were?

**Mrs. Lambert:** If that were to happen... I think I've answered that question. I'm staying, O.K. I'm not afraid of that. I'm here.

**Mr. Turgeon:** I realize you're not afraid of that.

**Mrs. Lambert:** No... no. I am not afraid of that and I believe... You know, when people don't have confidence in themselves, when they don't know where they stand, there are always problems. But when people... People who are easy to get along with and to interact with are people who know where they are and who have confidence in themselves. They don't need to protect themselves.

I don't know what will happen. There are details that have to be examined. I don't know what's happening in other countries for... Listen, I have French friends in New York. They never spoke a word of English. They lived there. They weren't very open to the society, but they got by. That's not what you want.

**Mr. Turgeon:** No, no.

**Mrs. Lambert:** You want people to be truly integrated into society.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Exactly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I will give thirty seconds of the Chair's time to Mr. Libman if he would like to add a comment.

**Mr. Libman:** A comment, or my question, because I registered for a question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A comment. I'm afraid there's no time left for this group.

**Mr. Libman:** Thirty seconds only. Instead of asking my question, I want to say that since I left the profession, which I did in order to join the Party and I've always wanted the chance to unite politics and architecture, I have to say that architecture is the most interesting, most fulfilling profession in the world and obviously, it is slightly more restful than politics. I mean, disagreements between architectural colleagues don't make the papers. That's one thing.

Just to respond to Mr. Turgeon, as an architect and as an Anglophone, I don't feel any fear either with regard to the consequences of Québec sovereignty, but we always have to fight for the best option, our beliefs, which is that the best option for Québec is the Canadian family. That is my response to his comments.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Libman. We'll now move on to Mrs. Louise Bégin.

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Lambert, in your presentation, you told us that emphasis must be placed on education and the arts. In terms of education, you said that we have to teach history. Do you feel that considering the constitutional situation Québec is in right now, it has the necessary powers to improve these two sectors, specifically, education and the arts?

**Mrs. Lambert:** If we don't know who we are... I remember when we first began protecting Montréal's heritage. People didn't know their buildings, didn't know their history. We had to supply a lot of documentation so that people could get to know them. After that, people began to have much more confidence in what their society was.

I was shocked that there wasn't a book on Québec architecture. Obviously, certain things are going to change with Montréal's 350th anniversary, but there's nothing on it. There are books that skim over it or touch on it, but nothing actually on it. There is even a Commission des biens culturels which puts out magnificent volumes, but no analysis, no putting things into context, because no one wants to see a serious analytical volume. But that's what we

need. I can say the same about our literature, I can say the same about painting, I can say it about institutions. There are small works and things all over the place, but no compendium, nothing complete. And if you think of France, for example, they always understood that texts about society, that promoted France, were really written for people outside. And they've known this since, I don't know, the 15th or 16th century. Ever since books have been printed. And other countries know this. I think it's fundamental. How else can we know how things happened in terms of our history? It's fascinating. How can we know if we don't have documents available to everyone, and I don't mean only here, but abroad as well?

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** I understand what you're saying, Mrs. Lambert, when you say that there is no book on architecture right now, but there is nothing stopping Québec from having one. Maybe you yourself, Mrs. Lambert, knowing your...

**Mrs. Lambert:** But even so...

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** ...to do it.

**Mrs. Lambert:** Of course, these things will get done, some of them. Someone will do some of these things, but it isn't up to one organization, it's up to society. Not only in architecture, but in art. Have you ever seen a book that looks at the progression of artwork in Québec since the 17th century? Have you seen that? No. There are certain interesting works. But there is no single analytical compendium, there isn't one on literature. We have an incredibly interesting literature. Are there any collections? No. There are all these things. We have to collect data on our society.

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** You're saying that there aren't any, but do you think there would be more in a sovereign Québec?

**Mrs. Lambert:** I mean that, in order to function, a sovereign Québec would have to, absolutely have to, establish these things. They are a priority whether Québec is sovereign or not, they must be done.

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** You say that in Québec, sovereign or no, they must be done.

**Mrs. Lambert:** Absolutely.

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** But if the Commission decides or the people decide that it is necessary to review...

**Mrs. Lambert:** I don't think that's what the Commission will decide.

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** ...constitutional status within a Canadian federation, what powers do you feel would be necessary for Québec to take a stand in these areas of activity?

**Mrs. Lambert:** Obviously, it will take some work, art organizations would have to receive support. It would require a strong ministère des Affaires culturelles which would be very strong and avant-garde and which had a large role — that goes without saying. But also a ministère de l'Éducation. People will have to do it for themselves too. They will have to support it, governments will be there to support it, but people have to ask for a proper education. That is essential. And I believe people will be motivated to do so.

**Mrs. Bégin (Bellechasse):** Thank you, Mrs. Lambert. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Bégin. That concludes our meeting, Mrs. Lambert. I'd like to thank you, Mr. Doré, Mrs. Lambert, for having come to help us take one more step in our inquiry into the political and constitutional future of Québec. As for you, Mrs. Lambert, I would like to say to you personally that, to us, in Québec, you are a true builder. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:55 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:59 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We'll continue our work. We will now be hearing from the Congrès hellénique du Québec. We have 30 minutes for this brief. I think you already know the rules about the time available to each group. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Antypas, if you will introduce your colleagues.

**Mr. Antypas (Sotirios):** Yes. Basile Angelopoulos, lawyer; André Gerolymatos, teacher; Thanassi Katsalkas. Dr. Thanassi Katsalkas will be making the presentation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Welcome all four. We're listening, Sir.

### Congrès hellénique du Québec

**Mr. Katsalkas (Thanassi):** No, I am not a lawyer, I am a doctor. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, I would like to thank you on behalf of my colleagues for the opportunity of presenting our brief. The first Greek immigrants to Québec arrived over 100 years ago. Our Greek community will soon begin its second century. In this sense, our community is an integral part of Québec society. We have parents buried in Québec and children who were born in Québec.

We are Quebecers.

In order to discover the feelings and position of the Greek community, the Congrès hellénique assumed responsibility for determining the viewpoints and opinions of the Québec Greek community about the eventual establishment of a new political relationship between Québec and Canada. Following long discussions and consultations on the current constitutional impasse, our community saw that there were two aspects to consider: on the one hand, Québec's evolution as a distinct society and, on the other, the type of relationship that we would like Québec to have with the rest of Canada. It goes without saying that the Greeks of Québec can historically identify with the aspirations of Francophone Quebecers to preserve and expand their culture and language. As a cultural community, we have a long history, almost 4000 years. Thus, for our community, the issue, given the constitutional impasse, is to examine the options presented to us, I mean independence, sovereignty with an economic association with the rest of Canada and renewed federalism.

Our brief is structured around the five following points: the first, the Greek community recognizes that Québec is a distinct society and that it has the right to promote this distinct character; the second, collective rights must be promoted in harmony with, and not at the expense of, individual rights; the third, the Greek community wishes that Québec, in turn, would recognize the distinct character of each cultural community and that it would maintain or increase its financial support for the development of each of them; fourth, that the Greek community, like other cultural communities, considers itself an entirely separate component of Québec society and hopes that Québec would recognize this fact by concrete action; fifth, the Congrès hellénique is in favour of a new Canadian federalism. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now move on to questions and will begin with Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue; right after him, Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased and honoured to see you here and, above all, to see just how involved you are in the community. I will ask you two short questions since the Chairman has asked us to be brief. You are in Québec and you maintain, and I see this often because I spend time with your groups, your culture, your traditions, you retain your language, and still manage to have a comfortable life in Québec. Are we to understand that this is what you want for Québec as regards Canada? Your situation, you, as a Greek community in Québec, Québec as a Francophone community, in quotation marks, as a distinct society in the rest

of Canada.

**Mr. Katsalkas:** Perhaps we should take a step back and say that as soon as there is a certain arrangement between Québec and the rest of Canada, the next obvious step is an arrangement between the cultural communities and Québec.

**Mr. Hogue:** My second question, which is also very short. How would the new rationalized distribution of powers in what you present be different from what exists now?

**Mr. Katsalkas:** It's obvious, Mr. Hogue, that we can... and I believe that I can divide your question into two smaller questions. I believe there are two problems here. The first problem is what to do to ensure that Québec feels at ease within the Canadian federation and, at the same time, preserve the country's economy. In medicine we would say: We have to do something good, without causing something bad.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Hogue. We will now move on to Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Congrès hellénique du Québec. We often have the mistaken impression that the Greek community in Québec associates exclusively with the Anglophone community. Today, the Greek community is a community that is very open and very well - integrated, in harmony, with the Francophone community, while maintaining important links with other minorities and also while maintaining its strong attachment to its culture. But my question is the following: Mr. Chairman, the Greek community, which is a community very loyal to Canada, what would its reaction be if, one day - and I say if, in quotation marks - Québec achieved sovereignty?

**Mr. Angelopoulos (Basile):** First of all, I would have to say that the loyalty of the Greek community to Canada does not mean that we are closer to Anglophones than to Francophones. We see ourselves as a community, we see ourselves as Quebecers, as Canadians who have certain ideas about the country and about Québec and about our community. The assumption you mentioned just now, of our being closer to the Anglophone community, I believe, is unjustified, since our history demonstrates clearly that even before laws, for example in the area of education, even before Bill 101 and Bill 22, etc., we took the initiative of joining the Francophone system because we felt that was the way to go. To return to the other part of your

question, what will the Greek community do if Québec becomes independent, of course, as in any group, any society, there will be more extremist elements who will, perhaps, decide to leave Québec, perhaps that is fair considering such a political structure. But in general, I believe that Greeks will surely take the time to understand and see how their economic and social interests will be served in a new political structure. And only when they have seen the extent to which those interests are served will they make their decision to leave or stay. Where they will go, I don't know, because it is not a question of going... I don't know if, afterward, there will be a Canada that people will be able to move to.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's it? We will now move on to Mr. Maciocia.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Congrès hellénique for having presented a brief to the Commission. It is very important, as I said just last week, that cultural communities participate in a concrete and realistic fashion in the constitutional and political future of Québec. In your brief, you speak of, you analyse, the three options: independence, sovereignty-association and renewed federalism. You take a clear stand for renewed federalism, but you say at the same time there is overlapping and also doubling-up in some sectors, some areas, between the provincial government and the federal government. My first question is this: In what area should Québec have more powers or exclusive powers?

**Mr. Angelopoulos:** I'll start by saying that with the current process, at least as we see it, it is more a question of redefining or redistributing powers between the federal government and the provinces, and perhaps most especially as regards Québec. The current division of powers dates back to 1867, and here we are, just a few years later; it's obvious the suit no longer fits, so we should go back to the tailor. And I think that's the process we're embarked upon.

As for the new division of powers, this neo-federalism, it is certain that Québec must have all the powers, all the jurisdiction allowing it to assure its culture, the survival of its culture, the survival of its language and of its distinct character. From this perspective, it is difficult for us to say exactly what jurisdictions should be transferred, but I know, for example, that communications, immigration, which has already been discussed at length, are jurisdictions that Québec needs to ensure its future within the Canadian context.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Yes, of course, The Chairman

spoke about immigration. According to you, should Québec have exclusive jurisdiction to choose its immigrants who wish to come to Québec, exclusive power?

**Mr. Angelopoulos:** That would have to be negotiated.

**Mr. Maciocia:** But negotiated with who?

**Mr. Angelopoulos:** With the federal government and at the same time... This is the principal means of ensuring that Québec, within the federal context, will be certain of, and unworried about, its cultural and linguistic development. Before answering these questions, we have to sit down and discuss the principles and powers that Québec needs so that it is comfortable within the Canadian federation.

**Mr. Maciocia:** It is exactly within this context that I placed my question. Do you believe - given that you know the situation in Québec somewhat, Québec's demographics, the possibilities open to Québec to maintain, say, its distinct Francophone character - is there, in your opinion - and the question is very important, especially for a community such as yours which has integrated so fully into Québec, and which represents a vitally important aspect of Québec society and economy - don't you believe that at a certain point you must more or less say to the Commission whether or not Québec should have exclusive powers over immigration?

**Mr. Angelopoulos:** Yes, the answer is yes, if at the same time Greeks will be allowed to come to Québec.

**Mr. Maciocia:** I don't think there will be any problem with that. Mr. Chairman, one more question. You mentioned Québec sovereignty at one point. You said that... You seemed to be hinting that Québec sovereignty, unlike the other options, might lead other groups to seek sovereignty for themselves. And you spoke of Amerindians. What other groups do you think could at one point, if Québec eventually achieves sovereignty, could make the same demand on cultural sovereignty?

**Mr. Angelopoulos:** I think that, for the moment, Amerindians are enough. What will happen in a sovereign Québec is difficult to foretell. But one group which clearly has the same historical links with this land, perhaps even more historic than we Quebecers, Canadians, Greeks. Therefore, it's easy to see that group demanding some sovereignty at one point.

As for other groups...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Unfortunately, our time is up. As long as you

haven't... You said that was the only one you saw.

**Mr. Angelopoulos:** The only one, yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Okay, Mrs. Pauline Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you in turn and, perhaps just to remind you, for you surely know, but perhaps it will be new to other members of the Commission, that a Quebecer, a member of your community, Mrs. Nadia Assimopoulos, has held, for almost five years, the second most important position in our political system. And I have to tell you that she has done her job with great panache.

Having said this, I was particularly, we were particularly happy to read your brief and especially pleased, obviously, about your support for the recognition of Francophone Quebecers' goals for Québec.

Having said this, in your brief, you mention on page 7, the fact that, "We must move from a situation where 'speaking French is mandatory' to a situation where, on the contrary, 'speaking French becomes natural'." I generally agree with this policy, that French has to become natural, but what steps do you feel we have to take to reach such a point?

**Mr. Katsalkas:** Madam, I must say that we are proud of Mrs. Assimopoulos...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Katsalkas:** ...and...

**Mrs. Marois:** I'm sure you are.

**Mr. Katsalkas:** ...at the same time, I believe we have to point out that there are members of our community who have problems even with Greek. Therefore, if suddenly you were to say, "As of tomorrow morning, you have to function in French." There's a problem there. What we are saying is that it is up to us to find a way to be a little more flexible with these people and, at the same time, find ways to teach them French and help them function in a French environment.

**Mrs. Marois:** To that end, don't you believe that French becoming the language of the workplace for a large majority of people could create the proper conditions so that we don't see such a reality as something mandated, but as a natural, normal occurrence, being accepted in its own right, if you will?

**Mr. Katsalkas:** The answer is yes. We must say that, as a community, we have already shown

that we are able to adapt very well.

**Mrs. Marois:** O.K., I agree. Two more questions. First, a comment. On page 8 of your document, you say: "The Greek community hopes that Québec, in turn, will recognize the distinct character of each cultural community...". It would perhaps be interesting to remember here that - and it's the Commission des droits de la personne saying it - in the Québec Charter of Rights, which is completely different than the one that applies in the rest of Canada, we have entrenched economic and social rights and, among others, the right of ethnic minorities to maintain their culture, which means that not only can you hope for it, but it is already recognized in the Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Therefore, your proposal with regard to the status that you want for Québec in the future is a renewed federalism. Mr. Maciocia asked some questions about this earlier.

Personally, my question is the following: How... what means will allow us to effectively renew federalism, considering the failures we have known in the past, and particularly the final failure, that of Meech Lake? What measures do you recommend or do you think you'd like to see us choose to proceed with the renewal of the federation since this is the viewpoint you are defending?

**Mr. Katsalkas:** Madam, to paraphrase Louis XIV, it is a little difficult to believe after Meech Lake comes the deluge. But, if that is the case, I believe that we will have to renegotiate because if we become independent we will have to negotiate, if we want sovereignty-association, we will have to negotiate and if we remain in Canada, we will have to negotiate. No matter what, we must negotiate, and perhaps the only thing we can change is the context in which the negotiations take place.

**Mrs. Marois:** Should we look for a mandate by referendum to do this?

**Mr. Katsalkas:** Yes, because there is a principle of democracy here. The principle of democracy is that the majority may carry out its mandate as long as the rights of the minority are respected. But, at the same time, I have to say that if independence becomes a fact, don't expect Greeks to be lining up the next day to exchange their Canadian passports for Québec passports.

**Mrs. Marois:** O.K.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Michel Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** A very brief comment. I would particularly like to thank the Greek community for the quality of the French text you submitted to us. We have to read a number of briefs as you will realize. Certain are a test of our virtue and intelligence. Yours was very well written. I am not speaking of either the conclusions or content for the moment, but of the quality of the presentation. The language was clear, it read well and was easy to understand, it was a pleasant change from some others and I congratulate you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I would like to thank the gentlemen from the Congrès hellénique du Québec for having come to share your enlightening thoughts with this Commission on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:22 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:26 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Order, please! We will continue. We will now hear from the Montréal chapter of the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India. Could you please identify yourself and introduce the people accompanying you.

**Mr. Daniel (David Jaykar):** Thank you. From the far side, Dr. Petros, Dr. Pinto, Mrs. Shanta Srivastava, Dr. Jakhu, Dr. Gowrisankaran and Dr. Daniel.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Daniel, you have a half hour for discussion with us. You have five minutes to present your brief and after that there will be questions from members.

#### National Association of Canadians of Origins in India (Montréal Chapter)

**Mr. Gowrisankaran (C.):** I am Mr. Gowrisankaran. I would like to say a few words. First, the creation of a non-partisan Commission to explore Québec's future after the death of the Meech Lake Accord is remarkable. It's an excellent idea. However, we regret the exclusion of Native peoples, that is, Amerindians, as well as women's groups and groups of particularly visible minorities.

The Indian community, for the most part, has been here for 25 years. We decided to come here to live in Québec because we liked the French culture, and we are here by choice. Québec's future concerns us too. We believe that

the French fact is recognized not only as part of Québec, but also of Canada as a whole. When we travel outside of our country, anywhere at all, even in Japan and China, Canada is viewed as a bilingual country, with French and English.

Today, the French language and the French culture in our lives are much stronger than they were, let's say, 25 years ago, not only in Québec, but in Canada. A remarkable percentage of young people are learning French throughout this great country from sea to sea. Obviously, the federal government has done much to strengthen and develop the French fact in Canada. Québec has also made a great contribution, and Quebecers will continue to play a major role in Canada. If Québec were to become an independent country, with or without sovereignty-association, we believe that the new Canada would become a unilingual country. Obviously, we have much to lose with an English-speaking country. Throughout the world, the trend is to strengthen economic ties rather than forming political associations. This is obvious in Europe, in Africa, in Asia, etc. But here in Canada, we have an existing federal system, which may be imperfect but why abandon it and try to replace it with a new system, let's say, sovereignty-association? We firmly believe that the separation of Québec from the rest of Canada would not remedy current ills. In fact, this would only aggravate the situation, exacerbating it through the termination of the contract, increase and discomfort; it will cause greater problems. Before finishing, I think my colleague, Mr. Pinto, will say a few words in English.

**Mr. Pinto (Francis N.):** J'aimerais ajouter à ce qu'a dit M. Gowrisankaran que la Commission devrait peut-être accorder beaucoup d'attention au fait qu'au niveau national, aussi bien qu'au niveau international, nous devenons de plus en plus interdépendants. Deuxièmement, que la diversité des peuples, des cultures et des langues est de plus en plus reconnue. Etant donné cette diversité et cette interdépendance, peut-être la Commission devrait-elle chercher à donner à la province une structure qui permettrait à chaque individu d'évoluer et de se développer, et qui permettrait aux groupes de se trouver une identité propre et de contribuer au développement de la province et du pays. Le Québec a apporté une énorme contribution, non seulement au développement du peuple québécois, mais aussi à l'ensemble du Canada.

Les Québécois ont contribué aux événements importants qui se sont produits dans tout le pays, et je crois que le Québec a un très grand rôle à jouer dans l'avenir, non seulement dans l'avenir de la province, mais aussi dans l'avenir du pays. Par conséquent, je nous exhorte, lorsque nous prendrons nos décisions, de garder à l'esprit l'intérêt des citoyens plutôt que les

intérêts de groupes particuliers, de sorte que quelles que soient le partage qui s'établit entre le gouvernement fédéral et le gouvernement provincial, l'intérêt primordial est l'intérêt des citoyens. Merci.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Merci, Monsieur. We will begin with Mr. Maciocia.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Mr. Daniel for the brief you presented before this Commission. As I said earlier to the Greek committee, it's very important for the cultural committees to actively participate in Québec's political and constitutional future. In your brief... I'll get on with my questions immediately because we don't have very much time. You said at one point that Québec has been able to flourish within the Canadian federation in a truly harmonious manner, and we agree with that. With certain imperfections, which are probably at the root of the problems we are currently experiencing.

You state at one point that Québec has played a major role in the choice of immigrants since 1971. I must correct you somewhat, I believe that it's been since 1978, with the Cullen-Couture immigration accord. But you know very well that, even with this accord, Québec still doesn't have total power over immigration because, with this accord, it definitely has the opportunity to choose its immigrants abroad, immigrants... But immigrants who have already arrived, refugees and others, still fall under federal jurisdiction. In your opinion, should Québec, in the current situation - and I believe that you are not leaving enough room, but enough for a renewal of federalism with new powers for Québec - in this context - I'm asking the same question I asked the Congrès héliénique - in your opinion, should Québec hold all powers over immigration?

**Mr. Daniel:** Obviously, the question of immigration is highly interesting to Québec and is very important. So, I think that my colleague, Mr. Pinto, will answer your question in English.

**Mr. Pinto:** En ce qui concerne la question de l'immigration, je crois que le Québec a signé, depuis 1971, plusieurs ententes avec le gouvernement fédéral; ces ententes ont donné au Québec un certain nombre de responsabilités dans ce domaine, et je crois qu'il est légitime de dire que la culture sociale et le profil économique du type d'immigrants qui viennent au Québec devraient permettre à la province de jouer un plus grand rôle, non seulement dans la sélection, mais aussi dans la formation de ces immigrants. Mais, en même temps, il faut nous rappeler que dans le contexte actuel d'une fédération, si l'immigration relevait entièrement de la province,

cela signifierait que la province serait encore plus séparée du reste du pays; par conséquent, il devrait y avoir un équilibre entre les responsabilités qui sont exercées par le Québec et par le gouvernement fédéral. Ainsi, les exigences relatives à la sécurité et à la santé devraient relever du fédéral, ceci uniquement à titre d'exemple. Par conséquent, il est possible dans les circonstances actuelles de négocier des ententes avec le gouvernement fédéral pour obtenir des pouvoirs qu'il est nécessaire de détenir si l'on veut choisir le type de citoyen ou le type de résident que la province désire accueillir. Merci.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Sir, a short question. Yes, there's another aspect that I wanted to touch on, Mr. Daniel, you talked about the amending formula, the constitutional formula. After the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, how can you assert that the constitutional amending formula is practically the principal avenue to a more appropriate division of powers? You know that Meech Lake with Québec's five conditions failed, yet you are telling us today that the constitutional amending formula which is currently within the Constitution is the appropriate avenue or the principal avenue to the division of powers, even after Meech Lake failed. Is... Could you explain a little bit about this to us in... very quickly?

**A voice:** Mr. Jaykar will answer the question.

**Mr. Daniel:** Please allow me to explain in English. Je crois qu'il est possible de négocier avec le gouvernement fédéral, et nous le croyons; toute la question de la sélection et de la formation devrait...

**A voice:** Could you perhaps ask the question again?

**Mr. Maciocia:** That's fine. O.K. Great.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. We will now turn to Mrs. Jeanne Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Mr. Chairman... are there, and to tell you that I am pleased to count one of your compatriots, Dr. Guha, who is assistant dean of research and education at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, among my friends. I will begin by correcting what seems to me to be a false statement in your brief. You say on page 11 of your brief that the mandate, that the "current leaders of the Parti québécois proclaim that a majority won by the Parti québécois during a provincial election would be considered as a mandate to declare independence." I understand that you aren't fully acquainted with the Parti québécois platform, so this is a false

statement, and I will perhaps take the liberty of sending you, if you wish, the Parti québécois platform. Now, I've come to my questions, and I do have several, but I'll begin with one on page 7 of your brief which bothered me a little. You equate economic union with political union, and you say that "economic union presupposes the existence of a viable political union", whereas we already have an economic union through free trade with the United States, and there is no political union. What has led you to such a conclusion? On page 7 of your brief, 7.03, in section 7.03.

While you find it in your notes, I could perhaps ask a second question. Because I see that time is passing and this will... Do you recognize that there is such a thing as a Québec people, and do you recognize this people's right to expect, the right to demand that Quebecers live and speak in French?

**Mr. Pinto:** Oui, je crois que la réponse à cette question est évidente, d'avoir le droit de vivre en français. Mais je ne vois pas le rapport avec l'union économique et politique.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** No, that was another question. In fact, there were two questions. Let's get back to the second. Because I think that it's what is fundamental in the debate we are holding today. As Quebecers, Canadians living in Québec, do you recognize that a Québec people, French-speaking, exists, and that this people has the right to expect and demand that those who live in its territory work and speak in French?

**Mr. Pinto:** La réponse est évidente.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Yes. You spoke to us about the advantages of federalism, and you mentioned the agreement concluded between Québec and Canada on immigration. You probably know that there is currently an agreement which would increase Québec's powers over immigration and which was to have been signed the day after the Meech Lake Accord failed, and is still pending and, according to information sent to us from the federal immigration and labour department, the only reason why this agreement has not been signed is because Canada, the federal government is waiting for another province to also be willing to sign the accord, so that people wouldn't get the impression that the government was negotiating one on one. In such a context, how can you think that Québec can control its immigration policies, and how can you think that we have some chance of increasing Québec's powers in other sectors of activity such as those you mention?

**Mr. Pinto:** Je crois que nous pouvons partager des attitudes dans une négociation. Depuis 1971, le Québec a signé trois ententes

avec le gouvernement fédéral, et je crois que les négociations sont possibles. La Constitution ou l'arrangement n'est pas coulé dans le béton, il est souple. Tout est possible avec la confiance mutuelle et l'échange. Mais il faut garder à l'esprit le bien-être de la région, le bien-être des provinces et les intérêts particuliers de chaque province. Alors, je ne crois pas que nous puissions donner de suggestions définitives. Je ne crois pas que ce soit le but de ce forum. Je crois que ces questions doivent être examinées à la lumière des principes qui découleront de ces délibérations.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Blackburn, unfortunately your time is up. We now turn to Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India, I would like to thank you for not only having the excellent idea of submitting a brief, but also for accepting the Commission's invitation to testify before us. I think that your presence here, at the Commission, as well as that of the Congrès hellénique du Québec this morning, and, previously, the testimony which was also given before the Commission by the Canadian-Italian Business and Professional Men's Association constitute significant testimony and points of view which must be heard by this Commission and which, if you'll allow me to say so, fully legitimize the existence of this Commission. I know that some of you would perhaps have liked to sit around the table, but the fact that ethnic groups were invited to voice their point of view and to testify before the Commission shows a great spirit of cooperation on the part of the Commission members. I can assure you that there is a concern - I cannot speak for all Commission members, but certainly for a very large majority of Commission members, that's what I felt - a desire to wholly respect the rights of each of you and to assure you that, regardless of Québec's future political context, the rights of those who live in Québec will be protected.

There is an aspect of your brief which interests me, and you have made a recommendation which I would like you to discuss in further detail. You expressed certain difficulties, certain concerns regarding the "notwithstanding" clause of the Canadian Constitution, and you suggested that our Commission should recommend that this "notwithstanding" clause be removed from the Constitution in future constitutional talks. Should this clause not be removed, you talk about a sort of National Council which would - and that's on page 15 if you take a look at your brief - you talk about a National Council which would have the sole authority to justify the use of the "notwithstanding" clause and to interpret

reasonable limits. What do you mean by that exactly? Who would be called upon to sit on this National Council, and how do you view the existence of this National Council in relation to the courts?

**Mr. Singal (Ramesh):** I would like to introduce myself. I am Mr. Ramesh Singal. I am a member of the Indian community, so I will help out the community if I may. Thank you. First, I will answer Mr. Ouellet's first question. The question that was asked regarding the Commission's legitimacy. The community thought that, in a society, there is a social contract, and all components of Québec society must be a part of this social contract. As we have already written to the offices of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition on the presence of representatives of cultural committees as they stand, it is normal for us to question the legitimacy of a commission which will study an issue as important as the political and constitutional future of Québec, at which one of the largest components, and a growing component, will not be present. So, it's because of this that we, in the cultural communities, are strongly questioning the Commission's legitimacy.

Finally, in the last phase, when you write your brief, when you prepare your report for presentation and submission, at that time there really won't be any true representatives of our group, of the cultural communities as they stand, of the body of minority, ethnic and racial communities, and I see that as a shortcoming. So, it is normal for a group which is excluded despite the wishes of all these groups to be present and to question the legitimacy of the Commission as it stands. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Robert Libman, you have the floor.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Are you going to answer my question? I'm sorry.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Unfortunately, your time is up, Mr. Ouellet, by at least... by over... Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a great pleasure to welcome the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India and thank you for your courageous presentation.

Votre collectivité a joué et continuera de jouer un rôle très important dans notre province et notre pays. J'ai deux courtes questions à vous poser. Voici la première. Dans l'éventualité où le Québec aurait sa propre constitution, que cette constitution soit compatible avec le système fédéral ou qu'il s'agisse d'une constitution pour un Québec souverain, cette constitution pourrait éventuellement constituer ce

contrat social que nous recherchons. Mais dans cette constitution, parmi les droits que votre collectivité voudrait voir inclure, y aurait-il la liberté de choisir la langue d'enseignement pour vos enfants? Quels sont les droits que vous aimeriez voir inclure dans une constitution québécoise?

**Mr. Pinto:** Nous aimerions que les droits fondamentaux soient plus sûrs. Il pourrait y avoir une autorité qui veillerait à ce que les droits individuels soient protégés. Deuxièmement, nous aimerions voir des mesures de formation, spécialement pour les minorités, et plus particulièrement les minorités de couleur. Troisièmement, nous aimerions voir que les peuples autochtones du pays ont des rôles importants à jouer dans l'évolution économique et politique de la province et du pays. Merci Monsieur.

**Mr. Gowrisankaran:** ...le droit à l'éducation dans une langue donnée est très important dans le contexte actuel.

**Mr. Singal:** I would perhaps add, Mr. Libman, if I may, that for the community, it isn't the choice that's important. It's the possibility of understanding English in addition to French. That would be something that we would want. But, that doesn't mean that we will choose between English and French. We recognize the necessity of learning French. You have seen the difficulty the community has. We would want young people especially to be Francophones so that they could be fully integrated into the Québec community. There is no doubt about that and we want to be clear about that. Thank you.

**Mr. Libman:** D'accord. Alors cela signifie l'enchâssement dans une charte des droits, sans clause extraordinaire. Voici maintenant ma deuxième question: Croyez-vous que si le Québec se sépare du reste du Canada, les citoyens de votre pays d'origine désireront autant qu'avant immigrer au Québec, ou auront-ils tendance à se diriger plutôt vers le reste du Canada?

**Mr. Daniel:** Notre réponse serait oui. Ce n'est pas que la langue qui nous attire ici. Le Québec est un pays qui favorise la protection des droits et qui offre beaucoup de possibilités sur les plans culturel et économique. Ainsi, je dirais que les citoyens de l'Inde seront tout aussi attirés par le Québec si celui-ci devient indépendant. Évidemment, nous nous inquiéterons si nos droits ne sont pas protégés. Il est naturel que si le reste du Canada offre une plus grande protection, les citoyens de l'Inde seront davantage attirés par ce pays. Il s'agit là d'une question purement hypothétique, puisque nous ne savons pas encore quel genre de structure sera

mise en place.

**Mr. Singal:** In fact, I could add that the Indian community is present in all countries around the world, and an independent Québec will not necessarily be excluded from Indian immigration. Indians are peoples who are travellers, who like to go to different countries and who like to experience various cultures. So, an independent country would not necessarily be excluded from Indian immigration. You can be sure of that. However, there is a linguistic affinity, and I don't know if you are aware of that. Even in India, there are 22 universities which teach French. There are also universities which are either entirely or partially Francophone. India is part of the organization of international universities which are entirely or partly Francophone. There is a part of India, called Pondichery, which is Francophone. So, there are still people who are either already Francophones or want to become French-speaking like myself; I learned French here. I did not speak a word of French before coming here. So, there is a possibility that these people will continue to immigrate, given the opportunity and the standard of living and the quality of life that Québec will have to offer.

**Mr. Libman:** O.K., fine. So the basic criterion is the entrenchment of a charter of rights and freedoms without a "notwithstanding" clause.

**Mr. Singal:** Well, we want to fully and wholly participate in Québec society, regardless of the choice that is ultimately made by Quebecers.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman. You may use the Chair's time, Mr. Ouellet, if you want to go back to your second question.

**Mr. Ouellet:** You are kind, Mr. Chairman, but what I asked is that, should the "notwithstanding" clause not be removed, you suggest setting up a National Council. Would this be a court, or would it be a body that is independent of the judicial system? What exactly are you suggesting?

**Mr. Singal:** Mr. Ouellet, we would prefer not to have the "notwithstanding" clause. Because, really, if we recognize fundamental rights, there is no "notwithstanding" clause. This having been said, I cannot go into detail about this concept because I wasn't there when this detail was decided upon. But I am sure that, if there are any questions, we will still be able to send you our answers later. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank

you. Mr. Daniel, Gentlemen of the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India, thank you for your contribution to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, and bear in mind one thing: if Mr. Larose had been here this morning, he would have told you that all Commission members are concerned about protecting your rights. Thank you.

**Mr. Singal:** ...not counting as well as Mr. Larose either.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will resume at 2:00 p.m. with the Conseil québécois du théâtre.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:57 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:11 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies, Gentlemen, our work continues. We will now hear from the Conseil québécois du théâtre, and the hearing will last one hour. I would like to remind you of the speaking times: 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Opposition, 25 minutes for the other members, with a maximum of 5 members per member, 5 minutes for the Chair and 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief.

Before giving you the floor, Mr. Chouinard, I would like to make a correction. I was informed that, this morning, when we heard the Association des notaires de Laval, the Chamber of Notaries did indeed table a brief before the Commission. That was this morning's question. So, Mr. Holden was right. Mr. Chouinard, if you would introduce your colleagues.

#### **Conseil québécois du théâtre**

**Mr. Chouinard (Normand):** Certainly. Well then, Mr. Chairman, you have, on my left, Catherine Bégin, actress and president of the Conseil québécois du théâtre from 1987 to 1990; on my right, René-Daniel Dubois, author, actor, director and president of the Centre des auteurs dramatiques, he is also author of the report; Rémi Boucher, on my far left, member of the Conseil québécois du théâtre and director of the Maison québécoise du théâtre pour l'enfance et la jeunesse, and lastly, Pierre MacDuff, director general of the Conseil québécois du théâtre. My name is Normand Chouinard, I am an actor and president of the Conseil.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well then, welcome to the Political Commission on the Future of Québec. You have the floor for ten minutes.

**Mr. Chouinard:** Thank you. Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. As Quebecers, what do we believe in? This is the fundamental question for our future, which must take precedence over all others, including those pertaining to the Constitution. What do we believe in?

The Conseil québécois du théâtre represents Québec's entire professional theatre community, administrators, authors, designers, artistic directors, performers, puppeteers, producers, teachers, all the trade associations, theatre companies and everyone in the field of theatre. The Conseil québécois du théâtre, for its part, maintains that the fundamental values which should be upheld by Québec, first and foremost, are social justice and Québec's unique culture. The Conseil recommends the immediate launching of phase 2 of the Quiet Revolution, targeting the promotion of social justice, cultural renewal and, eventually, Québec's independence.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** The brief submitted by the Conseil to the Commission is a cry of alarm. It shows that the predominant values of a significant proportion of contemporary Québec, values which reflect narrow-minded materialism, excluding almost entirely any recourse to intellectual activity, art and, in general, anything that does not promise immediate gratification, have, for almost 30 years, prevented the development of a veritable collective project, and that the realities created by Québec's espousal of these values could result in the disappearance, in the near future, in a historical sense, of the distinctive characteristics of the Québec people, particularly their language, if such a disappearance of our culture has not already begun.

**Mr. Dubois (René-Daniel):** It also shows that these values impede the energetic promotion of the objectives established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Especially the full recognition of humanity's equality in dignity and rights and the duty to act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**Mr. Chouinard:** Québec is unique in North America because it is the only remaining society to have maintained its essentially Francophone character, since others, over time, have more or less lost this character without the Canadian federal government having tried to stop this erosion, on the contrary in fact.

**Mr. Dubois:** Québec's cultural uniqueness is not based solely on its French character, but also on the combative, militant aspect of this French character and the importance traditionally granted to "being" rather than "having." Identification with our culture means contributing to the mutual fund of Québec

culture, which is made up of all Quebecers' memories and aspirations, regardless of their origin, and is expressed in French.

**Mr. Chouinard:** Daniel Johnson, senior, said in 1965: It should be noted that the fundamental element of a nation is not race, but culture.

**Mr. Dubois:** Québec can only define itself culturally, but...

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** ...but, if Québec culture has developed, it has been more thanks to individual investment by intellectuals, the artists themselves and their allies in society, insofar as their resources allowed, than investment by the Québec State, which should have been in this field, as it has succeeded being in others, such as the economy for example, the chosen representative of the collectivity and its aspirations. According to UNESCO, a society of less than 10 million inhabitants cannot allow its culture to be defined solely by the rules of the market. To develop, it needs committed State support. In Québec, the essence of this support has always been, and continues to be, lacking.

**Mr. Dubois:** Québec artists and intellectuals must deal with a State which is supposed to support their activities designed to ensure the survival and development of our culture, but they are destined to realize, from generation to generation, that the values upheld by this State repudiate their own.

**Mr. Chouinard:** Québec has never invested massively in its culture but has always led us to believe, despite the facts, that it did.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** Any identification with a culture is a struggle. To renounce the risks incurred by belonging to a culture is to renounce the culture itself.

**Mr. Dubois:** The struggle for cultural development is inextricably linked to that for social justice. Québec is, superficially, perhaps more enriched, united and confident than ever. However, we believe that, under the surface, it is actually in a miserable state, so much so that everyone seems to have given up hope, especially young people. The growing number of homeless, overcrowding in school and college classrooms, the appetite displayed by a number of Québec industrialists over the past few years for arms contracts, the years of delay in State promotion of the condom through sheer prudishness and during a full-fledged AIDS epidemic, and the rise of poverty are only a few samples of a frighteningly rich harvest in the portrait of modern-day Québec.

**Mr. Chouinard:** We feel that it is terrible for a society to stop trying, with all its might, to become just.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** We believe that Québec's focus on American values is based on a dangerous illusion because it leaves us open to the excesses of triumphant liberalism, but also because these values are irreconcilable with our people's will to survive. A North American people, except for those living in the USA, is not profitable, at least not by American standards.

**Mr. Dubois:** Who recalls that the creation of the ministère des Affaires culturelles was the priority issue on the 1960 Liberal agenda, that of the Quiet Revolution? That the father of the Quiet Revolution, Georges-Émile Lapalme, felt it was urgent to launch it on a grand scale, this Department, in 1959, that he used the expression "Herculean task" to refer to our cultural development? Not survival, not making ends meet, but development.

**Mr. Chouinard:** Who recalls that Jean Lesage, upon founding the Department in 1961, condemned narrow-minded materialism and spoke of French-Canadian civilization? Civilization. Who recalls that three years later, Lapalme resigned from the ministère des Affaires culturelles because he was denied the resources to carry out the urgent projects he had described five years earlier?

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** Who recalls that in 1976, Jean-Paul L'Allier said that the Department's first 15 years had been frustrating, that he said: Time is passing, renew, multiply, the time for action is now? Who recalls that his project, too, was ploughed under?

**Mr. Dubois:** Poet... Who realizes that the small shock he or she just felt upon hearing the word "poet", as if it was absurd to utter it in such a setting, that this small shock speaks volumes? Even though Vaclav Havel is president of Czechoslovakia, François Mitterand writes, Solzhenitsyn is a symbol, and Lamartine and Malraux were both ministers? It's true that Gérard Godin was as well, but only at the tail end of a mandate and with the same limited resources as those denounced by Lapalme and L'Allier.

We believe it is time to stop turning away hospitals, homes and schools on one hand, and the arts and intellectual activities on the other. Despite the cultural rather than economic risks presented by this option, three fundamental reasons justify, in our opinion, Québec's move toward independence. First, Québec must, for the first time in its history, take a collective, positive step toward self-assertion and

emancipation.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** Second, Québec must carve out its niche along with other nations of average importance, in its capacity as peacemaker, and as a non-dominating, peace-loving, ecological nation.

**Mr. Chouinard:** Third, Québec must, insofar as it decides to perpetuate itself, detach itself from the Canadian whole, which means giving it full jurisdiction over all the levers necessary to assume responsibility for its unique culture, only insofar as Québec intends to exploit these levers and not leave them dormant. If Québec does not intend to initiate its cultural revolution, gaining independence would only mean quicker assimilation by the United States.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** Having learned from past mistakes, we want to put you on your guard against yet another one. Would a sovereign Québec continue to support a social democratic trend, especially if it attempted to demonstrate once again, based on the United States model, that it is a skilled manager?

**Mr. Chouinard:** The fundamental nature of economists' tenets, which their followers would have us believe infallible, must receive an answer.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** First, economic development is a means of obtaining resources to carry out a task. In Québec, this task is to ensure the survival of our ancestral past, the development and expansion of our culture and the establishment of a just society open to the world.

**Mr. Dubois:** Second, Québec's economic development was made possible by the start-up of the Quiet Revolution which was supported by society as a whole. The victories chalked up by some and supported by all must benefit the entire collectivity.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** What Québec's unique culture most needs is an open, forthright discussion.

**Mr. Chouinard:** What do we wish to defend, and what price are we willing to pay to defend what we claim is essential? These are the only truly fundamental, urgent questions for the moment, because they are the only ones whose response, whatever it may be, will eventually be unable to change anything in any case, for a long time.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** Management doesn't create anything; it only manages. Under optimal conditions, it can support creation. But the

management which dominates the imagination of our leaders does the contrary; it kills hope. If Québec wants not only to live but to develop culturally, it needs hope. Countries cannot live by markets alone.

**Mr. Dubois:** Vercors wrote: "Humanity is not a condition to be suffered; it is a dignity to be acquired." Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Mr. Boulérice, who is sitting in for Mrs. Louise Harel, will be the first to take the floor.

**Mr. Boulérice:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will allow myself, as an opening gambit, a few brief comments and, of course, a number of questions. You may suspect that I read your brief with great attention and interest, having been responsible for this area in the National Assembly almost continuously for the last five years. You quoted many white papers, but I noticed that, unfortunately, you left out one, tabled by Dr. Laurin, former Secretary of State for Cultural Development, and written under the supervision of Professor Dumont, president of the Unstated québécois de recherche sur la culture. Therefore, I think it would have been worth quoting.

I won't deny that some of your statements, I wouldn't go so far as to say injured, even hurt me somewhat with regard to my political party. I would just like to remind you, in a spirit of goodwill, that when we came — my political party — to power, the budget for culture was 0.42 %, when we left it was 0.75 %, and today it is at 0.77 %. And that, unfortunately — I was going to say "you" but I think I'll say "we" instead, since I identify strongly with your struggles — we have not yet reached 1 %.

Having said this, my question, inspired by the Conseil de la culture de la Montérégie and the Mouvement national des Québécois, you link Quebecers' political choice to the need to define a collective project. To describe this project, you use an expression I find very interesting, which is "phase 2 of the Quiet Revolution." Moreover, you state that this collective project should focus on two fundamental objectives, social justice and the cultural revolution, this is on page 64, I believe, of your brief.

Could you perhaps comment a bit on the need to define a project common to all Quebecers? Who, when, what?

**Mr. Dubois:** What we believe, maybe this will correspond to the first part of your comments, Mr. Boulérice, is that on one hand, the negligible variations in the needs of the cultural and intellectual fields since the early 1960s, namely, these negligible variations, have not really fundamentally changed conditions. And this is why we feel that another Quiet

Revolution for the cause of culture and social justice is essential. In our opinion, it is not enough to simply rearrange things, because we'll never finish if we continue at this rate. It must be a priority objective, and we believe that culture should be one of the Québec State's main concerns, because the uniqueness of Québec culture is the only thing that enables us to define the essence of Québec.

**Mr. Chouinard:** That probably also reflects, in the tenets of today's politicians, of politicians who are looking to the year 2000, open-mindedness and the possibility that discussions not be conducted solely in economic terms. And this is obviously not what we hear in today's political circles. And the importance to be granted to a department is one thing, but what is also important is the way we perceive overall collective life in Québec in the 1990s and into the 21st century. We don't sense this in current discussions because they focus heavily on the economy, and we can't deny that.

**Mr. Boulerville:** Am I summing up your comments correctly when I say that culture is not a luxury or a whim, but one of a people's essential life qualities?

**Mr. Chouinard:** We demand the establishment of this people, but we actors, actresses, theatre people, and artists in general are not used to wasting words when we speak of culture because we experience it, we live it. It's very easy for us, we don't see it as a good deed. We are asking politicians to go one step further and realize that culture is not just giving money to a theatre company, it's adopting a more general, global aim, and culture must also be considered from a general, global outlook, so as to develop policies broader than those currently in place.

**Mr. Dubois:** There is also the fact that in 1959, Mr. Lapalme, while preparing the program for the Quiet Revolution, stressed the urgency of establishing a cultural development policy for Québec. According to us, in the 30 years since this time, no one has yet established a policy with the firm intention of implementing it, a truly avant-garde policy. So, the Quiet Revolution which was launched and which made possible, for example, for over 30 years, the development of Québec's economy, did not do the same for culture. So what should define, what defines culture, as Mr. Lapalme said, as Daniel Johnson said, as Jean Lesage said the day he presented the bill resulting in the creation of the ministère des Affaires culturelles, is that the basis, the only way to define Québec is by its culture. It's strange, I find it strange, unfortunate and dangerous that in 30 years this political project, as concerns this essential

aspect, has never been formulated.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** Here, it was based solely on the defense or promotion of language rights. However, we are speaking of language and culture. Language in itself, for us, does not fully represent a people's identity. And getting back to the tools you spoke of earlier, it's true, by reducing the essential cultural thrust targeted by the Quiet Revolution, which aimed to become the foundation for modern Québec, we also, naturally, completely exhausted the resources, scope and importance of the ministère des Affaires culturelles.

**Mr. Boulerville:** Don't get me going by mentioning taxes, otherwise we'll start a whole different discussion, Mrs. Bégin. Cultural development precedes economic development. I have always insisted on this key phrase. And when we look at the world's major nations, we see that the strength of their culture is directly proportional to the strength of their economy. But I noticed, on page 58 of your brief, the statement - and here I will quote correctly - "In the current phase of its collective project, Québec's move to sovereignty could very well lead to a swift acceleration of the process of its assimilation into United States culture." Based on this statement, how do you see the relationship between the United States and a politically independent Québec, so as to be safe from this threat you seem to perceive? (2:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Chouinard:** As citizens of French language and culture, do we ask ourselves what relationship we should have with the United States? I think this is one and the same question. If we have correctly defined and established the defense of our cultural interests as a priority, and if we label ourselves a society, a country in the same capacity as other countries on the same scale, as an independent country with its own culture, which believes in its own culture and which has given outward indications to the world that its culture is French and Québécois here, in America, I think that automatically, contact with America will be what countries on this scale can expect. We shouldn't have to ask ourselves these questions. If the housework has been done right, if everything is clean and well-aired, well-lit, if we are comfortable in it, in our language and in our culture and if we have defended them proudly, the relationships will automatically be, I wouldn't say on the same footing, we can't expect them to be on the same footing economically or culturally, because it's a whole different culture.

I think that now, here in Québec, people are becoming increasingly aware of the defense of their culture, whether it be through song or otherwise, with the result that we no longer need to ask ourselves if we are in danger, as

long as we have asserted ourselves. If we assert ourselves positively, I believe that we have nothing to fear. And it follows that if we develop a taste for this assertion and make it strong enough...

I am thinking, for example... There are a whole lot of things we can do, like... For example, doubling the ministère des Affaires culturelles budget, which would barely begin to make up for lost time and enable us to carry out the fascinating projects we have harboured for 15, 20 or 30 years, increased support for the regions, support for the cultural communities, stepping up foreign contacts to see what's happening outside Québec and to invite artists and intellectuals from other places. We have never been so keen on disseminating Québec art abroad, but we haven't taken the necessary steps to do so. We are limited in this respect and we can't count on the ministère des Affaires culturelles for much help. So, something global and feasible must be developed from this. I maintain that an orderly household will have no problem with its contacts with the United States.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We must go on... I'm sorry...

**Mr. Boulerville:** One last, very brief question, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead.

**Mr. Boulerville:** John F. Kennedy said: Ask not what you can do for your country, but what your country can do for you. You have told us what you expect from your country. I will ask you one last question. What can we expect from the artists you represent as concerns the promotion of this collective project and of Québec's independence?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Quickly, sir.

**Mr. Chouinard:** To continue, for us. We must continue on ever stronger. We will try. But I think we have been promoting this country for some time now. We were among the first to do so and I believe that we can... We're not going to blow our own horn, but we can say that we were among the first. We continue to subsidize the arts abundantly in all aspects, all categories of actors, technicians, theatre people. We have been doing so for a long time. We believe in it. We don't want to leave. We want to stay here, practice our profession with honesty, dignity and for the greatest glory of this country we believe in.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Chouinard. We now go to Mr. Serge

Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, the Conseil québécois du théâtre is an important organization in our society. I think it was, indeed, a good idea to ask René-Daniel Dubois to write the brief as he did.

Mr. Dubois is a playwright, an author of great talent. Several of my friends who read your brief wondered if your scenario, which portrays our culture as being threatened with American assimilation in the near future, was the product of your imagination, or was based on reality. I think you'll have the opportunity to respond to this.

You refer to the role of Georges-Émile Lapalme and I think it is important, especially on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the creation of the ministère des Affaires culturelles and on this subject you say that, indeed, if we had adopted the spirit, or at least the recommendations, of Lapalme, we wouldn't be where we are today, we would have experienced the true cultural revolution, and what's more, it would have been easy because during that period we had examples. In 1958-1959, France had just created its Department of Culture and appointed the likes of André Malraux as Minister. Already, from the beginning, we could see that it would be a many-faceted undertaking, and not just a lot of red tape.

Therefore, I understand, both from your brief's actual content and by reading between the lines, that if we had, since 1961, had a genuine ministère des Affaires culturelles with genuine cultural policies, we would not be speaking today of having to gain sovereignty. We would, without a doubt, already have assumed it. Instead, under the federal system, under the system governing us, our ministère des Affaires culturelles has become something, in the end, a department rather than a service. Of course, there have been positive things, people a bit more informed than others. But mostly, the Department has played fireman: it's put out fires here, stopped up holes there, and especially, developed a piecemeal subsidy system which maintained, and continues to maintain, creators and artists in a deplorable state of dependence. Result: chaos, no overall plan, no vision because no blueprint for society.

The question I am asking you is, in a sovereign Québec, what would be the role of the State in cultural affairs? Where would its responsibilities begin? Where would they end? And can you tell us this without us being accused by a certain medium, the English-language press, namely, *The Gazette*, of being Stalinists?

**Mr. Chouinard:** Yes. Well, I think I agree with part of what you said, almost all of what you said on the piecemeal action that has been

taken, and this is what our brief tends to prove as well. I think that the role of promoter and catalyst that the Department should play is based on what Lapalme said: "The Québec Parliament, legal supervisor and observer of traditions and customs which engender laws, dispenser of taxes and thus, indirectly, provider of education, manager of the territory and thus free to create municipalities, governor of rights and obligations... is still the highest authority capable of implementing the common denominator of a culture which is our own".

All these means are acceptable. Culture is part of everything, affects everything. And when, in a Cabinet, there is a concern such as this, as far-reaching as this, and if the person acting as trustee, such as the Minister of Cultural Affairs, expresses these concerns, the Cabinet and the Parliament are capable of acting on all levels, and this means believing in their importance and using this type of approach. I think this is what is important.

**Mr. Dubois:** From another viewpoint, I would like to respond to the first part of what you said concerning the perhaps overly dramatic aspect of the threat to which we refer in this document concerning the eventual assimilation of Québec, the Québec culture, into the United States culture. On one hand, the document submitted to you is unanimously supported by the entire Québec theatre community. Therefore, it is not simply a product of my imagination, it was discussed. We all agree on this danger.

On the other hand, the reason we pointed out this threat is because we wonder why Lapalme spoke so eloquently, in 1959, and why he left in such a huff a few years after the Department was founded. Why did this happen, when it was set out in section 1 of the Quiet Revolution program? How could this have happened? How could Jean-Paul L'Allier's 1976 green paper have been condemned to oblivion?

And how is it that we find ourselves today in a society which claims, in theory, to define itself through its culture, but which in fact must fight tooth and nail to have, at this table, a representative of this culture which is so essential to us, and even then it is only by the skin of our teeth?

And how do you explain that a Minister in our government, in the Québec State, this State which must define itself through its culture, has decided to make books taxable, unless the central government decides otherwise? How is this possible? We have tried to analyze this aberration, and we have concluded that there is an implicit focus on American values which began sometime in the late 1950s...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is now up. We go now to Mrs. Monique Simard, who is substituting for Mr. Gérald

Larose.

**Mrs. Simard:** I would like to say that I found your brief exceptional. Rarely have we seen such a profound analysis of the concept of culture. Of all the briefs presented here and which I've had the opportunity to read, it is truly an extremely interesting analysis, and your projection of the future is informed and very stimulating. I feel it is important to point this out and it also livens up the discussion, in my view, by going beyond exclusively economic or constitutional parameters and the constitutional framework. And this, I think, is the basic direction future discussion here in Québec must take. And your dissertation on it is surprising, and I feel that you will be the envy of many sociologists. I just wanted you to know this.

The concern over the social aspect, the dimension of social justice you mention repeatedly in your brief is extremely gratifying because for many of us, naturally, it is important that artists, creators be part and parcel of the people and the culture, and it is from here that they derive their inspiration. It is here, also, that they can best portray the aspirations, sorrows and history of an entire people. And I think that in the wake of the major creative movements of the 19th and 20th centuries, here, as elsewhere, you have assumed your rightful place in this trend.

One of the warnings, and I am happy to have read it, is the one concerning the danger of giving our allegiance to this American culture. And you say that it is not only in the current constitutional framework, but that even if Québec became independent, such a danger would still exist. I feel that this is important as well, because some people believe that perhaps the sole action of proclaiming our sovereignty, our independence, would protect us from this assimilation, an opinion I do not share. And I would like to hear more from you on this issue. You point out, at one point, that during discussions on the free trade agreement with the United States, we saw the cultural community and artists from English Canada protesting vehemently against it because they feared that it would threaten the English Canadian culture. Perhaps artists from Québec's cultural community have been less visible in their struggle against this same threat to Québec. I would like to hear your opinion, as well: Why do we in Québec express ourselves so little? And where does the danger lie, even in a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Chouinard:** It is perhaps due to the fact - we mentioned it earlier, Catherine mentioned it - that we perhaps felt a bit too safe in the language we speak, saying: Speaking French here is enough, it distinguishes us sufficiently from the Americans, whereas for our

English Canadian friends it is obvious that, the language being the same, we could be justified in thinking that the potential for confusion and assimilation would be greater, since the American culture would more easily assimilate another culture which shares its language. But this is not all and we have considered the question and we agreed that it was not enough. We think that, indeed, an independent Québec would have... We're like a fierce little gamecock when we arrive last on the world political scene as a new country, perhaps we want to prove that we are as capable as everyone else, and that's when we try and resemble those around us. And the first economic model that comes to mind, naturally, is the one right beside us, the American model. This is when we would be tempted to base ourselves on this model and we say: Watch out! we must be careful. I think that we have to open ourselves up and establish important links with other countries. This occurs periodically with France, I think we must continue and consolidate these links, establish solid, lasting ties and improve them on a cultural level with France. They are far from being so, they are only one-way at the present time. They are perhaps not bilateral enough. We have to open ourselves up a bit more in this sense. France must open itself up a bit more to us. Efforts must be made in this direction and I think that at that time we will be able to assume a strong bargaining position with regard to other countries. This seems to me to be necessary.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right, Mrs. Simard?

**Mrs. Simard:** All right.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have read and reread your brief, and I find it absolutely gripping. I didn't want to be identified with it, but a number of years ago I thought I was preaching in the desert when I said that culture comes before economics. I spoke like an industrial psychologist, but coming from your community, it reassures me and fills me with joy. When I read your brief, I didn't laugh with it. On page 58, the Rioux excerpt moved me deeply and, in general, I would like to touch on pages 58, 60, Taft-Reagan, 62, but I'd like to skip over 62, and page 66.  
(2:45 p.m.)

My question concerns these pages. And page 59 doesn't need to be commented on. The three reasons you give... the first reason is fairly dramatic, as are the other two. But I'm a federalist. I'm a federal Conservative MP. I've always been a federalist and I've always felt good about myself. I'm not saying that others

don't, but I think it must be presented. Because this brief is too rich not to react to it. But why is it that I feel your three reasons point to continued association, if we want to better protect ourselves from the Taft dream? Do you understand my question? Taft in 1912. When you speak of your thunderclap that will shock Canada out of its complacency - I would perhaps qualify this with quotation marks - it was Québec that was shocked out of it. Do you not think - going back to my first question - that this thunderclap which will awaken Canada, now that Québec is already awake, could the couple not continue to live together? This is my sub-question.

And my third question, or my second. In your summary, you speak of the republic. I have read and reread the last pages, because I find that it suddenly peters out, in a way. What interest would English Canada have in being part of such an exciting republic, where the French Canadians would not be conducting a "takeover", if I may borrow the expression, but there would be this immensely rich culture that would reap harvests and cultivate an entire territory? You understand, your argument, I accept it and I am comfortable with your argument in Canada.

**Mr. Dubois:** I will begin, if I may, with the second part of your question, which was an aspect we dealt with in the summary which had to be sent out quite quickly several weeks ago, and there was, indeed, a proposal made at the end, concerning a unilingual Francophone republic, a *marî usque ad mare*. And we decided not to retain this proposal in the brief itself, simply because it seemed to us more important to consider first... This question, discussion on a subject like this one - it was an example we gave at first - discussion on this subject should take place at a later date. What we believe is that the priority topic to be discussed in Québec should be: What do we believe in, and what price are we willing to pay to defend what we feel is essential? Then, we will establish the conditions for the implementation and defense of the constitutional tools we choose to adopt. It is for this reason that this proposal is not included in the brief.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up, but I wish to allow you an answer. I do not wish to add any further questions.

**Mr. Chouinard:** I would simply like to reply quickly to the first part. Listen, I think that as concerns your observation, I respect it immensely and it's your opinion, but it seemed to us in the theatre world and I think this is shared by a great many artists, even if they aren't involved directly with the theatre community, because I am also a member of the Union des artistes - I think we are at a point

where analysis, as far as we concerned, is in-depth enough not to have to come back to this question. All sorts of events have occurred, some recent, some not so recent. There was Meech Lake... you can analyze yourself. Many events have occurred recently. And it appears to us, now that people are becoming aware of the questions we have raised here, it appears to us now to be a waste of time for us - I emphasize, for us - to question this again. We already agreed on it in the early 1960s. They have stayed afloat, sunk and resurfaced, but they never completely disappeared and they are now ours, and we believe in them enough not to have to question them, but merely develop them properly and use them to create a Québec of which we can be culturally proud. This is the point we have reached, without rejecting the discussion you want to bring up here, I must say that, for us, it is rather outdated.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, sir. We now turn the microphone over to Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the government members, thank you for your brief, for having come to present your brief to the Commission on the Future of Québec. I congratulate you on the extremely polished French in which your brief is written.

**Mr. Chouinard:** We are lucky to have authors in the association, this is the result. We're very happy.

**Mrs. Hovington:** That explains it. Well, it's very well written, I can tell you that. However, there are a number of small points, Mr. Dubois, which I noticed, and I would like, I'm speaking here of what is on page 55, where you refer to Mr. Ryan. I can tell you that I spoke to Mr. Ryan of this reference and the article which appeared in *L'Actualité*, and I can tell you that Mr. Ryan has had the opportunity to read hundreds of novels, and I think that Mr. Ryan also discussed this subject with his son, because those are statements made by his son to which you refer there. As for his so-called scorn, as you say, for culture, may I remind you that the act the Liberal government adopted on the status of artists, which was adopted recently, had to meet with the approval of the Comité ministériel permanent des affaires culturelles et sociales - the COMPACS, as we say in our jargon - and this committee is chaired by Mr. Ryan. I can assure you that Mr. Ryan really had to pressure Cabinet members to have this act approved. And Mr. Ryan is very attuned to Québec culture, believe me. You go on, Mr. Dubois, unfortunately, also on page 55, to say, for example, how you perceive Québec's political class as a whole: "One has only to think of the

almost total absence of politicians at concerts, at the theatre, at the cinema, and in museums and art galleries, except at cocktail parties." I find this to be a gratuitous statement, a gratuitous judgement of politicians, believe me.

Having said this, let's go on to page 37 of your brief, page 38, rather, excuse me, where you say that "in their struggles, Québec artists have, paradoxically, often received greater support from Ottawa than from Québec. This support, particularly under the Trudeau regime, showed that, for its cultural survival, Québec needed the federal regime. With the support the various Québec governments contributed, through their negligence, to this hypothesis, the proof is conclusive." Tell me, how do you reconcile this statement with your conclusion to the effect that Québec's independence is the only means of giving Québec full jurisdiction over the maintenance and development of its culture, with a statement such as that?

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** If the Québec government, if the various, consecutive Québec governments had assumed their cultural responsibilities in an intellectual and artistic sense, the Canadian government probably would not have had to contribute in such a, well, such a significant way, if you will. It was also, as I understand, a means, for the Canadian government, to impose a form of supremacy over cultural affairs. I think that, when we refer to Québec's independence, it is obvious to us that it is with leaders, elected representatives, who would assume most of the intellectual and artistic responsibility for their society, in its broad cultural sense.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Because... Allow me to quote you a few figures. For example, we can say that, contrary to what is true in other areas, in Québec, our problem in cultural affairs is not the insufficiency of federal funds, perhaps, because in 1987-1988, the federal contribution per capita in all cultural sectors combined was higher in Québec than in any of the other provinces. We had \$117 per capita in Québec compared to \$103 in Ontario, which ranked second. Might we be justified in thinking that by becoming sovereign, Québec would have the resources to provide a significant, in quotation marks, amount of financial aid?

**Mr. Dubois:** Apparently, based on political choices, and that's the whole gist of our brief. That is, what we are asking in this brief is: Do we feel that we have the resources necessary to stay alive?

What we are saying in the paragraph you just quoted, on page 38, is that we find it unacceptable, but currently, historically, Ottawa has provided strong support, and I don't think we can say for sure that if Ottawa hadn't... that

it was federal interference. Unfortunately! I would like to be able to say that it was, but I'm not so sure. I'm not sure that, if the federal government hadn't done it, Québec would have. And this is what we question and what we find, to put it mildly, heart-rending.

**Mrs. Hovington:** That's it. So it's the scope of federal intervention, because in 1987-1988, the federal government spent \$774 000 000 in Québec in the cultural sector, while Québec itself contributed some \$438 500 000. Is it by becoming sovereign that we would find a way to recuperate or ensure such a considerable amount of financial aid? Would this help you, the cultural community?

**Mr. Chouinard:** I will ask Mr. Rémi Boucher to reply to that.

**Mr. Boucher (Rémi):** Yes, O.K. There are two things, there is the federal government's way of stepping in here, through the Canada Council, rather than through a single department, that of Communications. We believe it would be important in an independent Québec to have such a mechanism, an apolitical arts council which could intervene directly in arts funding. O.K.

When you speak of figures, one of the things I can tell you... if we base your figures on the theatre, French-language theatre in Canada represents 42 % of all theatre activities, but receives only 29 % of the Canada Council budget. So that gives you some sort of an idea of the dynamism of the Québec arts scene as compared to the rest of Canada. And it's far from certain that there is any equality in the sums allocated to us, which we always pay to the federal government, it's our money too. O.K. That's what I wanted to say.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Then what cultural powers do you feel should be under exclusive Québec jurisdiction?

**Mr. Chouinard:** Well, I think that will have to be considered - we haven't done an exact tallying-up of the powers - and I would unhesitatingly refer you to the Union des artistes brief with which we are generally in agreement on many points.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Which has been tabled here before the Commission.

**Mr. Chouinard:** Which has been tabled, and with which you are already familiar. Of course, the Union des artistes deals more broadly than the theatre with these issues, but we, as concerns the theatre, it is obvious that a repatriation from the Canada Council of the sums generally allocated by Communications Canada and the Department of External Affairs, for

tours or other things, should be repatriated here.

Cultural powers, they're much broader, I was speaking strictly of powers directly related to the theatre. But we must include communications, we must include immigration, we must include a great many things: all expenditures, copyright powers. There are a great many powers which should be repatriated, it's a technique which should be studied more closely. I admit that we haven't approached it from precisely this standpoint, but obviously it's important to repatriate everything even remotely related to culture.

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** We also stress the need for the creation of a Québec arts council.

**Mrs. Hovington:** All right. Still referring to cultural powers, what are the fields... according to you what are the fields of jurisdiction which could be shared by Québec and the federal government?

**Mrs. Bégin (Catherine):** Why?

**Mr. Chouinard:** If you speak of a sovereign, independent Québec, where would shared jurisdiction come up? Exchanges could perhaps take place. There would obviously be things to negotiate as between any two countries, this is only natural.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But I'm asking you this question, because you know that for the commissioners, we need this information, to do the...

**Mr. Chouinard:** Yes, yes, I understand.

**Mr. Dubois:** But if there is a point over which Québec must have full jurisdiction, it is that which defines us and makes a Québec a distinct society, and therefore not like the others, and that is culture.

**Mr. MacDuff (Pierre):** Especially since, without getting into a discussion over figures, the federal assistance to which you referred earlier does not, on the other hand, take into account the actual development of the cultural sector.

Thus, in theatre, for example, for the last ten years, the federal government's contribution has decreased in direct proportion to the overall budgets of theatre companies. Not only has it decreased, but the number of companies has increased and the proportion supported financially by the federal government is falling steadily. Naturally, since the Canada Council itself, which is the authority responsible for supporting artistic production in the field, in the performing arts at the very least, has had its budget frozen for years now by Communications Canada. So

even if there was an increase, the sector, the sector activities still develop more quickly than the federal assistance granted to them.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Fine. So if I understand correctly, regardless of the solutions proposed by this Commission on the future of Québec with regard to Québec's political future, they will necessarily be based on a large-scale cultural policy blueprint, if I grasp your ideas correctly. Can you give us details as to the resources or components which would enable Québec to formulate such a policy, a comprehensive cultural policy? What would be the components of the resources we could use?

**Mr. Chouinard:** Do you mean constitutional resources or...

**Mrs. Hovington:** Constitutional, political resources, to formulate a comprehensive policy regardless of our constitutional future. How do you perceive it?

**Mr. Dubois:** Near the end of the brief on page 64, we say that, fine, the brief is not the place to include a draft of what this phase 2 of the Quiet Revolution should be. We provide a few examples of the fields of application. "Cultural considerations are the main focus of Québec State policies. The ministère de l'Éducation and the ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Science are called upon: redevelopment of instruction in philosophy and the humanities, modern languages, the arts. Support for cultural and scientific leisure activities. Encouraging young people to travel, especially in "unknown territory", that is, with which Québec has had little direct contact to date. Utopian objectives: a society of artists. A department of arts and culture - which is very different from cultural affairs - committed to over 30 years of massive investments: It is no longer enough, today, to consider creating the ministère des Affaires culturelles envisaged by Georges-Émile Lapalme over 30 years ago; we must work overtime to create the ministère des Affaires culturelles we would have had by now if Lapalme had been able to implement his project 30 years ago..."

**Mrs. Hovington:** O.K.

**Mr. Dubois:** ...and if this undertaking had had repercussions. I don't know if...

**Mrs. Hovington:** O.K.

**Mr. Dubois:** Basically, this is the direction it must take.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Hovington. Unfortunately, your time is

up.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Can the Chair not allow me a bit more time?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right, a question of how many seconds? We'll negotiate.

**Mrs. Hovington:** You know that it's because I wanted to quote Mr. Beauchemin yesterday, who presented a brief and who said: A healthy culture cannot grow from a sickly economy, because culture is no more than the expression of the economy, and cultural creation and dissemination are fostered by a prosperous economy. One of your colleagues mentioned this yesterday. What effect do you feel Québec's sovereignty would have on the standard of living of Quebecers?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I think your time just ran out, madam. So, Mr. Boucher, Mr. Dubois, Mr. Chouinard, Mrs. Bégin, Mr. MacDuff, thank you for your extremely dynamic and interesting presentation, thank you for your contribution to the study and analysis of Québec's political and constitutional future. Thank you.

**A voice:** Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:03 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:10 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The Commission resumes its work. Welcome to the representatives of the Executive Committee of the Equality Party. The sitting will last one hour. I will repeat the rules rapidly for sittings lasting one hour: 10 minutes for the presentation of your brief, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition and 25 minutes for the other members, with a maximum, in the latter case, of 5 minutes each, and 5 minutes for the chair.

So, Mr. Martin Segal, who is the president, could you please introduce your colleagues?

**Mr. Segal (Martin):** O.K. Here are Raphaël Chalkoun, Gloria Freedman, Pietro Calderone, Ross Ladd, and Nadine Lee.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 10 minutes, Mr. Segal, for the presentation of your brief.

**Mr. Segal:** Mr. Chalkoun will be starting.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine, go ahead, sir.

### Executive Committee of the Equality Party

**Mr. Chalkoun (Raphaël):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Messrs. Members of Parliament, Mr. Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Leader of the Equality Party, ladies and gentlemen. Section 2, Division 1 of Bill 90 establishing the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, passed on September 4, 1990, reads as follows: "The mandate of the Commission is to examine and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations in respect thereof."

Mr. Chairman, we were troubled last week when we witnessed a surprising hostility on the part of certain commissioners towards speakers who had responded to your invitation. We hope that you will be more indulgent towards us today.

We would like to remind the commissioners that Québec is a pluralist society, and, consequently, the recommendations it will have to make once its work is finished will have to take into account the rights, and I would go even further, the rights and the aspirations of all Québec communities. We are, myself, my colleagues, our members, our sympathizers, we are all Quebecers here, Quebecers who love Québec, who want to live in Québec and who are as concerned as you ladies and gentlemen about a better future for Québec. I would also like to say that, in our brief, we criticized certain organizations, certain individuals. These were only local criticisms. We didn't want to offend anyone. However, I can say without hesitation that Québec is one of the most democratic, egalitarian, free and peaceful societies in the world.

**Mr. Segal:** En raison du peu de temps qui nous était accordé pour préparer le mémoire que nous devons présenter à la Commission, nous n'avons pas eu l'occasion de discuter à fond de nombreuses questions de nature constitutionnelle, comme la répartition des pouvoirs entre Ottawa et le Québec et la réforme du Sénat. Nous regrettons également que l'horaire très serré ne nous ait pas laissé suffisamment de temps pour consulter nos membres comme nous l'aurions voulu. Dans un avenir rapproché, notre parti sera en mesure d'adopter une position plus arrêtée sur les questions constitutionnelles, puisque nous organiserons une série d'ateliers et de congrès qui permettront à nos membres de participer activement à ces discussions très importantes. Nous examinerons aussi d'autres moyens qui permettraient de garantir la promotion de l'anglais et du français au Québec sans suspendre les droits civils ou historiques fondamentaux de ses citoyens.

Je dois aussi vous mentionner que nous avons sérieusement envisagé de ne pas nous

présenter devant la Commission. Nous ne comprenons pas pourquoi de nombreux groupes sont absents, notamment les autochtones, ni pourquoi certaines minorités sont si peu représentées, en particulier les minorités visibles, qui n'ont aucun représentant à la Commission. En outre, nous déplorons l'absence d'autres groupes, comme les jeunes, qui, selon nous, auraient dû être représentés à cette Commission.

Malgré les nombreuses réserves que nous entretenons à propos de la Commission, les membres de notre exécutif estimaient que nous devions exprimer notre opinion sur les questions fondamentales qui sont au cœur de l'harmonie sociale et de l'égalité que nous désirons obtenir pour tous les citoyens du Québec. M. le Président, nous vous soumettons donc les cinq valeurs essentielles suivantes. D'abord et avant tout, la liberté. La liberté fondamentale de tous les citoyens doit être garantie par les Chartes québécoise et canadienne des droits et libertés. Vient ensuite l'égalité. Nous croyons que tous les Québécois doivent être gouvernés également. Il ne doit pas y avoir de citoyens de deuxième ou de troisième classe dans notre société. Troisièmement, la fraternité et l'harmonie sociale. Nous désirons que tous les Québécois vivent paisiblement et en harmonie. Quatrièmement, nous désirons la prospérité pour tous les Québécois. N'oublions pas que sans la prospérité, nous ne pourrions pas profiter des nombreux services que la société d'aujourd'hui nous offre. Et enfin, la cinquième valeur essentielle, la générosité. Nous désirons maintenir et améliorer nos services sociaux, de sorte que tous les Québécois puissent vivre dans la dignité.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** As Mr. Segal just said, we are committed to five essential values, which were clearly listed in English, that is, liberty, equality between Quebecers, social harmony, and prosperity; because, let's not forget, when there is no economic prosperity, it is ultimately the most underprivileged who are the hardest hit. And finally, our commitment to improving the social services which we currently enjoy.

We have also taken into consideration in our brief the following questions, which we feel are very important in the Québec, Canadian and North American contexts. 1. The rise of the French language. We want to preserve and encourage the French fact, which is, as we all know, predominant in Québec. We have therefore made certain concrete proposals in our brief in that regard. 2. Bilingualism, French-English, which is the source of enviable cultural wealth and which may represent a considerable economic advantage for all Quebecers. 3. The rights of Francophones outside Québec. Progress has been made, that's undeniable, but we will take their needs into account in all our conclusions. 4. Québec's place within Canada. We

think that Canada is not merely a federation of provinces, just as Québec is not merely a group of cities or villages. Canada is a country for many Quebecers. What is more, we think that, through its history, Québec is in fact Canada, "Le Québec est le Canada". Many Quebecers have the feeling that Canada belongs to them from sea to sea.

The recommendations that we have made constitute a sort of broad, open vision of Québec and the rest of Canada, respect all the human values which we have mentioned and take into account Québec's Canadian and North American context. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now turn to the speakers. First, Mr. Ghislain Dufour, who will be followed by Mr. Louis Laberge.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before asking my two questions, I would like to make a comment. I would like to clearly state that I do not agree at all with the constant criticism levelled by you in your brief at Bill 101, Bill 178, and the "notwithstanding" clause. I must tell you that 30 % of Anglophones are represented by my membership and that, for the most part, these bills are now unanimously accepted here. Same thing for the promotion of French as the language of the workplace. I think that it's taken for granted here.

Why I have problems with this position, and I say this without any aggressiveness, is that I have the impression that this doesn't help us. This doesn't help us here because I think that, even if we wanted to move backwards in Québec society, with Bill 101 or the "notwithstanding" clause, I think that this is a debate that Québec society would not accept.

I also think that it doesn't do us any good in the eyes of others when we present this type of argument to the Canadian Anglophone community. The "notwithstanding" clause is used constantly in English Canada, and I don't think that we should continue to maintain that this clause was as disastrous as all that. In any case, we all know that Bill 178 will make it possible to amend this clause in three or four years, and I think that we could hold this debate at that time.

I find that your brief covers issues which are of much greater concern to the Anglophone community, and I would like to hear you speak about the figures on page 9 concerning the presence of Anglophones in the public service. You have figures which speak volumes. The presence of Anglophone - or of minorities in general - but of Anglophones is apparently very limited. You quoted 0.75 %. I would like to hear you discuss this. Do you think that this is discrimination, quote, unquote? Is it because of a lack of policy on the part of the Anglophone

community which puts you out of the running? I would like to hear you comment on your presence in the Québec public service.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Mr. Dufour, I would like to quickly respond to your comments regarding bills 101 and 178. We have no quarrel here with the natural predominance of French in Québec. In Québec, at least 80 % of Francophones are Francophone through and through. We have no quarrel with this predominance. What we are contesting is that there are irritants which must be removed and which do absolutely nothing to promote French, these irritants, which include Bill 178, which overrides the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**Mr. Dufour:** You talk about abolition on page 20.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Of Bill 178.

**Mr. Dufour:** Listen, in any case, I am happy to hear you say that these are irritants and not the entire...

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Ah! You are talking about the "notwithstanding" clause?

**Mr. Dufour:** Yes.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** No, no. I was speaking of language just now. The "notwithstanding" clause is an entirely different story. Yes, we also talked about abolishing the "notwithstanding" clause, which can suspend all rights, not only freedom of speech, but there is also a risk that the right of dissent, the freedom of religion and the right of association may be suspended. And we think that this is very serious.

As regards the Québec public service, our figures were taken from a government report entitled, "L'intégration des membres des communautés culturelles à la fonction publique du Québec". And this gave rise to certain newspaper articles. What happens is that the public service is almost a monopoly, and it is currently very difficult for members of ethnic minorities, especially residents of Anglophone origins or who are English-speaking, to obtain these jobs. I would like to quote a few specific figures. Of the 54 000 public servants that we have in Québec, just 2 % belong to minorities, are members of minorities in this province when, in fact, they represent, I believe, approximately 18 % to 20 % of this province's population.

I will not give any more figures, because, while these figures speak volumes, I would like to stress the fact that public service jobs are extremely important, because they are, first of all, good jobs which all Quebecers should be able to obtain, and secondly, they are a factor in social change, and a means of promotion. And

most importantly, they are a factor in integration. If we do not have members of minorities in the public services, in the police department, in the fire department, in the SQ, it would be very difficult for Québec's minority communities to feel that they are truly part of this society.

**Mr. Dufour:** A point of view which I wholeheartedly share. Quickly, Mr. Segal...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Too quickly.

**Mr. Dufour:** It's over?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes. At least...

**Mr. Dufour:** It's when you say that we must carry on and behave honorably with our Canadian and American compatriots, we agree, because we are still federalists. What do you mean?

**Mr. Chalkoun:** What I mean is that it's very, very difficult to explain to an American, for example, who are our neighbours to the South, what the "notwithstanding" clause is in their Constitution, or what Bill 178 is which abolishes English from the face of Québec. It's very difficult to explain to these people who are definitely not crazy, who are...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's enough.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** ...the cradle of democracy, somewhat as we are.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's enough. I would like to remind the members that the question period is five minutes. I have several requests to hear the Equality Party. If we could move a little more quickly with the questions, and, when you can, a little more quickly with the answers, if possible. I now turn to Mr. Laberge, who will be followed by Mrs. Diane Drouin. Mr. Laberge, you have the floor.

**Mr. Laberge:** I'm sorry.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Accepted.

**Mr. Laberge:** I was consulting with my colleague. Listen, there are interesting things in this. There are repetitions, things that we have obviously already heard. I would have just one or two questions. Obviously, we already know that you have been hit hard by Bill 178 and all that. You told us that French has made great

strides in Canada. On that point, I don't think we are in total agreement. There are people, supporters of the French language outside Québec, who came to tell us how appalling the situation was. It hasn't made as much progress as all that, but that's not what's important at this time.

When you say that the federal government has done things for the French language, yes, that's true, but look at what you said: "The governments of Québec have broken this 'social contract' by imposing language laws containing certain discriminatory sections: bills 22, 101, 178". That's direct, that's pretty hardline. But see how angelically sweet you are when you spoke of the federal government: "The federal government has long been negligent with respect to the demands of Francophones outside Québec". That's stated very well, but that doesn't exactly describe the situation.

I have one question in particular for you. There is this Commission, you have deemed it important enough to table a brief which is important. There will certainly be this democratic process which will play a role, and we will soon arrive at a recommendation once the Commission's work is finished. I think that it's an open secret that everyone seems to be heading towards the recommendation of holding a vote, a referendum, in order to enable Quebecers to express their opinion on the issue.

Should the Commission recommend such a referendum, and the majority of the population decides: It's not renewed federalism, there will be a sovereign Québec, certainly with an economic association which will be negotiated; will you and your group be able to live with this decision should such a decision be made?

**Mr. Segal:** Absolument, absolument! Quel que serait le résultat du référendum, nous respecterions le choix des citoyens du Québec et nous travaillerions dans ce sens. Il n'y a aucun doute là-dessus.

**Mr. Laberge:** And we will be able to count on you to prevent another exodus of Quebecers to the other provinces, regardless of the decision? Or... we have already learned to live with the decision of 1980. We didn't like it too much, but we have lived with it.

**Mr. Segal:** Je crois qu'il est très important de reconnaître que nous sommes des Québécois.

**Mr. Laberge:** C'est ce que je voulais savoir.

**A voice:** I would like to add a few words regarding the progress of Francophones. No one can hear me here.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, if

you have the same opinion, we'll go on to another question. There are a lot of questions. Mrs. Diane Drouin.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to turn to page 30 of your brief. You demanded certain constitutional amendments, among others, in section 15.6, where you said that: "The Constitution should clearly guarantee the existence and autonomy of language-based school boards, and in particular the English school boards in Québec and the French school boards everywhere in the rest of Canada". In your opinion, should these guarantees be added to the current confessional guarantees?

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Well, I will answer... the answer that I could give you commits no one other than myself on this issue. And I will give it to you very clearly. What we are doing here, in fact, is a sort of declaration of principles so that these French language-based school boards in the rest of Canada or the English ones here are guaranteed. Now, obviously, we will let lawyers and legal scholars make a thorough job of truly ensuring that this is guaranteed. Do guarantees exist now? Must something be added? This isn't exactly clear at this time. Will it have to be added to current guarantees for Protestant and Catholic schools, do you mean? I think so, given the historical context. But, it's as I told you, I'm giving you my own personal answer.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Good, I would like to ask a second question, if I may.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead, I thought that you were going to be good and move quickly.  
(3:30 p.m.)

**Mrs. Drouin:** This will be very short. You also said, in section 15.5: "The Constitution should guarantee all Québec parents the right to choose one of the two official languages of Canada as the main language of education of their children". I would like to know: In your opinion, would that apply also to immigrants? And, secondly, wouldn't this contradict everything that you stated on page 19, to the effect that... You named several organizations which are for the promotion of French, and you listed yourselves as one of them. You said that everyone is committed to the French language and truly intends to promote its growth. So, how can you reconcile these two points of view?

**Mr. Segal:** Pour nous, la solution en matière d'éducation serait d'enseigner correctement l'anglais et le français dans les écoles françaises et les écoles anglaises. De sorte que les anglophones qui termineraient leur cours

secondaire connaîtraient beaucoup mieux le français que je ne le connaissais alors et que les francophones connaîtraient beaucoup mieux l'anglais. Cela permettrait à tous nos enfants de prospérer dans le contexte de l'Amérique du Nord. Je crois qu'il est très important que nous n'isolions pas nos enfants dans notre province ou que, si le Québec devient un pays, nous ne les empêchions pas de profiter du développement et des possibilités qu'offre l'Amérique du Nord dans son ensemble.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Even for immigrants? Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Rosette Côté, who is substituting for Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You made an important point on the promotion of the French language on page 21, along with the coercion you employ and the defense you made against the coercion of language laws. However, when we look at that, at the same time as you say that we must protect the language, you said: We must have bilingualism in Québec. And you talked about the choice of language in education. A culture finds its roots and grounding in routine: work, school, daily life. Therefore, if you subtract these two areas of life from culture, how can you have a section on the promotion of the French language? First question.

Second question. I'm getting back to bilingualism. I would like you to tell me what poll, or what survey, or what study you consulted to be able to say that Québec could have bilingual status, even with renewed federalism. I would like you to discuss it with me because it seems to me that the people have always demanded the predominance of French and have always considered English as an asset, an acquisition of cultural assets to be able to know another language, to know another culture, but not for it to be considered on the same footing.

And, third question. When you talked about the treatment of minority rights and majority rights, I would like you to tell me what are the minority rights you would want protected? Because I thought I understood that you were treating minority rights and majority rights on an equal footing.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** As regards bilingualism and the status of French, you see, Québec is naturally predominantly French. The fact of becoming bilingual or trilingual or quadrilingual changes absolutely nothing in this regard. We can all be Francophones, or 80 % or 85 % of the population of Québec can be Francophone and know other languages, one doesn't preclude the other. Because it is absolutely necessary... I

don't know if you have children, I do and I wouldn't want my children to be unilingual, French or English. I think that it would do them a great injustice to teach them only one of the two languages. They absolutely need French to be able to function as they ought to in Québec. If they want to be able to travel or negotiate or do big business or become a Member of Parliament, they need English because we live in North America and because we are still in Canada. So it's in this sense. That doesn't prevent us from promoting French, the French culture in any case, while accepting the other languages.

As regards minority rights, I give them all equal footing because my current position is not against Québec or the *gouvernement du Québec*. We have a problem across Canada. It's pretty much everywhere that this is happening. As you very well know, Franco-Albertans just won their Supreme Court case a few months ago to be able to administer their schools. No? Yes? Did I make a mistake?

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** As a matter of fact, a court decision was rendered, but there is no control of Francophone schools...

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Not yet.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** ...by Catholic school boards yet, or by school boards of whatever language, which are currently French in Edmonton.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** That's exactly what I'm against. I'm against the federal government. I'm against the government of Alberta, which moved against these Francophone groups, and I'm against the *gouvernement du Québec*, which has also declared itself to be against the rights of these groups. So, it seems to me that, in Canada in general, we have a problem and the problem is clearly related to Native peoples, to Francophones outside Québec, and to Anglophones in Québec. All these groups certainly have problems. And pretty much the same thing is happening everywhere.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good, that's fine. So, we quickly turn to... Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to get back to what you said in your brief regarding splitting up Québec. I think that I misunderstood what you explained. You advanced the hypothesis that if Québec should gain sovereignty and you said that because there is no amending formula... that because there is no possibility of unilateral separation in the Constitution, that if sovereignty were gained even under these conditions, that would result in

Québec being split up. So, my misunderstanding of what you said was even greater when you just told Mr. Laberge that you would accept the affirmation of a sovereignty verdict following a democratic referendum.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** What we are saying is that, if Québec were to separate, there are two ways for Québec to separate: either in accordance with legal and constitutional means, that is, to hold a constitutional meeting, to have the consent of this province and 50 % of the population at best, or unanimity at worst. That's the only way, both constitutionally and legally. Given that there are many communities in Québec, given that, despite what has been repeated, there is no consensus in Québec - it is often repeated, I often hear the word "consensus" - there is no consensus on any topic, there are conflicting opinions and that's fortunate because... Therefore, there are people who will not be in agreement and who could say so, particularly the Native people and the minority communities, who could say that if Canada is divisible, so is Québec, and I believe that we have clearly indicated in our brief that we oppose both.

**Mr. Bouchard:** So, you do not recognize Québec's democratic right to assert itself by means of a majority referendum leading to the sovereignty of an indivisible Québec.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Well, I'm not a legal scholar. But, if a...

**Mr. Bouchard:** No, no, that's what you said. You said that Québec is divisible.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** No, no. But I've an idea of what is written in the Constitution. I can't tell you more, I'm not a legal scholar. But if you have an opinion to give, you can tell me.

**Mr. Bouchard:** No, right now I haven't...

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Does Québec have the right or doesn't it, according to the law? I don't know.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Right now, I have no opinion to give. I have a question to ask, if I may. In your brief, you said that, in the Canadian Constitution, there is no reference to permission, to a legal possibility by virtue of the internal law of the Québec Constitution, to unilaterally withdraw - which is correct. You said that and it's true. So, the question was - and it was Mr. Laberge who raised it first - if despite that, Québec, following a referendum, a majority of Quebecers decided to declare their sovereignty, would you recognize the democracy, the democratic nature of such a decision?

**Mr. Segal:** Ce que nous voulons dire, c'est que supposons que lors de ce référendum, la Gaspésie indique qu'elle ne désire pas la séparation du Québec, mais que le reste de la province la désire, qu'est-ce qui empêcherait la Gaspésie de dire: «D'accord, le Canada n'est plus le même. Les règles du jeu sont différentes maintenant. Le Québec est séparé, mais nous ne voulons pas faire partie du Québec.»

**Mr. Bouchard:** In other words, for Québec to democratically gain sovereignty following a referendum, the referendum would have to be won in all parts of Québec. That's what you're telling us.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** I would like to tell you a bit about my personal opinion. There was already a referendum 10 years ago. And that wasn't exactly a party for anyone. It made a lot of enemies, even within families. Do we need another referendum? Will we hold a referendum in Québec every 10 years? I'm personally asking you this question. Then, if there were a referendum, what would we do? I can't tell you. I know that there were books written, I read newspaper articles. There are many people who suggest that, at a given time, if there were separation, there could be the risk of "splitting up".

And that's why, what we are saying here is that, as Quebecers committed to Québec, we think that those who are promoting sovereignty, the independence of Québec, run the risk of a "split". Is that what we want? We say No.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** ...Québec is Canada, last page of your brief. "Le Québec est le Canada," you said. That immediately makes me think of Shakespeare, with whom you are very familiar, and his fundamental question: "Être ou ne pas être." And it's precisely because Québec wants to be, that it is legitimately, we think, demanding what it is demanding. And that's where there's a misunderstanding between us. Not a misunderstanding with all Anglophones, because there are those who came here yesterday to tell us that Québec sovereignty is the only thing which can ultimately save Canada which, in the current state of affairs, is starting to drift apart.

I want to make sure we agree on what the basic misunderstanding is between us. And I wonder if it isn't because we don't know exactly what your position is. I have only one short question to ask you. And I think only Anglophones like you can answer it. In your opinion, what difference, culturally speaking – we agree, culturally speaking – what difference is there between a Québec Anglophone and an

Anglophone from anywhere else in Canada?

**Mr. Segal:** Il y a une grande différence. J'ai eu le plaisir de vivre à Toronto pendant quelques années. Je ne me considère pas comme un anglophone qui serait à l'aise en Ontario. Je ne suis pas l'un de ceux qui aiment voyager sur la 401. Je veux vous faire comprendre que je suis un produit de la culture qui a été créée ici au Québec, un produit des immigrants qui sont arrivés d'Europe il y a trois générations. J'ai peu en commun, même au niveau de la langue, avec les citoyens de Toronto. Ma culture est différente. Elle a été créée d'une façon différente. Et même si un anglophone du Québec est un Canadien, il est aussi un Québécois anglophone.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** I would like to add something to that, about...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine; it's just because we must move quickly, an answer...

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Yes. I will go very quickly, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** I wanted to mention to Mr. Turgeon... you forget that the history of... because, ultimately, when we talk about sovereignty, we are talking about the majority of French Canadians of Québec. And the history of French Canadians exists throughout Canada, it isn't just in Québec. By promoting sovereignty in Québec and forgetting the rest of Canada, you forget that, in the rest of Canada, there are currently two million Francophones, including new Canadians, who speak French. These figures were just revealed by the president of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario.

Therefore, Mr. Turgeon, I believe that you are entitled to ask to be the part owner of all of Canada. You don't need to limit yourself to Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to relinquish my right to the floor, and instead merely make an observation. If Bill 101 is here today, it's probably because of a situation which existed 15 to 20 years ago, and if Bill 178 is also here today – which is a schedule of Bill 101... and, like you, I hope that one day they will disappear. Because, to listen to you now,

you Anglophones, who have finally agreed to speak French in Québec, that pleases us very much. And these things will perhaps no longer exist in five or ten years, and I hope that we will be able to get rid of them to your satisfaction and to the satisfaction of everyone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Russell Williams.  
(3:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of my political party, I would like to thank Mr. Segal and the Executive Committee of the Equality Party for presenting their brief. I think that you have brought up several major points.

Et je voudrais dire que je préfère de beaucoup le ton des discussions d'aujourd'hui. J'espère que durant les travaux de la Commission, nous pourrions maintenir ce ton de sorte que nous puissions avoir un dialogue ouvert et direct avec les personnes qui présentent les mémoires. Je tenais à mentionner ce point. Dans mon travail à la Commission, je m'efforce de représenter la communauté anglophone qui veut s'intégrer complètement, et je fais de mon mieux pour parler en français. Aujourd'hui, toutefois, je crois que je préférerais poser mes questions en anglais.

J'aimerais commencer par un commentaire. Dans toute ma vie d'adulte, j'ai été un Québécois et un Canadien, et je n'ai jamais caché ce fait, un peu dans le même sens que vous avez répondu à la question, M. Segal. Et je continue à être un fédéraliste. Mais je n'ai pas une vision statique du fédéralisme. Je crois que l'on peut respecter les aspirations légitimes du Québec à l'intérieur du Canada, les aspirations légitimes du Québec à l'intérieur d'une fédération canadienne. Et il me semble que jusqu'à présent, on a laissé se créer une certaine image du «fédéralisme», une image qui a été dépeinte dans certains mémoires ou dans des commentaires, une image qui veut que le fédéralisme sous-entend un gouvernement central fort. À mon avis, cela ne reflète pas l'histoire du Canada, et cela ne correspond pas à ma vision du fédéralisme. Cela est plutôt une vision statique, qui ne survivra pas nécessairement, à mon avis. Pour moi, le fédéralisme, et j'en arrive à ma question, est souple et changeant, il a besoin d'ajustements. Il n'y a pas de définition unique du fédéralisme, comme il n'y a pas de définition unique de la souveraineté-association. Je peux me tromper, mais il me semble que dans votre mémoire, votre présentation et vos commentaires, vous indiquez qu'il n'y a qu'un type de fédéralisme. J'aimerais entendre vos commentaires sur ce point. Vous ne pouvez pas laisser de côté le fait qu'il y a, sinon un consensus, du moins une forte croyance dans tout le Québec et le Canada selon laquelle le fédéralisme actuel n'est plus acceptable, quelles

que soient les raisons qui ont mené à cet état de fait. Au Québec, nous voulons être reconnus sur le plan constitutionnel. Comment concevez-vous que le Québec, à l'intérieur du Canada, puisse satisfaire ce profond besoin de changement?

**Mr. Segal:** Je suis d'accord avec vous pour dire que nous ne sommes plus devant un concept rigide du fédéralisme. Je crois qu'il est clair que le pays en est arrivé à une étape où des changements sont nécessaires. Je ne peux pas dire où tout cela mènera, car il devra y avoir de nombreux débats et dialogues entre les provinces et le gouvernement central pour déterminer l'avenir du Canada. Je crois que c'est la seule façon dont le Québec pourra envisager son avenir au sein du Canada. Il est fort possible que d'autres provinces envisageraient de se séparer du pays si elles n'entrevoient pas de changement. Toute nation doit évoluer, et j'ose espérer que le Canada fera de même et que les provinces resteront unies.

**M. Williams:** Je vous pose maintenant quelques questions sur le transfert des pouvoirs, parce qu'on a parlé du "sharing of responsibilities and powers" dans un certain nombre de mémoires. Considérez-vous, votre parti considère-t-il tout transfert de pouvoirs aux gouvernements provinciaux comme étant nécessairement négatif, et si oui, que penser des provinces comme la Saskatchewan ou l'Alberta qui demandent un transfert important de pouvoirs dans le domaine des communications, et de la province de la Colombie-Britannique qui demande un transfert de pouvoirs dans le domaine de la fiscalité et des taux d'intérêt? N'y a-t-il pas un danger pour le Canada de faire preuve de rigidité, comme il y en a un à être trop souple?

**M. Segal:** D'accord. J'aimerais répondre à votre question, mais en toute honnêteté, nous n'avons pas, en tant que parti, parlé de cette question en mars. Nous nous pencherons sur la question lors d'un congrès d'orientation qui se tiendra sous peu. Je crois qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une question facile. Je ne dirais pas que tous les transferts sont mauvais, mais il faut les évaluer un à un.

**M. Williams:** Pourriez-vous nous dire, même si vous n'en avez pas parlé au sein de votre parti, quels transferts – et je crois que cela est une question très importante – comment fonctionnerait la nouvelle relation, étant donné que la dernière formule de négociation n'a pas semblé donner de bons résultats.

**M. Segal:** Il faudrait sortir de l'antichambre et discuter ouvertement et de façon réceptive.

**M. Williams:** D'accord. One last question before I turn the floor over to my colleague. Il me semble — vous-même en avez parlé, et j'ai entendu des commentaires à ce propos dans mon milieu — que certaines personnes ont perdu confiance dans le processus politique, qu'il s'agisse de la Commission ou de la politique en général. Et je crois que nous devons reconnaître ce manque de confiance ou ce sentiment d'isolement si nous voulons que les minorités linguistiques ou culturelles participent pleinement au processus de détermination de l'avenir du Québec. Il est évident que ces minorités doivent se sentir en confiance et à l'aise. De la même façon, je crois que le Québec doit se sentir en confiance et à l'aise par rapport à son avenir. Par votre présence et votre participation, je crois que vous montrez que vous êtes confiants. Quels besoins concrets, et je parle des questions de tous les jours, pouvons-nous commencer à satisfaire, quand nous regardons l'avenir du Québec, quelles mesures pouvons-nous mettre en place pour assurer que tous les Québécois se sentent intégrés à la société québécoise et à son avenir? Je sais que votre parti a parlé de certaines de ces questions sur le plan constitutionnel, mais sur le plan concret, que pouvons-nous faire?

**M. Segal:** Je crois que le gouvernement a un rôle à jouer pour essayer d'encourager tous les groupes, tous les groupes culturels de la province de Québec, à apporter leur participation, tout comme ils l'ont fait au cours des audiences de la Commission. Je ne suis pas en désaccord avec l'idée de tenir des audiences en elle-même. Dans mon discours d'ouverture, j'ai parlé presque exclusivement de la constitution de la Commission, car j'estime qu'il y a trop d'absents.

Je crois que le dialogue est une excellente approche. Je crois que le gouvernement a aussi un rôle à jouer pour assurer qu'il y ait davantage de communication, un genre d'appel aux collectivités. Jusqu'à présent, ce qui se passe au gouvernement est trop loin des préoccupations de la population.

**Mr. Williams:** O.K. One last remark, I would like to say that I think that we can build any society if we have the good will of both sides. Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Robert Benoit, who is sitting in for Mr. Bourassa.

**Mr. Benoit:** In the little time that remains, I would prefer to make a comment rather than ask a question. Bill 90 invited all Quebecers to participate in the future of Québec, and among the reasons there was one which said: The democratic values and individual rights and

freedoms of Québec to which we are particularly committed, and another one said: Respectful of the rights and institutions of the English-speaking community of Québec. Bill 90, which we passed, asked Quebecers of all origins to participate in this debate, and I would invite your community to actively participate in all corners of the province, which I do not believe I'm seeing at this time. Some of the leaders are, but your community at this time is refusing to participate in Québec's future, and I think that, in a few months, it will probably be too late. And it is important, in your churches, in your social circles and everywhere, to participate in the redefinition of what Québec will be in future years. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** When you spoke of communities, I didn't know who you were addressing exactly, whether you were speaking of the Anglophone, Greek Francophone, Italian, Indian communities, I don't know, because our Party is open to everyone, it isn't an English party, it hasn't been an English party from the beginning. Obviously, there are a lot who have become members because of Bill 70.

The principles we have outlined in this brief are not exclusive to Anglophones. The freedom and principles are not exclusive to Anglophones, they are for everyone. I'm responding to the fact that... and Mr. Turgeon, I think, said to me at one point that I was an Anglophone. I don't speak English very well, I can tell you that right away.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Clarification accepted. Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As is said colloquially, it takes all kinds to make a world, and I thought that we had reached the limit of political and constitutional options. We are expanding the range of options today with your testimony, because I now realize that the status quo is unsatisfactory to you, is displeasing to you; you are not satisfied with the status quo, you want to reinforce the status quo and increasingly centralize powers with the federal government.

Basically, that's it, because the abolition of the "notwithstanding" clause increases the ascendancy of the Canadian Charter, and therefore that of the federal government, and, in addition, you want to re-enact a statute which has fallen into disuse, the federal government's power of disallowance, the federal government's power to disallow laws passed by the provincial legislatures. It's been decades since that's been used. You are asking for it to be reinstated. Therefore, greater centralization, because the

status quo is not satisfying you, you are going further than André Ouellet on that point. That expands the range. But I would like to point out that, in doing this, this indicates that you have no confidence in the gouvernement du Québec, particularly as regards fundamental rights and especially with respect to language. That's the meaning I get out of it. It's that you want to give back to the federal government this entire area of language legislation and fundamental rights.

You also want to return to freedom of choice of language in education. However, you agree that the promotion of French requires effective public relations. That's what you said on page 21. So that, essentially, if I understand your position, you are rejecting all restraining measures aimed at promoting or ensuring the survival and development of French in Québec. This must be limited to purely optional measures, since the return of freedom of choice, you are well aware of the fact that by returning to the freedom of choice of language in education, that means that children of immigrants will be able once again to attend English schools. That's what that means. We know that, before Bill 101, almost 90 % of immigrants' children in Québec went to English schools, which greatly swelled the ranks of the Anglophone community in Québec.

If you want to return to this freedom of choice, it's obvious that, the North American context being what it is, the children of immigrants will once again go to English schools in the same numbers as before, in the order of 90 %, and at that time, French will once again become seriously and truly threatened.

We understand that you are in agreement with the promotion of French. Good. I'll take note of that, but understand that this isn't lip service because, once you set aside all restraining measures and desire the return of the freedom of choice of language in education, it's obvious that that can only result in a situation which involves serious threats to the survival and development of French in Québec. Do we at least agree... It's your opinion, and I respect it, but do we agree that it had that effect and it will have that effect?

**Mr. Chalkoun:** We don't agree on much, Mr. Brassard, because you speak French so well after hundreds of years that that proves that French is still here. It has been here for a long time without restraining measures.

We don't want to centralize the federal government. Absolutely not. We are not for the status quo. We don't want to centralize the federal government in any way. We only dealt with fundamental questions in our brief. I would like to ask you just one short question. As a Francophone in Québec, if anyone today prohibited you from posting signs in French,

how would you feel as a Francophone? What would you feel? That gives you some idea of the frustration of some of our citizens to have their language banned in public. Think about it. If we banned French signs today in Québec or Montréal. That's all I have to say on this subject. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Chevette.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not share the point of view of the Equality Party. I would be a liar if I didn't tell you that. Moreover, I detest falsehoods and always make an effort to refute them.

In your brief, on page 6, you said that in 1978, Bill 101 imposed French as the only official language in Québec, and banned the use or even the sight of English or other languages almost everywhere, even though Bill 101 let you have 171 000 businesses, or 60 % of businesses, which could post signs in both languages. Think of all the businesses of four or less.  
(4:00 p.m.)

Bill 178, on page 10, even if I was in disagreement with the bill, but not for the same reasons as you: "Bill 178, notwithstanding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, bans outdoor signs in a language other than French everywhere in Québec." You state that straight off, even though Bill 178 gives you, in addition to the 171 000 businesses under Bill 101, 65 000 other businesses which can post signs in both languages, that is, 82 % of all businesses in Québec which can post signs in both languages, and you categorically state...

**Mr. Chalkoun:** ...aware of that. How so? I don't understand.

**Mr. Chevette:** I will finish my questions, then I will let you...

**Mr. Chalkoun:** I didn't get anything out of that. What's this business of signs? 82 % of businesses can post signs in both languages in Québec?

**Mr. Chevette:** The original 171 000, plus the 65 000 under Bill 178, gave you 82 % of all Québec businesses which can post bilingual signs.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Outside, sir?

**Mr. Chevette:** Outside, sir.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** I wasn't aware of that.

**Mr. Chevette:** And, inside, 95 % of all Québec businesses can post signs in both languages. Between you and me, isn't that

carrying things a bit too far when you assert such things so categorically? You seem to be terribly unhappy, it's as if we were treating you dreadfully, despite the fact that Bill 101 from the beginning gave you 171 000 businesses, and Bill 178 gave you 65 000 more businesses. You assert that there is no more English outside; that's possible. That makes 236 000 businesses. Only 18 % remain which have unilingual French signs only. Truthfully, don't you find when you assert things of that nature on page 6 and on page 10, that that's laying it on a bit thick?

**Mr. Chalkoun:** I would like to respond to this, for the Chairman's sake, that, in Québec, posting outdoor signs in English, even with French added, except for certain religious organizations, bookstores, etc., which do not represent even 1 % of all signs that we have in Québec, is banned. All commercial signs in English are banned in Québec. If I'm wrong, please tell me, Mr. Chairman. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I don't want to act as a referee.

**Mr. Chevette:** Oh! Apparently, I said "outdoor" rather than "indoor". It's possible I made a slip. I don't know, I didn't have the time to check. Ninety-five percent of businesses can post signs in both languages inside. Imagine that.

**Voices:** Inside.

**Mr. Chevette:** It seems to me that I had said 95 % inside. Good.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That proves one thing: by talking, we understand each other.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Yes. There. Finally, we understand each other.

**Mr. Chevette:** And I believe, Mr. Chairman, that I will ask the group before us to tell me if they have compared their situation with that of Francophones outside Québec.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** Yes.

**Mr. Chevette:** And so, what does that tell you?

**Mr. Segal:** Il est très important que les francophones hors Québec puissent recevoir tout l'appui possible. J'ajouterais que les francophones hors Québec peuvent poser une affiche en français s'ils le désirent, et que cela ne va pas à l'encontre de la loi. Dans mon quartier, si le magasin du coin installe une

affiche qui est bilingue... Regardez-les toutes, elles sont toutes couvertes de ruban et elles sont effacées. Alors, mes voisins se promènent dans le voisinage avec leurs enfants et ils leur expliquent pourquoi il est illégal que leur langue soit affichée. Je ne crois pas que cela aide notre culture à se développer, et j'apprécierais que d'autres se penchent sur les besoins de notre culture dans l'avenir. Merci.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fifteen seconds, sir.

**Mr. Chevette:** One last question, Mr. Chairman. When you talk about another possible great exodus, have you recent surveys of Anglophone Quebecers to see if, truly... Because you asserted, in response to a question by Mr. Laberge and one by Mr. Bouchard, that, should Quebecers use their right of self-determination, you would respect the verdict. Are you aware of the CROP poll, which says that 78 % of Quebecers would accept the verdict of Quebecers? Why do you brandish the threat of an exodus?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Do you want to respond to that?

**Mr. Chalkoun:** We have never brandished the threat of an exodus.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine.

**Mr. Chalkoun:** We mentioned that there was an exodus which was almost the equivalent of the Marshall Plan for Toronto. Toronto has twice as many head offices than we do, and many Quebecers left and took their talent, their money, and all the education they obtained here was ultimately useless because it was used in Toronto. And that's too bad. But we did not brandish the threat of another exodus.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman, do you want to speak for 30 seconds?

**Mr. Libman:** O.K. Just in closing, I cordially welcome the Executive Committee of the Equality Party. A party which has the support of 11 % of Quebecers, according to the latest IQOP poll, which appeared yesterday in *Le Soleil*. And it's fairly obvious, Mr. Chairman, that the Equality Party is a party which unequivocally supports the Canadian Federation, and is willing to go the distance in defending its undeniable advantages so that Québec can remain a strong and integral part of our country, Canada.

And, finally, just to add something to what Mr. Dufour said. Mr. Dufour spoke of the consensus of Anglophones who are in favour of Bill 101. It is true that the majority of Anglophones are in favour of the spirit of Bill

101, and this spirit is expressed in the preamble to this bill. But, as Mr. Chalkoun said: There are sections, there are irritants which should not exist. And, in closing, there will be unanimous support by the Anglophone community for this bill if these irritants, if these sections did not exist, and also, there would no longer be linguistic tensions in Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman, that's fine. So, Mrs. Lee, Mr. Ladd, Mr. Segal, Mr. Chalkoun, Mrs. Freedman, Mr. Calderone, thank you for your contribution to our Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:07 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:16 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We resume our work. Our next guest, Mr. Leprohon, for 30 minutes. The rule, for 30 minutes, as regards the time allocated to the various speakers... You will have 5 minutes to present your brief. There will be 5 minutes for each of the parliamentary groups forming the Government and forming the Official Opposition, for both groups. There will be 10 minutes for the other members, who will have a maximum of 5 minutes each. Therefore, there can only be two speakers. And 5 minutes for the chair.

So, Mr. Leprohon, you have 5 minutes. First of all, welcome. And you have 5 minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. André de B. Leprohon**

**Mr. Leprohon (André de B.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dear members of the Commission, there are four myths in our society. These myths have led us to accept the rejection of the constitutional status quo and accept the possibility of the break up of our country. By understanding these myths and their influence on us, as Francophones, the Commission can make recommendations in a more objective manner. With the six and a half minutes I've been allotted, I will concentrate on the fourth myth, that is, that we've been rejected by the rest of English Canada and that it doesn't sympathize with our need to protect our heritage.

This myth has been spread and strengthened following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. It didn't matter that the great majority of our citizens didn't understand the Meech Lake Accord. It wasn't important that we really explain to them the legitimate objectives of this ill-fated document. Month after month, we told them that Québec's position was totally reasonable and that to reject the accord would mean English Canada's rejection of Québec. We then repeatedly showed them a minuscule group of thick Anglophones wiping their feet on our flag.

In my view, there are many reasons why this document did not deserve to survive. My greatest objection was that there was a chance that the insertion of the distinct society clause within the text of the Constitution could threaten the clauses of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter is the most marvellous document ever to emerge from Canada and it was designed by a Francophone. This document protects the rights we have always taken for granted. The Charter protects us from government abuse. Our constitutional experts were divided on the issue of whether or not the Charter of Rights and Freedoms could be affected. My position is as follows. If there is the slightest chance that the Accord affects our fundamental rights, then that chance alone is reason enough to kill the Accord.

Our Prime Minister refused to guarantee that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms would take precedence. All that alarmed Anglophones. They all agree that we are a distinct society. Nobody is contesting that point. A major difference between our two races is our attitude to our respective governments. The Francophone, because of the myths described in this report, places his trust in his government. The collectivity is of great importance. The Anglophone fears his government and wants it to have as little power as possible and objects to the State meddling in his affairs. He maintains that individual rights are more important than the collectivity. When you take a right away from my neighbour, you also take it away from me. The fear that the *gouvernement du Québec*, through the distinct society clause, might be in a position to take away rights is what frightened many Anglophones. This fear began with the implementation of Bill 178. It emerged again with the demonstration of 10 000 to 25 000 in the streets. This worries me and should worry all of you, that it should be so easy to eliminate a right. What other right could we lose, because of demonstrations that feed and draw on the myths prevailing in our society?

This has never been explained to our people. It wasn't in our politicians' interests, or those of our media which, as we know, have a completely different agenda. English Canadians throughout the country support us with all their heart in our desire to preserve our language and culture. We are Canada's cachet. Anglophones don't reject us, don't want us to lose our heritage and don't want to lose us. Canada is constantly evolving. Attitudes change and the old myths are gradually discarded.

Who would have believed, twenty years ago, that today in Calgary, supposedly an anti-Francophone stronghold, that in the Catholic system that includes about 25 % of Calgary's students, there are more than 3000 children of unilingual English families enrolled in French schools. Or that the University of Calgary

granted some of its diplomas in French. It's time for us to change. It's time to bury the myths that have always blocked our society. Will we look to the future with confidence or, on the contrary, will we turn inward and allow our worries to isolate us even more?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 15 seconds, Mr. Leprohon.

**Mr. Leprohon:** I've got a minute left.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No, you said you had six and a half minutes at the beginning.

**Mr. Leprohon:** That's right.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, it's five minutes.

**Mr. Leprohon:** Oh! I'll stop when you tell me.

If we want to move ahead as a society in the next century, we have to change our attitude. It's inconceivable that in 1990, our students can graduate from secondary school, CEGEP and university as unilingual Francophones. We're limiting our young people, isolating them from the rest of Canada, placing them here in a weak economic position and preventing them from developing. It's unfair that only Anglophones, those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English and upper-class French Canadians are bilingual. And that middle and lower-class Francophones are unilingual French. It's deplorable that in the Abitibi region, parents have to abandon their religion to enable their children to begin English language courses earlier. And it's hypocrisy that our leaders are all perfectly bilingual, having had the opportunity to attend institutions like Harvard and the London School of Economics...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** So, one person's freedom begins where another's ends. It's time for questions. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll try not to abuse the liberty or privilege you've given me. Your brief has raised many questions, much reflection for me. Unfortunately, we're also limited by time. So, I'll try to get straight to the point. I agree with you on one point: myths. I agree with you. I've never felt I was in a fight with the English and I never felt that if something happened to me, it was because of the English. When you're the best, the best happens to you and when you're the worst, the worst happens to you. In that sense, I say that we control our destiny and we're doing fine. In that sense, in any event, I

don't tend to blame others when I've got problems.

But there's one aspect I find very distressing, for instance. You say the failure of Meech Lake is a good thing. At any rate, you're happy with that, but it didn't make me happy. O.K., perhaps because I became very involved in promoting it, explaining it, defending Meech. But the failure of Meech hurt me. I didn't think it was funny at all. I'd like you to tell me why you think it was a good thing.

**Mr. Leprohon:** Happy perhaps isn't the right word because I realized the damage it would do to our province, to our people and to Canada. I was very pleased that the document didn't pass because I hold individual rights to be sacred. And there are three points. There was the danger that rights could be at stake in Québec and, even if it's for our minorities, I don't want that as a minority problem. It's a philosophy that says that rights are sacred and if we have problems in Québec, it's up to us to find approaches and apply some creativity and intelligence to solve them. Then if we take away, if potentially there's the chance of taking away a right from somebody, that diminishes us as a society. There were two other problems involved with the Charter. And, in any negotiation, you always have to understand the other side's approach or objections. Nobody really took the time to explain those objections to us. Senate reform is a rather important objection and then there was also the fact that the Meech Lake Accord would have isolated Québec by giving it more power - and I realize that isn't a popular position - but I don't want to see Québec isolated and its people isolated. I want us to participate in Canada.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** But you're telling me, there, that we're isolating ourselves by taking on more power, to summarize very briefly what you've told me.

**Mr. Leprohon:** If you reduce the influence of the federal government, Ottawa, and cut more and more links, yes, there is a tendency to turn inward. We take care of our little affairs here, in Québec. So, there is a tendency to limit our horizons. But if there's a federal presence... and, between you and me, I feel the federal presence is already minimal. Our language is controlled... we have our own Civil Code, our own laws. We control education. We have all the tools necessary to preserve our language.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Yes, I'd understand your point of view if Québec's nationalism was defensive. We're afraid of dying, afraid... we have to defend ourselves, protect ourselves. I agree with you. But if, on the contrary, we say we need more room to grow,

affirm ourselves, develop, that we've outgrown our federal clothes, that we need more. We're stronger, more confident. In that sense, do you agree with that form of nationalism?

**Mr. Leprohon:** Well, let's say that perhaps we're talking about the same thing. The only difference is that I see Canada as the playing field. In the past 20 to 30 years, we've achieved... we've taken control of our business, right. The world of business belongs to us. I say that the next generation should be Canada. And that's why I don't want to reduce the existing influence, which I feel is already minimal.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. Chairman, do we still have time?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes sir.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Fine, then, in the links you envisage, in the powers, that is, you would consider it necessary for Québec to grow? Are there any additional powers that Québec should seek that wouldn't reduce or "ghettoize", "ghettoize", I'm not quite sure. Excuse me, my colleague has a better expression than I do.

**Mr. Leprohon:** Let's say that near the end of my brief, I recommended that we should perhaps consider a bilingual society. When I say bilingual, I don't mean half and half. I mean, perhaps, we should consider changing our education system so that it's 75 % French and 25 % English in all schools. It's up to us to preserve our language, our culture. We have everything we need to do that. But we absolutely have to prepare your young people for the next century. English is critical for the future. You can't deny that.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's it. We now move on to another block of questions. We may come back to you. Mr. Jacques Léonard.

**Mr. Léonard:** Mr. Leprohon, I read your brief and I had the impression that you defend what could be called integral federalism, the status quo, and basically, the 1982 Constitution, with its Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. On that score, I think your proposal is very clear. Basically, you're saying that this Canadian constitution suits us, should suit us and I'm proposing it to Quebecers. Except that I have the impression that a lot of Quebecers are less satisfied with it and for reasons that, in my view, don't necessarily involve myths. And that's where I think the myths you raise - you can call them myths when they're simplified to the extreme... But, nonetheless, proceedings have been held and issues raised. I think they're well

grounded in reality. I don't want to go over all that, there isn't time in five minutes. But I'd simply like to say that a growing proportion of Quebecers thinks that these aren't myths and would like to get out of Confederation, the 1982 Canadian Constitution.

And what the Prime Minister of Québec did when he proposed the five conditions of the Meech Lake Accord... They were minimum conditions that everyone in Québec, at least a very large proportion of Quebecers considered them a minimum, a very large proportion of the population. So, I wonder if there aren't myths on both sides in all that and whether, basically, people will have to decide democratically at some point.

(4:30 p.m.)

If a referendum were held on this question, between the status quo which I respect because, for me, the Canadian Constitution as it has been designed leads to a very strong central state and to level out, in any case, what you could call nationalisms; that's one position while the other would propose sovereignty. I think those two things can be defended very well. Good, they can be defended. I'm going to ask my first question. In this context, I suppose you would respect the result of a referendum because it would be a democratic result. You'll be able to answer. Second, you say that a Québec turned inward on itself would be closed to international influences. I agree with you when you put it that way except that Québec sovereignty, which is opposed to your vision of federalism, means that Quebecers - the gouvernement du Québec and Quebecers - will increasingly have direct access to the world at the international level. And I simply want to point out to you that Quebecers themselves, as a community, have the largest share of their gross national product exported to and imported from other countries. So, our economy is already very open and I don't see why we should go further in that direction, which is consistent with current international influences. That would involve going against the current and that would turn us inward.

**Mr. Leprohon:** Let's say your question is fairly lengthy. I'll try to pick up as many threads as possible. My point is that in economic terms, that's not the aspect that should be the most important for Québec's future. If we argue and say we need to maintain our links, for economic reasons and then the international side takes on more importance, those arguments are unfounded. With the links we have with Canada, we have the opportunity to act on the international scene that helps us. Do you understand? If we separate or become more independent, we'll be more restricted in terms of size of population that will have the opportunity to act on the international market. Certainly, we'll continue to have relations as we do at present, but I don't see how that will benefit

the majority of our population. If, two and a half years ago, and even today if we asked the majority of our population to explain the Meech Lake Accord, they couldn't tell you anything on the subject. It's true, two and a half years ago there was no problem for most of the population. If we'd asked them if the status quo was acceptable to them, they would have said yes. Right? They wouldn't have been able to explain more than that. What's happened over the past two years is the political process — once again in our province — and today, we're province against province to a certain point, Francophone against Anglophone and Anglophone against Francophone.

**Mr. Léonard:** Just...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A 15-second comment.

**Mr. Léonard:** ...a quick remark. In French Africa, for instance, there are no Québec consulates in any Francophone country as far as I've been told, except for a post actually within the Canadian Embassy in Abidjan. So you see that when you say that Québec has access to the international world, it's only through Ottawa. You know what that means. Currently, it has no access at all to Africa. That's a fact that can't be denied now.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's it. Time's up. We now move on to Mr. Ouellet who will be followed by Mr. Libman and Mr. Louis Laberge. Mr. Ouellet?

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't really want to ask a question, but make a short comment. Sir, I appreciated your brief because you have convictions and you express them. It makes me think that a brief like the brief submitted by the Société nationale des Québécois de Richelieu-Yamaska yesterday evening necessarily brings a brief such as yours today. There are things that ought to be said and brought to the attention of the members of this Commission. You talk of myths and I think you're right to do so because, in some parts of Québec, some myths have been spread very eagerly and I congratulate you for deflating some of them. I must say that I don't share your views completely. In particular, I was for the Meech Lake Accord in 1987, I was still for the Meech Lake Accord in 1990 and I was disappointed that it wasn't passed.

I've just heard Mr. Léonard try to explain how terrible it was that the Anglophones rejected the Meech Lake Accord. In 1987, if I remember correctly, the Parti québécois, the sovereignists spoke of a great illusion, a compromise, a terrible deal by the gouvernement du Québec in talking about trying to have an

agreement on Meech Lake. They were against it. Suddenly, when they saw it wasn't working, then they said it was terrible that it wasn't working. And I think that, in some respects, when you talk about a certain myth in Québec, you're touching, you put your finger on something that hurts this change of attitude, suddenly, for the partisan and electioneering purposes of the Parti québécois.

But you talk about another myth that is very important. And it's the one that there's a threat that we could lose our language and our culture. Earlier, Mr. Laberge spoke about a brief that was presented before this Commission and which said, which mentioned a brief presented by the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, and which spoke of the disappearance of Francophones outside Québec, the fact that Francophones were disappearing. I received some rather major corrections to the brief of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste from the Fédération des francophones hors Québec, particularly when it speaks of rates of assimilation of Francophones. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste mentioned an assimilation rate of 70.9 % in Ontario. The figures provided to us were of the order of 27 %. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste spoke of an assimilation rate of 27.7 % in New Brunswick, whereas the official figure is 7.1 %. Another myth which, in my view, you're right to deplore. It's obvious to me that there's room for improvement in Canada, that a better distribution of tasks between the federal government and Québec is needed, to serve the population of Québec better and better meet its legitimate aspirations. And I think it's possible to do that within Canada in the best interests of Quebecers.

**Mr. Leprohon:** No comment.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You're lucky, Mr. Leprohon. You don't have to answer. Time is up. Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must also congratulate Mr. Leprohon. I think he's very brave to say publicly what he thinks in private. There are many Québec Francophones who think like that, but keep their opinion private. And I think you represent a silent majority in Québec, which perhaps should have the courage to come before this Commission in public.

I'd like to touch on a number of points you make. You say, there's a sentence that says: "If there is the slightest chance that the Accord affects our fundamental rights, then that chance alone is reason enough to kill the Accord." I think we have to repeat the fact that in 1985, when Québec's initial five conditions were raised in their electoral program, their demand that Québec be recognized as a distinct society, it was stated that they wanted that recognition in the preamble of the new constitution. That was

the original demand, by the gouvernement du Québec, for the recognition of Québec as a distinct society, that it be placed in a preamble. That way, there would be no effect on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Second, you mention in your brief about a dozen unilingual English persons whose children are all bilingual. I mention this point because we often say that Trudeau's dream of bilingualism for Canada will never come true. It must be said - and I think this sentence may shed some light on it - the fact that if we can maybe allow the Trudeau dream to develop, we might one day reach a point where the dream of bilingualism would exist in Canada because, among our young people, the story is very different today from earlier generations.

Mr. Leprohon, my question. We have to touch on the education issue. You talk of education. Do you believe the sections of Bill 101 that concern education, education for immigrants who must attend French schools... is it an essential tool to promote the French language and culture in Québec to force immigrants to attend the French school system or, if there was freedom of choice, could we still promote the French language if fluency in French was maintained for immigrants, even if they attended English schools?

Mr. Leprohon: Let's say that I was proposing that perhaps we develop a system, a school system in which education, the schools are all the same. I recommended 75 % in French, 25 % in English. And, if more class time is needed so that children can retain their language, whether in French or in English, let's do it. I'm against imposing things. On the other hand, I realize that immigrants don't have a choice. They absolutely have to learn French to be involved in our society in the same way as the English today, young Anglophones, it's increasingly rare to find young unilingual Anglophones. So, Francophones need to go into the French system if it doesn't change. But I recommend that it be changed.

Mr. Libman: O.K. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said, I appreciated the brief.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine, Mr. Libman. Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Two to three minutes.

Mr. Laberge: Pardon me?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Two to three minutes.

Mr. Laberge: Yes. Two quick corrections. Mr. Ouellet said that I'd referred to the brief of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste. You're slightly mistaken. It's not the first time. Probably not the last. But I wasn't there when the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste presented its brief and I'm ashamed to admit that I haven't even read the brief. So I certainly didn't refer to the Société's brief.

Mr. Libman has just created another myth. He congratulated Mr. Leprohon for his courage. He said there are many French Canadians who think like you. If there were as many as all that, you probably wouldn't be all alone, Lib.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No comment.

Mr. Laberge: I found the myth argument a little simplistic. It's not just myths. There are truths in there after all. After all, and this isn't just a myth, the federal government is infringing on provincial jurisdiction more and more, in Québec as well: in education, occupational training. And here again, with the commission they're setting up, 28 organizations, including the chambers of commerce, the whole business community was there, everyone, everyone, except a business organization for the Forum pour l'emploi which agreed that Ottawa had to be pushed back to its jurisdiction and given the message: Don't touch that. So, that's not a myth. That's happening.

Francophones outside Québec have told us they were having a devil of a time. I didn't get that from anywhere else. They should know. They're experiencing that situation. It's very different in Laval-sur-le-Lac, I suppose.

Besides, another myth that's been around a long time and we'll always remember, I think is that in 1980, we were told that a "no" vote was a vote for change. There were changes. Things got worse. That's been the changes since 1980.

There may be myths, but there are not just myths. There are causes, there are causes and, once again, there are a lot of organizations, and I'm pleasantly surprised by this, that see things clearly and say that the status quo is impossible, we don't want to discuss it any more. On the other hand, they also say that pure, hardline separation - that's what Mr. Rémillard calls it - that's also out of the question. So, I think we're starting from something. Québec has to assume its own responsibilities. You say it's a myth to rely on the gouvernement du Québec to defend our interests. Fine. That's where I've got problems following you. Do you think that... Well, that's what it says.

Mr. Leprohon: ...that only our government can adequately represent us. On that point, what I was trying to do, is that we have a Francophone representation in Ottawa to represent

our interests.

**Mr. Laberge:** If you'll allow me. Number two. The myth that our provincial government can effectively defend our interests. I didn't write that.

**Mr. Leprohon:** That the only one, the only one that can defend our interests...

**Mr. Laberge:** It doesn't say "the only one"; "can effectively defend..." Now you seem to be saying that it can't defend our interests at all.

**Mr. Leprohon:** Not at all.

**Mr. Laberge:** Well, let me tell you something. I was locked up once for... You know!

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Laberge:** Not for politicians' things. And I preferred to be locked up by my gouvernement du Québec than by the federal government. The federal government missed me by two minutes...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Laberge:** ...when they sent in the army, in 1970, and picked up 500 or 600 Quebecers. That's not a myth. They locked them up, no lawyer, no right to use a telephone, no right to do anything. That's not a myth. That happened in Québec.

**Mr. Leprohon:** How did you feel about that?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very good.

**Mr. Laberge:** Good. Well, I'm finished.

**Mr. Leprohon:** How did you feel about that?

**Mr. Laberge:** ...and my question is, do you believe, I mean sincerely believe, that we can continue with the status quo?

**Mr. Leprohon:** Perhaps a question, before proceeding. How did you feel about the fact that people were picked up off the street and incarcerated? Was it something really terrible, disgusting, abominable?

**Mr. Laberge:** Well, as far as I know, Pauline Julien isn't a criminal.

**Mr. Leprohon:** I agree and that's why...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good. So, while we agree, it's time to end the hearing.

**Mr. Laberge:** You agree, so you'll vote "yes" in the referendum, for change.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Leprohon, for presenting your views on the future of Québec to this Commission.

**Mr. Leprohon:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a correction.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No. I'm sorry sir.

**Mr. Leprohon:** Just make a correction to...

**Mr. Laberge:** ...We haven't been allowed to reply.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No. Listen...

**Mr. Laberge:** So he should do like me and wait.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good. There we are. Thank you. So, we now welcome the Fédération des CLSC.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:47 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:49 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now welcome the Fédération des CLSC du Québec for a one-hour hearing. For the benefit of our guests, I'll repeat the time allotments. You have 10 minutes to present your brief, there are 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Government, 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 25 minutes for the other members, each with a maximum of five minutes, and finally, five minutes for the Chair. So, I understand, Mr. Payette, that you will be giving a summary of the brief?

**Mr. Payette (Maurice):** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Could you begin by introducing your colleagues, please.

#### Fédération des CLSC du Québec

**Mr. Payette:** Certainly. Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Commission, allow me to introduce my colleagues. To my right, Serge Bouchard, vice-president of the Fédération and beneficiaries' representative on the board of directors of a Côte-Nord CLSC, the CLSC Aquilon in Baie-Comeau. Mr. Bouchard is also involved in the education and municipal sectors as a school principal and mayor of Pointe-aux-Outardes. To my immediate left,

Jeanne D'Arc Vaillant, director general of the Fédération des CLSC. To my far left, at the end of the table, Louis Côté, director general of the CLSC la Petite-Patrie in the Villeray-Rosemont district of Montréal and vice-president of the Fédération des CLSC. To my far right, Michel Bissonnette, director of communications with the Fédération des CLSC.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you were given the mandate to study and analyse the political and constitutional future of Québec and we are very pleased to be able to make our contribution to the fulfillment of this important mandate. For many Quebecers, and for several groups who have spoken before this commission, this mandate has given rise to a deeper and more global concern. It's not enough to declare ourselves a distinct society; it's not enough to try and establish what makes us distinct and what we need to be distinct. In our opinion, we must also ask ourselves what kind of society we want to build and how a blueprint for society can be formulated and adopted. As far as we are concerned, the constitutional and political option and the social option are one and the same. What brings the CLSC network before your commission to remind you of the need to build social unity is the following: first, for over 15 years now, CLSCs have been firmly rooted in the grassroots of society, in the local communities. The 476 service outlets established in urban centres, cities and villages throughout Québec place us in daily contact with the reality of Quebecers. Over the years, CLSCs have become active and key partners in all local community activities.

Second, every day, the 15 000 CLSC employees, who deal with 2.5 million beneficiaries, are confronted with the poverty and suffering of thousands of citizens who are victims of a sick society infected with disparities and in the process of disintegration. We have come here today to tell you that as providers of health and social services, the CLSCs have observed that the population they serve is experiencing a profound feeling of disarray and that many individuals are neither able to participate, nor even feel concerned by these debates on the constitutional future of Québec. They are, in some way, without a voice.

We did not come here to tell you how to break the constitutional impasse. We merely wish to remind you that your reflections cannot ignore another type of impasse: the ever-widening disparity between the rich and the poor, the disparity between the regions of Québec, the disparity between urban centres. Several organizations have already delivered the same message: the Association des évêques du Québec, the Conseil des affaires sociales, the Union des producteurs agricoles, the Fédération des caisses populaires, and no doubt others will come to remind you of the social aspect of the

proposal for Québec's future.

The key to our future is the capacity of each of our communities to stir the population into action. If we want to get back our social unity, rebuild the social fabric and build a better future, we need a blueprint for society, a new social contract that will unite the entire population of Québec in the pursuit of shared objectives fully understood by all.

I would now ask Mr. Bouchard to describe what our brief sets out as the key principles that should guide the formulation of a new social contract.

**Mr. Bouchard (Serge):** Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I would just like to outline the ten bases on which, in our opinion, the social contract must be formulated.

First, the clarification of Québec's political aspirations and the search for a sociopolitical consensus on the major factors at stake in our development.

Second, the establishment of clear, long-term objectives, that is, objectives for at least the next 20 years, for our socioeconomic development.

Third, the adoption of a global policy which is aimed primarily at fighting poverty and inequality and which provides the various social, political and economic agents with the targets of our collective degeneration and the means to eradicate them.

Fourth, true decentralization of the decision-making powers of the gouvernement du Québec, both with respect to the administrative regions and the various networks, be it in the sector of economy, health and social services or education, or in other sectors of human activity. The primary mission of the government machine, other than to manage public funds and our development goals, should be to support the efforts and accomplishments of groups and organizations working in the field.

Fifth, the recentering, that is, the reorganization of government activities at the municipal level, which in our opinion, brings us back to local jurisdiction, so as to better equip the municipality in matters of socioeconomic development and allow it to play a more active and decisive role in the goals of local development in Québec.

Sixth, a consensus between employers and employees so as to decrease confrontation and rally our work forces to join the common cause of our socioeconomic development.

Seventh, the systematic adoption of attitudes and preventive management practices in matters of government action and socioeconomic development goals.

Eighth, the clarification and affirmation of the basic values proposed by Québec as a land of emigration and for its immigrants, particularly the French fact and its specific sociocultural

character.

Ninth, a resolution through negotiated agreements on the rights of Native peoples within the geographical, sociocultural and political context of Québec.

And tenth, a reformulation of the existing Charter of Rights and Freedoms to include the collective rights of all Quebecers.

(5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Chairman, those are the bases of the social contract we would like to see for Québec and if, to agree on this social contract, we have to rally the entire community, we propose that the States General be summoned and take the time and means necessary to achieve this end. We believe that this is where our future as Quebecers lies and we are willing to work towards this end. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Payette. We will begin with Mr. Guy Chevrete.

**Mr. Chevrete:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Fédération for its brief. I feel it touches on a number of Québec realities and it reflects the results of reports that have been conducted in recent years, in recent months even; the report of the Conseil des affaires sociales et de la famille, for example. I think we have to attack the problem of poverty and fairer redistribution of wealth in Québec head on. And when you speak of a social contract or blueprint for society, and then list your 10 points, we become aware that we don't have all the tools required to achieve this social contract. For example, you speak of relations with the Native peoples, you speak of the redistribution of employment for example, you speak of immigration and I said in my inaugural remarks before the Commission that on January 1, 1991, there will be a shortfall of \$1.2 billion in health and social services alone as a result of federal transfers because Ottawa cut down on them. You know this. And yet you don't state before this Commission, which is specifically mandated to study the future options for Québec, you don't state what these, what the essential levers we must have are. Nor do you say how we can resolve this conflict that has lasted through some 30 years of attempts, if you will, to solve the constitutional problem.

Therefore, my question is the following: First, do you think Québec has all the necessary levers to achieve the social contract you are proposing and, second, if not, which ones are essential in the short term? And third, do you feel it is possible to hold the States General at the same time we are inquiring into the future of Québec, or should we settle the question of Québec's constitutional status first?

**Mr. Payette:** Do you think we're going to

answer that?

**Mr. Chevrete:** No, I don't think you're going to answer, but it's my job to ask questions.

**Mr. Payette:** With respect to the levers required, I think the answer is in the solution we are proposing: to agree in a social contract to properly define the levers required, and then, following a group consensus, agree on the means to obtain all these levers. I would call on Mrs. Vaillant to answer this somewhat touchy question more clearly.

**Mrs. Vaillant (Jeanne d'Arc):** What you find in our brief is actually to state what, what type of society... and your question has to do with the common people. What we're saying is that one way or another, whatever the chosen path, what seems important is that Québec society have a set of levers that will allow it to achieve the type of society we desire. As for this being achieved through either an agreement negotiated with the federal government or any other path, we have not taken a position. This is the wish of our authorities and it also conveys a reality. But what we feel is important, over and above the specific mechanism to be used or path to be taken, is what sort of relations... what do the members of our society want? And this particular debate must take place, this agreement must be reached.

**Mr. Chevrete:** Mrs. Vaillant, you are a frontline speaker with respect to health and social services. You are the ones who are closest to the individuals, to the people. You say we must get closer to the people. Is it not that the people you meet, the people who tell you all their problems and who ask you to represent them here, given that you don't have all these levers at your disposal, do these people not want you to settle the constitutional problem once and for all so we can get on to the phase you are proposing? Is that not what you're being told at the CLSCs, which have direct contact with the people? And if so, do they discuss the tools they require but don't have? Can you tell us what they're telling you, since you have not been so good as to write it down. Can you tell us what these people are telling you?

**Mrs. Vaillant:** One thing they're saying is that the uncertainty we're experiencing as a society must end. That's the first thing. The second thing is that a large number of Quebecers are in some ways facing great difficulties and would like to know what tomorrow holds in store. But for them, tomorrow means bread and butter. That's what they're telling us and that's what we're trying to convey today by telling you that the uncertainty we are experiencing as a

society must end. But while this uncertainty must end, together we must build a blueprint for society for the very purpose of determining what the future holds for a great many Quebecers who are either unemployed or living below the poverty line.

**Mr. Léonard:** Mr. Chairman, in his opening, long-winded speech, the president, Mr. Payette, said that the constitutional option and the social option are inseparable. I assume that the basic political structures have something to do with the blueprint for society we could have. And I think we need a grassroots answer to the question: What type of system do we want? In some ways, it's like laying the foundations of a house. You have to start with the foundations; otherwise, if we start with the roof, I think there will be problems. And the foundations of a country are called the constitution. And that's the question we're asking you, that's what we're here for. What is your opinion?

I would also like to discuss another point you raised. You plead very much to make primary social care, the care you provide, local jurisdiction — the responsibility of either a municipality, a regional body or a network — and I would like to ask you this question: If we duplicate administrative levels, would we not end up just duplicating our problems instead of solving them when all our attention should be going to solving our problems at the grassroots? In this respect, I think we must first lay the foundations and then work in the direction you are suggesting. But it seems to me that that is precisely the question: What is your opinion on the foundations?

**Mr. Payette:** I would ask Mr. Bouchard to answer the second question since he works in the field of municipal affairs.

**Mr. Bouchard (Serge):** With respect to transferring power from the central government to the municipalities, I think we must be careful. I don't think the experience of the past two years has been too encouraging and if we continue in this direction, it's not decentralization. And we absolutely must renegotiate power sharing with the municipalities if we want to do something in this direction. However, when we of the municipal affairs sector speak of municipalities to the Fédération des CLSC, we get a sense of affiliation since we cover the same RCM territories in Québec — so we are restricted to the geography of Québec — and we are partners at the local level who are often able to make some living arrangements or arrange some participation. But overall, negotiating for the sake of negotiating doesn't lead to much. We must have content to negotiate. It's the same thing as... Go ask

someone who's down and out if we're going to have a referendum, if we're going to hold an States General, if we're going to become independent, if we're going to establish an association. He doesn't give a damn.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now go on to Mrs. Campbell Steer, followed by Mr. Béland and Mrs. Simard.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Ladies and Gentlemen, no one could disagree with you that, in formulating a blueprint for a future Québec society, we have to deal with the exceedingly high and increasing number of poor people in this province. It is not enough to merely face the situation, we must work to develop a blueprint for society that would enlighten this poverty. And it is to help me in my own personal reflections that I ask the following question: In formulating this blueprint, is there anything in the Canadian federalist system in particular that prevents Québec from developing, starting immediately, a new social contract, particularly taking into account the powers that some have already suggested should be transferred to Québec, such as manpower training, immigration and family policies?

**Mrs. Vaillant:** Our opinion on that question is that, in order to put this blueprint for society into practice, whether with respect to manpower or health and social services, is that Québec must be able to act. All right. If we are in a federal context, if you will, this means that Québec must have sufficient power to be able to achieve this blueprint for society. The bottom line of what our authorities are saying to you — and it's the decision; we live in a democracy and we have authorities, and this brief was adopted unanimously by our authorities — is really that the status quo is not acceptable.

**Mrs Campbell Steer:** Right.

**Mrs. Vaillant:** First point.

Second point: in order to deal with the increasing discrepancies in Québec in the last decade, a certain number of measures and policies need to be adopted. To do so, Québec must be given a range of powers. How far are we prepared to go? We haven't analysed that question yet. That's not our aim. We're not constitutional experts. We haven't conducted a detailed analysis of the Canadian Constitution and power sharing, but what seems obvious to us is that whether we opt for sovereignty or independence, or a confederation, a common market or whatever, there must be a convergence of the major social policies if the Québec society is to deal with the poverty, illiteracy, violence, and the overall social phenomena we are describing.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** If we're looking at the situation in that light, I have already mentioned three jurisdictions that everyone — at least a certain number of individuals — have already suggested, whatever the constitutional situation might be, should be transferred to us Quebecers, here in Québec City. Could you name any others that could be transferred?

**Mr. Bissonnette (Michel):** One thing seems clear. The social contract, or the basic elements of the social contract presented to you, is broken down into ten components. What the authorities you represent as a commission would seem to deem appropriate to use, or what the political machine that governs us will deem useful to use to achieve this social contract or these components of the social contract, is up to you to decide. You're the commission appointed to use it. But what we consider absolutely fundamental — and here I refer to Mr. Léonard when he spoke of laying foundations — what we are very interested in is knowing whether the ground on which you are going to lay these foundations will be able to support them. Will the social fabric of Québec as we know it be able to support the political project we want to see implemented? We doubt that the state we live in as it currently exists is capable of such a feat. That is why we are here.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Really, we...

**Mr. Bissonnette:** When we speak of galloping or increasing poverty in Québec, the State we live in, is such that we doubt it is possible; that is why we have come here today, to convey these very concerns.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up, Mrs. Steer.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** O.K. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to thank you for your brief, since it's obviously this type of brief that gets us thinking. You know, there are a lot of people who come here and say: We'd be crazy to change anything in the Canadian constitution because this country is wealthy, we have one of the highest standards of living, the quality of life is exceptional. Then you come and remind us that there are two Québecs in one. There are some who say: Well, maybe we just need to make a little amendment to the Constitution and then we can continue living together. At least one Québec is functioning correctly. Let's continue as we are. Then there are others who say: Exactly, there is another Québec that isn't functioning

correctly and it won't be able to function until it is given certain powers.  
(5:15 p.m.)

Your brief also gets me thinking because I find it goes beyond the question of power as you actually define very well what a blueprint for society really is. In fact, I would like to thank you for emphasizing the question of a blueprint for society. I think this is extremely important. But you say: the Constitution is above all somewhat of a consensus code used to gauge our society. But do you not agree with me when I say that if we want to think globally, as you suggest, before acting locally, if we want to find a consensus, it's easier to find this consensus among people who see the society in which we live in the same way, people who dream of the same society, who... Do you not think that a consensus, since that is what you are suggesting, a consensus is reached amongst people who see the future in the same way?

**Mrs. Vaillant:** Yes. On that question, we agree. What we're saying, you see, first and foremost, is that we're currently in the early 1990s and are positioning ourselves for the year 2000. And there is really — we're going to be questioned — whether it be the environment or anything else that's going on, the violence, anything. What we're saying is that we must stop, and every part of society — your particular field of business, the social classes, the women's movements, immigrants and Native peoples, every part of society — we must all learn to build together. Earlier we spoke of foundations, we have to know what type of house we want to build. And that house must last long enough to face the year 2000 and inside the house, there cannot be some sleeping in the attic and some sleeping in the basement.

That's pretty much what we're saying. We're conveying an overall reality since, at the grassroots of the system are the people who use our services, people who come from all classes of society, all socioeconomic groups. In a sense, that's the appeal we're making: Let's build together.

**Mr. Béland:** But do you think it's merely by repatriating certain powers that we can reach a consensus or do we have to go further?

**Mrs. Vaillant:** The preferred means for us — because we did ponder the question ourselves — is to say: To find out where this consensus is we have to put the various components of our society to work. And that's why what we're proposing is the States General. Perhaps there are other means. We're not experts. But that's why we're proposing holding States General so that the various groups, the various components of our society can express themselves and, if we all decided we want to build, this will lead to a

consensus, to solid ground on which we will be able to build the house of our choice.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Simard.

**Mrs. Simard:** Mr. Chairman, it gives me special pleasure to hear what you have to say since, I think, the CSN represents almost everyone who works in the CLSCs and who are therefore in a position to make us aware of this increasingly harsh reality encountered in the context of their work — a population which is becoming poorer, the development of all kinds of important social pathologies.

I am very pleased that you've come to present your analysis. You've basically reminded us that development in Québec is unequal, taking on one form for the wealthy and another for the poor, and that it's fine if some people make it in certain areas, but that we must remember that a growing segment of the population is poor and that these people without jobs, who are on welfare, unemployed, in an extreme state of poverty, and who watch this commission's work, at home on television, that their immediate worry is more their socioeconomic situation and that they are unconcerned by these major debates on constitutional issues. And that's important that we, as a commission, remind ourselves that hundreds of thousands of people in Québec, who are just as concerned as we are by the constitutional future of this country, live this situation. And there is a challenge to see to it that they also participate in this debate, just like any other member of society. In this way, you refer, clearly, to different studies, other analyses. You speak of the necessity of defining a social contract, a new social contract. I agree. And you speak about an States General. I would like to hear your explanation of "States General". Who would call for them? Who would attend? Do you see this as part of the mandate of this commission? You must have talked about it, because you are quite affirmative in your recommendation at the end of your brief.

**Mr. Payette:** I would like to say that, among the different means that we considered for developing a true social contract, we think the most adequate would be an States General which is a democratic means allowing mobilization of the greatest possible number of citizens, citizens from all classes, citizens who represent all sectors of society, all of society's participants. To us, the process is as important as the result. If we embark on a process which permits this broad debate — let's think of the current debate; if we could apply it to all of Québec and to all citizens — I think it's a way to grasp the reality and also the decision-making

process and to prepare this consensus. We also think it would be the most democratic means. To answer your question, I believe that political leaders in particular must initiate such a process. Political leaders, I believe, are not simply responsible for determining content; they are also responsible for initiating, facilitating important processes and allowing the most democratic expression possible of needs, of aspirations, and also of objectives which we want to pursue together. This is what has led us to suggest an States General as a means of establishing a new social contract.

**Mr. Bouchard (Serge):** I'd just like to add that, in any case, coming from a so-called outlying region... anyway, we think that an States General would allow us to speak our minds even if, in number, we don't carry as much political weight. So, it's a tool like any other, this States General, but we think that this tool offers the best chance of reaching Quebecers. And we could start by means of an States General in the regions, synthesize the results and carry them over to the provincial level.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** I want to tell you that I find it somewhat refreshing to listen to hear you, because until now, it's been pretty rare that people came and reminded us a little of what's going on, showing us that Québec isn't simply sectors, it isn't just the economic side, it isn't just the cultural side. You show us the whole picture today and, I would say, you show a picture of Québec complete with the obvious deterioration, which is as much economic and social as it is cultural right now. I hope we'll keep seeing these reminders until the end. Because the real problem that we're experiencing right now in Québec — and elsewhere in the world, but let's worry about Québec since we have our hands full with that — is simply that there isn't a blueprint for society any more. There's disillusionment right now that it encourages apathy, it's a little like each man for himself, and personally, I think that we're going to have to react very quickly.

As for the States General, well, I hope that the States General for the rural areas are going to provide the incentive to organize — with your collaboration, what we organize will encourage the rest of Québec to do the same — and from there, we'll be able to weld together a real blueprint for society.

Two short questions: First, many have asked you this, and I am also asking it, but in another way. It isn't a trap, though. You propose, and I agree, 10 points for developing this blueprint for society. If they were

presented to you as a list, and to carry them out you had to choose a sovereign Québec with powers or renewed federalism, which would you choose to carry out your blueprint for society?

**Mr. Payette:** Is that your first question?

**Mr. Proulx:** Yes.

**A voice:** O.K.

**Mr. Proulx:** ...and I don't want to trip you up...

**A voice:** Of course not. Do you want to answer that?

**Mr. Proulx:** ...because I know that you're a little stuck like the rest of us, but it's just between us here. There aren't too many of us here. We're just a small group.

**A voice:** And all of Québec.

**Mr. Proulx:** "What would you choose?" We won't hold you to anything.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Keep your options open.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Proulx:** Besides, it's with the Chairman's blessing.

**Mr. Bouchard (Serge):** I've always preferred taking care of my problems myself, before someone else takes care of them for me.

**Mr. Proulx:** My second question. You speak of decentralization. I agree about that, but at the same time, I keep wondering, decentralization. Is it decentralization for the sake of decentralization? In order to shift the balance of power and create all over again a lower middle class of power, and so on? Or is it decentralization in order to be more effective, productive, and so on. I would like you...

**A voice:** Louis, do you...

**Mr. Côté (Louis):** Well, in terms of decentralization, what we think is that the municipal level - which is the level nearest, I would say, to the citizens - might be currently underused in our society. It would be worthwhile to bring many elements which closely affect the citizens down to this level of decision-making. In terms of creating solidarities, we think that the local level - the regional level

- is important in our society. And we currently live in a Québec where the municipal level could, we believe, encourage interaction between citizens and society's resources. And also work toward creating solidarities between the different actors who have to coordinate their actions in order to achieve results at the local or regional level.

**Mr. Proulx:** But, nevertheless, always within a global vision because there could be a danger of bringing more poverty to the poor and more wealth to the wealthy.

**A voice:** Yes.

**Mrs. Vaillant:** And that stems from the postulate that to take care of the problems that are part of life - for example, the aging population - to be able to face up to the aging of the population, there must be a set of measures which will affect homes, and therefore housing, which will affect transportation, which will affect security, and which will also affect services supporting people in their living environment, or health and social services. And we think that the best ones for deciding on the solution, for adapting it, are those at the local level, but within a global policy. For us, they go hand in hand. And of course, this implies financing and an adequate transfer system.

**Mr. Bouchard (Serge):** I'd like to come back again to the regions. It's very different. We have to avoid doing what we have done in the past, namely, putting down wall-to-wall carpeting. Patient transportation in one area is by ambulance; in another, it's by plane. It's different. If the various regions had the necessary tools, if Québec had the necessary means to go further, perhaps we could do something.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Rosette Côté.

**Mrs. Côté:** Mr. Chairman, I agree with the members of the Commission, that your message is important: that the economic health of Québec must be measured along with its social health, that the social contract must not create distress, but cohesion. I think it is important to be reminded of this. However, when you speak of the parameters of the blueprint for society, as you just told me: decentralization must nevertheless respect the principles of accessibility, universality, and free services... And you have spoken of a global policy. Basically, this means that you want the government to have wide-ranging policies and to have regional realities determine how decisions are applied. However, you also speak about... you have applied the concept of prevention, known in

the health sector, to socioeconomic development. I would like you to explain what it means when you say "the adoption of a preventive approach to managing socioeconomic development". That's not easy. We've rarely heard that before. Would you.

(5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Bissonnette:** Lately, many CLSCs have had to deal with crises such as Saint-Basile, the tire fire, PCBs, etc. We have to adopt approaches, ways of preventing, for the preventive management of our problems, rather than risk management. This means, for example... Not too long ago, a couple of days ago, Mr. Côté, the Minister of Health and Social Services, informed us of his intention to slate a portion of his health budget strictly for prevention. This is one way of acting, and basically, of governing, by adopting preventive attitudes. It might be a little of what we're lacking.

**Mrs. Côté:** Basically, you would stress the CLSCs' and other health centres' preventive task in dealing with the social problems you mention.

**Mr. Bissonnette:** It's a far-reaching attitude. Affecting the whole way of governing, managing Québec affairs. It's a question of adopting an attitude, a way of working which includes thinking 10, 15, 20, 30 years down the road. What's going to happen in 20, 30 years? We must plan ahead now and not in the future.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You wanted to speak, Mr. Nicolet?

**Mr. Nicolet:** ...if there's still time.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** It's O.K. Go ahead.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find it comforting to hear you say, Mr. Payette, that having pursued essentially parallel courses, based on the same reality, we have both arrived at conclusions which largely support one another. I would like to hear you elaborate more the way you see decentralization at the level of administrative regions since it is nevertheless an important element of your proposal. What interests me in particular is knowing whether you envision administrative regions as becoming a political level or a level... a driving force whose function is essentially administrative.

**Mr. Payette:** Well, as far as that's concerned, I think we could perhaps illustrate that with the reform of the health and social services system which will be announced in a few weeks. It's obvious that, in this reform, the principle of decentralization will be primary. And, from what we know of it, according to

Minister Marc-Yvan Côté, this decentralization will enable the regional health and social services boards to acquire real control over the budget as well as their goals within a particular region, in order to be able to provide the citizens with the services they need. These regional boards will also work with the local institutions. Therefore, it's a question of harmonizing local and regional levels of power. But I also think that even with such decentralization in the health and social services reform, there will always be far-reaching policies, broad frames of reference coming from the central government. And from this perspective, I would say that contrary to what we currently have, the regional centres won't simply be repositories for the Department's decisions, but institutions, councils, and boards which will have a sufficient margin of power to properly adapt far-reaching policies to regional needs. Serge?

**Mr. Bouchard (Serge):** If I may add, I think that it will go further than simple administration because when we think of decentralization, we also think of accountability to the local population. And that's extremely important. And I think that takes on another dimension.

**Mr. Nicolet:** A brief question, Mr. Chairman, if I still have the time. Will these regional centres be specialized, namely social services, health, education, or do you see a horizontal fusion of different activities?

**Mr. Payette:** I haven't thought about that yet.

**Mr. Bouchard (Serge):** We're not there yet.

**Mrs. Vaillant:** In the first place - these are demands we have made within the context of the parliamentary commission on health and social services - it involves decentralization but only in one sector. Therefore, we think that things will happen progressively. But we've seen decentralized systems in Scandinavian countries, such as Norway, for example, where the local authorities have a tremendous amount of responsibility, and education, health and social services are at the municipal level. Perhaps in 15 years, or in 10 years, that could be a reality, but for the time being, we have asked that this decentralization... we have proposed it in the area of health and social services.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Williams, you have the floor.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of my political party, I would like to thank you for your brief and congratulate the Fédération des CLSC for having drawn our

attention to several very important issues, which affect the day-to-day life of Quebecers.

CLSCs are playing an increasingly important role in Québec society. And with 158 CLSCs holding the purse strings of a budget of more than, if I have the correct figures, more than \$500 million, you play a significant economic role as well. And since, on average, each CLSC has a budget of over \$3 million, you play a pretty important role at the local level as well.

I'm very happy to have taken part in setting up the CLSCs serving my riding, one of the oldest, in Pierrefonds, and one of the newest, the Lac-Saint-Louis. However, you've touched upon the question of a social obligation, and I'd like to pursue this issue because I think there is a social obligation, but it is Québec's, and Canada's as well, when we speak of health and health-care systems. Right now, the responsibility is shared. Federal legislation controls the system and sets out five criteria: integrity, universality, transferability, accessibility and reasonable remuneration. These are the five criteria that apply to all provinces, but we each look after our own affairs. Then there's also a transfer payment of one billion two hundred and something million dollars. Perhaps we could discuss the efficiency of this system. However, my question is not do you prefer, but do you believe in the degree of efficiency of services, the level of health and social services? Will it be any better? Given that we don't want to live in isolation, will it be better for Quebecers to have a system with exclusive power in Québec, in a sovereign Québec? Or would it be better if it were adjusted, as we discussed earlier, and I'd like to get back to that, would the level of service, the quality of service, improve?

**A voice:** Do you want...

**A voice:** Michel.

**Mr. Bissonnette:** Perhaps one aspect... You spoke earlier of a sort of minimum, pan-Canadian standard to maintain principles like accessibility, universality. For example, in the programs currently in place, mentioned earlier by Mr. Chevrete, the federal government sort of withdraws from social assistance programs. When the federal government withdraws some of its support, still maintaining the same standards, the withdrawal translates into a percentage, but it is applied in terms of the province's geographical size. However, that doesn't take into account the provinces' tax base, its ability to pay. For example, it's fairly obvious that when the federal government withdraws, for example, by two tax points, this is an example, it creates a certain number of problems. But 10 % or 2 % doesn't really matter in Ontario, because it's a rich, prosperous province. For Québec, though, it

could mean major trouble.

**Mr. Williams:** May I interrupt?

**Mr. Bissonnette:** Yes.

**Mr. Williams:** Do you think it's a good idea to maintain the five criteria I mentioned, for Québec's future, in either system?

**A voice:** What we think is...

**Mr. Côté:** When we're talking, for example, in our charter of collective rights and... For us, the principles of universality and accessibility of health care are, I think, a fundamental part of our society - and we think it's something that has to form part of the social obligation that unites all citizens of Québec - and, ultimately, it is something that is a constitutional guarantee, I mean the right to access to health-care services.

**Mr. Williams:** We've talked about using the expression: solving our problems once and for all. You mentioned the problem of uncertainty. We spoke about the issue of economic stability, but if we cut federal ties, will the political and economic instability have a negative impact on Québec? Since you brought up the stability issue, I'd like to hear your response.

**Mrs. Vaillant:** I think that as soon as all Quebecers reach a consensus, we'll have the maturity to live with that decision, no matter what it is, and there are a lot of countries in the world that have lived with all sorts of statuses, shall we say. I'm thinking of the Scandinavian countries, among others. Therefore, to answer your question, what seems most important to us is to avoid uncertainty or insecurity because one of the foundations of society, is the security of its citizens, security on a global level... And, in that same vein, we think that if there is a social consensus, those issues (uncertainty and instability) won't come up, because we will have made the decision with maturity.

**Mr. Williams:** Now, I think the Member for Marquette would like to ask some questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead.

**Mr. Dauphin:** O.K., very briefly then, since the time allotted is so brilliantly calculated by our Chairman. Obviously, I understand the message you're giving us today, I mean, it's all well and good to talk about political and constitutional status, but that we should be thinking about the nearly - as I read in your brief - the nearly one million people who are out of work, on unemployment insurance or

welfare, and I imagine that when there's not much in your fridge, you're not really too concerned about whether or not there's a real confederation or sovereignty-association, or even whether our delegates are going to be elected to public bodies or appointed to them? But I'll get back to this. We have had the opportunity over the past weeks to hear from many groups and individuals, among them, some have talked about repatriating certain powers related to the war on poverty. Again yesterday, there was a speaker who mentioned it. And I often have cases in my constituency office of people who are on welfare but, considering the minimum wage, if they were to go to work they would make maybe \$30 a week more, to say nothing of the fact that they'd have to dress appropriately, eat and pay for public transportation. I'd like to hear your comments on this, considering all these things. What do you think of all this? You're undoubtedly going to say it's the minimum wage policy, which is provincial jurisdiction, that the whole condition of those on social assistance, which is also provincial jurisdiction, but by repatriating certain powers, specifically all powers related to manpower training, I wonder if we wouldn't have more leverage or more tools to find a solution to what is really an immense social problem. I wonder if you have any opinion on this in terms of incentives to re-enter the labour force.

**Mrs. Vaillant:** You see, the way we get a handle on the problem, we grab it at its base and what we say – and we endorse your words – is that it's at the level of the local community, at the level of the citizens who live day to day. A faulty intergovernmental ignition must not create problems at the base. That means that, if we promote stable payments, if we want to settle the unemployment problem, reduce inequities, and therefore promote equity, we need consistent policies. The measures of one policy must not have adverse effects and cancel out another. And I don't want to even talk about the sharing of powers.  
(5:45 p.m.)

What we say is that there must be consistency and, beyond all the tangling up, what it is important is daily life, the bread and butter. That's what will build up our strength as a society. This is the way that we get a handle on it.

**A voice:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There are two minutes left out of the Chair's time, Mr. Chevette, but you must not go beyond the two minutes.

**Mr. Chevette:** I won't, Mr. Chairman. I agree with what Mr. Bédard pointed out to you.

You said that the constitutional blueprint is an integral part of the social contract. You said, in an answer you gave earlier, Mr. Bouchard, that you prefer to settle your problems yourself with your tools than to have them settled by others.

In your brief, you implicitly prove that Quebecers are capable of calling upon the necessary tools, but you don't say so. And the Commission is here to take your testimony as a basis to tell us what is the best constitutional vehicle we need. Will it be at the States General that we will learn which tools we need to fully realize our potential? And do you believe that we are capable, as a Francophone people, to achieve self-determination and manage our own affairs?

**Mr. Payette:** To the last question, I would say "yes", we have the capability, the maturity to achieve self-determination. In my opinion, it's obvious. I will close by saying, along with the poet Gilles Vigneault: "We still have a country to build". I think that we are capable of doing so.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue, do I understand that you had a comment earlier?

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would perhaps make a very short comment. I read your brief – if I could find my note because I would be interested in having it. I would like to personally thank you for showing us simply, without emphasis, with a certain calm – and I wrote that down because it touched me – a reality which confronts us all as we are. You do not blazon a whole series of frightful things on placards, the sky isn't an azure blue, everything isn't roses, our society must become increasingly aware so that we can consciously decide that each of us must act. And you add – then I'll finish, Mr. Chairman – you said, or you implicitly said that, soon, our discussions could be carried out on the backs of the most underprivileged. I thank you for that, but I would add to that: This being said, we can see...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is that what you said?

**Mr. Hogue:** Fifteen seconds?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I would like to know if that's indeed what you said, Mr. Payette.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, yes. The lady said that our discussions would soon be carried out on the backs of the most underprivileged. That was said earlier. It isn't unkind to say that. In the blueprint for society, there is bread and butter which Québec society needs, so, that's it, the

bread and butter, that's what the people of Québec... Four people said that.

This being said, we can see that the Canadian society or, if you'll permit the expression, the societies in the various provinces are the same, live this same reality. In other words, the blueprint for society could come from each province of the country, your blueprint for society.

**Mr. Payette:** They are the same principles, I think. All blueprints for society...

**Mr. Hogue:** And that could apply across the land. This isn't a reality which belongs to Québec alone. We aren't necessarily worse.

**Mrs. Vaillant:** There are many countries which have given themselves social contracts. Sweden did so in the 1930s.

**Mr. Hogue:** That's right. No, but that's right; we aren't any worse than others.

**Mrs. Vaillant:** No.

**Mr. Hogue:** So, within the Canadian reality, we could develop this social contract that you're talking about.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's enough. So, Mrs. Vaillant, Mr. Côté, Mr. Payette, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bissonnette, I would like to thank you very much. I would like to extend a special thanks for having come to talk to us, to the members of the Commission, about one of the faces of Québec which we must never forget. I'll reiterate Mrs. Vaillant's comment: We must promote equity. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:51 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:08 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen, we are resuming our day's work. At 7:00 p.m., we will hear the Mouvement national des Québécois, which will be followed at 8:00 p.m. by the Canadian Institute of Adult Education and, finally, by the YMCA at 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Sylvain Simard, I would like to welcome you and your group from the Mouvement national des Québécois. First, I should repeat the speaking times. Since your hearing is one hour, you will have ten minutes to present your brief. The parliamentary group forming the Government will also have 10 minutes. The one forming the Official Opposition will also have 10 minutes. Twenty-five minutes will remain for the other members of the Commission, with a maximum of 5 minutes per member, and there will be 5 minutes left for the Chair. Mr. Simard, welcome.

If you would now introduce your colleagues to us.

**Mr. Simard (Sylvain):** Mr. Chairman, to my right, the secretary-general of the Mouvement national des Québécois, Danielle Gagné; to my left, the secretary of the Mouvement national des Québécois, André Valois; and at the extreme left, the treasurer, Normand Saeys.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Welcome to our Commission.

#### Mouvement national des Québécois

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, at this crucial point in Québec's history, your main responsibility is to identify, with precision, lucidity and courage, the major issues that Quebecers face and lead the way for them. It was on May 26 that the Mouvement national des Québécois first called for the establishment of a touring parliamentary committee for hearing what Quebecers have to say. The MNQ, which is made up of national groups and the Sociétés Saint-Jean-Baptiste from all over Québec, the first of which dates back to 1834, has been involved in every possible kind of struggle for improvement in the social, economic and cultural well-being of Quebecers. In fact, we would have appreciated it if the MNQ, as the largest nationalist movement in Québec, with its 150 000 members, had been invited to sit on this Commission. We have nevertheless come here to speak to you this evening with a strong feeling of responsibility and we are highly conscious of the gravity of the occasion.

In 1969, our movement, in the wake of the states general in French Canada, voiced its endorsement of political sovereignty for Québec as, and I am quoting here, "an indispensable condition for the well-ordered development of the human, physical and economic resources of the Québec community". It gave itself the mandate of informing citizens of the urgent necessity for Québec to attain political sovereignty in an orderly and calm manner. This is in fact what we intend to demonstrate to you today, placing the stress on the need to put this major change into effect as soon as possible, convinced as we are that there are a number of time limits for the economy and society that Québec cannot go beyond without taking a number of risks.

To help you fulfill your mandate, our brief also offers details of research that we are presently conducting throughout Québec, into a fundamental issue: the population of Québec. For Québec is not just a political structure; it is first and foremost the men and women who inhabit it.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the

enormous possibilities that sovereignty will open up everywhere in Québec. Briefly, we insist upon the absolute need for the Québec of today to have all the powers of a normal country if it wants to successfully meet the challenges it faces at economic, social, language, demographic and cultural levels.

Over the years, and particularly since the 1950s, Québec's governments have gone as far as they could with Canadian federalism. Despite their different approaches, they all came up against the same centralist tendencies. Even when a more accommodating government was receptive to their minor, symbolic requests, Canada as a whole — we saw how it was — quickly rang the bell for the end of recess and snubbed the women and men of Québec in the most humiliating manner since the Durham Report. It is now clear that Canadian federalism cannot be reformed to reflect Québec's interests by means of traditional negotiations with the rest of Canada.

There is absolutely no hope of our bringing about any reforms to the 1982 Constitution, which was repatriated and amended without Québec's agreement. It is now clear that Canadian federalism prevents Quebecers from dealing effectively with their main problems. And it's urgent that we do so. Canadian economic policy, as well as the "superpower" to spend enjoyed by the federal government, the current catastrophic debt being only the most visible of its negative effects, is slowing down economic growth in Québec. Take the example of the ridiculous centralization of manpower training, right at a time when the globalization of trade dictates the urgency of Québec's determining and orienting the training of its labour force.

Current policy respecting steep interest rates does not in any way, nor did it in 1982, reflect alarming inflation in Québec's economy, and it poses a threat to all of Québec's small and medium-sized businesses, which are vulnerable and whose capitalization rate is still too low. Every 10 years, the federal government, via the Bank of Canada, bleeds those sectors of our economy that generate the most jobs. It is no great surprise that so many businesspeople are increasingly anxious for Québec to attain sovereignty so that it can define its own policies in keeping with its own reality. The overlapping of centralized Canadian decision and policy-making has prevented Québec for a long time from dealing successfully with two major challenges: the fight against poverty and the implementation of a genuine family policy.

In Victoria, Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Castonguay tried vainly to win us some constitutional concessions. But Canada was well aware, once again, that expansion of Québec's powers in such a strategic area would go against national policies and threaten in this way to call into question the whole centralizing

balance of a federalism with which everyone, apart from Quebecers, was very content. Meanwhile, in the cities and towns of Québec, there was still devastating poverty. The Constitution does not just mean symbols and hood ornaments — to use a famous expression — it often means, for the most destitute, the powerlessness of governments to relieve them of the misery that is their daily lot in life.

But the most disastrous effects of our situation in the Confederation have been, and are likely to be in years to come, on the population. Few people are truly aware of this. We are at the beginning of a demographic crisis that may well threaten and wipe out in a few years the fruits of all our struggles for individual and collective development. Our brief brings out what many demographers and statistical institutions have been warning us about for 10 years. Because of a particularly low birthrate, not only will our population start shrinking soon, but taking in more and more immigrants will only solve part of the problem, while creating an explosive "demographicolinguistic" situation. By the end of this decade, no matter how optimistic the projections, Quebecers of French-speaking heritage will no longer make up a majority in Montréal.

How can we hope to integrate hundreds of thousands of newcomers into the French-speaking majority when recent studies show that in certain schools in the heart of Montréal it is the French-speaking pupils who are being anglicized, despite all the efforts brought to bear by Bill 101. Only a policy of recruitment and integration of immigrants with demographic and "demographicolinguistic" objectives defined by Quebecers can guarantee that this desirable and necessary influx of immigrants allows the preservation of our Francophone reality. We can't just pretend that the problem isn't there.

Already, our low birth rate is causing an aging of the population that is literally draining certain regions. According to all forecasts, even the most optimistic ones, the reversal of the age pyramid will bring about major socioeconomic upheaval. Most of us around this table today will probably have access to pension programs and decent health care when we get on in years. But for young people under thirty any hope of comparable treatment is out of the question. But, some people might say, what difference could sovereignty possibly make? The answer is simple. The situation in Québec is too different to be treated the same way as that of the other provinces. It takes five years for Québec to achieve what Ontario gains in population in only one year. But, more importantly, what it really comes down to here is the linguistic and cultural future of a very vulnerable people surrounded by English-speaking North Americans. Only effective, generous and integrated family policies can

have an impact on the birthrate, and these policies cannot be possible unless they are controlled by all the decision-making apparatus involved. But, we mustn't go too far! Today's women would never agree to a return to traditional values and behaviour that would limit their own full participation in the activities of our society. Nor would we, for that matter. But everyone who wants to have children must be able to do so in acceptable conditions.

Regarding these intimidating questions that often become emotionally charged, the Mouvement national des Québécois officially requests and is strongly in favour of a forum on population issues within the framework of this Commission. Nothing would be better than to study these issues if we want to grasp all the implications, at this turning point in our history. A country that will have repatriated all the responsibilities and powers it needs to be a sovereign state...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** 15 seconds, Mr. Simard.

**Mr. Simard:** I would like to conclude by emphasizing the fact that sovereignty will have to be accompanied, for us, by decentralization towards the regions, more power for municipalities, more power for regional county municipalities, and the possibility of creating regional structures that truly allow the regions and Montréal to influence the future of Québec. And in concluding, Mr. Chairman, the Commission can help our people through the transition — along the path they are forced to take to achieve the full means for their development. The Mouvement national des Québécois therefore urges the commissioners to recommend that the gouvernement du Québec table a solemn declaration at the Québec National Assembly of its intention to make Québec a sovereign nation and set up a commission responsible for writing up the constitution of this nation. This constitution would have to be submitted to Quebecers in a referendum. Should the gouvernement du Québec reject this recommendation, the Mouvement national des Québécois would ask the gouvernement du Québec, whose political agenda collapsed with Meech Lake, to hold general elections promptly to legitimize this situation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Simard. We will now hear Mr. Marcel Beaudry. Excuse me just for a moment please, Mr. Beaudry. I got the impression that there was a hint of applause in the air. I would like to point out that the rules of the Commission prohibit applause during these proceedings. Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We

have the pleasure of hearing tonight two people from the Mouvement national des Québécois, Mr. Simard and Mr. Saey, both of whom are from the Outaouais. I am glad that they too are aware of the gravity of the situation for our region and the vulnerability of this situation within the context of a sovereign Québec. I also happen to know that these two men have been active in this movement for many years and in the Parti québécois. I am therefore sure that they must have thought of the problems, which they raised in fact in their brief, on page 58, when they talk about federal civil servants. They inadvertently say: "living in Ottawa". I am quite sure that they did not mean to take on everyone who lives in Ottawa, but rather those who live in the Outaouais.

And they also talk about an administrative pole. I am glad to see that they looked into this question and that they feel as strongly about it as I and others in the region do. I was, however, sorry to note that they say nothing in their brief about the 15 000 wage earners who work in the private sector in Ontario. These workers would also, necessarily, be affected by a sovereign system. They might also be affected by a form of renewed federalism but would be especially affected by the kind of sovereignty advocated by this brief.

So, my question is this: How would you integrate federal civil servants in Québec's Outaouais region into a sovereign Québec? And I should tell you right now that I read a document we were given last night dealing with an agreement between Québec and Ottawa, which offers Canadian federal employees, within the context of transfer of the GST or administration of the GST, the same advantages as employees of Québec. This document does not, however, say anything about guaranteeing that these civil servants will work in the Outaouais region. They could be transferred to Québec, or Montréal, or somewhere else. And you know as well as I do that even if civil servants are integrated into the Québec public service and transferred to Québec, Montréal or another location, this does not solve the problem of Québec's Outaouais region. We'll be left with empty buildings on our hands, we'll be left with houses that we won't be able to get much of a price for... maybe mine.

So, along these lines, I would like to believe that ways must have been thought of for alleviating this problem. I would like to hear what you have to say about these two questions, the one dealing with civil servants, if you think that we can recover them, in Outaouais especially, and the one dealing with wage earners who work in Ontario and how they could keep their jobs or what kind of guarantee we could offer them in this context so they would feel more secure.

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Chairman, I would be

happy to answer Mr. Beaudry. This is a question that comes from a person from Outaouais and who is therefore acutely aware of it. And the related question that he asks about the economic vitality of the region and home owners, his own keen interest in this area would lead me to believe that he is anxious to hear my answer.

Mr. Chalman, if I had had 11 minutes for my presentation, I would have read this sentence out to you: Finally, the Commission will have to propose a plan for reassignment of federal civil servants and for economic diversification in the Outaouais region to enable it to get through the transition to a sovereign Québec harmoniously. Located at the dividing line between Québec and Canada, Québec's Outaouais region, with its 25 000 federal civil servants, must become, after Québec City, the national capital - Québec's second administrative region. During these proceedings, you will have the opportunity of visiting Outaouais, and I am already aware, as are you, of the contents of a number of the briefs you will be hearing there, which talk about this question.

Without going into too much detail, I think that it is obvious, it appears to the Mouvement national des Québécois - and it's no accident that we, who are presenting a national brief, have insisted on including this major regional aspect - it appears to us to be of capital importance, for the sake of national solidarity, that we make no changes that do not guarantee the people of Outaouais complete security, full assurance not only that their situation will not deteriorate but that it should be able to improve after sovereignty.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Beaudry's time is up, Mr. Simard.

**Mr. Simard:** Could I just have a second to...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No, you cannot. You're so skillful that when we took a minute and a half away from you, you managed to get it back in the question. So you'll just have to find another opportunity. Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Simard, in your presentation, you stress something that is, in my opinion, worth our undivided attention: the declining French-speaking population. On page 19, you report that, despite the fact that Québec's 83 % French-speaking population might tend to be reassuring, you put forward studies, projections that lead you to believe that the French language is threatened in Québec. I notice that over the years French has survived, back when Québec was perhaps still not quite as sturdy culturally or economically. It even survived very nicely. The facts speak for themselves. You say that 83 % of the Francophone population of Québec

already speaks French, works in French and acts in French. What makes you think that things will be worse tomorrow than they were yesterday?

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ouellet must have read our brief and the answer is in it. Tomorrow is likely to be worse than yesterday because yesterday is gone for good. Families with 8 to 12 children - I am the oldest of 8 myself - there isn't much chance of our seeing many more of these families along the shores of the Saguenay or the St. Lawrence. Population figures dictate that tomorrow will be more precarious. As a society, we should be worried about this radical decline in the birthrate, which is now, depending on the month - although monthly fluctuations do not have much bearing here - for the past few years, at about 1.6, while it takes 2.1 for a group to reproduce itself. This implies not only that our population will not renew itself on its own but also that we will have to - and this is desirable - count on immigration. But even with these immigrants, we have to... No matter what legislative requirements can be imposed upon Quebecers, on newcomers, even then these people - this group of immigrants - would still have to find themselves alongside a critical mass of Francophone Quebecers that is large enough to integrate them. And we note - and all the statistical indicators tell us - that in the Montréal area, where half of all Quebecers live, we no longer have, in certain areas of development, in downtown Montréal especially, that critical mass of Francophones that is needed to integrate newcomers harmoniously. We must not...

**Mr. Ouellet:** Just so I understand you clearly, is this what you're saying: O.K., we have to count on immigration that we control, immigrants who will come to Québec and who will stay in Québec. Let me point something out to you... In your brief, on page 27, you state that Québec has lost quite a few people to the other provinces over the years. Between 1971 and 1976, about 15 522 left. But for the period from 1976 to 1981, these figures shoot up to 31 299. Those are your figures, the ones you gave us. I would like to point out to you that as of 1976 it was the Parti québécois that was in power. In light of these figures, might this not mean that under a Parti québécois government, under a sovereignist administration, more people leave Québec for other parts of Canada or the United States? Don't you yourself, with your figures, see a more favourable climate, one that permits this immigration to North America in effect? You will never be able to control it and you will always, even in a sovereign Québec, be vulnerable to people leaving.

(7:30 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Simard, I can only give you 30 seconds to answer. Since Mr. Ouellet's time is up, you can follow up later on like you did earlier.

**Mr. Simard:** I will take the 30 seconds to say, very quickly: One, the situation between 1976 and 1985 was merely a continuation of a trend over the 10 preceding years. Two, earlier today, Phyllis Lambert, in a statement that I think people found deeply moving, made it clear that the people who are in Québec now are here to stay and that communities with non-Francophone roots truly intend to take part in our collective future. Three, I think that underrating Québec by assuming that sovereignty will automatically entail... will result in people leaving Québec instead of coming here, seems unrealistic to me. A dynamic Québec, a strong Québec, a Québec that is very healthy economically, that knows where it's headed and sends out clear signals will not be able to help but see that its numbers are increased by these newcomers who will promptly become integrated with the Francophone majority.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Gérald Larose, you may have the floor.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I admit, from the outset, that when I was reading the several dozens, almost hundreds, of briefs, there were chapters that I wished I had written. And after the CSN brief, I think perhaps that this is one of the ones I would have liked to have written, for the following reason: Because plans for independence are seen not as an objective in themselves, but as a way of realizing something that may be political - this is defensible, this is interesting - that may be cultural, and that may be social. But what I found really interesting and saw as the contribution made by your brief was the deciphering and dismantling of the economic brake system represented by federalism. Because, in contrast to what a number of more prominent people say, independence doesn't mean that our standard of living absolutely has to suffer; it has become a condition, not only for maintaining this standard, but also for improving upon it.

In this sense, I find that your presentation is quite an exceptional demonstration of the fact that the plans for the independence of Québec are, economically, to make it bigger and stronger and give it strategies that are profitable for the population as a whole. Another element is that you stress both the weaknesses - because we do have weaknesses - and also the strengths, which we have to make the most of. But the thing that I think really needs to be explained a bit concerns your proposal. You recommend that the Commission merely suggest to the government

that it make a proposal to proclaim sovereignty. It seems to me that this would not make us very well equipped to carry out an undertaking of this scope. Why not go directly to the people, even if it means clearing ourselves some space for realizing independence, but first go after the mandate to do it? I don't understand.

**Mr. Simard:** In effect, your lack of understanding might stem from what may be seen as a degree of ambiguity in our text. Actually, I think that we see perfectly eye to eye. This declaration of intentions by the National Assembly, declaring Québec sovereignty, would immediately give rise to the process of drafting a constitution that leads, within a period of time which must be very short - and I said this repeatedly, we insisted in several places in our brief on the importance of the time element - we will have to rapidly ask the population to settle the matter, in other words to accept or turn down this draft constitution for a sovereign Québec. I can't think of anything more democratic and, at the same time, more respectful of parliamentary institutions. I am in front of a parliamentary commission now but, important as it is, beyond the parliament, there is the legitimacy that we will be getting from the people. And I think that going ahead rapidly with constitutional plans, asking the people if they are in favour or against achieving sovereignty in this way, this seems to us... We're not trying to exclude anyone here, and we are also certain that other proposals may be just as valid as ours; this is our contribution. We think that we can very rapidly attain the objective, which is, calmly, democratically, with respect for the state of mind of the people... this way, we can ensure the best possible foundation for a sovereign Québec that will be recognized, not only in Québec, but also in its dealings with Canada, which will have to be induced to negotiate a number of things, and especially by the international community. I think that this democratic foundation arising from a referendum is the most valid one possible. I am one of those people who believe that different formulas or procedures... There are people here who prefer "states general" style formulas, but we don't have a king here who needs to be sent to the guillotine. I don't think that our democratic history over the past few centuries, our struggles, have led us to the development of this kind of structure, I'm not saying that it's impossible, but personally I am less inclined to place my confidence in these structures than in parliamentary structures and after that consultation of the people via a referendum.

**Mr. Larose:** But is this realistic?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'm sorry, Mr. Larose, but your time is up. So, we

now have three speakers left: Mr. Libman first, followed by Mr. Nicolet and then Mr. Dufour. If everyone can try to keep their questions short and Mr. Simard can answer quickly, we will have enough time for all three speakers.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, I have three short questions, two questions. You say here in your brief: "It is now clear that Canadian federalism prevents Quebecers from dealing effectively with their main problems. And it's urgent that we do so." Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I have to say that in light of the past 30 years, I think that this statement is utterly false. This has to be acknowledged in the *Journal of Debates*, that this declaration is utterly false.

Secondly, my question. You also say in your summary that Québec must attain political sovereignty in an orderly and calm manner. Do you think that this is possible? Negotiation of assets, negotiation of territory are emotionally charged issues. There will be many Quebecers against this. There are many Quebecers who may possibly try to reclaim their own land. Do you yourself foresee any of these emotional, confrontational type problems?

**Mr. Simard:** Quebecers have often been criticized for carrying out politics with their hearts instead of their minds. And I truly believe that what we have been witnessing for at least the past few years, and this year particularly, is the opposite. I think that Quebecers have reached an absolutely extraordinary degree of maturity, whereas we can clearly sense that in those who are opposed to this autonomy and this national sovereignty, irrationality and passion are taking a firm hold, motivated perhaps by feelings of panic. So, when your party, speaking of territorial integrity, of partition - a journalist from the *Gazette* even talked about military intervention to recover certain land - when you dive into these troubled waters at this point in the debate, Mr. Libman, I can tell you that you are totally removed from the debate that we're having here, around this table and in Québec presently: a calm debate, a democratic debate, a debate that will enable Quebecers, among themselves, to see where they are going and then negotiate with people whose passions will have been spent, I hope, and who will be able to negotiate. I think that, no matter which faction of the Equality Party we are dealing with at that point, we will manage to find an area of agreement.

**Mr. Libman:** You use the word "we". You don't have very much to say in your brief about Québec's minorities. There are quite a few, a lot of people who have come here to tell this Commission what their definition of a Quebecer is. When you say that I am excluded - and we

can talk about these things calmly here - what is your definition of a Quebecer?

**Mr. Simard:** I think that I am going to give you it, but I think that first...

**Mr. Libman:** Please.

**Mr. Simard:** To start with, Mr. Libman, I don't feel obliged to define myself every morning when I shave in front of my mirror. I don't have this problem.

**Mr. Libman:** I'm waiting for your answer.

**Mr. Simard:** On the other hand, for us it is very clear, and let's say this once and for all - and I don't think that there are any grounds here for lecturing the Québec nationalist movement as a whole - for us, Quebecers are people who live in Québec, Québec as defined with its current boundaries. Everyone who lives in Québec, who is a citizen and who is integrated in this Québec, belongs to Québec, and there are no ethnic, linguistic, religious or other restrictions. I might suggest one, but it almost goes without saying. Obviously, for those who are capable of paying their taxes to Québec, those who pay their taxes to Québec, who are citizens of Québec, but I think that that applies to everyone here around this table tonight.

**Mr. Libman:** So, according to your definition, I am a Quebecer. It's in your...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Simard:** I hope so.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Roger Nicolet.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Simard, I read with a great deal of interest what you said, starting on page 49, about a decentralized Québec. And my questions will be relatively short. First of all, do you foresee the constitution of these regional structures that you advocate by incorporating them into an eventual Québec constitution? And secondly, what do you tell people who wonder about the timeliness of creating elective structures at the administrative region level?

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Nicolet, your... How much time do I have? I have a few minutes to answer?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, you've taken so much that... Try and keep it short.

**Mr. Simard:** I will be very, very brief. Mr.

Nicolet, your question is extremely important. I personally think... We don't have a magic formula in our case. We think that the initiatives to define exactly what the structures will be should come from the community. But I firmly believe that the drafting of a new Québec constitution - everyone around this table will agree that this isn't something that's going to happen every other week - would be an ideal opportunity to finalize this decentralization and create this Québec model for structures that truly meet the needs of its citizens.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The next speaker, Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back, Mr. Simard, to the recommendation that Mr. Larose referred to a few minutes ago. I want to make sure that I've got this straight. Recommend to the Québec government - so the Commission recommends that the gouvernement du Québec present a solemn declaration at the National Assembly proclaiming its intention to make a sovereign nation of Québec. The Commission recommends that the government make this declaration of sovereignty. I would like you to explain to me just how they were given this mandate during the last elections to solemnly declare independence. We mustn't overstep ourselves here. The Commission is not the government that was elected by the people. I do not understand your recommendation.

**Mr. Simard:** I can answer you right now. Mr. Dufour, you are just as aware of the results of the public opinion polls as I am. You receive briefs and you are currently still in an even better position than I am to feel the pulse of Quebecers. I am convinced that any government that made this declaration now, doubtless with the agreement of the Opposition, I hope, would receive the support of a consensus of the population of Québec. But let's not fool ourselves. Let's not give ourselves any illusions that would be premature. We do not think that the present government, whose constitutional mandate died with Meech Lake, will dare to respond to this consensus at this time. Therefore, if it is unable to do so, we suggest that it call an election so that the party that will be elected can have this mandate.  
(7:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Dufour:** That is your second recommendation; that one is clear, at least. But the first one certainly wouldn't be considered very democratic. The people did not elect this government to make this kind of decision. You can base your arguments on the polls, but in a democracy, we haven't yet reached the point

where we elect governments by public opinion poll.

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Dufour, you have a mandate. You are a member of a parliamentary commission so that you can indicate to the government what it should do, and this is your responsibility. To advise the government to act as we suggest would be to respect the population and make the commitment to consult it via a referendum. I don't think that there's anything antidemocratic about that, quite the opposite.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Simard, your time is up. We will now move on to the question period allotted to the government party representatives. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Personally, there are parts of your brief that I would not like to have written. I'll tell you what they are right away so that you'll know where I stand. In particular, you make ample use of a study by Michel Paillé that is quite complex with regard to a group of statistics. And this study has a terrible fault. It uses percentages to bring out, to convey an image that does not reflect the reality we see when we look at the absolute figures. So, if I look at the figures behind the percentages, the end result is quite different from that implied by the percentages. Let me give you an example: In the study, it says that Francophones living on the island of Montréal in 1986 represented 51.6 % of the population of the entire Montréal area, including suburbs, while the percentage quoted for people whose mother tongue was neither French nor English was 83.8 %. Translated into figures, there were 1 084 728 Francophones living on the island, compared to 339 354 non-English and non-French speakers. So, this puts a new face on things, this changes the proportions considerably. And there are other weaknesses or other things that have been criticized in Paillé's study. I won't spell them all out for you, but just recently, there was a series of articles, in *La Presse* for one, that pointed this out, or that questioned these aspects anyway.

There is another aspect too that bothered me a bit. Personally, when people tell me that if we don't have sovereignty the Québec people will die out... First of all, the newspapers last week reported an increase, and quite a substantial one, in the birthrate in Québec. And it wasn't our party that was saying this, it was Statistics Canada, whose official statistics were saying that the policy implemented to increase the birth-rate in Québec is beginning to show certain results. So, we are beginning to witness an interesting reversal.

One hundred years ago, or even more, we were saying the same thing. We were saying that

Québec was going to die out. Back then, it wasn't a question of a decrease in the birth-rate, it was the problem of the exodus to the United States; 1.5 million Quebecers left for the United States, which was a huge number when we consider how small our population was then. We're going to die out. There have been countless times in the course of our history when we've been afraid that the Québec people were going to die out. But we're far more robust than that, far more tenacious than that. Just look at the fact that we are all here tonight, and I think that we'll still be here for a long time to come, through our children.

But this is not really what I'm worried about. When we use scare tactics like these, to my mind it's the same thing as when Mr. Mulroney says: Who is going to pay your old age pensions when Québec separates? I feel that arguments like these are useless and worn out, they don't get us anywhere.

But there are some things in your brief that I do like. I have to be honest. I like what you say about there being a force in Québec, about the federal framework not being broad enough to allow us to realize our aspirations or capable of being a driving force for our aspirations any more, about our aspiring to greater things, more power, for example, over manpower, over immigration, over our culture. Briefly, there are a number of factors, and I might add, more power over the monetary factor too - having our say about interest rates for instance, because when people come down with a cold in Ontario I hate having to take pills for them too. I don't mind swallowing them when I am concerned, but when I am not affected it really bugs me.

In short, then, you have a number of very interesting things to say. You introduce a concept that is also very interesting, a concept that I had heard about in Sweden and Norway, but that is a Québec version, the concept of "nordicity". Assuming our nordicity, becoming aware of it and even exploiting it, these are things that I would like you to comment on.

But, before you make these comments, I would like you to answer this question: If whatever government that was in power were to say tomorrow: Fine, O.K. Québec's independence is an accomplished fact, is settled. This would have a number of consequences, right? At least economically. In terms of economic stability, there will be a price to pay. Have you evaluated this price? Are you aware of this economic impact and how do you intend to alleviate it, prevent it so that independence is accomplished in relative harmony and the economic security we all hold so dearly is maintained?

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Chairman, so many questions. I will answer them in order, if that's

all right. Mr. Chairman, what Mr. Bélanger has just said about statistics being alarmist and therefore interpreted differently by different sources, I must say that our brief is part of a Mouvement national des Québécois plan of action initiative for the whole of Québec. Our documentation is based on about twenty years of studies, neutral studies by the Bureau de la statistique du Québec, Statistics Canada and dozens of demographers who have looked into the evolution of Québec's demographic profile. Your leader in fact, Mr. Bourassa, is acutely aware of this, he has said so repeatedly.

Your wanting us to hide our heads in the sand and say that we are not in danger looks to me like a form of blindness that could be very detrimental in the short term if Quebecers do not face the fact that our demographic future is extremely precarious. A handful of little half-yearly announcements of increases from 1.4 to 1.6 to 1.7, depending on the season, are not going to change much. So, let's make this very clear: for as long as we average no more than two children per family in Québec, there will be population losses. And we are actually being greatly misled by the end of the "baby boom" effect, and, in a few years, the women who are not born will not be there to bear children, and all the statistical studies, without exception, even the study by the Bureau de la statistique du Québec, the most optimistic one, indicate that there will be major decreases. Now we can obviously read whatever we like into statistics or make them say whatever we want them to, but I choose to be more alarmist with regard to these figures.

Regarding the concept of nordicity, I think that in effect - and this will cover the third question as well - contrary to your premise that Québec sovereignty would lead to economic loss, a negative shock in economic terms, I believe that it would free Quebecers from the restraints that prevent them from orienting the key economic policies in their interests, and that the price to pay would be the price of federalism now. But nordicity is an extraordinary example. Sweden, the Scandinavian countries, set all sorts of examples for us in this regard: how we have failed to manage our forests in a positive way; how we have acted, basically for centuries, as though we arrived here through navigational error and that Florida is the place where we should have ended up. Quebecers have been negligent and we have unfortunately failed to direct our development in many ways. We have neglected and sometimes shamelessly exploited resources that are ours and that we must integrate into our collective future, that we must exploit in an increasingly rational manner.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** I will now turn the microphone over to my colleague, Mr. Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Is there any time left, Mr. Chairman? There is?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes. I'll let you know right away. Go ahead.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Quickly, then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have a good two minutes.

**Mr. Dauphin:** A good two minutes. We have been thinking, as the present Liberal government... Obviously, the question of immigration policy is going to come up very soon and we have been evaluating, for some time now, in connection with immigration, the possibility of giving or obtaining or having incentives so that more immigrants will settle outside the Montréal area, in Québec's regions specifically, needless to say, facilitating integration with the French-speaking majority by means of all kinds of incentives that we will have the privilege of hearing about in the next few weeks. Therefore, as the Mouvement national des Québécois, I would like to hear your views in this regard.

Secondly, if you have ten seconds, several groups have talked to us, obviously, about assets and economic space after sovereignty. Have you anticipated any ways for maintaining links with our economic partners and, if so, what kind of links?

**Mr. Simard:** Fine. Thank you very much. Regarding incentives, first of all, you will agree with me, and I think that your government, like all of Québec's governments, has had to wrestle with this problem... The current mess that federal-provincial relations are in over this question of immigration is absolutely scandalous. Having to beg for millions in order to integrate into the French fact, and in the COFI schools, with immigrants coming here and finding that they have to wait a year. The whole immigration issue, working within Confederation is now totally unacceptable.

As for where immigrants settle - and this is connected with an earlier answer I gave Mr. Nicolet, who is very interested in this area - our regions, which we will be developing under a sovereign Québec, should be empowered to provide incentives for attracting manpower and thereby favour, obtain... The regions in Europe, and in France particularly, which have very specific manpower needs, spend money, have incentives to offer specialists in priority fields of expertise, which is obviously something that our regions do not have the powers to do now. Therefore, I think that this represents a real option in the field of immigration, in terms of regional power, which could improve a great many things.

We are not, however, going to attract anyone to our regions with merely a few extra dollars - what has been happening with doctors these past few years has made this very clear. What we need much more is a global policy. And global immigration policies can only be based on the full control of political powers. Sovereignty is therefore inevitable. It is a key element that we cannot forget.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We are now going to hear the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition. Mr. Parizeau. Mr. Chevette?

**Mr. Chevette:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We may have had some difficulty understanding which option certain groups were in favour of but this was certainly not the case with you and I thank you for that. I only have one question and then I will allow my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean to take over, and then Mr. Parizeau for a few minutes after him. I have a question on page 21 of your brief. You say, and I'm quoting from your text here: "The MNQ expects this Commission to have the courage to state what Québec can be without its federal bonds. A federal system can be of great service, but in other circumstances." I would like you to explain to me what you mean by this last remark - that it can be of great service, but in other circumstances.

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Chevette, I am going to give you only one example and once again this brings me back to the question asked by Mr. Nicolet. In terms of decentralization, I think that the model that... It is a considerable challenge, an extremely exciting challenge to create a development model for Québec that is geared not only to our current concerns but also to Quebecers' prospects for future development. And we have, with the management of our land, decentralization, the challenge of seeing that all the regions - Montréal, for example... It was said one time too many during the latest electoral campaign in Montréal that Montréal does not have any influence over important economic orientations, which nevertheless create poverty and affect its whole future. Mr. Beaudry talked about the Outaouais region a while ago and I stressed it. Once more, we absolutely must, the Commission must deal with this and make concrete suggestions respecting all the resources that we have not used yet and to which we would have access when we become sovereign. I think that a Québec model needs to be created and that you must start on it right away.

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Chairman, just one question regarding signals. Before dinner, we as a political entity were criticized for having been against the Meech Lake demands because they

were not sufficient. And later on, we were criticized for being so shocked when the whole thing was turned down at the federal level. It was Mr. Ouellet who said this. It seems to me that our reactions were very logical. When you don't ask for anything and then, on top of that, you are denied it, it is an insult.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Chevrete:** But I would like to take this opportunity to say that, in our political entity, the MNAs were asking for something and the leader was asking for the same thing. But I cannot say as much for Mr. Ouellet, who was in favour of Meech Lake but whose leader was not. Now for my question regarding immigration - thirty seconds - I would like to say... Is it not true that none of the immigrants who come to settle in sovereign Québec will receive crossed signals? The signals we send out will be clear. These people will be entering a French-language Québec, where the price to pay to get in is learning to speak the language of the majority.

**Mr. Simard:** This is basically what we say too in connection with immigration. There are a lot of other points, once it is clear that they are not immigrating just anywhere in North America, but to French-language Québec, from that point on all the ambiguities that have tainted our relationship with these newcomers up to now should disappear. And I think that we will be able to have clear policies, in accordance with this fundamental principle, with this signal we send out. We will open our arms wider to the whole world once Québec's French identity has been made good and clear.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, this afternoon the Equality Party brought up the possibility that if the Québec people were to exercise its right to self-determination and decided to make Québec sovereign, that in this event, the territory of Québec as it is defined now would be threatened and that Québec would be threatened with partition. You who are familiar... The Mouvement national des Québécois has been, for very a long time now, very familiar with the right to self-determination and the right for peoples to decide their affairs. You who are familiar with this right that Quebecers intend to exercise as soon as possible, I trust, does this not presuppose scrupulous respect for the integrity of Québec's territory?

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Chairman, what Mr. Brassard has just said is very important and I think that my answer, which will be short and

as unemotional as possible - because we must avoid the traps that certain people lay for us for the purpose of firing up a debate on a false subject, a subject that isn't one anyway - this is very clear to us, as it is to all Quebecers in general. Québec is the Québec that, in your geography textbook, in your dictionary, on all the maps supplied by the gouvernement du Québec and even by the Canadian government, is covered by Québec's current political and economic geography. The map of Québec, of the Québec of tomorrow, the sovereign Québec will correspond to the present political map of Québec as we know it. And, with the exception of a handful of people who have every interest in confusing the issue with false questions, there is no question of Quebecers negotiating anything whatsoever, any concession whatsoever with respect to this reality which does not even pose a problem, our territory in its entirety. The right for Quebecers to self-determination over the entire Québec territory, in other words respect for democracy, respect for the majority rule of Québec's citizens.

**Mr. Brassard:** I am very happy to hear you mention this, because if this had not been the case, then in 1980, since a 57 % majority of the people of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region voted "yes", we might have been able to form an independent republic. We didn't do it precisely because we considered that our territorial integrity was absolutely inviolable and something that we had to be very careful to respect.

Another question, Mr. Chairman. You do not seem to have any doubts at all that English Canada, once Quebecers have asserted themselves and decided on a majority basis to make a nation of Québec, you do not appear to have any doubts that English Canada will agree to negotiate agreements or an economic association. What makes you so sure that English Canada will be eager to sit down and negotiate with us?

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Brassard, I think that you already have a pretty good idea what my answer is going to be. I think that the interests of English Canada are so closely linked to this agreement that they will have to deal with us, they will have to negotiate this agreement. However, I have nothing against our talking at this point about who is going to represent English Canada. What kind of English Canada are we going to be facing across the table? And we Quebecers probably have about thirty years of experience on them as far as defining our objectives and who we are is concerned. We must therefore, quite soon - and it's a good thing that the process is starting to get going in English Canada - English Canadians are beginning to understand who they are, so they will be able to negotiate calmly with us. But money talks; I think that interests inevitably end

up prevailing when solutions are arrived at in a clearly democratic way. We Quebecers are going to do everything we can, I think, to keep the debate as calm as your talks here have been, and I think that not only can we hope for it but we can be absolutely convinced that Canada will negotiate with us. There is no reason to believe that Canada would hurt itself just to punish us for assuming our own destiny.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Brassard, you have one minute left.

**Mr. Brassard:** I just have a small comment to make on your initiative. If I understand you clearly, the referendum that you propose on the question of the draft constitution for this sovereign Québec: basically, we will call... we will not only be asking Quebecers to take a stand on Québec's status, on Québec's becoming a separate country in other words, but also asking them to adopt the constitution proposed for this country, the fundamental law of this country — because the Canadian Constitution would obviously no longer be Québec's constitution, it would need to be replaced by a Québec constitution. Basically, then, we'd be killing two birds with one stone, if I understand you correctly.

**Mr. Simard:** You have understood perfectly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Parizeau, 30 seconds. Our time is now up. So, Mrs. Gagné, Mr. Simard, Mr. Valois and Mr. Saey, I would like to thank you for your contribution to the work of this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. And Mr. Simard, the secretary made a remark to me that I will pass on to you. He told me that, with your facility for answering questions and, in particular, the time that you take to answer, you would have made an excellent member for this Commission. I'm sorry, there is no...

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:07 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:14 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We are now going to hear the Canadian Institute of Adult Education. This hearing will last an hour and I think that you are familiar with the rules regarding the time allotted. Let me repeat them. With one-hour hearings, you have 10 minutes to present your brief. We give the parliamentary group forming the Opposition 10 minutes, the parliamentary group forming the Government 10 minutes, and other members 25 minutes, with each member in this last group having a maximum of 5 minutes, and 5 minutes for the Chair.

So, Mr. Proulx, could you please introduce your colleagues.

#### Canadian Institute of Adult Education

**Mr. Proulx (Jacques):** Allow me to introduce, at the end, Madeleine Blais, a member of the executive; Pierre Pâquet, a member of the executive; Nicole Boily, managing director of the Institute; and Lina Trudel, project coordinator in the communications sector and member of the executive.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Proulx, you have 10 minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Proulx (Jacques):** Thank you. All right. We appreciate this opportunity to express our opinion concerning the future of Québec. The Canadian Institute of Adult Education is appearing today before the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec to represent the interests of adults in areas connected with access to culture and knowledge. From the outset, we should specify that what we have to say during these hearings will be based on our specific experience in adult education in the fields of general and vocational adult education, self-directed popular education and the media.

The scope and democratic character of the debate are also of particular concern to us. The collective reflection which is now beginning is crucial for all Quebecers. We would like to see this reflection broaden and involve a larger number of people, so that everyone has an opportunity to form an opinion before having to come to a decision.

Our limited resources and the time constraints for these hearings have made it impossible for us to properly and systematically consult the members of the Institute about Québec's political and constitutional status. We believe such a choice is, in the end, that of the people of Québec, who should be fully informed of what is at stake in such a decision before they are formally consulted.

Therefore, our thoughts are not directed at defining a new status for Québec, but rather at questioning the end result of an eventual repatriation of powers, with the process leading to a political choice for the future of Québec. Full powers? For which blueprint for society? We'd like to recall here one element of the consensus stated in the preamble to Bill 90. The next to last paragraph of this preamble sets out as a premise the maturity and dynamism of the Québec economy and the clear will of Quebecers to ensure its development and growth, while respecting the demands of both market globalization and social justice.

This statement seems to reflect in an

interesting way the desire of the Québec population to have more control over its own reality. But first, what is the current situation and what kind of Québec are we talking about? We want to make it clear from the start that the problems experienced by urban and rural Québec cannot be reduced to mere federal-provincial relations, and that these problems are of concern to us on many other levels, if only in the social choices made in matters of redistribution of wealth, universality of services, job creation and encouragement to cultural production. To respond to Québec's development needs requires a wider vision, supported - we repeat - by a blueprint for society and taking into account market globalization and a fair balance between social and economic objectives.

What is Québec's status? Its social and economic context? The economic restructuring which took place at the beginning of the 1980s led to significant breakthroughs for Québec. However, its repercussions were not only positive. In Québec, as in many countries, the gulf between the various social groups is visibly widening. This has changed the face of poverty and the list of social classes more likely to being excluded. Impoverishment, the perpetuation of inequality, dropping out of school and heightened social tension and violence are all results of this context which encourages exclusion. In all sectors of activity, certain job categories are disappearing and new technologies are being introduced.

As the extent of illiteracy and under-education are discovered, many people consider equal opportunity as a distant mirage, an illusion. We should stress that the many places for informal learning, the community activities, unions and popular organizations set up by Quebecers for the protection of rights and for social, economic and community development are, in this respect, invaluable in helping people take themselves in hand and seek out original democratic solutions. We feel these efforts should be given more consideration and recognized for their true value.

The second element in the current situation is the cultural and media context. Technological change and market globalization have introduced new threats to the cultural identity of Québec and the future of French-speaking communities. We should recall that Québec has never had a consistent communications policy. The overall objectives of the ministère des Communications are economic, and our society has trouble reconciling economic issues with cultural and democratic objectives. The media industries are different from other industries. Today, radio and especially television have become society's main cultural vehicles. Watching television is one of our main activities. Québec ranks third worldwide in terms of television viewing. It is not only our main leisure activity, but also our

main access to information and culture. The cultural future of a society and its social and democratic quality increasingly depend on the quality of its media in general, and especially its radio and television. If Québec recovered full powers in the field of communications, would it leave the development of this sector in the hands of private enterprise? Should it not rather consider adopting a policy that would give priority to democratic and cultural objectives?

We feel that a certain balance is desirable. The aims that led both governments to make certain political choices have undeniably given priority to the economic development and have fostered prospects of accelerated growth. The CIAE feels that choosing economic effectiveness must be coupled with choosing social equity. The two must go hand-in-hand in the kind of society we advocate for the future. Organizations such as the OECD encourage the search for this kind of balance. Balanced development should take into account such aspects as solidarity, cultural growth, intercultural relations and public participation in decisions concerning the people.

Consequently, as far as the CIAE is concerned, the status quo in matters of education and culture is unacceptable. The last decade has seen obvious federal government encroachment on these two fields of provincial jurisdiction. Given their crucial importance for Québec society, the negative impacts resulting from these encroachments and the need for protection against the threat to the identity of Québec posed by the North American context, our position, is as follows: The CIAE recommends that Québec's jurisdiction in matters of culture, the fight against illiteracy, and general and vocational training be reaffirmed; that Québec adopt the cultural and educational instruments necessary for its development, and have complete control over them; that while acknowledging the diversity of educational institutions, the public sector be reaffirmed as the prime component in the efforts for educational democratization; that Québec adopt a manpower training policy targeting full employment; that Québec adopt a communications policy targeting the promotion of its cultural identity and grant radio and television the status of a public service in which the central role of the public network is confirmed; that Québec promote the decentralization of powers to its various regions, supported by the resources needed to implement projects involving the participation of Quebecers; that popular initiatives enabling Quebecers to take their own development in hand, and to contribute to democracy and the social and economic development of Québec's popular education network be recognized and supported by the State.

A second element to which we want to draw your attention is the need for a broad, democratic debate. Here, we will quote another

part of the preamble to Bill 90 establishing the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. In that preamble, the legislator states that Quebecers are free to assume their own destiny, to determine their political status and to assure their economic, social and cultural development. He also mentions the wish of Quebecers to play an active part in defining the political and constitutional future of Québec. Indeed, Quebecers are most closely affected by the reflection initiated this fall by the 36 members of the Commission and the organizations and experts appearing before them. However, the general process of which these hearings are a part remains to be defined.

We feel that, in order to be truly democratic and reflect the wishes of all groups of Quebecers, this reflection process should be broadened and should be extended to include all social groups, Native peoples and cultural communities that make up the Québec of today. We consider that the Commission report should not be limited to transmitting recommendations concerning Québec's political and constitutional status to the gouvernement du Québec. The expectations of the CIAE concerning the role of the Commission are as follows: that the Commission encourage widespread dissemination of the result of its work through the written and electronic media; that it publish statements on which a wide consensus has been expressed as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed options, and that it propose a process involving various steps that should lead to some form of popular consultation. Our organization favours a referendum preceded by an appropriate period of public debate and study. This period would allow people to form an opinion leading to fully informed choices.

In conclusion, the CIAE wanted to show that social concerns can coexist with a concern for developing collective prosperity. A blueprint for society is built on differences, similarities and the steps that are needed to reach each other and complement one another. For us, it is unthinkable that exclusions be accepted; we even refuse to admit that prosperity might exclude equity.

We feel that the cultural dimensions of current social changes are very important. What kind of Québec can we expect to have in the future if we do not manage to integrate the newcomers? In this respect, the free access to and the openness of the Québec school system, the serene affirmation of French-speaking culture, may play a tremendous role. The most important concern of the CIAE is that the discussions on the political and constitutional future of Québec be open to the concerns we have expressed throughout the brief we submitted to the Commission, and that these hearings, rather than having the sole purpose of leading to a political or legal structure, become,

in the short or medium term, an integral part of the elaboration of an overall blueprint for society. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Proulx. We shall begin with Mr. Claude Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. First, on behalf of the ministerial team, I would like to thank the Canadian Institute of Adult Education for presenting its brief. I acknowledge the fact that you have preferred not to give a firm specific opinion on Québec's constitutional future. However, you address subjects that are of interest to the Commission members, particularly in the field of communications.

As you know, it was, I believe, in 1973 that the gouvernement du Québec established for the first time an official communications policy. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of Canada, in particular, in 1978 for cable television, decided this was under federal jurisdiction, contrary to our policy statement. It also decided, a few years later, that telecommunications came under federal jurisdiction, which left us with radio and television. But you say in your brief that Québec should repatriate all its powers in the field of communications.

Taking the hypothesis of a renewed federalism, what would you see as coming under the jurisdiction of the provincial legislatures while also coming under federal jurisdiction? Which would you see as federal powers? (8:30 p.m.)

**Mrs. Trudel (Lina):** I think that communications is first and foremost a question of culture. I think it's part of the culture. We consider communications not as an industry but as part of the cultural sphere. As far as communications are concerned, the main tools we have are radio and television. Of course, communications also include telecommunications, telematics and informatics. But we wanted to focus more specifically on the question of radio and television.

As we explained in the brief, what we're saying is that radio and television have become society's main cultural vehicles and prime information tools. Consequently, we feel that they must be repatriated since they are our main cultural instruments. In that respect, we think it would be relatively easy, for example, to repatriate Radio-Canada. The CBC is not only a federal institution. Within the CBC, there is, on one hand, the English service, and there is the French service. The French service of the CBC is a Québec entity. There are services offered to Francophones outside Québec. The CBC also offers services to the English-speaking minority in Québec, and we think in that area, it would be very easy to have agreements or exchanges between Canada and Québec to provide

services to both communities.

So, as far as the CBC is concerned, I don't think there is really a problem. But when we talk of a communications policy focussed on cultural development, the choices for Québec must all be rethought since this was a field under federal jurisdiction. The choices to be made are related, for example, to the place reserved for the public sector as opposed to the private sector.

We know that, in a small society such as ours - because we are a small society - we have considerable capacities, but we are still a small society, so we have a small market. Therefore, it is not easy to achieve profitability and quality in audiovisual production. So we say: we must count more on the public sector, and the public sector is also the one that invests in Canadian production.

We must count more on the public sector, and not only on the development of the industries. Then, it is important to strike a balance by saying: There is Radio-Québec, which is important because it is a tremendous tool for cultural and educational development. There is also Radio-Canada. We will have to keep them both and we will have to redesign them in terms of... We are a small population as I was saying a while ago, and there is a significant, ridiculously high number of television services. This multiplication of services compromises quality, because they are no longer profitable. So we will also have to redesign all this, and it is important to repatriate all these powers to Québec because Ottawa made choices that were not necessarily intended to meet our needs or respond to our interests as a society. And it is in that sense that we say that there is no overall communications policy in Québec. Québec has always thought of communications in terms of industry, but it is above all a question of culture. And we will have to pay the price for cultural sovereignty. We'll have no choice.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you. Maybe just a short question before asking my colleague Bélanger to ask one. On pages 17 and 18 of your brief, when you say: The Institute... That is, I'm asking you to give me your definitions when you say: The real exercise of the right of the public to information... or ...through genuine democratic control over the mass media. What do you mean by that?

**Mrs. Trudel:** What we believe is that if Québec, now, by repatriating communications, made it an industry like any other, if Québec did not recognize that these instruments have the status of public services, it would be the loser, because these instruments have such an influential power over opinions, lifestyles and information. As everybody knows, communications is the hub of democracy. So, when we speak of

democratic control, what we're saying is that we cannot allow those instruments to be ruled only by the market. We must regulate them. We must impose social and cultural obligations on businesses in the private and public sector. So it is essentially in that sense that we say: We have to establish democratic control. In Canada, radiotelevision is defined as a public service. There is an independent service responsible for determining whether businesses are achieving those objectives, and I think those are accomplishments we now take for granted across Canada. If we repatriate, we will also have to repatriate those accomplishments and not make a mere business of these communication instruments.

And when we talk about the right to information, we also say that in Québec, for example, the written press is not regulated, but we absolutely must be concerned not only with the preservation of free enterprise, but also with the protection of the right of the public to information. And this means supporting the Conseil de la presse and supporting the population as far as the right to information is concerned. We do not propose political control; we propose democratic control.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. Chairman, first, from the very start, I want to stress that I fully agree with you as far as communications are concerned. In any case, this dispute has existed for a very long time. I agree with your views about training too, when you talk about the problems created by dual jurisdictions... and other groups whose primary concern was manpower training have mentioned this duplication, which is very costly and leads to all kinds of problems. But among the powers you would have us repatriate - since you do not speak of a global option, you speak of powers, in certain respects. Would it be part of your vision to repatriate all unemployment insurance responsibilities to Québec?

**Mr. Pâquet (Pierre):** Let's say that, as an organization, we had the opportunity to take a position and go to Ottawa to submit a brief to a joint committee of the House of Commons and the Senate on unemployment insurance. We were very interested and found it positive that workers, unemployed workers, could be guaranteed income support to receive training. On the other hand, we did not agree. We felt that the main function of unemployment insurance is to support income, and we felt that wanting to finance training activities and other support measures with unemployment insurance monies,

through the proposed special fund, was inappropriate. So, the CIAE rejected the idea of using unemployment insurance monies for those purposes. Therefore, if the blueprint is designed to allocate funds for training, it would be consistent with the positions we have presented that the management of those funds should fall under Québec jurisdiction, including the income support that would go to the unemployed worker for training purposes. And, in this sense, we have taken no overall position on unemployment insurance as such. But, of course, we must be consistent, as far as training is concerned, or rather as far as using unemployment insurance funds for these purposes is concerned.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Pâquet. We will now turn to the Official Opposition. Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, let me thank you for agreeing to take part in the work of this Commission. Your experience and expertise in adult education gives considerable weight to your opinion. I will go back to some of your statements and finish with a few questions. You tell us first that it is impossible to debate the future of Québec without taking into consideration the cultural and educational aspects of a society's development. And you want the debate on the future of Québec extended and broadened to become truly democratic, while telling us that this reflection must become part of the preparation of an overall blueprint for society. You indicate a number of very interesting points for reflection. You discussed some of these with Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Dauphin. You have developed your ideas in the field of communications, but also in manpower training and income security. But already in your brief, you tell us that in matters of education and culture, the status quo is unacceptable, that it is essential that the powers of Québec in the fields under its jurisdiction be acknowledged and respected. And Québec, you say, will have to acquire the educational and cultural instruments needed for its development. You go on to say it is of the utmost importance to reaffirm Québec's jurisdiction in education and manpower training, and that these matters have to be supported by continued development of the public sector.

The various groups that have come here — and this is, I would say, a constant for all of them or at least for the vast majority — recognized that the status quo is unacceptable and there was an urgent need for action, because insecurity generates negative effects on the poorest sector of the population, as you mentioned a while ago. So, in your brief, you ask us to take part in preparing an overall blueprint for society. But can we really sit down around a table to take part in the preparation of

an overall blueprint for society without making sure that we have the tools needed, i.e. the jurisdictions you are calling for and which, it seems, we cannot obtain in the existing federal framework?

**Mrs. Boly (Nicole):** Yes, I think that, on the one hand — decisions on political or constitutional structures are an extremely serious issue — so, on the one hand, the legal or constitutional status is a means, and that if we do not have certain points of reference to enable us to see what we want to do in relation to this legal or political status, what we want to do with it, if we do not have certain points of reference, I think it is absolutely incomplete and that this means, which might be sovereignty or a renewed federalism, needs a certain framework. This is why we feel it is essential to establish some points of reference that will constitute an overall blueprint for society. Because if there are things that are going wrong at present, and if the status quo is something to be categorically rejected, the fact is that we do not want to find ourselves in a situation where social points of reference, where this balance which we consider an important reference point — a balance between social and economic objectives — will be respected. This is why we feel it is also necessary that this kind of very broad debate take place, to allow us to reach society as a whole, to go beyond the limited level of Commission members or people speaking before this Commission, and to be able to reach a wider public. Because the choice, in the end, has to be made by the population. And the entire population, all Quebecers, will have to make this choice in an enlightened manner, so that they can see the advantages and disadvantages of one status or the other.

We should also go beyond... If we think, for example, of other debates which have taken place, debates that were only initiated and never went very far, I'm thinking of a debate such as the free-trade debate where, really, the population certainly didn't have all the elements it needed to make real choices. The future of Québec is something so important that all citizens should be able to make enlightened choices. It is for this reason that, in our opinion, we have to establish points of reference, so that we know what things really are, and so that the population can make enlightened choices.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** You speak about advantages and disadvantages. We are aware of a certain number of them, and I will quote a few: for example, the costs of overlapping programs. I think the Chambre de commerce told us it had drawn up a list of more than 400 programs. Over a third of them overlapped. This is extremely costly, and it is no longer effective. So I have a

hard time following you. You tell us: We need additional powers. We know that with the current federal system, we are in an impasse; we know that Meech has led us into this impasse. Then, you tell us... You seem to be saying that we should carry out all this debate and then choose the constitution that suits us or the constitutional status that suits us. I would like you to tell me, ideally, what your steps would be and how much time it would take?

**Mrs. Bolly:** I was rather expecting a question of this type, namely: Do we want to defer and prolong the debate for years? Will it last 5 years, 10 years? This is not what we want at all. We have not laid down specific time limits, but we simply want to have the time we need. We don't want a debate to be avoided and we want it to be done within reasonable time limits. We know that all negotiations have failed up to now. In the field of manpower training, as we well know, some agreements have to be renegotiated and are now on hold, something which is bad for the population of Québec as a whole. Nevertheless, we feel we must take the time to proceed with this debate. Part of the debate takes place here in the Commission. If these debates are sufficiently widely dissemination, people will also be able to see that certain consensuses were arrived at by the Commission. The population will be aware of that, and then would come the final step of popular consultation. As we have indicated, we feel that a referendum would be the preferred form of popular consultation.

(8:45 p.m.)

**Mrs. Blackburn:** You know that Mr. Bourbeau has been negotiating with Ottawa since April 1989 to repatriate the \$350-million unemployment insurance training fund and that he has not yet succeeded. What would you say to a hypothesis like this: namely, Québec would repatriate all powers within a sovereign State but in their current situation, i.e. all rights, powers, privileges already granted to groups and minorities would be recognized de facto? Simply, federal laws apply in Québec and then, as a society, we define our overall blueprint because now, we can do it with these tools, with full control over our instruments. Don't you think this would be more effective?

**Mrs. Bolly:** I think we must know exactly where we stand. In certain cases, there might have been some interesting policies within the federal framework, while some others were more harmful, and there is currently an overlapping of jurisdictions which is very negative, but...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'll have to interrupt you, Madam. If I want to allow Mrs. Marois a quick question.

**Mrs. Marois:** Very quickly. The process we could adopt as a commission makes provision for the use of forums, public debates on certain specific themes. In your perspective on training, for example, i.e. adult education, communications, manpower training, is it possible to imagine that a forum could provide you with this debate, in the way you want to approach it of course?

**Mrs. Bolly:** I think it's pretty much taken for granted that we would have these regional forums, as well as the thematic or sectorial forums. I think it's taken for granted and this was one of the ways chosen for widening the debate. And with these forums, with the Commission hearings and the studies, all this should take shape. We should have a way of presenting it to the public to make it better known. This is part of it and would also spill over into various areas, various sectors, and could also give rise to initiatives like the one that will take place in the Québec City region based on a coalition of groups in the Québec City region, in which there will also be forums, as a complement to the Commission. We think that...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perfect, Madam.

**Mrs. Bolly:** ...the driving force is the Commission, but this kind of thing should also be developed in all areas, in all sectors.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Bolly. We will now turn to Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier, followed by Mrs. Diane Drouin.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, several people have broached the subject I wanted to discuss with our guests. The last one was Mrs. Marois. I have some knowledge of the field of adult education, and my personal opinion is that it is probably the education field that has made the most progress in the last 20 years. There have been extremely innovative people there, people who have invented methods to combat illiteracy. These individual people have made a tremendous contribution to raising Quebecers' level of schooling. I stumbled especially when I read pages 4, 5 and 6 of your brief, where you say: "We express the wish that the rest of the process will be made accessible to the whole population". Further on, you say: "this involves 'collectivizing' the reflection process"; then, a bit further, you say on page 5: "We feel that, in order to be truly democratic and claim to reflect the will of Quebecers from all classes, the reflection on the future of Québec must be extended in this way and become more representative of the various sectors of society." Mrs. Marois spoke of a forum; you spoke of a referendum. When someone speaks of

a referendum, he starts counting positions, giving the pros and giving the cons. People introduce discussions on the way to make it collective, to collectivize it as you say. A referendum might not be the right way. The word forum has been mentioned. But to reach out more, to make sure that people understand this new process a little better, this path Québec is taking, this new Québec we will all try to design together, do you have other means that could reach Quebecers better, means that are different from those we are using now and that would explain things to people with more certainty and more rationally, and avoid political debates?

**Mrs. Blais (Madeleine):** The word debate was mentioned a short while ago and I had the impression its meaning had been interpreted in a certain way. What we mean when we say the population has to be involved in the present debate is, on the one hand, to get the information that has been available to you since the beginning of the Commission's proceedings. You have felt the need to be informed to be able, eventually, to come to a better decision. You were given the invaluable possibility of receiving groups which bring different points of view, and you will also have the possibility of consulting with experts.

In all this material, in all these contents, what could be converted into simple texts, written texts or audiovisual productions, that would allow people in popular groups, for example, or in the various regions, to debate these issues?

It is well known - I don't know it personally, I'm saying it is known - in the field of science, in the field of adult education, it has been demonstrated very clearly that things are really assimilated only to the extent that we can discuss them. So it is important if we want the population to assimilate what is going to be its collective future, that it should have the opportunity to discuss it. Not in the sense of a single option, but that it should have a choice of options. What are the consensuses with respect to these various options. What are the advantages and disadvantages? What does it involve, later on, if we make such and such a choice? This is what the word debate means in our own minds. It is not necessarily an activity that should last months and months, but a well-organized activity that will enable the population to be well informed.

We know very well that informing the public through newspapers, bulletins, and so on, is not sufficient. Remember the amount of information that was disseminated when free-trade was discussed, and when people were questioned on the open lines - what do you know about free trade - they knew nothing. Except the few people, maybe some of you and a few others, who took the time to listen or to

read.

So I think what we're talking about now is not only the thematic forums, important as they are, but also material that would allow groups of people to discuss the options, so that when they are offered a referendum, they will know what they have to decide on.

**Mr. Beaumier:** One last question, Mr. Chairman. Could we count on the assistance of the Canadian Institute to try to create these tools?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Can you answer quickly with a "yes"?

**Mrs. Boily:** If we are given the means.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. Now Mrs. Diane Drouin.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As an elected education official for several years, I think I, too, know the education system quite well and I have read your brief with great interest. You know that our school boards have measures for welcoming young immigrants. But there is also the problem of adult immigrants for whom linguistic and cultural integration in Québec is a daily affair. You speak very little of this in your brief.

Do you believe that the current welcoming measures for adult immigrants are adequate? If not, could you offer an example of what might be done to improve them?

**Mrs. Boily:** Well, I think that first of all, the welcoming process is difficult for everyone and programs are not perfectly accessible to all adults. One might therefore say that, from the immigrant's point of view, the problems are that much greater and that certain obstacles are more difficult to overcome. There are problems involving language and, thus, information, as well as problems integrating into Québec society. And on that level, I definitely believe significant steps could be taken, there could be more, and more specific measures to improve the welcoming process. It is essential that immigrants be offered French-language instruction and the means to better understand Québec society, so that they can become better integrated.

I think these are the basics of the problem; naturally, the brief was very short, but the entire issue of cultural communities and new immigrants is certainly a serious concern. We must also develop a sense of solidarity with immigrants by providing measures that will make welcoming measures more accessible.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** And

now, Mr. Proulx, immediately followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Proulx (Jacques-UPA):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to follow everyone else's example - I'll start with a little criticism, not malicious, for it wouldn't be fitting, given that I am one of the parties involved in all this. Nevertheless, when I read your brief, which is rather simplified and gets straight to the point, I see you're asking for just about all the powers there are. It's all very fine of you to talk about setting up points of reference, and - I'm summarizing here - if the public is to be respected, they have to make their way between them, and all that. Still, I have difficulty understanding how an agency like the Institute, with all the people and organizations it includes, and which calls for all those powers - based, after all on an observation - how it can call this setting points of reference. It seems to me that if you had provided a little instruction manual on how to avoid hitting these points, it would not have taken all that much more effort, and I think it would have provided some additional guidelines. I think you could have done that without placing yourself in too delicate a position. That having been said, I would like to know... I have two questions, actually. The first concerns the whole issue of manpower training, which is linked to employability programs. Could you quickly tell me... Has it achieved its objectives, despite - and I liked what you said here - despite the tangled maze of federal-provincial relations? Despite all that, has it achieved its objectives, or has it merely helped people go from welfare to unemployment?

**Mr. Pâquet:** I think that the employability programs, the federal ones we've had since 1985, in particular through job planning, are programs that essentially sparked a thorough reorientation of the manpower training programs. Before then, I think there was a much greater focus on more complete training programs with a view to long-term employment. The term employability programs itself is a bit of a Jell-O term. What does it mean exactly? Is it about training? Is it about jobs? I think we're dealing with a concept that questions some of the basic approaches we wanted to develop, particularly in Québec, by offering undereducated people training opportunities, the chance to catch up on their schooling. In that sense, I think the so-called employability programs ultimately offer very little training. Basically, we want to give the unemployed a chance to get some work experience, and, if possible, complement that with training, as required. Many employability programs offer practically no training, some offer a little; it depends where and when the training occurs. In that sense, I'd say that the

employability programs are far from achieving the objectives we'd like to see<sup>4</sup> them achieve, that is, to promote entry or re-entry into the job market.

**Mr. Proulx (Jacques-UPA):** Do you think that, if we were able to repatriate the powers you demand, it would at the same time be possible to repatriate the sums of money connected to them? We do, after all, receive significant sums from the federal government. My second question, before I run out of time, concerns communications, for I know you have done considerable work - I raise the issue because the theatre people spoke to us today about the Americanization of the media and the airwaves, and I know you've done a lot of work on this topic - you made a presentation to the CRTC through the Caplan-Sauvageau Commission. I'd like to know at what point... Even with all the data you have there, how much time do we have left to limit the damage in this whole issue of Americanization?

**Mrs. Trudel:** I think the Americanization of the airwaves is a problem not only for Québec, but also for Canada and the world. What we have to realize here, is that, in Québec, the Francophone population, unlike English Canadians, prefers to watch programs produced here. Two-thirds of the Francophone public spend most of their viewing time watching French-language Québec shows, while the opposite is true in English Canada. So, with regard to Québec, the problem is not nearly as important on that level, although when the Sauvageau-Caplan report was doing its work, 90 % of all drama series broadcast in Québec were American and foreign-produced shows.  
(9:00 p.m.)

So the problem is also significant. That's why, when we say we have to count on the public sector here, it's because it's the public sector that invests in production, that is in a position to produce major programs, that can also offer people programming concerned not only with commercial entertainment, but that has the means to produce educational cultural shows, as well. And we deplore the fact that, currently, in Québec, even Radio-Canada is producing increasingly commercial programs. This will have to change, because our culture is not expressed solely by people like Céline Dion, Roch Voisine and the Festival juste pour rire. It's more diverse than that.

The entire issue has to be reviewed, and we say: Paying for cultural sovereignty is going to mean repatriating Ottawa's budgets. Because in 1989, Ottawa invested \$775 million in culture in Québec, and here in Québec we invested \$420 million. There's something wrong with that, for culture is under provincial jurisdiction. O.K., so people say, well, we'll reinvest, we'd have the

means. But are we really going to reinvest in culture? If we look back over the past few years, culture has not exactly been a priority for the gouvernement du Québec. And yet, cultural and political sovereignty are very closely linked. So this is what we mean when we talk about choosing a society. And this is what we mean when we say debate is necessary. I think...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Could you please... You don't have much time left.

**Mrs. Trudel:** ...all right, it's just that I personally would not like to see us closed in like we have already been before. Let's decide, quickly. People talk as though we should declare sovereignty right away and then afterwards we'll look after the other things. That's not it at all. I think that sovereignty and a blueprint for society are indissociable and at some point, since we want a broad debate, we have to say: There are still people to convince, discussions to be held...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. I now give the floor to...

**Mrs. Trudel:** ...there are people to bring together...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'm afraid I must stop you there, your time is up. I give the floor to Mr. Hogue; perhaps the issue will come up again and you'll have a chance to respond. Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like the others, I have read your brief and find it fundamental, like the one we received this afternoon from the CLSCs, in which they force us to consider a certain repositioning. One issue is that of poverty and the other deals with that part of society which is like its head, its mind, that is, training and education. And you, too, seem to be saying that the discussion should not take place to the detriment of society's intellectual and pedagogical development; I thank you for that.

But from all this, I come to a question that has been raised, and to which you have provided a number of answers. Like our colleague, Mr. Dauphin, I see that you approach the issue of positioning federalism and sovereignty with the delicacy and respect such a question deserves, and I congratulate you for it. Now, I'm not speaking for anyone... but you know where I come from and where I'm going, and there's no doubt that Ottawa, as we call it so often, or the federal government, might, under different circumstances, reorganize quite a number of things.

That being said, on page 4, on page 5 and

on page 6, Madam, you wrote "sovereignty", whether it is sovereignty or not, but you link it to the blueprint for society, and you specify a certain time period. So, if I amalgamate all the comments you have made, in both your presentation and your answers, I have one last question, and you may extrapolate, as the Chairman has suggested: Who will coordinate - for this seems fundamental to me - who will control this plan to mobilize the perceptual field of an entire population?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...

**Mrs. Boily:** If I understand you correctly, it's the process...

**Mr. Hogue:** You seem to have answered Mr. Beaumier.

**Mrs. Boily:** If I understand you correctly, it's the process...

**Mr. Hogue:** O.K., you speak about broad consultation, a second stage, broad and democratic. You mentioned Native peoples, you spoke about consulting the public, you talked about a time period. Here is a specific question: Could you specify and clarify what you mean when you call for a second stage? Parts of the answer are already in this process of consultation and reflection. You have already provided some of the answers. I don't want to keep coming back to it, but at a certain point I have to go beyond, take the question further, and ask: Who would be in charge of coordinating or controlling - and I don't mean that in a pejorative sense - this operation, which is of such extreme importance for the future of Québec and the future of Canada?

**Mrs. Boily:** Well, you might say that this Commission itself has already formed a very important core, ever since it was first conceived and formed - people certainly expect a lot from this Commission. At the beginning of our presentation this evening, we said we wanted the results of all this work to be widely disseminated, also through the written and electronic media, to popularize it, in a way. You could say that everything relating to the Commission is already extremely important, and that, if the Commission made use of every means available, it could be a driving force which might help inform people in various areas.

At the same time, I think that these different areas also have a responsibility to continue this debate. Some groups are well organized but have more limited means; there are groups that were not able to appear before the Commission but nevertheless have something to say. There is a lot of energy out there waiting to be harnessed, don't you think?

**Mr. Hogue:** But...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 15 seconds, sir...

**Mr. Hogue:** All right. You know, things in pedagogy and education have to be coordinated, and when you're teaching, you need a bit of direction. That's not necessarily pejorative, it's not authoritarian, it's not autocratic. Who do you picture as the person for the job? Legislators, pressure groups, social groups? Who? It can't be everyone, after all.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A short answer, please, Mrs. Bolly.

**Mrs. Bolly:** Honestly, we...

**Mr. Proulx (Jacques-CIAE):** We didn't spend a lot of time on that question. What we really wanted to point out, is that this commission is sparking not only a political process, but an educational one as well. We believe it is important that this educational process be broadened to allow people to understand the situation, and make choices with full knowledge of their implications, so that after making those choices, people can mobilize to carry them out; for after the choice comes action, and we feel that's very important. That is why we are here asking your commission to consider this aspect and perhaps see who might direct things. We are ready to help in that regard.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A last question from my colleague, Mr. Michel Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** It's not exactly a question, but you talk about a blueprint for society. I'm very impressed by the term; I also have difficulty understanding all its implications. However, you speak, and with very good reason, about maintaining a balance, harmony, solidarity between social, cultural and economic goals. I think everything has gone just fine, up to now, and anyway, more balance is all for the better. But in reality, social goals mean State spending and I think I understand that people would want more. I have no objection. Cultural objectives also involve State spending, and again, I have no objection. As for economic objectives, that presumably implies that the system produces sufficient revenues to cover all the other expenses. However, the current situation of the State, in Canada and in Québec, no matter what angle you view the whole thing from, whether you separate the pieces or not, for every dollar the combined public authorities spend in Canada, they produce the equivalent of \$0.70 for their own use and have to borrow the rest. So, right off the bat, before pursuing our blueprints for society any further, we're starting from a

position of extreme and fairly long-lasting imbalance in public finances. Does that reassure you or worry you, with regard to the blueprints for society that have to be drawn up?

**Mrs. Bolly:** In any case, I think we are always making choices, and if we're talking about economic objectives, it is solely for... We're not operating in a vacuum. It depends what we want to do with these results or profits. There are choices to be made. You can want something but you also have to be realistic. And I think that when we talk about balance, it's because we are being realistic; some choices may be costly, we may want to spread them out over time, but we can't... Ultimately, economic objectives cannot be separated from social choices. We might reduce the...

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** I agree with you completely on that part, madam, and assure you that I support all movements in favour of harmony, balance, etc. What concerns me is that we're starting off with a profound imbalance that has maintained itself relatively well in recent years. If, indeed, we want everyone to understand, shouldn't we, in any discussion of economic development, also point out that we're a little short before we even begin?

**Mrs. Bolly:** Where are we short?

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** We're short... Every time governments in Canada spend \$100, they're short \$30. So they borrow. You can do that for a while, but the serious imbalance problem is: How long can you do it for? If we're talking about a blueprint for society, what worries me is: Are we all aware that we're setting out with a few problems balancing public finances?

**Mr. Proulx (Jacques-CIAE):** I think this could be included in the information we're saying is important for people to have, in order to be aware of the choices to be made and the price that will have to be paid by everyone involved.

**Mr. Pâquet:** Nor can we simply set economics against social issues. I think that's the fundamental message we're trying to convey.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** No, no. We agree on that. Some of us here even believe that social issues are among the more interesting aspects of economics, but not everyone shares that opinion.

**Mr. Pâquet:** On that topic, I think we found the OECD had the most interesting things to say, with regard to us, and it was the OECD, in fact, that explained to what extent we might try to reconcile economic effectiveness, that is development, which is absolutely essential, with social justice. Our concern is that we don't

want to move towards a Québec split in two, but rather a Québec that stands in solidarity. What we mean is, a Québec that is not just for winners, but that seeks to establish fellowship, that makes room for and takes in its losers.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Trudel, Mr. Proulx, Mrs. Boily, Mr. Pâquet, Mrs. Blais, thank you for the clarifications you have brought before this Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 9:14 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 9:17 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** After this last hearing, I will have a few comments with regard to tomorrow's proceedings.

We will now hear from the YMCA for 30 minutes. For the benefit of our guests, I will repeat the time breakdown. You have 5 minutes to present your brief, there will be 5 minutes, including answers, for questions from the parliamentary group forming the Government, another 5 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 10 minutes for members of the Commission, each of whom may have a maximum of 5 of those 10 minutes, and lastly, 5 minutes for the Chair.

If you keep your questions and answers short, everyone will have a chance to speak. Mr. Lemay, if you would please introduce your colleagues.

### YMCA

**Mr. Lemay (Claude):** Fine. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. On my right, I have Salomon Kasimer, general director; here, on my left, Marcel Côté, outgoing president, and on my far left, Victor Drury, former president of the board.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Welcome to you all. You may now make your presentation.

**Mr. Lemay:** Thank you very much. We would like to thank the Commission for this opportunity to introduce the YMCA and our view of our experience which, we feel, may prove useful to the Commission. The YMCA is best known as a centre for physical fitness, but it is much more than that. The YMCA is community activities, it is convict reintegration, it is the youth centre that helps unemployed young adults. It is babysitting services and daycare services. It is also an organization that has been able to integrate and aid in community development throughout Montréal. The YMCA is an organization with a certain amount of experience, we have been here since 1851. And, we have succeeded, especially in the cauldron which is Montréal, in acquiring experience in

society and in integration which, I believe, might enlighten the Commission in its task. The YMCA is known as being an English organization although, today, — and it is true that it began as an Anglophone institution which is present today on the West Island, in Notre-Dame-de Grâce, in Westmount — but the YMCA of 1990 is a YMCA which is present in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, in Ville Saint-Laurent, in Pointe-Saint-Charles, in Guy-Favreau. It is a YMCA which is thrilled to be able to solve the social problems of greater Montréal.

Montréal, clearly, has some very specific characteristics. A Francophone majority, a significant Anglophone minority, and a growing cultural communities play an active role in the life of Montréal. We at the YMCA have tried to integrate these communities through consensus. We have tried, and I think we have succeeded, in working, in respecting these people, and in trying to maintain an approach that is very democratic, to be able to integrate these different parts of the Montréal reality and to be able, in this way, to help them achieve their blueprint for society.

I would like to ask Marcel Côté to present a few of the processes we have used which seem to have worked and, which could possibly be used by the Commission. Marcel.

**Mr. Côté (Marcel):** The YMCA works extensively within the context of Montréal's diversity, in every district, and we are constantly called upon to take a stand on subjects that are relatively controversial and on which those involved surely don't unanimously agree. Had we thought to do a survey of the political opinions of our people, I think we would have had more opinions than we have members, especially amongst the staff and the volunteers. These are all people who are extremely involved in the community. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we have been successful. And that success is perhaps due to the fact that we are patient in our lengthy, consensus-seeking approaches which eventually bring everyone together.

We listen. Sometimes compromises must be made. Compromises are always made while respecting the opinions of others. In a way, it is as a grassroots organization that we come to remind the Commission that, insofar as we would like a collective arrangement which involves the people of Montréal and greater Montréal, at the grassroots, I think that what we expect, or we would want, or we would wish for, would be amongst other things, a respect for this diversity, a special attention paid to the process, to how it will be done, rather than to the end result. The result... we will arrive at something, that is certain. However the means may be more important. That is what our daily experience in our ten community centres across the city has

taught us. I would not want to begin naming these principles. I'm certain that you have already seen them. I'll stop before my five minutes are over. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's rare. We will begin with Mrs. Pauline Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I welcome you to our table, to our work. I would like to congratulate you because I know your commitment. I have worked alongside you on several occasions. We have even shared an economic development corporation effort, of which I am certain, you are very proud. And I too, somewhere, feel that I may be proud because I think that we enabled some people to become a little more independent and to help themselves. Indeed, we may learn many lessons from your work in terms of mutual aid, of solidarity and all the rest.

Two questions. The first is related to a statement that you make on page 11. You say: "At the grassroots level where the YMCA works, the attribution of the constitutional responsibilities sometimes seems to be of secondary importance." I'll stop there. It's on page 11 of your document. It's the last sentence at the bottom. You are in the field, you are confronted with problems of unemployment, with problems of poverty and thus, with problems of the overlapping of jurisdictions and of the subsequent price to pay. Therefore, in this sense, could you not shed some light on some powers that we should be able to count on in Québec that would permit us to better deal with these situations of poverty. First question.

Second. On page 8 of your document, you state the characteristics or principles upon which our procedure should be based, that is, the procedure to which the Commission is committing itself; participatory and democratic, open, where each participant is treated equally, etc. Do you think that we should open the discussion, a little like the preceding group had mentioned, within a forum? Should this result in a referendum which would decide upon the choice of the constitutional option? Have you considered these things, in view of the criteria that you mentioned in your document?

**Mr. Côté:** I will answer the first question regarding overlapping and how, at the base level... what we think of that. I must admit that at the base level we are looking for money. You know how it is pretty well all over: everyone is constantly looking for money. In some cases we like to have spokespersons. I believe it is clear at the base level to have spokespersons. In the example to which you refer, the Centre de Développement, the PEP, what was the PEP in the beginning and which has since become a network. Now, it is in Québec City. Finally, we

found the money in Montréal. One would think that a clarification of the responsibilities would help, but I think that it is perhaps more important, at our level, no matter where the money comes from, that more confidence be shown to the ground level than to the lengthy bureaucratic operation. I must admit that at the level where community organizations are launched, we bother less about constitutional overlapping. These are not our worries. Our greatest concern is that things not become too bureaucratic and that people be accessible and, in that sense, I must admit that the local authorities often prove quite useful. In the city of Montréal, amongst others, in all of the district of Pointe-Saint-Charles, we have had some - even in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve - quite positive experiences with the involvement of the authorities. However, we cannot draw up great constitutional theories based on the daily experiences at Pointe-Saint-Charles. That is what we mentioned in the report. But, in that sense, it is evident that the decisions you make will have an impact on the way in which we operate at the base level.

**Mrs. Marois:** And my second question, regarding procedure.

**Mr. Lemay:** Yes, I will attempt to answer the second question. One exercise that the YMCA has carried out, and that has been quite successful, especially during strategic planning, when we tried - when we have 150 000, 200 000, or 300 000 members and we try to orient these people in a particular direction - try to see, try to involve them to try so that they become aware of their responsibilities and so that they achieve their personal goals. Often, it is very tempting to quickly consult them and say: The elite agrees. We'll go on ahead with it, we'll do it, our board of directors is well organized, let's go. And we realized that things rarely work well that way, and that thorough, wide open, thorough consultation is absolutely necessary. We decided this to be true for simple problems, problems concerning entire districts, problems of unemployment, problems of employment, and problems of refugee integration. I think that if we speak of a blueprint for society that respects diversity, broad consultation, and the integration of the various elements of an answer - because there will be a wide variety despite the fact that the polls seem to indicate a certain direction - I think that we should not place too much confidence in that and I think that thorough consultation is necessary to successfully build a consensus. That is much more difficult to achieve but it is much more durable in the long term.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine. But then which means would you suggest that the Commission favour in

order to do so? Because, essentially, we are the ones presently faced with the problem. And, I go back to the problem mentioned earlier, the CIAE told us, the Canadian Institute of Adult Education told us: "Discussions should be held in the regions, etc." In that sense are you suggesting any type of formula?

**Mr. Lemay:** We have experienced these problems. We often settle them district by district. It is not simple to solve problems for Montréal. There is not one Montréal, there are about 20 Montréal. And I think we must try... if you want to convince the various cultures, if you want to integrate people, so that they feel part of a blueprint for project. You must put yourself on their level, speak their language, and that, you cannot accomplish in a meeting of 5000 people and therefore, we as an organization, cannot. It is not our responsibility, however, I suggest that you go to the most basic level possible, with the means that you have, and really try to incorporate these people in your decision to become a society. All other proposals will be superficial and will not produce the desired results.  
(9:30 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We shall now move on to Mr. Roger Nicolet, followed by Mr. Ghislain Dufour.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I read your brief with great interest, and one of the observations that struck me was the extremely vivid description of the multiculturalism of the city of Montréal, and I refer more specifically to page 5.

A mosaic that you master perfectly, and therein lies, I believe, an important account. However, you also know that there is an opposite side to this coin, and that this opposite side has been amply described by the media. It has been diffused at all levels. It is truly the precariousness of the linguistic balance between the ethnic communities and the Francophone majority.

All this to bring me to - and I invite you to comment upon this dimension - but to question a recommendation that you make, and which seems to be at the heart of the debate before us. You speak of reconciling individual rights with collective rights. Is that not in itself a key problem in every exchange and all the difficulties of communication that we may have with, in, taking into account the constraints I referred to earlier?

**Mr. Lemay:** Concerning the first part of your question, I remember the YMCA of 20 years ago which was an organization, whose membership was approximately 80 % Anglophone. And, as good Catholics, we were not interested

in going to the YMCA. It was something for the Protestants and the English.

Our annual meeting was held a few weeks ago in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, an area which is 99.9 % Francophone. The entire process was carried out in French. We tried to do it so that people would not feel threatened, so that the language would not be a problem. The way we did it was that we did not see these people as Francophones, Anglophones, Italians or Greeks, but rather as people, as Quebecers, as Montrealers who lived here and who had problems of unemployment, who had interpersonal problems, who had family problems. And, when we discuss problems such as these, there is no longer a difference in language and culture because we are dealing with problems that are more profound and more serious.

We mention this towards the end. The constitutional method is not, in itself, an objective. We strive for social justice, economic progress and that is how we solved that problem: by stressing the real problems and transcending, if you will, cultural differences. In this way, these people did not feel threatened, and the language problem did not arise, and we did the majority of this in French.

I won't answer the second part of your question on the balance of collective rights and individual rights. It's a hard question. I think, even there, when people feel respected and listened to, they are much more willing to integrate themselves into a society. And, speaking of minorities, the people that came to participate at the YMCA came from all communities. Of course we wanted to stick to the Montréal reality and we have become an organization with a Francophone majority. But without removing this pride, this difference, we have turned this difference into a plus and not a minus. We have tried to feel that these people are truly integrated into our plans for community responsibility. To the extent that people feel respected, generally, the balance is made.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dufour?

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I also would like to highlight the attendance of the people from the YMCA and endorse the fact that it is one of the most important organizations in Montréal. Two questions. You have already partially answered the first. In the brief you say, "yes". The constitutional structure is no more than a means, it is not in itself an objective. Quebecers do not live for a constitution, they live for the day to day reality and that seems to me very important. The first question that I shall ask you is this: Basically, in the work that you do, isn't the whole constitutional question,

for all practical purposes, ignored, because there are other concerns? And second, you state six principles. I retain two. "Québec society belongs to the global village and cannot isolate itself or even aspire to do so." And, "A healthy economic base is essential to social justice." The following is not a trick question: To achieve these two principles, do you prefer renewed federalism or independence?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Côté:** For the first question, don't think that we consider the constitutional framework to be without impact but I must admit that it would be at the base level, especially regarding social problems. The YMCA is a volunteer organization with a social mission and, at that level, we ask those people at your level, those who establish the structures that will in a way, govern our society, to pay careful attention, if you make your omelette with broken eggs, be careful of those at the base level that may be destitute. I would not want to suggest that the constitution is not important, but when we rearrange the constitution, we must always be conscious of the base level. Regarding the questions that are not trick questions: Is it better under a society of renewed federalism? There are little countries and big countries — actually, there are all sorts of countries — and finally it is almost certain that we can succeed in solving these problems, no matter what the formula. I don't think that we could oppose any formula to facing the world, technology, or even the priority of the economy openly or not. I don't think these are opposing sides.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You are speaking for the YMCA, not yourself, is that correct?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Dufour:** That is the detail I was about to mention, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** In that case, Mr. Larose followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 1965, I arrived for the first time in Montréal, and as I had to sleep, I slept at the YMCA. I was leaving for Goose Bay, my first prospecting expedition. I lived on Leclerc street for 13 years, I saw the YMCA arrive in the neighbourhood. I'd like to congratulate you on having an important institution that has always stuck to the reality of Montréal.

You know, one does not always preside over the CSN, and one does not always sit on parliamentary commissions. There are times when we try to take the time to reflect on the

meaning of things to see where we are going. You state six principles. Contrary to Ghislain, I accept all six. And I say to myself: 1990 is Québec's year, the year of a blueprint. O.K? No matter what the constitutional vehicle, I say. It's funny, but when I read your work, I find that all of what you do at the grassroots, in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, on Drummond street, is in a sense building a society. And, when we put that in the perspective of a collective project, we have a complement to the work done at the grassroots level. And if we look elsewhere in the world, take for example recently, the Germans, though we could also consider the post-war Germans, or even the Japanese, these are societies that, I think, have had to pick themselves up or take charge of a situation. Can we say to ourselves that this gives deeper meaning to the world's daily affairs? In that sense, I find that your six principles, regardless of the options of some individuals, for the experiences that the coming year will bring, it's odd but I find that to be an extraordinary complement to your daily efforts. Am I completely off track when I say that?

**Mr. Lemay:** First of all we appreciate that... we think we experience those principles every day and it's not easy. And when problems arise, we often have very difficult discussions. Perhaps not as difficult as yours, because there are many intelligent people around this table and whenever you have many intelligent people together who must move in the same direction on the same project, it isn't always easy; and the two Chairmen have many challenges. What we try to tell ourselves is that if the project is a worthy one, if the people feel respected, if we want to feel... The YMCA is an international organization present in 107 countries and we try to build our future by trying to help others. Trying to help others here in Québec, and trying, also, to think international.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Without asking a question, Mr. Hogue, would you like to make a final comment before we pass on to the next block? Because I have no time left.

**Mr. Hogue:** Certainly, I would like to make a comment. I would like to thank you Mr. Chairman for this occasion because I wanted to intervene due to the fact that the YMCA is such a success story. When I was young, I never had the right to go there. Contrary to my friend and colleague Larose, my father forbade me to go to the YMCA.

**Mr. Larose:** Really?... libertarian.

**Mr. Hogue:** Give me five seconds. There is a YMCA in my riding of Outremont, on Park Avenue, that is doing wonderful work. You may

choose to answer my question or not. What are you doing with your constitution and your initials? Because your initials are rather English; what are you doing that allows you to live in Québec, to have successfully adjusted with a constitution and initials while other social or ideological groups, during the same period of time, have left? We just don't see them any more.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** O.K. Mr. Lemay, I will help you. We've run out of time. We will now move to Mr. Robert Benoit.

No, no. Your comment.

**Mr. Benoit:** Gentlemen of the YMCA, I join the other speakers in congratulating you on this worldwide mission that the YMCA has adopted but more particularly, here, at home and, upon reading your brief, we find a human side, a compassionate side, a love for mankind that unfortunately we do not find in the other briefs.

On page 4, you speak of the 21 % of Montrealers that were born outside of Québec, that were born outside of Canada. How do you, you who are close to the people, who are close to the real world, how can we integrate these people who are arriving from everywhere, and, who will continue to arrive in rising numbers in the coming years into Québec?

**Mr. Lemay:** The principle was, from the start, to see the relationship as one of wealth. When people feel that they are appreciated and they feel that they can contribute to society, they integrate themselves much easier. When people come to us, people out of work, we help them to integrate, we help them find work. When people have work they can feel respected. Therefore, the economic problems Mr. Bélanger mentioned when he said, "Yes, there is an imbalance, and there is a serious economic problem", we, at the YMCA, think that economic responsibility is critical if we want to see a viable blueprint for society in the long term.

Therefore, for these immigrants, for this 21 % that is coming, if we find them work, if we teach them the language, because the Y gives many language courses, if we let them have friends, feel that they are appreciated, when they come to the Y, it's like a community centre, they feel at home. If you are successful economically, if you feel that you are integrated on a personal level and that your presence is considered beneficial to society because people appreciate your cultural diversity, generally, that is quite good criteria to try to integrate these people.

**Mr. Benoit:** Thank you. I would like to end this evening by reading a line of yours and, that might serve as food for thought for the rest of the evening. It is in your brief on page 10. You

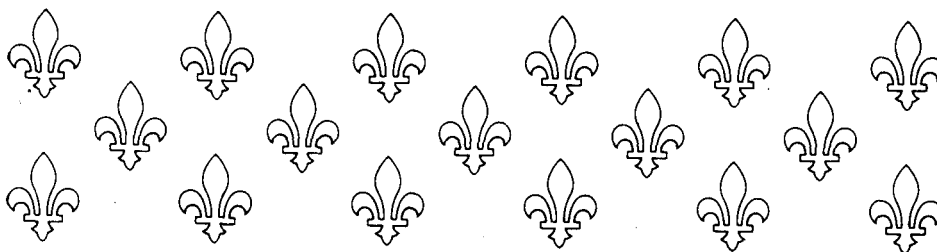
say: "Our youth, the generation of tomorrow, to whom we would bequeath this country, shall be the first to defy the barriers that we might build". Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your cooperation. Good night.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Kasimer, Mr. Lemay, Mr. Côté, Mr. Drury, thank you for your involvement in Québec society. I can only thank you for your generosity, your devotion, on behalf of the individuals you have helped through your work. It is clear that a society needs citizens like you, who are ready to help and serve their fellow man.

And now, I should like to add just one excerpt from your report that might apply to the Commission. "Avoid situations which create winners." Thank you.

And news for tomorrow. We shall be in Joliette. Work begins at 10:00 a.m. and the bus leaves from here, the Hôtel Sheraton, tomorrow morning at 7:50 a.m.

(End of sitting, 9:46 p.m.)



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# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

## Journal des débats



**COMMISSION ON THE POLITICAL  
AND CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE  
OF QUÉBEC**

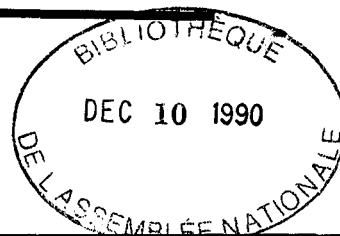
**Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau**

**Joliette, Thursday, November 22, 1990**

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Joliette, Thursday, November 22, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations and Individuals

(10:02 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I declare open this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, held today in Joliette. Let me remind you once again of the Commission's mandate, which is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to formulate recommendations in that respect. Today, we welcome organizations and individuals from the Lanaudière and Laurentian regions who have submitted briefs to the Commission.

At 10:00 a.m. we will hear the Sommet économique permanent de Lanaudière for an hour; at 11:00 a.m., the Corporation régionale de développement des Laurentides, also for an hour; at noon, Mr. Richard Côté for 30 minutes; then we will recess until 2:00 p.m. In the afternoon we will have a series of half-hour hearings: at 2:00 p.m., the Antoine-Labelle RCM; at 2:30 p.m., Comité intermunicipal de développement économique de Labelle Inc.; at 3:00 p.m., Association des intervenants forestiers des Hautes-Laurentides; at 3:30 p.m., Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière; at 4:00 p.m., the town of Sainte-Thérèse; at 4:30 p.m., Mr. Roger Lemoine; at 5:00 p.m., Mr. Robert Dean; and at 5:30 p.m., Mr. Jacques Brisebois. We will recess at 6:00 p.m. and resume at 7:30 p.m. with the Société nationale des Québécoises et Québécois de la région de Lanaudière, which will appear at the same time as the Société nationale des Québécoises et Québécois de la région des Laurentides, with the two groups together having one hour; at 8:30 p.m., Mr. Gilbert Boulet will have 30 minutes; and the proceedings will end around 9:00 p.m.

May I remind you of the rules concerning discussion time. For a brief that is allotted one hour, 10 minutes are allocated for presentation of the brief, the Chair has 5 minutes, the Government party 10 minutes, the Official Opposition 10 minutes, and members who have registered with the Chair 25 minutes all together, with each individual having 5 minutes. As for the rules for half-hour briefs, we will see a little later. For the moment, we will be dealing with people who have an hour.

If you please, Mr. Dupuis, I would like to bid you welcome on your own turf, something I don't get a chance to do every day! So I welcome you and ask you to introduce your group and then take 10 minutes to present your brief.

**Sommet économique permanent  
de Lanaudière**

**Mr. Dupuis (Jacques):** Mr. Chairman, Ladies

and Gentlemen of the Commission, naturally I would like to reciprocate the Chairman's welcome to me by greeting all of you. We are very pleased to welcome you to the Lanaudière region, which, as you will easily be able to see from the presentations made here, is an extremely dynamic region. The group accompanying me consists of Mr. John Redmond, a resident of Matawinie, who is chairman of Tourisme Lanaudière and vice-chairman of the Sommet économique; Mr. Denis Roch, chairman of the Conseil régional des loisirs and a resident of the D'Autray RCM; and Mr. Grégoire Flamand, administrator, representing the Manouane Band Council. I would like to bring to your attention that we are probably one of the few regions in Québec that has found a way to build an active, dynamic partnership with the aboriginal peoples. This is due in great measure to the open-mindedness of Mr. Flamand. I would like to introduce Mr. André Auger, newly elected head of the Montcalm RCM and member of the board of directors, and Mrs. Andrée St-Georges, executive director of the Sommet économique. As for me, the chairmanship of the Sommet is not my full-time job; I have other occupations. I am mayor of Repentigny and head of the L'Assomption RCM. This means that I belong to both municipal organizations present here.

The Sommet économique permanent de Lanaudière is a regional organization that includes various interested parties from the region, in particular, elected municipal officials, organizations from the socioeconomic sector, and government representatives from the region. Our activities are based largely on economic and regional development. To attain our objectives, we use mainly a process of consultation with the various parties involved. Our primary mandate is to promote our region and ensure that its special interests are protected. The experience of the Sommet économique permanent de Lanaudière, more specifically the regional socioeconomic conference it held in 1990, demonstrates the urgent need to define regional responsibility and jurisdiction in the context of Québec's future. The board of directors of the Sommet wishes to take the opportunity offered by your tour of the regions to make you more aware of the necessity of defining the status of the regions as recognized political and administrative entities.

It will first of all be necessary to agree on a definition of the term "region". To us, a region is the geographical sum of several RCMs with complementary vocations, constituting a homogeneous whole, which have a feeling — that can be created or strengthened — of belonging to a single entity and which desire and are capable of achieving cooperation on socioeconomic issues. Québec is divided into 16 regions, which consist

of 98 RCMs and over 1 500 municipalities. The tendency at present is for transfer of power to take place through fragmentation into municipal territories, which with all its strengths and weaknesses, remains very complicated and disregards a major level of intervention. Both reason and sentiment were involved in the creation of the regions, but it was done in good faith. All parties involved can obtain their fair share, and genuine recognition of the region constitutes the prime ingredient of the consultative process that has proved so essential.

The past 10 years have been overloaded with talk about the regions, without any ensuing follow-up to all the fine speeches. It might even be said that the term "region" is overused. It is used to define a neighbourhood in a city, a geographical subsector, an RCM, an electoral district, the territory covered by a particular government program, a zone in a particular sector, and on and on. Québec RCMs are demanding it for themselves. Some cities are doing the same, and finally, the Québec and Canadian governments use the term for various administrative and political purposes.

Considering the economic situation in Québec, and in particular the current social and political situation, in the light of defining Québec's future, it seems fundamental to us to clearly stipulate the place or the role that devolves on Québec's constituent regions. Major trends such as market liberalization, measures to support adequate competitiveness, the rules of the economic game on the international scale, the large-scale deficits of both Canada and Québec, the lack of involvement of both governments in the economic and social sectors, and the transfer of responsibility to other levels of government such as the municipalities are some of the factors that make it necessary for all the parties involved to take a position on regional development. The experience of regional socioeconomic conferences gives us a foretaste of the economic situation we can expect.

The federal government's involvement more often than not gives evidence of piecemeal measures; as for the provincial government, its measures are too often band-aid solutions and neglect the collaborative process that we are asked to carry out. This is why, whatever direction the constitutional future of Québec eventually takes, a major place must be granted to regional development carried out by the regions themselves.

From the standpoint of the political and constitutional future, it seems undeniable to us that the policy of local and regional development must be under the responsibility and jurisdiction of the Québec government; that this policy must be defined and implemented in cooperation with all the municipal and socioeconomic partners at the local and regional level; and that any

measures to structure it must be subject to the priorities and responsibilities established in the context of the policy.

Decentralization of responsibilities is accomplished through decentralization of powers and also by recognition of the jurisdiction of each of the levels where economic measures can make themselves felt with the greatest effect and at the lowest cost.

While we don't wish to reiterate all the statements made by the Association québécoise des organismes de concertation et de développement du Québec, we do insist on the fact that the future of Québec must be defined by something besides just reducing the places to which we address our pleas from two to one. Consequently, if we intend to maximize the potential of the regions and ensure an adequate quality of life on the social and economic level, as well as sustainable development that respects the environment, we must allow the regions to play their full part.

This means encouraging development of resources, supporting the vital forces in the community, and facilitating access to a world that is increasingly tending toward liberalization of trade. Enhancement of the regions must be an integral part of Québec's development goals. This can be accomplished by taking the following guidelines into account. First, regional development must reflect the economic, social, cultural, and political concerns of the communities of the region. Although this implies making choices or setting priorities, it is important to allow the various regional players to position themselves according to the strengths and weaknesses of their respective territories.

Second, regional development must be based on local and supralocal initiatives, taking into account disparities within the region. It will become more plausible to base regional development on solid foundations that are agreed upon by all parties with a stake in having the region flourish economically.

Third, starting from the main policies to be defined by Québec and its partners, primarily the regions, the latter must be capable of taking a hand in their own destiny. The State must ensure each of them the means it requires for its development, whatever the political structure favoured. Having these means implies a possibility of administering significant regional funds and an accountability that receives its legitimacy from the State as well as from the residents of the regions. This sort of political legitimacy and financial means will allow genuine structuring on a regional scale.

Fourth, development must be based on shared responsibility by the interested parties in the region, namely elected officials, representatives from the social and economic spheres, and the State, thus calling on genuine collaboration. In this respect, collaboration means

partnership in policies, actions, and decisions that concern the socioeconomic development of the region. The idea of shared responsibility involves recognition of disparities between and within regions. A principle of flexibility regarding the mechanisms of development and the standards to be applied in each of the aid programs must prevail over administration that is simply easy for the government apparatus to implement. But only collaboration that is officially recognized can contribute effectively to achieving this.

(10:15 a.m.)

Fifth and finally, in order to achieve coordination of territories, the definition of the counties, in other words the electoral districts, ought to be modified to fit the geographical boundaries of each of the regions. This all by itself will have the immediate result of intensifying the feeling of belonging to a single entity, as well as coordinating the measures taken by the various partners.

Regional development is a system that is influenced by overall government policies. Consequently, it is important to settle the objectives that each of the sectorial government departments pursue, in order to maximize the effects on the territory. Beyond the socioeconomic challenges that we have set ourselves, remember that the challenge of the environment must not be forgotten. So that is the basic message that the Sommet économique permanent de Lanaudière would like to leave you with. As you can see, we are looking mainly at the socioeconomic domain. Notwithstanding the eventual political choice Quebecers make, the development of Québec's regions is based on a recognition and enhancement of its resources that can lead to assumption of responsibility by the regions themselves. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Dupuis. We will now start with an initial group of questions and, as it happens, the first person will be Mr. Chevrete.

**Mr. Chevrete:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome all the members of this Commission to one of the most beautiful ridings in Québec. I would also like to thank the Steering Committee for agreeing to have the Commission conduct hearings in Joliette. I think this honour was accorded me because I was a member of the Commission, and I thank all the members of the Steering Committee.

Having said that, Mr. Dupuis, my first question deals with page 3 of your brief, where after stating that you were... You recommended that regional development be under the jurisdiction of the Québec government. You spoke of the involvement of the federal government. As you know, the spending power of the federal government exists and allows it to

intervene at any time in any project, with few or no constraints at the level of Québec. How do you regard that form of involvement, since in your brief you do not opt for sovereignty-association, political sovereignty and economic association, or for renewed federalism or federalism pure and simple? I would like to know how you view federal involvement for the moment, since you talk about it on page 3.

**Mr. Dupuis:** Well, the answer to the question is relatively simple. In effect, we make regional development subject to Québec government jurisdiction, in other words the closest level of government. And once constitutional recognition takes place, if we are talking about the hypothesis you propose, the hypothesis of federalism, and it would be unusual for you to propose it as a hypothesis, under that hypothesis some coordination would have to occur, since the constitutional agreement resulting from the negotiations carried out by Québec will recognize the regions, and there will have to be some change. And if, on the other hand, the federal issue no longer exists, obviously the question will be answered immediately.

**Mr. Chevrete:** But since initially you go directly to it and say "Jurisdiction on questions of regional economic development must be the responsibility of the Québec government", that is automatically what you advocate. And if it should turn out not to be so, you advocate constitutional amendments to coordinate the federal action with the provincial. Am I following you?

**Mr. Dupuis:** That's it.

**Mr. Chevrete:** So your initial recommendation is that you prefer this whole area to be completely repatriated to Québec.

**Mr. Dupuis:** The reason is that in regard to regional development, it is clear that the closest level of government is the one that should be addressed. This is not to disregard other levels, but the closest government should be the primary guarantor.

**Mr. Chevrete:** You also talk about decentralization in your brief. Can you give us some concrete examples of what must absolutely be decentralized to ensure better regional development?

**Mr. Dupuis:** Mr. Redmond.

**Mr. Redmond (John):** We can see from our experience, whether as members of the Sommet or in our own everyday lives, that the final decisions about regional, local, supralocal affairs

are not made in the regions. We can see that we have to live with decisions made outside or beyond our region, and in our opinion that amounts to taking away one of our tools, namely the final decision on planning and spending. We frequently find ourselves tagging along behind programs that were thought up outside our regions, and the decision cannot be made in our regions. It comes from the central government, and decisions that come from the central government often must be modeled on a preestablished program that we have not been able to design or had a chance to construct ahead of time.

**Mr. Chevette:** But concretely, Mr. Dupuis or Mr. Redmond or someone else, how do you envision the procedure? For example, do you see the funding, the actual funds, being assigned to a permanent structure, with decisions on allocating it arbitrated by the people in the community, either jointly with government or independently in the regions? I would like to know concretely what procedure you see when you talk about decentralization.

**Mr. Dupuis:** The procedure is relatively simple. In the majority of regions in Québec, there are consultative bodies that in my opinion are qualified, by the diversity of their background and training, to truly represent the interests, expectations, and needs of a specific geographical area. What needs to be done is to give these consultative bodies the means to do their job fully.

In the Sommet we have a project development fund that is supplied by the OPDQ. It isn't much, \$ 50 000, but at any rate it is better than nothing. This fund is supported and enables us to present to the government and other parties, to the various departments, well-designed, comprehensive projects that truly represent the needs of the region.

When we talk about decentralization, we are in a good position here; the members of the Commission will surely recognize that in the Lanaudière region, for example, two of the sectors, the Les Moulins RCM and the L'Assomption RCM, are the sectors in Québec in which the rate of growth is the highest from a demographic standpoint. And while the government, in its centralizing function, is presiding over, if not demographic stagnation, at least slight decreases at times, we do not fit any of the statistics; at Repentigny, schools are being built, while in many other parts of Québec, according to ministère de l'Éducation statistics, none are being built, and people are trying to find a use for existing ones. Decentralization and the strength of a consultative body equipped with the means to make itself felt are going to lead to just such concrete results.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, I would of course like to congratulate the Sommet économique permanent de Lanaudière for having succeeded in establishing a partnership relation with the Amerindian community in the region. You have boasted that you are probably the only region to have done so. I do not want to get you started again on the subject, Mr. Dupuis, but this is also being done in the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean region. The community of Pointe-Bleue is also a partner in the Conseil régional de concertation et développement of the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean region. I think that this should be taken note of, it is an excellent initiative.

**Mr. Dupuis:** Then I am happy to see that you have followed our example!

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Brassard:** I don't know who followed whose example, but in any case, we are on the right track, I think. Mr. Dupuis, I just wanted to indicate to you that when you demand that the Québec government be in charge of regional development, I want you to be aware of the magnitude of the transfer of responsibility, jurisdiction, and resources that it involves, because it's an easy thing to say, being in charge of regional development, but what it involves is transfer of responsibility for vocational training, manpower, development of tourism, business development, transportation, and cultural affairs. That's what it means, basically, because it is not enough simply to say that Québec is in charge of regional development, while the federal government continues to be active in vocational training, development of tourism, or business development, and still intervenes in the cultural field. At that point, it becomes a meaningless expression, an empty phrase. I would just like you to tell me that you are really aware of what is involved in being in charge of regional development.

**Mr. Dupuis:** Yes. In fact, we are perfectly aware of that. However, when we are talking about recognition, in a constitutional agreement, we are talking about an alignment, if there were two levels of government, as regards the real situation, recognized in the agreements to be negotiated, but we are perfectly aware of the situation that you are raising. Moreover, this is approximately our relationship with the Commission: you have to solve the problem, and we have indicated the results that you are supposed to achieve.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That is all the time we have for this set of questions. We will now go on to questions from other members of the Commission. Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue, followed by Mr. Roger Nicolet.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Brassard has just raised a question that seems to me to be a pivotal one. I heard... this decentralization, to what level? This concept of decentralization, how far do you see it going? You talk about a particular geographical sector, you talk about consultative bodies, but at what level should the decision be made? In the consultative body?

**Mr. Dupuis:** No.

**Mr. Hogue:** Or by the particular geographic sector?

**Mr. Dupuis:** We are saying that the project management, so to speak, is at the level of the Québec government, first. True recognition of the regions, of the role of the regions or the consultative bodies, will unavoidably be taken into consideration as one of the major factors in decision-making. I don't think it is the region that is going to decide on the application of program x, y, or z. Nonetheless, program x, y, or z is going to apply to a region that has made a clear and comprehensive request for it and it is the government of Québec that will guarantee it.

**Mr. Hogue:** Then the consultative body is just consultative.

**Mr. Dupuis:** Its role is somewhat more than just consultative, but it does not have general public funds to administer, but rather specific public funds, as I was saying just now, funds that enable us to design projects and present them.

**Mr. Hogue:** So you stop your basis for decentralization, in quotes, at the sector level, at the regional level. The same concern kept coming up during the Commission de l'Union des municipalités du Québec, and there was no opposition as such as far as transfers are concerned. Where the commission saw certain difficulties was in regard to money that was to be reused. So that to follow your reasoning, there would be nothing in Canadian federalism to prevent the implementation of the development policy you are advocating.

**Mr. Dupuis:** Canadian federalism as it exists at present does not have such an acknowledged concern with fundamental respect of the regions. Neither does the federalist position as it exists in the Québec government have a tendency

to recognize the role of the regions as such.

**Mr. Hogue:** Well, there is a broader level, but...  
(10:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Dupuis:** That is, on paper, what you are telling me is that anything is possible and nothing is impossible and I agree with you. Our actual experience in the regions has shown very clearly that what is on paper does not have much meaning when the item stipulating the recognition of the regions and the active role of the consultative bodies is missing from the list. May I remind you too that in a given region, using the definition we gave earlier, there are governments involved, municipal governments and, effectively, RCMs. So the consultative body brings together all the parties involved from a given geographical sector, in collaboration with the existing governments...

**Mr. Hogue:** All right. That is what I wanted to hear, at any rate.

**Mr. Dupuis:** ...who administer general funds, but who are still partners...

**Mr. Hogue:** It's that there are always several levels involved, always.

**Mr. Dupuis:** That's right.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):**  
Mr. Roger Nicolet.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take the opportunity to greet our elected municipal officials, whose sphere of activity is so very important for the development and future of regional Québec. I would like, with your permission, to target three separate aspects of your brief and ask you to develop, perhaps quite simply, three of the points raised in your text which I feel require some explanation.

The first aspect, or the first question I would like you to deal with, refers to the passage stating that to achieve coordination of territories, the definition of the counties, in other words the electoral districts, ought to correspond to the geographical boundaries of each of the regions. You would start out with division into administrative districts, fit the electoral districts into this, and finally there would be division into municipalities and RCMs. Would all these divisions have to be superimposed and coincide? My first question is, can you clarify this aspect?

**Mr. Dupuis:** Basically, the process should be two-way. The administrative districts, for example, as they are set up, are the sum of RCMs

and reserve territories. We are saying that if the process is carried out from the bottom to the top, it should also be done from the top to the bottom. Let's take a simple example, the example of an MNA who has municipalities and RCMs belonging to more than one administrative region. I won't name names, I don't want this to get personal, but there is someone at this table who is caught between the Laurentians and Lanaudière and sometimes has tremendous difficulty reconciling the perfectly legitimate interests of the two. Now that particular superimposition seems somewhat illogical. And the fact of identifying the electoral districts with a particular region, in addition to increasing the very considerable effectiveness of the 125 Québec MNAs, will give somewhat more of a feeling of belonging to their region, as well as greater practical results.

**Mr. Nicolet:** That's all right on that subject. The second question concerns the powers to be decentralized. You refer to them in a general way, but have you made a more specific list of the powers that should be transferred from Québec to the regions?

**Mr. Dupuis:** We approach the subject as a question of principle. I really think that it would be premature at this stage to give recipes or specific lists of ingredients. We consider, however, that the regions, or at least ours, are increasingly capable of being a positive factor in economic development, insofar as they receive full recognition and are equipped with the proper tools. This would take nothing away from anyone, but would increase the effectiveness of the results we are looking for.

**Mr. Nicolet:** The third question deals with Amerindian participation. Can you elaborate a little on the interests, the coordination of interests that can exist between the region you represent and the reserve territories? What are the functions you share, the interests you have in common, leaving aside, obviously, the primary geographical reality?

**Mr. Dupuis:** The Manouane reserve - it's a hunting and fishing area with a great deal of tourism - it's the Attikameks on the reserve who made Québec aware at some point, it was several years ago, I think, three or four years ago, when they denounced the terrible state of the road leading to the reserve. It was totally incongruous that a road like that could exist in Québec. The six RCMs in the region, under the aegis of the Sommet, provided immediate support to the Attikameks, and in that way we got them involved in the dynamics of the Sommet économique and in the development of their own sector, which is located within our territory. Collaboration came about naturally in order to

identify certain needs and prepare certain projects that correspond to the expectations of the Attikameks, and at the Sommet économique, we have recognized this collaboration in a common task, as well as the needs we share, and have found it very easy to continue with these projects in a way that brings results.

**Mr. Nicolet:** In which RCM is it...

**Mr. Dupuis:** It's not in an RCM, it's a reserve.

**Mr. Nicolet:** ...it's an unorganized territory.

**Mr. Dupuis:** It's mainly in the Matawinie region.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will go on to Mrs. Lorraine Pagé, then.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Several people who preceded me asked questions that I would have asked, in particular about the responsibilities that in your opinion should be repatriated to the regional level as part of the decentralization you are talking about. So you answered that with Mr. Nicolet. I am going to ask you two questions. The first is what Mr. Chevette was saying to you at the very beginning of the presentation, and Mr. Brassard too: you talk about Québec as being in charge of regional development. You know what that involves in terms of repatriation of powers, you know something of the difficulties that have been encountered over the past few decades when people have wanted to discuss a transformation of federalism, and along with that, we have the Conseil des Affaires sociales that was talking about a Québec that was broken in half, split in two, with regions experiencing a form of underdevelopment that would require rapid intervention. In your opinion, is there really an urgent need to repatriate the powers related to regional development to Québec and is there also an emergency in regard to the model for deconcentration and decentralization you envisage in your brief? Does the situation in the regions really require immediate action?

My second question is this: towards the end of your presentation, you referred to the environment - sustainable development and the environment. There have not been many groups so far that have addressed this question, and I would like you to elaborate a bit more on the role of the regions, in the decentralization mechanism you are talking about, in setting up environmental protection and sustainable development.

**Mr. Dupuis:** On your first question, when we are dealing with public affairs, government affairs, you know as well as I do that the word

"urgent" has a very relative meaning. I personally come from private enterprise, and when I became mayor of the municipality, I realized that the term "speed" and the term "urgent" don't have the same definition at all when you are in government that they do when you are in private enterprise. Now that that's been said, regional development is fundamental enough to warrant two things as urgent priorities. First, recognition of the regions as having a real role, and second, implementation of measures as quickly as possible, because we are faced with difficult economic conditions. The governments, both of them, in contrast to the municipal governments, have astronomical deficits, and at present it's not just juggling of responsibilities but actual sloughing off of some of them that the governments are facing. I don't mean that as criticism; it's just a fact. At that point it is urgent for useful and effective levels of intervention such as the regional consultative bodies to be able to act, and I think it is by working together that we will succeed in overcoming the difficulties we are in. And to have a genuine role in this, we must be capable of... We must have recognition, pure and simple. There is urgency, at that level. And obviously, at another level, we must try to find as many resources as possible to deal with the difficulties we have.

Regarding the environment, let me just remind you that the Sommet économique has chosen the environment as an essential focal point of development, and all the projects we have submitted are subject to that reality. It is clear that we have been - and I say "we" meaning the generations that preceded us - negligent about this issue, to say the least. And we have twice as much work to do to both stabilize the situation and make advances. In this context too, it is fundamental for governments to reduce their deficits, reduce their spending... It's easy to reduce spending, anyone can do it. Except that spending, if it goes on at another level, then nothing much has been solved because there is still the same taxpayer; he pays the municipality, he pays the school board, he pays Québec and he pays Ottawa, but there is still only him. So if someone doesn't spend and the spending still has to be done, someone else has to do it.

At the environmental level, that's the sort of thing we have to worry about. The municipalities have a role, the RCMs have a basic role to play in environmental matters, but they cannot solve the problem alone, and they can't solve it in a comprehensive manner.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Then we will go on... this time period is over. We will go on to Mr. Claude Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, in your brief, not very far into it, on page 2, you say: "That is why,

whatever the direction the constitutional future of Québec eventually takes, a major place must be granted to regional development carried out by the regions themselves." And a little further on in your brief, you say: "Decentralization of responsibilities is accomplished through decentralization of powers." In response to a question by Mr. Hogue just now, you said: no, we are not just consultative committees, it's more than that. So if I have understood correctly, it's a sort of additional level that you are contemplating. Now it worries me a little when you say, whatever the eventual direction. If we assumed that it would be the status quo, I admit that it is a difficult assumption to make, but if it were the status quo, everyone has been telling us that with two levels it is already very complicated, there is duplication, there are costs involved, there is confusion, we are unable to set our objectives. How do you see - short of eliminating a level somewhere - how do you see the development of the regions by the regions within the current constitutional status?

**Mr. Dupuis:** Even for a hypothetical question, that's pretty hypothetical!

**Mr. Béland:** No it isn't, it's today's reality.

**Mr. Dupuis:** Of course, but I think that if it were going to remain so, none of us would be here today. There is certainly the possibility of coordinating powers rather than jurisdictions. Both governments obviously have spending powers. They have sums of money to dispose of, and coordination within the current framework - and I told you just now that our experience had proved disappointing in that regard - but within the current framework, at least on paper, it is possible to see that might come about.

As for us, we think that dynamic funding, or funds to be invested in development, must necessarily be thus, after all the specific needs have been identified. You know that it is easy to send two, three, four million dollars at some point and say: there are RCMs that are poor, we are sending you such-and-such money and then plant trees, do this or do that. That is not what we are talking about.  
(10:45 a.m.)

We are talking about development, and therefore about consultation, cooperation, identification of needs. And no matter what the system, coordination can be accomplished, if only the decision that it must be done is made, whether by negotiating it or by entrenching it. And that is what we are asking for: recognition of the regions and maximization of the effectiveness of the investments that are made.

**Mr. Béland:** But you were talking about an emergency just now, and you said that in private enterprise people know what "urgent" means.

What do you suggest to solve this? How can it be solved by emergency measures?

**Mr. Dupuis:** What we call urgent, and unmistakably urgent, is recognition of the status of the regions and recognition of the role of the consultative bodies. Once this is done, the regions will have the capacity to develop by themselves, to intervene significantly in their own development and governments are subject to the recognition that they give them. So these are measures that we feel are very important. Don't forget one thing: In the economic situation we are in in 1990, and which we will unfortunately be in in 1991, with the government deficits and periods of recession, with all the factors that you are much more aware of than I am, we absolutely must be as effective as possible so that each of our actions and each of the measures we take is really of use in mitigating the negative effects of the situation. That is what is urgent.

**Mr. Bélard:** You achieve it through decentralization of powers...

**Mr. Dupuis:** Yes.

**Mr. Bélard:** ...That's it? It's an additional level.

**Mr. Dupuis:** It's not an additional level, no, it's not an additional level, it's an additional element in decision-making, which doesn't mean it's a level.

**Mr. Bélard:** And you are talking about powers, of course. You are talking about decentralizing responsibilities and powers. That's what you say in your brief.

**Mr. Dupuis:** Yes. When we talk about decentralizing... Powers, to make it quite clear, we say clearly that it is the Québec government that should have them in matters of regional development. The recognition granted the regions by giving them an active role in regional development does not confer on them any power as such that could result in the possibility of spending one, two, three, four, five, or six million dollars, but recognition of their status would give them policy-making power vis-à-vis the government.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will go on to a set of questions by the Government party. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam, Gentlemen, thank you for agreeing to come and speak with us today, this morning. It is a particular pleasure for me to be in your region, a very beautiful area of Québec. I am

accompanied by MNAs from the region, and I would like particularly to underscore the presence of Mr. Robert Thérien, MNA for Rousseau, Mr. Albert Houde, MNA for Berthier, and Mrs. Madeleine Bleau, MNA for Groulx.

You presented a brief to us that is interesting in that it makes a plea for regional economic development. You are a very economically dynamic region. You are a region with one of the lowest rates of unemployment in Québec. You collaborate well, because you mentioned it earlier, and it is well known that you collaborate well, that you work well. In your brief, you make a case for decentralization, and you are correct. Despite all the efforts that can be made to decentralize Québec's economic development, we are unfortunately often aware that what we are doing is much more deconcentration than decentralization.

We have to see that despite all the efforts we are making, there still remains much to do. You are right to plead for regional economic development, because no economic development is possible in Québec without regional economic development. This is obvious. In your brief, you speak about federal-provincial relations briefly without coming out in favour of a particular constitutional option, but you say that regional economic development, regional development should be under provincial jurisdiction. However, you refer to coordination with the federal government. Just now you were asked some questions that were somewhat on that subject, but I must admit that I didn't understand your answer very well. How do you view... To what level of government should regional economic development belong, and what relations with the federal government do you see at this point?

**Mr. Dupuis:** We have stated, I think fairly clearly, that regional development should be under the jurisdiction of the Québec government, which is the government most immediately concerned. How can that be accomplished? It's just as I said, if the status of the regions is recognized, if the consultative bodies are recognized as partners and contributors, the alignment, assuming there are two levels of government, the alignment of constitutional agreements, negotiations, or texts will make it possible for partnership to exist, whatever the division of powers between the two of them may be. As for us, we want to be dealing with whoever is in charge, and to us that means the closest government. But when we sign a constitutional agreement — if and when that occurs — since that possibility is included in the texts, everybody is going to have to live with it. And that is the partnership we are talking about. Whether we have one or two levels of government, if there are two there will be an adjustment to be made, a realignment of the situation; if there is only one, the problem will

look different.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Just now Mr. Béland, in asking a question, used as point of reference the possibility of the status quo. I would use as my point of reference a substantial modification of the division of legislative jurisdictions, and if this regional economic development were actually placed under Québec's jurisdiction, what structure would you prefer so that we could implement this regional development as adequately as possible?

**Mr. Dupuis:** The structure that we currently have here, the Sommet économique permanent de Lanaudière, is precisely the type of structure that could be particularly effective. Now I don't need to remind you that in this consultative body there are 12 municipal representatives, 12 representatives from the socioeconomic sphere, 12 government appointments for the sake of balance, one youth representative, one community activities representative, and of course a representative from the Manouane reserve. So we have a body that represents all the geographical areas, all the nerve centres for action and economic development in the region. It is an example of a level which, if it were genuinely, sincerely recognized in the texts, would be an effective tool for regional development.

**Mr. Rémillard:** You are a mayor yourself, Mr. Dupuis; do you think that the municipalities would be able to play a greater role in regional economic development?

**Mr. Dupuis:** I am going to answer cautiously, because I am afraid that you will take me at my word and place more responsibilities on our shoulders, as has sometimes happened. The municipalities are in fact extremely involved in regional development, and we possibly assume more than the role that we should normally assume, because, in effect, the service that we must provide for the population depends on the effectiveness of many interacting factors. Municipal powers as such — and that's not the hat I'm wearing at the moment, which is why I'm going to be very brief — should certainly be reviewed, and the municipalities are certainly going to continue to be active in regional development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Houde.

**Mr. Houde:** Thank you very much. First I would like to extend to you a very cordial welcome to this large and beautiful Lanaudière region in which you have been staying lately. The first question, on page 3, second principle: "It must be based on local and supralocal initiatives". What role do you think the mu-

nicipalities and RCMs should play in the development of the regions of Québec in the coming decades, and how do you see the role of the consultative bodies in the context you have just described?

**Mr. Dupuis:** Well, in fact, we recently held a socioeconomic conference. It was the second. There was one that apparently was not too popular, from what I read recently in the newspapers, but I did not attend. The one that has just ended is precisely an example of a case where all the parties involved, from the various sectors and from the municipal governments, played their regional role to the full. I think that instrument, the complementary relationship we managed to achieve through the participation of various RCMs, different parties from all segments of society, is evidence of the value of this operation, which I think was successful, and which can be repeated after our recognition is an accomplished fact.

**Mr. Houde:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** A quick question, Mr. Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Yes. In addition to its role of levelling out the disparities which might exist among the regions and which inevitably do exist because nature has been more generous with some areas than with others — you can see that when you arrive here; I hope you realize it — in this regard, beyond that role, what part would the Québec government play, if powers are repatriated from the federal government, in regard to such disparity, in the mitigation of regional disparities? Are there other roles that can devolve upon the province or should responsibility be entirely decentralized to the regions?

**Mr. Dupuis:** The role of the government toward... We are talking about one region, the government is going to be talking about 16, 18, or 20 regions, whatever. It is clear that if we ask or if we believe that economic and regional development should fall under the jurisdiction of the Québec government, it is because we are entirely aware that the Québec government, if it assumes its responsibilities fully, will, as the saying goes, give us all a fair shake. And insofar as we are in a beautiful region, I agree with you that we are pretty lucky, except that 3 of the 15 RCMs in our region, I must bring to your attention, are recognized as being among the 15 poorest in Québec.

The Québec government, by being in charge of regional development overall, is going to be able to work on balancing the disparities, when you talk about inequities. But always on the

strength of a recognized, active consultative body that will work as a partner with the government to carry out the various programs for regional revitalization...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Dupuis, that uses up the time allocated for this set of questions. In contrast to what usually happens, the Chair has no time left, but there are other members who have not taken all of theirs. I would like, with your permission, to take advantage of the fact that Mr. Flamand, from the Manouane reserve, is the first of this very important group of Québec citizens to come before us, and ask him a question, specifically. You have said that you are very pleased that he is part of your group. Mr. Flamand, is there anything you would like to say about the participation of your group in the Sommet de Lanaudière?

**Mr. Flamand (Grégoire):** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I believe that we must make the effort that remains to be made, that is to make a commitment to a process of partnership between aboriginal peoples' groups and administrative regions. That is what has been done in the Lanaudière region. We have to make a commitment, we have to translate wishes into concrete action. I think that Lanaudière, the people of the region, all the component parts of the Lanaudière region, have understood that the aboriginal peoples are capable of acting as valuable partners on the economic level.

I believe it's a start. It's an example which I think will be in the interests of the other regions of Québec to follow.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Flamand. That uses up our discussion period with the group from the Sommet économique permanent de Lanaudière. I thank Mr. Roch, Mr. Redmond, Mr. Flamand, Mr. Auger, Mrs. Saint-Georges, and Mr. Dupuis, and at the same time that I offer you our warmest thanks, I would ask you to leave the table fairly quickly so that others can take your place.

**A voice:** Have a good day.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:00 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:03 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We ask the next organization, the Corporation régionale de développement des Laurentides, to please take their places at the table.

I would ask the members of the Commission to please take their seats so that we can begin with the group before us now. If you don't take your seats, we'll start anyway.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well then, as I just said, evidently not quite loud enough, if you don't take your seats, we'll start anyway. Mr. Mercier, Mr. Ducharme, welcome. Mr. Mercier, I think you will be giving the presentation. If you would kindly start by introducing the people with you and then, since you are with us for an hour, you may take 10 minutes to present the essential points in your brief. You have the floor, Mr. Mercier.

#### **Corporation régionale de développement des Laurentides**

**Mr. Mercier (Paul):** Mr. Chairman, first I'd like to introduce the people with me. To my left, the vice-president of our organization, Mr. Jocelyn Benoit, and, to my right, our director general, Mr. Claude Ducharme, whose presence will be helpful for questions that might be a little more technical. I'll do my best not to exceed the 10 minutes allowed; I might go over by a few minutes. The brief is quite lengthy so, instead of reading it, I'll try to summarize it in my own words.

Mr. Chairman, first I'd like to say what a pleasure, and a surprise, it is for me to meet you here in Joliette. A pleasure, because this is a lovely city, and a surprise because I thought that the Laurentides region, being the fourth largest in Québec, would have deserved the honour of the Commission's visit. To echo the words of Mr. Chevrete, we too, in the Laurentides, have some interesting ridings and we hope to have the support of at least two commissioners from the ridings of Labelle and Rousseau.

Having said that, I'd like to tell you more about the Corporation de développement des Laurentides. Ours is a private, non-profit organization active in the field of economic development in such areas as cooperation, and acting as a channel through which the community can make its economic needs known to the government and coordinate the distribution of government aid and subsidies. We also organize the economic summits in our region. Our members consist of 45 municipalities, 2 regional central labour bodies, 144 businesses and 59 institutions covering social affairs, education, recreation, the environment and culture. I think we can say we are truly representative of our region.

As I mentioned earlier, with a population of some 360 000, the Laurentides region is the fourth largest in Québec. Its economy can best be described as being derived externally and dependent. It is centred. The Laurentides region is made up primarily of forestland, which is exploited for the most part by multinationals. We also have major industries such as General

Motors and Bell Helicopter which are, as you know, industries whose development or facilities were subsidized. We have tourism, of course, a major activity over which we have only partial control since it depends largely on the highways department, promotion policies and exchange rates. And, of course, we have Mirabel, where the situation has improved since there are plans to turn its management over to regional authorities.

Which leads me to the position taken by our organization. It is based on the opinions of a strong majority, which can be summed up as follows: We want a radical return of political powers and tools to the regions. We see this return of power to the grass roots as a two-step operation: First, from Ottawa to Québec within the framework of sovereignty-association and, second, from Québec City to the regions, in the form of decentralization. I'll discuss these two steps separately, beginning with sovereignty-association.

Why do we want sovereignty-association? Because we believe that, as far as the administration of a country is concerned, this is a less costly and more efficient solution. Obviously we cannot debate every argument surrounding this issue, but let me present a few. The current status quo involves costly overlapping. For example, I am told that, and I find this flabbergasting, there are 4 300 civil servants in Revenu Québec; there is obviously a duplication of task with Revenue Canada, something which does not happen, as far as I know, in other provinces, at least not to such an extent. Another example is Industry, Commerce and Technology, which is a duplication of its federal counterpart. We also indulge in the luxury of giving out family allowances, and even go so far as to distribute these at a cost of \$ 5 per cheque, I understand. This is money that doesn't go towards any real service to the public; it is a consequence of our trying to express our distinct character within a federal framework. If we take the hypothesis of two provinces with the same income per capita, same tax revenues and same needs, well, we in Québec can only provide services that are lower in quality and fewer in numbers because some of our resources go to non-services and duplicate services. As a result, our roads are in poor condition; 30 % of them need to be repaired. Hospitals can't keep up; beds are crowding the emergency wards. Our universities have no money. The judges in Saint-Jérôme are no longer sending out summonses because there are no facilities and no judges to hear the cases; 700 children are waiting to be interviewed by Youth Protection. Nobody is to blame. There simply isn't any money. Part of our money goes to non-services, which in many ways makes us look more like South America than North America.

We also have conflicts of jurisdictions

coming from grey zones. We all know what's happening in the environment with Phase II of James Bay. Look at programs shared by the provincial and federal levels, this is not new money, it's money that would have been allocated anyway, the only difference is that money has to be spent to create a mixed structure to manage the money. Our point is that we find the status quo costly and inefficient. Obviously, if we had out-and-out federalism, like the other provinces, such overlapping would not exist but, without being economists, we maintain that highly centralized, massive structures like the Federation no longer meet today's economic needs. They were created in the 19th century, at the beginning of the industrial age, to meet mass production needs. It is no coincidence that the Federation was created at the same time as Germany and Italy became unified. They were heavy, massive structures needed because of heavy concentrations of people working in industrial production. But things have changed. In contrast, the postindustrial era requires less tightly knit structures. As well, the major economic markets are created through agreements between sovereign states rather than within a single state. These changes are taking place throughout the world.

For all these reasons, we consider sovereignty-association to be the best solution for Québec. Of course, we don't have all the data on how this would be achieved, but there are historical precedents that might provide useful clues as to the distribution of powers. The Austro-Hungarian empire is a case in point...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Mercier.

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'd like to remind you that you have just over a minute left. Let me remind you also that the members have read your brief, so if you could simply introduce the last two sections... the questions will enable you to elaborate later on.

**Mr. Mercier:** Very well. As I was saying, we are in favour of sovereignty-association and the survey you have, or which you will have, mentions the powers involved and the way we would like to see them distributed. According to the survey, there would be very few powers left entirely in the hands of Ottawa. National Defence, of course, is a department we see as remaining in Ottawa. Mind you, some see it as a shared power.

Sectors that we see as sharing powers are External Affairs, Communications and Transport. The others we see as belonging in Québec City.

The second part of this return of power to the base is decentralization. The current system

is detrimental to the regions. Our organization, the CDL, is responsible for distributing \$ 50 000 in subsidies; it's not a great deal but it still has to go through four government agencies. The municipalities have a multitude of controls, with the result that a project must be studied at two levels, municipal and provincial. Some standards are too rigid to apply to our needs, etc. Decentralization must filter down to the regions and local authorities such as the municipalities; decentralization is constantly being discussed but never achieved... This is the vital issue. I'm sorry to have to pass over some things that might be interesting...

(11:15 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I am sure, Mr. Mercier, that during the question period, even if a question is not quite appropriate, you can always include those things in your answer, being the skilful man you are. So, let's go on to the members' questions; you have 5 minutes each, up to 25 minutes for the group, starting with Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. First, let me thank you for your presentation and ask you a question in connection with a passage I came across in your report. In your brief, on page 15, first paragraph, there is a passage to the effect that if we had outright sovereignty or outright federalism, one or the other, it would mean freedom from constraints that have been eroding budgets for services and reducing opportunities for development. Earlier, at the end of your presentation, you specified that the option revealed in your survey had led you to the conclusion that sovereignty-association was the solution. How do you reconcile this position, this support for sovereignty-association, with the passage from the brief I just cited. I'd like to hear a detailed explanation on this point.

**Mr. Mercier:** I was referring to certain cases of duplication and the ensuing expenses. I referred to the Revenue department, and other examples, where there are expenses that other provinces don't have. If we were sovereign, there would obviously be no overlapping in our jurisdictions, and if we lived under the same kind of federalism as the other provinces, there wouldn't be any overlapping either. To go back to the example of the Revenue department, we wouldn't have this duplication of tasks if we had either wall-to-wall federalism or sovereignty. As things stand, we find ourselves seeking to express Québec's distinctive character in a federal framework, which is why we have the duplication I was talking about.

**Mr. Bouchard:** In other words, the hypothesis of a Québec willing to leave this kind of power totally in the hands of Ottawa to avoid overlapping is not one that you would consider?

**Mr. Mercier:** No. I reject the current situation because of such overlapping. And I reject wall-to-wall federalism because it no longer corresponds, we feel, to today's economic needs. It was appropriate in the 19th century and in the early 20th century.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I'd like to close, Mr. Chairman, if you'll allow me, with a question on another aspect of the brief, a question which I know is very important for all regions of Québec, namely the need for sufficient decision-making, or at least operational latitude when it comes to their development. It is evident that in all the regions, and particularly in this one, there is an attempt and a desire, and I would go so far as to say a need to repatriate decision-making powers, and we know that Québec as a whole is in sympathy with this issue. But the question is how will this be achieved; how can all this be organized and still leave the Québec government, which will also need a minimum of latitude, and the means to determine national policies, how will the regions gain more power in the decisions made on their development, in a decision-making structure where the Québec government would keep the latitude it needs? I understand this is one of the desires expressed, you put it in terms of...

**Mr. Mercier:** First of all, I can see an overarching structure and, second, as mayor, I can also see another way for Québec to organize its administrative supervision. At present, Québec's administrative supervision over cities is tight and therefore costly. Each additional control means another thing to be done by two civil servants — one in the municipality and one in Québec City. It is difficult to imagine how cumbersome and obstructive such a structure is for our activities.

To give you an example, although it's not a major problem, we'd like the law to stop saying that we can't hold meetings before 6:00 p.m. We don't think that Québec should interfere in such matters... In the past, we had the right to expropriate in industrial parks for industrial purposes. Now, this is still the case, except that the hotel industry has just been excluded. This has come out of the blue, just like that, at a time when we had a whole hotel development project under way. All of a sudden, you're told: You can't do this any longer. This slows things down, it jeopardizes development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let's go on to Mr. Beaumier.

**Mr. Mercier:** Have I answered your question?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes

you have, Mr. Mercier.

**Mr. Mercier:** Not sufficiently.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Not sufficiently, but you'll be able to take up where you left off.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Mr. Chairman, my colleague...

**Mr. Mercier:** I hope he's going to ask the same question, so I can continue.

**Mr. Beaumier:** My colleague will be able to continue; my questions will be more or less along the same lines. First I'd simply like to welcome my colleague, Mr. Mercier, who also sits on the Board of Directors of the Union des municipalités. Anyone familiar with the enthusiasm of Mr. Paul, as he is affectionately known in our region, will not be surprised to see him defend the autonomy of the regions.

This is precisely the line of questioning I'd like to pursue. You state categorically that there must be a return of power to the regions; that everyone must be involved; there is something very interesting in your brief on that point. On page 32, you say that you seriously think elected officials must play a leading role, no less so than the municipalities and the main socio-economic agents. But, on page 33, you say that the idea put forward by Minister Marc-Yvan Côté in 1986-1987 was a step in that direction and in parentheses, you mention one-third elected officials, one-third municipalities, one-third socioeconomic agents.

In your discussion with Mr. Bouchard, and I believe this was along the lines you had in mind, I simply wanted to throw in a little cautionary aside, perhaps, so that you could elaborate on this. You also know that, in the idea proposed by Minister Marc-Yvan Côté, the one-third, one-third, one-third formula also applied to expenditures and the means of subsidizing the organizations. We can recall what happened in transport: one-third the municipalities, one-third the users, one-third the government. You also speak of regionalized funds. I'd like you to try and explain this and put it in a municipal perspective.

**Mr. Mercier:** We consider that the region as such is capable of having an executive power. We used the one-third, one-third, one-third proposal to illustrate our idea; we have no preconceived idea, when it comes to distribution. Furthermore, the way I understood it, it had to do with the makeup of this executive power and not at all with the way financing is apportioned. What we mean is that some of the resources earmarked for development by the provincial government should, to a great extent, be left to the discretion of the regions, without necessarily

asking Québec to give up its administrative supervision. I never said we wanted sovereignty-association for the Laurentides. But we do want a regional executive. Does that answer your question?

**Mr. Beaumier:** Part of it.

**Mr. Mercier:** Partly.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Yes.

**Mr. Mercier:** What part has been left unanswered?

**Mr. Beaumier:** The way the people will be chosen. If we're talking one-third, one-third, one-third, some people and some municipalities will necessarily be excluded. Depending on the size of the region, there will be differences in participation. There may be regions where you have 5 or 6 RCMs, maybe 65 municipalities.

**Mr. Mercier:** I see...

**Mr. Beaumier:** If we break it down, what we want is equity within the committees. You'll have to explain this one-third, one-third, one-third formula a little more clearly to me. Who will decide who participates in the negotiations?

**Mr. Mercier:** Mr. Benoît must have some idea on this.

**Mr. Benoît (Jocelyn):** I think that, in the regions, via the economic summits we have consultative bodies, we have the means... We have RCMs... they can see to municipal representation. The one-third formula, in any given group, doesn't mean a specific number of people. It can be 30, it can be 40, or 50. The purpose of the one-third formula is to have an equal number of representatives from a specific number of municipalities; municipal officials that can make decisions on major regional issues. It means we can have people from the socio-economic milieu to achieve a certain balance where you have regional development issues that are less centred on the political aspect of elections, plus the active participation of elected officials, both from the Government party and the Opposition.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let's go on to Mr. Dufour, who will be followed by Mr. Nicolet.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must say I liked certain parts of your brief very much. I refer particularly to the last federal-provincial agreement that you mention, which was signed in 1988 and was to inject more or less one billion into the region's economy. You

say that this has only just started, but without any new money, and you conclude by saying that this, however, comes under a new structure insofar as expenditures are concerned. This enables you to say a little later — and I find this excellent as well: Any self-respecting bureaucracy is capable of transforming a solution into a problem. This leads us to a very real problem that you, in the region, are experiencing. Like Mr. Bouchard, I had not seen that the brief opted so clearly for sovereignty-association — this will help me in my question. Let's talk about Mirabel. There has been debate about Dorval, and about Mirabel, in a federal context of course, for several years. You mentioned in your brief that some 5 500 jobs depend on Mirabel. There is an organization, the name escapes me, but...

**Mr. Mercier:** SOPRAM.

**Mr. Dufour:** Huh...

**Mr. Mercier:** SOPRAM.

**Mr. Dufour:** Yes, the committee that looks into the policies governing our two airports. In this sovereign Québec which you told us about in your conclusion, which you don't talk about in your brief, how would you deal with the Mirabel airport issue?

**Mr. Mercier:** Mr. Dufour, what we're saying is that civil servants make problems out of solutions; with you, it's the opposite, you present me with a problem and you ask for a solution.

**Mr. Dufour:** Is there a problem?

**Mr. Mercier:** Of course there is. You know what this is all about — the two Montréal airports should be managed by a single structure in which the local powers are involved, which is what SOPRAM purports to do. This role, whether in a federal system or in a sovereign Québec, would remain within this organization which is made up of regional interests. Mr. Ducharme?

**Mr. Ducharme (Claude):** Perhaps I can provide some additional information. Since 1969-1970, Mirabel has been developed on the basis of national policies identified by the federal government without any say on the part of the region; we have seen Mirabel's development stagnate for many years. This could have happened with any government, I don't mean to point the finger at the government per se, but... Essentially, what we're saying is that, from the moment priorities are identified by those in the field, in the regions, those who are involved, the results are far more interesting. Take the example of Mirabel: the transfer of its management to SOPRAM, a corporation that

encompasses the entire Montréal Metropolitan region, has produced interesting elements in terms of development opportunities. We may finally see this airport get off the ground, as it were, and provide economic benefits for a region which has seen very few to date.

**Mr. Dufour:** One last question, perhaps. I'm not sure I understood Mr. Mercier clearly earlier. In sovereignty-association, you would leave a number of powers to Ottawa, and I was given to understand that transport, or at least part of it, was one of these. Are we to understand that, in a sovereign Québec, the Dorval and Mirabel airports would still be under federal jurisdiction? (11:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Mercier:** Are you answering that question?

**Mr. Ducharme:** The survey of our members reveals that, where transport is concerned, given the debates that prevail in air and rail transportation, particularly between Québec and the other provinces, a certain continuity is advisable. They concluded that it would be advantageous to have certain coordination in transportation systems. From this, I conclude that they mean a form of jurisdiction which would remain at the federal level, as such, whether it be in air or rail transportation. These are the two particular areas that come to mind.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let's proceed with Mr. Nicolet, followed by Mrs. Simard.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, allow me to explore an important aspect of your presentation a little further. When you speak of a survey on which you based yourself to prepare the document you submitted, can you tell us briefly who the people consulted were and what the rate of response to your survey was?

**Mr. Mercier:** What happened is that we sent, a bit late admittedly, a questionnaire to our members, 18 % of which are municipalities, 57 % private enterprises and 24 % organizations. We sent the questionnaire to everybody and, to date, we must have received between 42 % and 44 % of the responses, although what we're dealing with here is about 25 % of the responses, since this goes back two or three days. But, the percentages have not changed to any significant extent. I maintain that such a sample is significant, and I was a professor of statistics.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Could you quantify these results?

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes. There are 250 members.

At this stage, we must have received approximately 90 or 100 responses, which is quite significant.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you. Second, I'd like to stop for a moment and look at the concept of a regional level, which, I believe, if I understand your text correctly, would have taxation powers. Did I misunderstand?

**Mr. Mercier:** Huh, I think, the regional level would not be elected by the people and I don't think we mentioned any taxation power.

**Mr. Nicolet:** All right...

**Mr. Mercier:** On what page, Mr. Nicolet?

**Mr. Nicolet:** I'm referring to a summary that was handed out and I'm trying to find it... I'll give you the information later, but I was referring to a summary which is here somewhere.

**Mr. Mercier:** No, the region would not have taxation powers.

**Mr. Nicolet:** So, essentially it would be an advisory level, or would it be a decision-making level?

**Mr. Mercier:** It would be a level with executive powers, not legislative powers. For example, look at the way... What we would need basically is an umbrella act on regional development, giving the region a more important role. At the moment, when the government comes up with a new program... Basically, a program can be divided into four stages: planning, regulation, financing and implementation. But we're not participants in these four stages, even though we're the ones concerned. Let's take regulations for example. As far as forestland is concerned, for example, we have a regulation which, because it is based on the Québec forest as a whole, is geared primarily to conifers, but what we have here are deciduous trees. That's the way the regulation is, take it or leave it.

**Mr. Nicolet:** But are we talking about executive powers in areas of Québec jurisdiction or municipal jurisdiction?

**Mr. Mercier:** Mr...

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Nicolet, here's a concrete example of the dialogue we have initiated with certain of our colleagues who are elected officials. Every year there are regional development programs. In the regions, what we're asking is a minimum of \$ 2 million to be distributed according to regional priorities. In

forestry, for example, one of the particular characteristics of our region is that we have a mixed forest, mixed deciduous trees, and this is of particular concern to one RCM.

But the programs make it difficult to accommodate the regional needs to government programming. This annual \$ 2 million obtained through annual planning and coordination meetings with government people enables us, not to spend but to apportion government spending according to our priorities. This is fundamental in regional development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let's go on to Mrs. Simard.

**Mrs. Simard:** Thank you. I think your presentation very clearly stated your concerns. Thank you for stressing the fact that your region includes subregions where there is quite a bit of poverty and that, in certain cases, as you mentioned, certain RCMs are among the poorest in Québec.

Yours is a consultative body that has surveyed its members, and they have clearly come down in favour of decentralizing a number of powers. You have also made some very clear political choices. Since you're an economic development corporation, I'd like to hear more about your view of economic development and, as we all know, economic development cannot, or at least should not, take place without giving due consideration to its social dimensions and consequences. I'd like you to elaborate on the type of economic development you would like to achieve in your region, in a context of decentralization such as you propose.

**Mr. Mercier:** The type of economic development we would like to see in our region, if our hands weren't tied, would consist in being able to continue, without obstacles, working towards developing the tertiary sector, which generally speaking, produces better salaries for the people involved than certain primary or secondary sector activities.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. If we take the example of tourism, we have a major project to turn the disused Saint-Jérôme to Mont-Laurier railway into a trail along which people could ride horses or bicycles and which could become the backbone of the region. But we can't find the resources because Québec says it has no money and because our region is incapable of coming up with all the resources needed to complete this project.

If we had the required autonomy and the means to put the money on what we know are the priorities, to give you an example among many, we would put money on this project because there won't be another opportunity like this to provide our tourism-dependent region with such an asset since the line will be torn up

and the land parcelled out. I'm giving you a concrete example to show you that a minimum of autonomy and means would help our region make the transition to more profitable activities.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélangier):** Let's go to the question period for the group of the Government party. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Mercier, Mr. Ducharme, Mr. Benoît, thank you for being with us this morning. You have submitted a brief which is not unlike the one we had this morning from the Sommet économique régional permanent, and you make a strong case for regional economic development. You're absolutely right. There is not enough being done, as we mentioned, to decentralize our decision-making process when it comes to economic development in Québec. Much of the criticism levelled at Canadian federalism – that it is too centralized, that there is duplication, etc. – could also apply to us, to the way we manage our affairs in Québec. Basically, the problem with Canada, being a country so vast and sparsely populated, is similar to the problem in Québec; our territory is also very vast and sparsely populated. There are barely 7 000 000 of us, which means we have regions that, in many respects, have a unique character, and want their autonomy recognized when it comes to decision-making in development, particularly among them regional economic development, and rightly so. At some point, we must talk about a formula modelled on federalism to reconcile this decentralization with the problem of vastness and a widely dispersed population.

You're in favour of sovereignty-association. However, yesterday, our friends the economists came to us saying: Be careful, economically, sovereignty can have serious economic consequences during the period of transition and negotiations as such. Did this warning from economists make you think...

**Mr. Mercier:** First of all, Mr. Rémillard, it's obvious that my arguments could easily be rebutted, since I'm not an economist. I could say, I bow to their superior knowledge. But to comment on the first part of your question, I'd like to remind you that there is such a thing as the weight and pull of power, which means the federal level exerts pressure on the provincial, the provincial exerts pressure on the regions and the municipalities, and since the municipalities have nobody beneath them, they exert pressure on taxpayers. That's the only way. Now, as to the question of seeing whether we should... Your question had to do with...

**Mr. Rémillard:** On page 18 of your brief you state that financial considerations will rapidly find a solution. I was referring to what we heard from economists yesterday. You argue for

regional economic development, which is why I was simply trying to make the connection when I asked: Have the economists' comments made you think?

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes. What the economists tell us must of course be taken into consideration. Please understand that, in this study, I know only what I read in the papers and I would not go so far as to advance arguments against these economists, since I have neither the time nor the competence. But if I remember correctly, the economists also said that a sovereign Québec was a perfectly viable option – this is what they said – and that difficulties would be temporary, which, in my incompetence, I am willing to accept.

**Mr. Rémillard:** On page 17 of your brief – I'm only trying to understand the meaning you ascribe to this sovereignty-association. On page 17 of your brief, in the section dealing with federal benefits in the region, you state that the programs and services that apply in your region are the same as those that apply throughout Québec. You go on to say that it is nevertheless important that these programs and services continue to be dispensed in your territory, even if they come under another authority. What exactly does this passage mean? In the final analysis, would there still be room for federal authority in your sovereignty-association?

**Mr. Ducharme:** Perhaps, to answer your question, Mr. Rémillard, when we speak of programs and services... Let's take unemployment insurance, for instance. In a context where the Québec government repatriates powers, this would mean that unemployment insurance benefits must continue to be sent to those who need them. It's as simple as that. That's what we meant.

**Mr. Rémillard:** I see. If I understand correctly, what you just said is that you'd like to keep the services that are currently under federal jurisdiction if they depended on provincial jurisdiction.

**Mr. Ducharme:** Absolutely. It's obvious. I don't think anybody would want to lose any of the benefits they've acquired. If things are being done, everybody wants to see them done. What we're saying is that we must be prudent when it comes to the costs of services – Mr. Mercier spoke at length about this – about the costs of services and the escalating, as it were, inflation-producing spending of governments, generally speaking. You rarely see governments cutting down on expenses or staff, or civil servants deciding to reduce their own numbers. The tendency, even when distributing powers or responsibilities to lower levels, is to keep the

same administrative structure as the higher level of government, once the responsibilities have been delegated to lower levels. Take the case of schools. Some \$ 300 million was lifted out of the school board budgets. To our knowledge, this is due to the federal deficit which was passed on to Québec and Québec then passed it on to the school boards. The federal government didn't lay off 350 civil servants; Québec didn't eliminate 4 levels out of the 22 at the Education department in Québec. It simply decided to pass the responsibility on down. Except that, at the bottom, it's the people who have to pay. This is where the problem is. The services are not increasing, neither in terms of quality nor in terms of quantity, but the price keeps going up. And this is money that doesn't profit the regions.

(11:45 a.m.)

**Mr. Rémillard:** So if we referred to a new jurisdiction for Québec, which would give it complete jurisdiction over regional economic development, which would be highly desirable, I agree with you, what would you say is the best structure to meet the objectives proposed in your brief? What you refer to are the current structures, you seem to criticize them and you even go as far as to say in your conclusion, I think I saw something to that effect in your conclusion, that the time has come to stop discussing this situation and start doing something about it.

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes.

**Mr. Rémillard:** What did you mean by that?

**Mr. Mercier:** I mean that sovereignty-association, as we see it, after looking at various technical aspects and details... Let's take an example from the past, the Hungarian community in the Austrian empire in Hungary was happy to find itself under a new regime, in 1868 or thereabouts, with the double Austro-Hungarian monarchy. They were equals, Austria and Hungary, equals that sovereignly delegated certain powers to the top. The same thing happened with Sweden and Norway, in 1805. In our case, we'd have two equals, Québec and the rest of Canada; other regions of Canada might even decide to do the same. Canada could be made up of two or three entities. We would have equal, sovereign states which would have certain services in common, under whatever name, within this union of sovereign states. Does this answer your question?

**Mr. Rémillard:** Thank you, Mr. Mercier.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Thank

you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, if the issue of sovereignty-association has sparked spirited discussions before the Commission, as some have observed, this is even more evident where the regions are concerned. The issue is being debated abundantly and well, and I, for one, am convinced that there is a need to decentralize and carry on from there. We keep talking about the cost of this double structure, this double jurisdiction and non-productive money, and so on. Have you totalled it all up? Have you made an evaluation? I keep hearing about the cost of it all, but to me, this is all in the realm of fantasy. My excuses to my colleague, Mr. Turgeon, but any decisions will have to be made with the actual figures at hand. So...

**Mr. Mercier:** If you can find me an accountant that... You have a point, the figures should be available. I believe Mr. Turgeon is an accountant, is he not?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let's not make the problem worse than it is, please!

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** No, he's President of the Union des artistes, hence the allusion to fantasy.

**Mr. Mercier:** There you have it, Mr. Turgeon.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This is all the time we have for this question period. Let's go on to Mr. Léonard.

**Mr. Léonard:** Mr. Chairman, allow me to begin by mentioning the presence of my colleague, Jocelyne Caron, the MNA for Terrebonne, whose riding is partly in the Laurentides. I would also like to thank Mr. Mercier and his colleagues for coming to this Commission. Let me begin by stressing that, in my view, after reading the brief, I found that the presentation went beyond... I'm referring to something in the brief in terms of position, which leads me to a quick question, if I may. Since you have taken a position in favour of sovereignty-association, do you consider that the public should be consulted on this issue as soon as possible, say after the report from the commission or as soon as possible after the report of the Commission? Do you consider that a referendum would be an appropriate method of consulting the public on this issue?

**Mr. Mercier:** First of all, you're quite right to say that my presentation went further than the text, for the excellent reason that the

results of the survey came in too late and we didn't want to make a statement, as you will understand, without being certain that the community was behind us. This is why I gave an oral presentation which departed somewhat from the text.

As regards the referendum, this is one of the questions we were asking and the question was: Do you want Québec to hold a referendum on its constitutional future? And 90 % of respondents said yes. But the question did not specify whether this referendum would occur before or after an election. But as far as the principle of the referendum is concerned, 90 % are in favour.

**Mr. Léonard:** Very well. Mr. Mercier, you have taken a position in favour of sovereignty-association, but you also mentioned shared powers, as part of this association, I imagine. In particular, you spoke of defence and external affairs, and others as well, but I am pleased that you dealt with this question as part of our project, because few of the participants have done so. In my view, this is a very important question, because defence spending makes up a large part of the federal budget and of sovereign states in general, regardless of how they use their armed forces, regardless of all that. But do you not consider that questions of defence in North America concern the entire continent and, ultimately, go even beyond the Canadian framework? These questions are debated with both the United States and Canada, perhaps even more so with the United States. Basically, power would be shared three ways: the United States, Canada, and Québec. This casts a different light on sovereignty-association, all the more so since, in my opinion, the economic benefits of defence investments remain substantial, including for our region. Just think of Bell Helicopter, Dowty Aerospace, and so on; all the development around Mirabel is bound to produce economic benefits. Don't you think we should look at a tripartite rather than a bipartite agreement in defence matters? And with respect to external affairs, it seems to me that you're letting a big chunk slip away. Wouldn't it be important for Québec to have direct access to external affairs and other countries rather than going through embassies over which we have little control?

**Mr. Mercier:** Mr. Léonard, you have an uncanny talent for zeroing in on, I wouldn't say the weaknesses, but the difficult points in our brief. The responses to these questions in our survey were very mixed. Here they are. As far as national defence is concerned, 45 % of us are in favour of the responsibility being shared by two levels; 42 % would like it to be strictly a federal responsibility; and 8 % are in favour of a Québec army, period. To be more precise, when we say federal, we mean a common structure.

Those who are in favour of a common structure are certainly of the opinion that agreements with the United States should be made through their common structure vis-à-vis the sovereign states which would make up the old Canada. Conversely, those who are in favour of shared power see no problem in this power being shared three ways.

**Mr. Léonard:** I presume you agree that this will be a decision to be made by Québec, once the principle of sovereignty has been established?

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes.

**Mr. Léonard:** I would simply like to point out that you also talk about communications and transport; this seems obvious to me, since the two sections of Canada will necessarily have to communicate with each other. So, in terms of association, I would think it is necessary to have one with Canada.

I'd like to touch on another point, which is the internal question. You speak of the power of the regions and a number of participants are discussing this point today. My question has to do with how this will come about, and I think this is an important way of doing this. In your mind, does this involve a division of powers between Québec and the regions - here the term region is open to diverse, changing interpretations - with residual power in Québec? Or, for you, is power concentrated entirely in a sovereign Québec, with delegations for highly important matters radiating to the regions or RCMs? Are we talking about being able to share or being able to delegate?

**Mr. Mercier:** I believe I said earlier that I'm not looking for a sovereignty-association of the Laurentides. Shared powers necessarily mean sovereignty-association. We do not contest Québec's right to continue exercising powers of administrative supervision or its powers of delegation. Except that this delegation to the regions which we have been talking about for so long and which still hasn't come about, this decentralization to the regions - that's what we want. As I said earlier, we want increased power for the region in the four stages of government program regulation; thus we're looking at a much more substantial delegation of powers and a more flexible, less cumbersome and therefore less costly type of regulation, but without taxation powers at the regional level. I don't see how we could have a government or an assembly there.

**Mr. Léonard:** I understand that, basically, autonomy would be exercised in the framework of a delegated legislation, in a very broad sense, with the taxation powers that go with it.

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes, but with greater flexibility in programs.

**Mr. Léonard:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Two minutes, Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to thank you for taking a clear position. This is what we had been waiting for for some time and, coming from your organization, it is an important step. I share your confidence in the regions when it comes to their ability to manage their development. On pages 31, 32 and 33, you list the main responsibilities that should be entrusted to the regions, and I agree with you. However, you state that the best supporting structure should be that proposed by Mr. Côté, that is, one-third elected officials, one-third municipalities and one-third socioeconomic agents. This is more or less the same debate we had when we were looking into the nature and structure of a framework for decentralization in matters of health and social services. The problem with the structure you suggest is that it is partly made up of elected officials and partly of socioeconomic agents, and all of us know that elected officials must be held accountable for their administration, which can be repudiated, and citizens may change it through elections if they're dissatisfied, whereas you have one-third of the members which is not subject to the same rules, and this, according to the specialists, poses a problem of equity or accountability. I haven't given the question a lot of thought, but I'd like to hear what you have to say with regard to this power to repudiate elected officials, compared with nonelected officials, and how accountability works in each case.

**Mr. Mercier:** What we have in the text is an idea that had been put forward by Minister Marc-Yvan Côté. To illustrate our proposal... decentralization with respect to elected officials and users in fact. I admit that, in such a structure, the position of elected officials should be defined and it would be difficult because, basically, an elected official has a collegial legislative power first, and second, he must also push for the interests of his region. Here, it's obvious that his position would be difficult and should be perfectly defined. There is difficulty involved, I am aware of that.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Because this holds true for municipal elected officials as well as MNAs.

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes, but as a municipal official, I'm also with the Corporation de développement des Laurentides, which, of course, is not a decision-making structure; I'm with the

RCM, which could at any point make majority decisions which I would have to accept. This has been known to happen.

**Mr. Léonard:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to congratulate Mr. Mercier on the clarity of his ideas.

**Mr. Mercier:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Consider yourself doubly congratulated, Mr. Mercier. I too congratulate you and thank you on behalf of the Commission for being here with us this morning and explaining the proposals of the Corporation régionale de développement des Laurentides. I would also like to thank Mr. Ducharme and Mr. Benoit, who are with you. At this point, kindly make room at the table for Mr. A.-Richard Côté, whose presentation is next, thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:01 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:04 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Members of the Commission, Mr. Côté, let's continue. We have a presentation lasting a maximum of 30 minutes, which means you have 5 minutes to present the brief. This will be followed by 10 minutes of questions by the members in general, 5 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group and 5 minutes for the Government parliamentary group. Mr. Côté, the members have received your brief; kindly proceed with your oral presentation. There is no need to read the text, this is a five-minute presentation. You have the floor.

**Mr. A.-Richard Côté**

**Mr. Côté (A.-Richard):** Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. First, I'd like to thank you...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Let me interrupt you one second to ask the people by the door to come in or go out, one or the other. Now, please continue.

**Mr. Côté:** Thank you. I'll start over again. First, thank you for the opportunity to present this outline for a new Québec in a sovereign state community. This strategy would enable Québec and other nations of Canada to redive the territory in a way that would better correspond to the national aspirations of all groups of people. By virtue of international principles all nations are entitled to a national territory on which their numbers are prevalent, so as to be able to develop as distinct societies. All individuals have the right to decide which

nation they belong to. However, in the past, territorial divisions have been dictated by military supremacy rather than by cultural differences. The recent events in Québec, Eastern Europe and in the Persian Gulf have shown the need for universal standards in territorial jurisdiction, based on the respect of national groups of all sizes.

Let's look at the current situation in Québec and Canada. The Francophone nation occupies nearly the whole of Québec, almost half of New Brunswick, and certain parts of Ontario, Manitoba and other provinces. The rest of Canada is peopled primarily by the Anglo-Canadian nation. Aboriginal nations, as well as minority groups of dominant nations and recent immigrants of national ethnic backgrounds are scattered throughout relatively small territories. All these national groups, except the dominant one, are continually forced to disperse their energy in the fight for cultural survival. The peripheral regions suffer under a central economic domination because each province, by itself, is too small to stand up to Québec and Ontario. The majority of Anglophones reject the idea of a pan-Canadian bilingualism. The reason they and the First Nations rejected the Meech Lake Accord is that it granted Québec a distinction that they themselves would like to have.

The majority of Canadian citizens are in favour of creating distinct, autonomous regional blocs. These days, total independence is a utopia. With the globalization of the economy, interdependence has become the rule between neighbouring or even distant states. What the peoples concerned are looking for is an identity and regional or national sovereignty in the mutual respect of other nation-regions. This is the dawning of a new world order based on concerted efforts at all levels rather than on the model of postwar power structures. The current economic situation couldn't be more favourable for sovereignty. The majority of Francophones want it very badly, as do the aboriginal nations. The majority of Anglophones in other provinces are fed up with the federal government and want to form autonomous regional groups. Québec should ally itself directly with other dissatisfied Canadians to support their territorial claims in exchange for their support in our territorial claims. This is the only coalition strong enough to take back from the federal government the overcentralizing powers that it was granted in the past. It will also be the force behind a new Canadian economic community.

To achieve this goal, I propose the following course of action. First, and this may be the most important aspect, we must demand the status of a distinct and sovereign state for a territory made up of Québec and the adjacent Francophone regions of New Brunswick and Ontario, as well as the other Francophone

enclaves elsewhere in Canada. This is a concept of national territory which is very different from what we have known in the past, because it entails fragmentation. There must also be an alliance with the aboriginal nations and the Anglo-Canadian nation-regions wishing to obtain a status in any way similar; with our allies, under the aegis of the United Nations - this is very important, because there is an international dimension to the problem, we are not the only ones facing this situation, everywhere in Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, the situation is the same - we must draw up a universal code of behaviour which will govern relations between nation-states or region-states of all sizes; then, we must return to these national or regional states the powers they need for complete autonomy; and, finally, the federal government must be replaced by an organization similar to the European Parliament, which will be responsible for the proper functioning of the allied states and the defence of common interests on an international scale, no more than that.

We cannot, in all fairness, demand sovereignty for ourselves if we are incapable of granting it to other nations that we currently dominate. By being fair with them, we will elicit the respect and trust of our partners, and their support in our pursuit of sovereignty. Our national state will not be complete until it includes the Francophone populations currently living outside Québec. This is why I believe that the Québec Government, in the interest of the Francophone nation of America, which it has a historic duty to direct, must ask for a new division of Canada based along the lines of nationality. Now that we have the wherewithal to do so, we must not miss this opportunity. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, you have used up your five minutes. Now, let's go on to a group of questions from the Official Opposition party. Mr. Brassard will be first.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you. First, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Côté, for accepting the invitation to testify before the Commission. I must admit that I derived a certain intellectual pleasure from studying your project and hearing about it, but as you well know, the members of this Commission are also constantly pondering the question of feasibility. This is something we have to do. It's not enough to simply look at various aspects of a project; the question is whether the project is feasible, whether it can materialize. In the case of your project, I confess that the question of feasibility came immediately to my mind. Do you really believe that, for example, Ontario would agree to have a portion of its territory cut off because some Francophones live

there, or that New Brunswick would willingly give up a large part of its territory because it is home to many Francophones, to form part of a sovereign state with Québec? This is my question to you.

What makes you believe... We talked about this yesterday in Montréal, this whole question of integrity of territory, this is something Québec wants to hold on to. I think Quebecers want their territory to remain intact, and rightly so. I'm under the impression - I haven't investigated the question, but I'm under the impression that Ontario too wants to see its territory remain intact. It seems to me that, strictly in terms of feasibility, your project is extremely complex. I don't think that Canadian provinces would accept amputation of a large portion of their territory just like that, without saying a word... So, ultimately, I have to conclude, this is how I feel, that despite its generosity, your project is perhaps more difficult to achieve than renewed federalism.

**Mr. Côté:** With respect to the question of feasibility, let me say that I'm somewhat of an expert on building complex things and, to date, I have never proposed a project that I did not believe feasible.

Furthermore, on the subject of territorial integrity, what I propose is a give and take solution. Of course, when it comes to Ontario, we'll probably have a situation where if we make an alliance with the other provinces it'll probably be more or less against Ontario, without wishing to become adversaries, because Ontario is perceived by the other provinces as being the dominating province, which it is, since the federal government is in Ottawa, and since the current system works best in Ontario.

As for territorial integrity, in actual fact, the territory belongs to those who occupy it. If people, say in a certain county in New Brunswick, decide that they want to belong to Québec, there is nothing to stop them, based on the same logic which says that Québec may decide to belong to itself and not to Canada; nothing is preventing them from claiming their independence from New Brunswick and joining Québec.

When I said we had the wherewithal, I was referring to this give and take option. If we ourselves agree to give sovereign aboriginal nations certain territories that are part of the current Québec territory, and which would no longer be a part of it, we're opening the door to other provinces to do the same thing with us. Thus, in the scenario of a subdivided Canada, say after the independence of Québec or after the sovereignty of Québec, Canada would no longer be able to remain as it is. It will have to divide itself into regional blocs, it won't have any choice. There would be nothing stopping us from giving portions of our territory around

Labrador to the Maritime bloc in exchange for territories that we would take from New Brunswick.

**Mr. Brassard:** But, Mr. Côté, you know that this is extremely dangerous. If you accept this process of exchange of territories, it means that Québec risks losing the whole of the West Island, which is to say Anglophone Montréal; it would mean that we're willing to let that particular portion join Ontario. So... (12:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Côté:** Yes. This is entirely conceivable in the system I propose because...

**Mr. Brassard:** And extremely dangerous as well. Are you aware that the West Island is home to nearly half of the industries in Québec? We're on dangerous ground, here.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...your question time, Mr. Brassard. Let's go on to the other members. Mr. Assad first, followed by Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Assad:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be here today, in the company of several of my ex-colleagues from Québec City. I can see that they haven't lost any of their political flair either...

Mr. Chairman, after looking at the brief, I quite agree with my ex-colleague, Mr. Brassard, that Mr. Côté has presented us with a very generous offer which would take an extraordinary open-mindedness to achieve. I agree with Mr. Brassard, it would be difficult to achieve, but I found certain elements of your proposal very interesting. If I may, on page 3, in the section entitled "La conjoncture stratégique", you mention that, nowadays, with the globalization of the economy, and interdependence being the rule between neighbouring or even distant states, total independence is a utopia. I agree with you. Indeed, interdependence is a reality, it is the most important thing, and it is easy and logical to see that interdependence with the rest of Canada would be absolutely essential. So, I would have to ask: Are you, ultimately, proposing another form of interdependence?

**Mr. Côté:** The way I see it, interdependence already exists, in the form of the economic mechanisms we already have. For example, if there are industrial plants in Ontario, the West Island, Repentigny or anywhere else, they have markets, which could be in the United States, in Ontario or in Québec. I think that, from an economic standpoint, the existing networks have nothing to gain by changing. Let's suppose, for instance, that there is a threat, say the people of Ontario declare that they're going to carry out economic reprisals. Would it be in the

interest of an Ontario manufacturer to carry out reprisals against its own market in Québec? Because Ontario's biggest market is in Québec. So, I think interdependence is already a fact. There's no need to touch it... I think achieving sovereignty will change nothing in terms of the economy, at least not in the short term, except that there may be a reaction of panic, perhaps, or something like that.

**Mr. Assad:** I agree with your explanation, but there is no doubt that in order to maintain this interdependence and to keep it profitable for both sides, it takes structures and a constant dialogue. Of course, this presupposes a type of central government, to make sure that this continues to work at all times.

**Mr. Côté:** Yes. The way I see it, rather than having a central government that rules, let's say, by divine right like the English monarchy and gradually goes down to the provinces, what I see is a sort of large consultative body, as they have in the European Community, where each sovereign state knows that there has to be quotas on milk or things like that. They get together to draw up agreements and discuss matters, not to argue about power. Power is something that exists only in people's minds. Power is something that we're seeing less and less of. The fact is... In any case, it's difficult to explain. But there would be a consultative process. It would not be a government. What we call the federal government, at the moment, would be more like a consultative process at a supranational level.

**Mr. Assad:** Right. There are some who think that the findings of this Commission will come as a surprise to our fellow Canadians. I'm inclined to agree with — in a manner of speaking — the leader of the Parti québécois, Mr. Parizeau, who says: They won't be surprised. I agree with him, there's no surprise in store, ultimately, because everybody knows that the status quo is only an expression, there is no such thing as the status quo in the world, nothing is static. Everything has to move forward. And as you yourself and your project show, there is indeed change in the world. We've been following the crisis in the Persian Gulf and all the rest, so much is happening. But a final question...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is up, Mr. Assad. Let's go on to Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Côté, I may not be an accountant as some might wish, but your proposal strikes me as so much fiction. To take up where Mr. Brassard left off, you can see that, here in Québec, we can't even

get everybody to agree, although there is a strong consensus as far as the direction we're headed in. But unanimity is not in the picture yet. Realistically speaking, how many hundreds of years do you think it would take to convince everybody that yours is the best solution?

**Mr. Côté:** I don't think it would take all that long if we all pulled together because what I propose appeals to a feeling of justice among most Canadians. I myself have met with many Canadians. I have met with aboriginal peoples and I know quite a bit about their culture, and I am happy that there is such a thing as an Amerindian culture because it reminds us of certain values which we tend to forget in our industrialized world. And I am happy that there is an Anglo-Saxon culture in the rest of Canada because, being more business-oriented than we are perhaps, the English have enabled us to build that aspect of it. I don't think it will be difficult to convince them because there is a fundamental justice in all this, nobody loses. It's win-win situation, which is what the English like.

**Mr. Turgeon:** If I understand what you said to Mr. Brassard correctly, your concept of de facto bilingualism... The West Island, for example, would go to Ontario. But Montréal would remain a bilingual territory...

**Mr. Côté:** No. Montréal would be a unilingual territory. As for the West Island, well, the municipalities of the West Island with maybe 80 % to 85 % of English-speaking people, would be English unilingual. Montréal would be unilingual French, except if a district like Westmount wants to be unilingual English, let it. But as far as de facto bilingualism is concerned, people who live in those areas that border on another language will automatically learn the other language. They will not have to be forced to. The language and the culture of a territorial unit, as I see it, would be quite small — it could be a municipality or a district of a city — and will be decided upon by the residents in that area, democratically. They may decide that a section of Montréal would be Portuguese, if that's what the Portuguese want. But, of course, there have to be mechanisms to ensure that the language of the larger national state, which encompasses small minorities, must be taught in the schools, etc. There are many things... When you say that the West Island would be part of Ontario...

**Mr. Turgeon:** That's what I understood from what you said.

**Mr. Côté:** What I advocate is a very clear distinction between administrative and legislative jurisdiction. Which means that, from a legislative

or national standpoint, it would belong to the Ontarian culture. But being on the Québec territory, being within the boundaries of Québec, it would be under the administrative jurisdiction of Québec. The same would apply to Amerindian nations that are part of this enclave, they would be under the jurisdiction of Québec, in Québec. This would enable us to protect our minorities outside as well, because they would benefit from the same status. For example, if you go to Saint Boniface or Winnipeg and look for French newspapers, you won't be able to find them. Even in Saint Boniface, all the Francos speak English among themselves because they no longer have a status, they have nothing. This would enable us to protect Francophone minorities outside Québec. They would have the same status; culturally speaking, they would come under... Anything that has to do with the nation, the nationality, would be under Québec. But, the same thing would apply to Anglophone minorities in Québec. If a village in the Gaspé wants to declare itself unilingually English because there are only English-speaking people there, let it do so. We're not losing anything by it, are we?

**Mr. Turgeon:** If I may have 30 seconds, Mr. Chairman, there is the concept of a subculture. You talk of an Anglo subculture in the East. What do you mean by a subculture?

**Mr. Côté:** This is not a pejorative term. It might be... I took it from my other text. If we look at Anglo-Saxon culture in Canada, it is not uniform, the people from the Maritimes have a sort of... We could go as far as to say that people from Newfoundland are different from people in Prince Edward Island, etc., but there is a kind of subset in the Anglo-Saxon culture which is at the basis of their regional entity. In the same way, we could say that the West is not a bloc, as Mr. Chrétien seems to think... The West is divided in two. There is British Columbia, with a distinct subculture which is much closer to California or the American West Coast than the Canadian Central West.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That brings us to the end of this question period. Now, we go to Mr. Maciocia, who represents the Government party.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Côté, in your brief, you propose a project which is quite bold and original. On page 3 of your brief you say that we must envisage a new territorial division of Canada, closer to the principle of nationalities than to that of the old colonial frontiers. At the same time, you propose a new division of the Canadian map, along the lines you mentioned earlier. You will admit that you have totally disregarded the current political and economic situation in Canada. At the same

time, you assert in your brief that, if this comes about, it will completely change the Canadian federal system. What makes you say that other Canadian provinces today, and even Québec, are ready to accept such an upheaval?

**Mr. Côté:** First of all, when you say that we disregard political and economic realities, as I said earlier, this makes no difference to economic realities, and from a political standpoint, this is a figment of our imagination. Whether a territory belongs to one province or another makes no real difference, the difference is inconsequential. The power that exists is still there... The only thing is that it will be divided in a different way. The politicians will still be able to say they have power since we're still going to have political structures. The only thing that may happen is that a politician may have a little less power, but what does power mean when you can't exert it? There is nothing to be gained by it, absolutely nothing. What was the other part of your question?

**Mr. Maciocia:** What I was saying is why should the other provinces, or Québec, accept such an upheaval?

**Mr. Côté:** Because everything that has happened since, say the 1960s, 1970s, the other provinces have realized... In the past, the question was: What does Québec want? Now, they know what we want and, the idea has gradually sunk in; during that time, Anglo-Canadians in other provinces have asked themselves the same question. They too realized that there was a need for forming regional groups and attaining regional autonomy, so we're asking for cultural sovereignty on the basis of culture, on the basis of a distinct nationality. They themselves, I believe, would be very interested in sovereignty on the basis of regional affinities; they would be interested in regional autonomy to resist large provinces like Ontario, or the federal government. Once they're organized into regional entities, you'll have balanced states within the Canadian community, and the states will be large enough to hold their own.

**Mr. Maciocia:** But this is not, absolutely not, what came out of the last round of negotiations on Lake Meech. If you'll recall, the English provinces or the majority of the other Canadian provinces wanted stronger federal institutions, including, among other things, a stronger Senate. My second question is this: You propose replacing the federal government by a European-style parliament. What powers should this European-style parliament have?

**Mr. Côté:** I would propose going through the provinces, which means going through those provinces that want to form an alliance to ask

the... It would no longer be the federal government; it would be an alliance or something like that; a coalition, a community which would have sufficient power, as I see it, to settle disputes between the various regional blocs and between the various sovereign states that it belongs to. I see very few powers for this type of government. We are entering an era of consultative powers. There is no such thing any more as absolute power! Armies are dismantling superpowers. Soon, there will no longer be any such thing. We are entering an era of world peace. We can't think the way we used to. When it comes to changing Québec, we have to change it the right way to solve all the other problems. When it comes to upheaval, let's do it once and for all, but let's do it the right way so that the problems of other nations will be settled along with ours.

**Mr. Maciocia:** But would this be done through a sort of international tribunal, or what?

**Mr. Côté:** Something like that, yes. To establish milk quotas, to decide on transportation systems...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This is where I have to interrupt you, your time is up. Thank you, Mr. Côté. This has certainly been an original presentation and it gave rise to some interesting comments.

May I remind the members of the Commission that there is a bus at the door which will be leaving for the Château Joliette within the next 10 minutes, and you will have 50 minutes for a sandwich; that same bus will leave the Château Joliette around 1:30 p.m. and be back here for the next session at 2:00 p.m.

The sitting is now adjourned.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:31 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:03 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** If the members of the Commission would take their seats, please, so we can go on with the proceedings.

The Commission now resumes its proceedings. This afternoon, for half hour each, we will hear: the Municipalité régionale de comté d'Antoine-Labelle, the Comité intermunicipal de développement économique de Labelle, the Association des intervenants forestiers des Hautes-Laurentides, the Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière, the City of Sainte-Thérèse, Mr. Roger Lemoine, Mr. Robert Dean and Mr. Jacques Brisebois.

As you know, gentlemen of the regional county municipality of Antoine-Labelle, you have half an hour and your brief has been received by

the commissioners, who have read it. For this presentation, you have five minutes to present your report. But first, I would like Mr. Jolicoeur to introduce the people with him.

#### **Municipalité régionale de comté d'Antoine-Labelle**

**Mr. Jolicoeur (Jean-Pierre):** On my left, the Deputy Warden, Jocelyn Séguin, and on my right the secretary-treasurer of the RCM, Pierre Borduas. Co-chairmen and members of the Commission, early in November we sent you a short brief setting out our comments on the political and constitutional future of Québec. We deliberately avoided taking a position on whether Québec should opt for sovereignty or renewed federalism. This matter is of interest to us but, like many of the groups that have appeared before you, our organization comprises representatives of all leanings and we did not think it was absolutely necessary to hold a major discussion of the matter.

The failure of Meech Lake has shaken many of the convictions held by our group, and it would have been difficult to establish a consensus on the matter in the short time we were given to prepare our brief. Instead, we established a consensus on matters relating to decentralization, which have been very important to us for many years. Nonetheless, I can state without fear of making any mistake that most of the elected officials in our RCM, mayors and councillors alike, are proponents of a form of change that must take into account the true aspirations of the people, and they feel that the people will be able to express their will only through decentralization and a clear referendum.

As for the content of our brief, I will let our secretary-treasurer, Pierre Borduas, summarize it for you briefly. Mr. Borduas, Jocelyn Séguin, our Deputy Warden, and I will then answer all your questions. Mr. Borduas.

**Mr. Borduas (Pierre):** Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, our brief is quite a simple one. We speak for a regional county municipality, the region of Mont-Laurier, which has a population of 31 000 in 23 municipalities in an enormous territory covering 16 000 square kilometres in the northern Laurentians. Our economy is based on forestry and tourism, particularly hunting, fishing, and vacation activities. Our agriculture and service industries are limited, and we've had an alarming unemployment rate for a long time. Over the years, our region has learned how to claim its rights and fight to defend its specificity and especially to preserve what it's achieved. But it hasn't always been easy.

After at least 10 years of concrete involvement through development plans, socio-economic summits, etc., various commissions, we've come to realize that, despite all the fine

studies and fancy talk, regional development isn't a government priority. We're convinced that the one and only way to achieve regional development is to give the regions the necessary tools. These tools must come from a decision from above, as a result of a genuine policy to decentralize powers, a genuine credo. But decentralization must go beyond dumping responsibilities on us without compensation or delegating authority to the regions, as was the case last spring with the school commissions. We hope the government won't continue this exercise in mid-December at the Québec municipal round table.

We feel that decentralization should be effected through the municipalities and the RCMs, and obviously through the urban or regional communities in the most populous areas, by adding powers to Bill 88, which already contains interesting mechanisms to accommodate them. As you know, Bill 88 sets out various mechanisms for delegating powers to the regions and enables the regions to discuss and accept these powers.

We also feel that decentralization must be effected quickly and in two stages. Initially, the municipalities and the RCMs will be able to take over a certain number of powers, which we list in our brief, so I won't go over them, but in general we're talking about construction, maintenance of local, tertiary and secondary roads, certain economic-development programs, environmental inspection and monitoring powers, management of public lands, etc. So we're asking the government to put some things on the table, some real powers and the money that goes with them in the form of tax points, tax rebates and taxation powers, in short incentives for local and regional elected representatives to take things in hand.

And over the longer term we'll also have to find a way, a flexible and efficient structure, to regionally coordinate the powers managed by the municipalities and the RCMs, the local powers of school commissions and also the local powers of social-affairs organizations. A sort of regional structure on the scale of the RCM, possibly with officials elected by universal suffrage. That's as far as our thinking has gone. We haven't given a great deal of thought to the second stage, but what's important is to decentralize as quickly as possible and have the upper levels of government make a real decision.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That concludes your five minutes, Mr. Borduas. Would you like to add a concluding sentence?

Then we'll begin the question period, starting with Roger Nicolet, who will be followed by Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure you won't mind my welcoming our colleagues from the Antoine-Labelle RCM and

thanking them for having presented their brief to the Commission today. Knowing how difficult it is for municipal governments to take a stand on major national issues, your determination to contribute to our vision of the Québec of tomorrow is remarkable, and I'd like to congratulate you.

My question is a short one that essentially concerns problems related to the various levels of government which, I think, different people see as carrying a different amount of weight in terms of the RCM, the region it belongs to, and in terms of the administrative region proper. This morning we heard from two groups that argued in favour of an executive level for the administrative region. I'd like to know how you feel about organizing the territory that way.

**Mr. Séguin (Jocelyn):** I'll be brief too. At first sight, our priority, as we said in our brief, is decentralization. Obviously with the federal link that we now have, there are various levels. If you're talking about introducing another level, I wouldn't be too happy about it. Our priority is to decentralize local power and give it to the RCMs.

In certain cases, as we said in our brief, you can see the type of coordination that could be done regionally. When we talk about a region, we're referring to an administrative region... But when we talk about a level between the two... You see, we didn't necessarily discuss our theme under decentralization... But if other options come up along the way, and if we're working from the four... really completely, as we should, and other options come up, maybe we'll be open to looking at other options too.

**Mr. Nicolet:** It seems to me that, for several years now, there's been a tradition of collaboration at the level of the administrative region, and that many people want to maintain this collaboration at the level of the administrative region. But the situation gets complicated when you want to give the administrative region spending power. But the power to spend what money? Will these people really be accountable? It's all well and good to function on the level where you're elected and you spend the tax money you collect, but it's another thing to simply administer money that's given to you. It seems to me that the accountability would be lost, and it's from this standpoint that I'm asking you: if the regional level has to become a level that has its own capital, how are we going to maintain the relationship between being an elected official, and therefore being accountable, and having the power to tax people? I don't know whether you have any comments on that.

**Mr. Borduas:** Essentially our goal is decentralization in favour of the RCMs, in

favour of local municipalities, depending on the powers decentralized. It would be easier to give some powers to municipalities, and others to RCMs. We believe in considerable, no, I'd say complete, decentralization in favour of RCMs. There could be some kind of coordination on the scale of the administrative region, but most of the power would have to remain with the RCM, therefore the sub-region.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now we'll go to Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read your brief with a great deal of interest because you're in a region where you're asking for decentralization of powers, as Mr. Nicolet said just now. Given that I too am from a region, the Outaouais region, we're also in favour of decentralization. In your brief, in the last sentence on page 3, you say that you consider decentralization to be the only way of instilling in the regions the desire and the will to work toward full employment. And you add that the government must first make a firm commitment. Does this mean that, as far as you're concerned, this decentralization would come only from the provincial government, or would it entail decentralization of both levels of government, because before that you say in your presentation that the federal government is also involved on the regional level and that, in certain cases, this has created a certain amount of confusion? So, to your mind, is this decentralization provincial only or does it involve both governments?  
(2:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Borduas:** We feel that there are constitutional choices that will have to be made. But regardless of the constitutional choice, we believe that our region, our RCM and our municipalities also have to have powers and money, specifically to avoid the confusion created by the variousness of levels, and all the discussions, disputes and negotiations.

**Mr. Beaudry:** So if I understand you correctly, what's important to you isn't that powers be repatriated from Ottawa to the province. What's important to you is to know that the region has certain recognized powers it can work with and administer. Is that it?

**Mr. Borduas:** Hence the importance of where it comes from... In our brief we ask for certain economic-development powers. We know that Ottawa has money, that Québec City has money, but what's important is that the money is there. But the constitutional situation is also important. What's important for our level, as we

say in our brief, is that things be decentralized and, therefore, that the decision-making power and the money be controlled by our RCM.

**Mr. Beaudry:** You also say in your brief at the bottom of page 4 that no decentralization will be accepted on the municipal level without reasonable monetary compensation, directly or indirectly through new fields of taxation or recovery of sources of income. Does that statement mean that what you're recommending is a new field of taxation on the regional level, because, for example, at that point the tax field of the municipalities would be insufficient? You would go further than the field of taxation, than property taxes, for example. Would you go further than that or what?

**Mr. Borduas:** We could go much further than that. When we talk about the municipal environment, we often think strictly of property taxes, but there are other ways. As I said just now during my presentation, there could be taxation points, revenues we could perhaps obtain from programs. There could also be... It doesn't rule out a tax that could be regional.

**Mr. Beaudry:** So it wouldn't add or subtract a new level of government, which to your mind would be added to the two levels that already exist.

**Mr. Borduas:** Yes, but provided that the RCMs were controlled by local municipalities.

**Mr. Beaudry:** All right, but possibly with specific taxation power for the whole.

**Mr. Borduas:** That's a possibility.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Fine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I correctly understand this decentralization you're asking for, right now it's primarily under Québec's jurisdiction. It's the Québec government that could do it. Even if you don't want to comment - which is understandable - did you ask yourself whether it would be easier to achieve this decentralization by maintaining the existing system, or with a new constitutional option? Did you ask yourselves that question?

**Mr. Séguin:** I think we can answer that one fairly simply. Obviously if we had just one level, sort of like the question I asked myself just now, if we have just one level to get along with, to negotiate what we really want to decentralize and administer ourselves, it would be much easier. It would simplify things. The

fact that there are several levels... That's why in response to Mr. Nicolet's question just now... On what level and how? If you say you're going to introduce another level, then it's more complicated. But if the federal link were really...

**Mr. Turgeon:** So if there are three levels, it's too complicated. If I remove one, there are two left. That's what I understand.

**Mr. Séguin:** Obviously it's easier for us.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Because when you also say that Germany has become what it is because the decision was made from above, I'd like to point out that the decision was made from below. When the people decided it was going to happen the way it happened, that's when it happened like that. Do you agree?

**Mr. Séguin:** Yes, but in terms of carrying out political decisions afterwards, it was still pretty fast.

**Mr. Turgeon:** There's one thing I'd like to know. Culture is one of the areas you would like to decentralize. I'd like to hear your comments on that in terms of the regions.

**Mr. Borduas:** ...library-management programs, programs to support galleries, cultural centres, assistance programs. One of the regional programs provides assistance for the staging of shows. These powers, which are now held by the ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec, could be managed by the regions, rather than being handled by the various authorities.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Unfortunately that's all the time we have for this set of questions. Now we'll go to the Government party and Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good afternoon, gentlemen. In your introduction you say that there's only one environment official for your region. So I'm sure there's at least one area where we won't be talking about the duplication and triplication we have in other areas, and probably you would like to see this official multiply or even divide into several people, because it seems we don't always respond to your requests in this area quickly enough. Because, in general, we're told that there's a multiplication of structures and a duplication of personnel, so the whole structure gobbles up money that should be working its way down into services. But that doesn't seem to be the case, in any event with respect to your... But I'm just pulling your leg a bit.

In your form of decentralization - because there seems to be a quorum, there seems to be very strong determination on the part of the

RCMs to make a case for decentralization - you have a specific problem in your RCM, the settlement roads, or so-called development roads, which has come up again. Do you see the RCMs taking on responsibility for this type of road or would it stay with the provincial government, as is now the case? You're going to tell me that we've given the responsibility for maintaining these roads back to the RCMs, and you seem to be saying that for one RCM there hasn't been any financial compensation. I'm not familiar with the situation. But in any case, in your vision of the decentralized RCMs of the future, do you see this type of road being repatriated to the RCMs?

**Mr. Jolicoeur:** Yes. Right now we're in a unique situation in the province because we're the only RCM to maintain its settlement roads, and I feel that if Bill 112 is put on the table, we could set an example for other RCMs, because we've been living with this for the past 15 or 20 years and we're in a position to keep on doing the same work we're doing with tertiary roads. Naturally we still hope to be compensated financially in return.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** In terms of the decentralized powers that should be given to the RCMs, there are probably certain things you don't want to have. What are these things? What are the powers you don't want to see given to the RCMs?

**Mr. Borduas:** We've never asked ourselves the question that way.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Does that mean you want all of them?

**Mr. Borduas:** Well, maybe not all of them. We agree that there are some powers that have to be exercised in Québec City, on a more national level, especially because of the management difficulties that come up at a certain point. I'm just thinking of hazardous waste or things like that that require considerable expertise. Obviously that sort of thing has to be handled on a larger scale. The other powers...

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** If you don't mind, I'd like to ask one more, short question. In the treatment of hazardous waste, when we send this issue to Québec City, we usually send the containers of waste too. But since they have to be put somewhere, what role would the RCMs play? Because I'm all for the responsibility, but I don't want the waste that goes along with it. We've had the PCB problem, and we've had this sort of thing on other levels.

**Mr. Borduas:** I think there are things that

have to be worked out when you're talking about decentralization. There are things that have to be worked out, such as hazardous waste, because it's an extremely complex area, so in that respect to answer your first question: There are certain powers that we agree should remain on a higher level, and there are others that affect citizens directly, that should be as close as possible to the citizens. That's a principle that has always been defended by the unions and the municipal governments. But we've never specifically thought about the powers we really don't want.

**Mr. Jolicoeur:** I'd like to go back a bit. Just now you referred to the environment. Within our RCM, we manage a huge territory, a territory that isn't divided into municipalities. Naturally, this involves controlled harvesting zones, outfitting operations, and lots of hunters and fishermen. We had a nasty problem in the territory, so the RCM took over waste control. The RCM took the initiative of creating in-trench disposal sites. I can tell you that right now it's very well controlled, and the people use them a great deal. So that's an area where the RCM, from the environmental standpoint, took the initiative and got directly involved.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now we'll go to the questions from the Official Opposition party. Mr. Léonard.

**Mr. Léonard:** I'd first like to congratulate and thank the people from the Antoine-Labelle RCM for appearing before this august assembly. I'd like to ask a question about our constitutional future, because that's what concerns us. You say that after the failure of Meech Lake a number of your colleagues were shaken up. I suppose you mean those who were pretty much federalists, rather than proponents of sovereignty. Would I be correct in saying that?

**Mr. Jolicoeur:** That would be a personal comment, Mr. Léonard. We didn't have time to poll our troops. But right now I consider the situation, well, similar to a divorce. In a divorce, naturally the couple splits up because they're not getting along. We know that right now the gouvernement du Québec and the federal government aren't getting along, even from the standpoint of the various departments. We're still tossing the ball back and forth. We established programs, but we're still saying: Well, we don't have any more money to put them into effect. And naturally I think the people, from that standpoint, are sick of always hearing the same thing. I also think our population, the population of the Antoine-Labelle RCM, is becoming aware of this state of affairs and, as we said at the beginning, I think that with a referendum you'll

definitively have a clear, plain indication of the peoples' position.

**Mr. Léonard:** But you'd like to have the referendum as soon as possible, let's say after the Commission tables its report, I suppose.

**Mr. Jolicoeur:** Yes, that would be preferable.

**Mr. Léonard:** Do you think, I suppose you must, that it's hard to effect change within the existing constitutional framework? That's probably the conclusion people are drawing, and that's what shook them up after the failure of Meech Lake. I think we have to realize that if we want to change anything, we in fact have to ask British Columbia and Newfoundland for permission to change anything within the framework of Confederation, with the required majorities. So I conclude that the thought process is speeding up. That's what I think.

**Mr. Jolicoeur:** Yes.

**Mr. Léonard:** Fine. With regard to decentralization... I suppose that settling the constitutional issue will be an important step toward decentralization. Would you agree with the principle that once there are powers and responsibilities that must be exercised on the regional level, as close as possible to citizens, that we try to give them to the RCMs rather than any other regional authority, in particular an administrative or public-service authority?

**Mr. Séguin:** That's exactly our position. That answers the question Mr. Nicolet asked just now, it completes it somewhat. Our priority is that the responsibilities should really be given to local governments and RCMs.

**Mr. Léonard:** So when we talk about reorganization or administrative deconcentration of government departments in the regions, we have to keep it to the strict minimum and instead go directly to the elected authorities who have taxation powers and therefore control the administration of these responsibilities.

**Mr. Séguin:** Exactly. But, for example, that doesn't preclude — that's why I didn't dare say no to the proposal Mr. Nicolet made just now — any form of innovation. I think that, given the fact that we're dealing the cards differently, maybe it's time to take the opportunity to say... not to always stay with the conventional types of levels. We're used to functioning with levels. We could deal the cards a different way.

**Mr. Léonard:** Yes, I understand that if there were one level for the RCMs, one level, which would be the gouvernement du Québec,

things would be much easier.

**Mr. Séguin:** They certainly would.

**Mr. Léonard:** That's what you'd like to see.

**Mr. Séguin:** It's a question they're asking us. Of course if one level... tries to settle things. We're used to dealing with two, with an MLA and an MP, two groups. Of course it would be easier with one. That's obvious.  
(2:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Léonard:** Fine. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you for your answers, Mr. Séguin. I'd like to thank the group of representatives from the Antoine-Labelle regional county municipality. This concludes the time available. You've given us new views on the regional situation and they're quite useful. Thank you, Mr. Borduas, Mr. Séguin and Mr. Jolicoeur. I would ask you now, and I'm going to ask the members of the Commission to be so kind as to not congratulate you in front of the table so that the others can take their places quickly and we can stay in the right order.

I'd like to welcome Claude Rademaker. I would ask you to first introduce the people with you and then present the summary of your brief in no more than five minutes.

#### **Comité intermunicipal de développement économique de Labelle inc.**

**Mr. Rademaker (Claude):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, on my right, you have Sylvain Martineau, vice-president of the corporation. Raymond Dalcourt, here on my right, is secretary-treasurer and on my left is Jocelyn Saint-Jean, industrial commissioner. Mr. Dalcourt will begin the presentation, since he proposed our position, and I'll finish it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Please begin.

**Mr. Dalcourt (Raymond):** Chairmen, members of the Commission, we are anything but indifferent to Québec's examination of its political future and the institutional structures that should govern its citizens. Each individual working for our corporation, either as an administrator or an employee, has an opinion on the matter. As an economic-development corporation, it's important to us to state our opinion on those aspects of the debate that affect regional development. This is a subject that merits a long presentation. Unfortunately, the time we were given to prepare our position prevented us from developing it further. We will simply outline what we consider to be the basis of a reform of the roles of the various levels of

government in respect of regional economic development, once the constitutional issue is settled.

The following position was adopted unanimously by CIDEI's members. The Comité intermunicipal de développement économique de Labelle inc., commonly called CIDEI, is in favour of patriation to Québec of all powers given to the Government of Canada, especially policies and powers related to the economic development of Québec. The gouvernement du Québec will negotiate agreements regarding its economic development, with Canada and any other country it deems necessary. Patriation would allow Québec to adopt its own economic-development policy and delegate to the regions real mechanisms to meet its needs and achieve harmonious development. Patriation would make it possible to avoid the current situation, namely, duplication of government policy, duplication of a cumbersome bureaucracy and the lack of consensus between the various levels of government. The ideal structure that would allow our region to develop fully is the RCM, which must be given all the powers and mechanisms necessary for its full development.

I'll now let Mr. Rademaker continue.

**Mr. Rademaker:** The problem that led us to adopt this position is the fact that at present the number of organizations that affect Québec's economic development in some way is quite astonishing. Each and every one, with good intentions, is involved in activities to promote the development of a region, a sector of activity, a type of manpower, an age group, and so on, without concern for the existing structures and the actual impact of their activities on the economic and social realities of each region and sub-region of Québec.

When the will of each "load-bearing" organization to take action and create structures starts to make waves or when duplication of organizations with a similar mandate makes people on either of the upper levels of government think there's a problem, an advisory committee or a body mandated to provide coordination is quickly set up.

This committee or body will of course have a new structure, with people working there, operating budgets and of course other people, on one of the two levels of government, who control the application of its mandate and decide on expenditures.

For example, the Association des commissaires industriels du Québec pointed out in a document released in August 1990 that in the 1980s alone, about 150 new organizations were created in the same territories served by the industrial commissioners' offices and the regional offices of the ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce. According to their experience, the estimated average budget of each of these new

organizations was easily \$ 100 000 to \$ 15 000 000. If these budgets had been used for the people in the region, especially the Corporations de développement économique financed by the RCMs and the cities, a great deal of effort that went into justifying them, giving them a mandate, and duplicating certain work could otherwise have been invested in activity that would have promoted economic development. Instead, the federal and provincial governments created a series of ivory towers, with each trying to protect its privileges and visibility. But, for the businessman in the field, the system is more like a Tower of Babel, with everyone talking at once in unintelligible languages.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is almost up. If you'd like to sum up with one last sentence, perhaps that would be best.

**Mr. Radermaker:** In any case, we think that it's high time we decentralized and that this shouldn't mean deconcentration, in other words taking one civil servant and his desk and moving them somewhere else. It has to be more than that. It has to involve powers, and it absolutely has to mean one government. The people have to be able to deal with one government, not two governments, each with their own channels and structures for economic development, so that when it actually gets to the region, well, it's still a dual system, there are still conflicts and there's no cooperation on the regional level.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now we'll go to the questions. We'll start with the Government party. Mrs. Bleau.

**Mrs. Bleau:** Good afternoon, Gentlemen. I can see that, from your brief, you too are for decentralization. Could you tell us which powers you would like to see given to the RCMs, and especially in which areas? You're talking about economic powers, but are there other areas?

**Mr. Radermaker:** Of course. That's what I was going to say. The regions' economic-development tools must be in the hands of the regions. What I'd like, of course, is to have training programs centralized in the regions. At a certain point, there are quite a lot of people involved in this type of program, and it would be better if we brought it closer to the people. Obviously we have needs at our RCM. Public land represents a large portion of our territory. That's something that could be of interest to us.

We're also in a situation where we have a lot of people on welfare. If we start from a question we could simply ask ourselves... because although they represent a large percentage of our economic capacity, these are people who are on welfare, who have no jobs, and we can't find

them jobs in these regions, at any rate in the short term. Several community programs have been set up by both the provincial government and the federal government, which at a certain point puts people on welfare on unemployment, and people on unemployment on welfare. We need more than that. We need a policy that will enable these people to contribute to the regions and Québec on a permanent basis.

**Mrs. Bleau:** Right now, don't you think that... if we have to negotiate with the other provinces and negotiate with Canada, how do you see these negotiations between the RCMs and the gouvernement du Québec or, what sort of negotiations do you foresee?

**Mr. Radermaker:** I've got to say I'm not afraid of it one bit. I was a member of the Commission d'aménagement du territoire for six years. We went through the whole development-plan process, and in 1978 when the gouvernement du Québec passed Bill 125, we said: The municipalities aren't ready to take on these responsibilities and mandates, and we ended up... The plans were drawn up and, to my mind, in environmental matters, for example, they taught the upper levels of government a thing or two.

**Mrs. Bleau:** That's one issue, but if you want to patriate powers, you'll have to negotiate.

**Mr. Radermaker:** Madam, I think it's a question of confidence. That's what I mean. I mean that I personally am confident that the regions and the municipalities can sort things out and work together.

**Mrs. Bleau:** Do you think that the RCMs throughout Québec are prepared to exercise those powers?

**Mr. Radermaker:** I think we're ready.

**Mrs. Bleau:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We'll now go to the Official Opposition and Mr. Léonard.

**Mr. Léonard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again I'd like to thank and congratulate the people from CIDEL for appearing before the Commission. I'd perhaps like to draw a conclusion, if you agree with the one I'm going to draw. When you say you want to patriate all the powers from Ottawa to Québec with respect to economic development, it seems to me you'd be patriating quite a lot. In the context of the negotiations we had prior to Meech Lake, you can see they were long and drawn out and they didn't succeed. I suppose the conclusion we have

to draw, if we want change to happen fairly quickly and correctly, is that we have to opt for what people call the sovereignty-association concept. Do you agree with that?

**Mr. Radermaker:** I don't think we have any choice. It has to be sovereignty, especially since when we speak hypothetically about certain federal powers that could be delegated to, for example, municipalities, it's completely anti-constitutional, because to my mind municipalities are created by the provincial government. So, to my way of thinking, anything that can be delegated to the regions, to a level such as the municipal level, has to come from Québec City. And responsibilities, well, I have a sense of belonging, and it's much easier. The policies of the Government of Canada are adopted as a function of the country, as a function of Canada as a whole and then Québec, but still... The focus is on Québec. It's much closer to our reality.

**Mr. Léonard:** Would you agree that the government should hold a consultation when the Commission finishes its work, for example by means of a referendum, as soon as possible?

**Mr. Radermaker:** Precisely.

**Mr. Léonard:** Now I'd like you to tell me about the duplication of functions by the two governments. In response to a question Mrs. Bleau asked, you talked about occupational training. Are there other areas in which this duplication is a significant hinderance, where in any case the struggle between two mechanisms or two government structures is paralyzing for you? Obviously there are the industrial commissioners' offices in the field where you work and others.

**Mr. Radermaker:** I'd say economic-development tools and community projects too. A region like ours will benefit considerably from community projects. I have examples of people on welfare who took training courses, got a job and then at a certain point ended up on welfare again because a federal project used up their unemployment, so the person went back on welfare. In other words, at a certain point, these people suffer a crushing blow. You never get over...

**Mr. Léonard:** To turn to another area, do you think that if the gouvernement du Québec had been responsible, for example, for the railways, the line from Montréal to Mont-Laurier would have been protected more effectively?

**Mr. Dalcourt:** I think this is a very concrete example of the problems we encounter in the regions. If you take the problem of the

Saint-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier line, which was recently dismantled, it's a line that's an essential development tool for the region, not only in terms of a railway but simply in terms of a right-of-way, a corridor that exists and belongs to Quebecers. And I think, if I can make a personal judgment, that Quebecers paid for the line, because we didn't get any subsidy from Canada. We're a province that had to pay for its railways, and right now we've got a company that, in my opinion, is squandering the property of Quebecers by selling off the railway, which is a development tool that's essential for our region. And when I saw advertisements in the newspapers this morning, saying that railways are a key to development, and we're going to take trucks off the roads for safety and transportation reasons, well, I just don't understand.

**Mr. Radermaker:** It's the result of duplication.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Quickly please.

**Mr. Radermaker:** It's the result of duplication in terms of rail transport and highway transport.  
(2:45 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now we'll go to another set of questions. I'd like to remind you that the Government party has two minutes left, so we'll take them at the end. For the time being we'll go to Mr. Assad, followed by Mr. Hogue and Mr. Nicolet.

**Mr. Assad:** I noticed in your presentation that the word "sovereignty-association" or "independence" as such wasn't used. What is your position, and would you give us a definition of what either term means to you?

**Mr. Radermaker:** I think that... I don't know whether...

**Mr. Dalcourt:** No, the words "sovereignty" and "independence" aren't used as such. If you read our position, we, it wasn't in terms of words, it was in terms of actions. And when we talk about patriating all powers from Canada to Québec, for me, that can be summed up in one word... sovereignty.

**Mr. Assad:** In other words, with this sovereignty, we declare sovereignty and then we negotiate with the rest of the country.

**Mr. Dalcourt:** Absolutely, and any other country we might have to negotiate with.

**Mr. Assad:** And this duplication you talk about, of various existing programs. Don't you

think that elsewhere in the country there are the same sort of problems and that, with dialogue, we could resolve the duplication of problems? Instead of saying that the entire system should be called into question and tossed out just like that. You're not the only ones. I was on the commission on the Meech Lake Accord in Manitoba. I heard the same problems you're bringing up today. The issue of trains and all that. You talk about harmony, but it seems to me that, within the structures we've been living with for a long time, there would certainly be ways of finding a solution.

**Mr. Dalcourt:** I think we've been negotiating that kind of thing for a long time. At Meech we weren't asking for the maximum; we were asking for the minimum. They said no, and we got the message. We're going to make decisions on our own and afterwards we'll negotiate whatever we need for harmonious economic development with our other partners.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Is that all right, Mr. Assad?

**Mr. Assad:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This morning we had the opportunity of hearing representatives of the Sommet économique, the Antoine-Labelle RCM and your group. In looking at the three presentations, without necessarily agreeing with your oral position, the one that you're presenting right now, I find that the first two presentations were solid and clear. I think those groups are quite entitled to the positions they took, just as you are when you talk about the responsibilities that the regional and local governments should take over.

During the commission set up by the MQ with Mr. Parizeau, which I had the honour of being involved in, we heard the same demands, which truly come from the heart and also from the head. And you know Rome wasn't built in a day. But I find that your oral position, the one you've presented as opposed to the one in your text, is a far cry from the one in your text. I'd like to ask you specifically: Don't you think that Ottawa, that that level - because if I've understood you properly, everyone had a finger in the pie and it was like the Tower of Babel - would you place the responsibility for this Tower of Babel you were talking about, where everyone had a share in it, on the federal government, or would you put it down to a lack of cooperation? If the answer is yes, the second question would be... Don't you think that, in the federal system, there's a place, once we keep the structures as they are, that with well-drawn

architectural plans, such as the briefs we've received, that Ottawa may agree to rethink things?

**Mr. Radermaker:** I think it's obvious that we're targeting the system; we're not targeting either government, because it's a set of problems. We're trying to settle it this way, by patriating all powers and having a government that's one government, not two governments in one. With the background and knowledge I have of the debate over the past 20 years, I don't see how we could achieve a consensus on that level without having sovereignty and delegating powers to the regions, because ultimately it's the regions that are penalized, not the people who have jobs in the office towers in the big cities.

**Mr. Hogue:** Ultimately you're talking about decentralization and cooperation. But decentralization and federalism aren't mutually exclusive.

**Mr. Radermaker:** Maybe not, but our position, what we think, with two governments that have been tearing each other apart for years, I don't think we can... It's like a two-headed monster attacking itself, so in the end...

**Mr. Hogue:** You also talk about Towers of Babel. But I don't want to get into that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** In any case we've come to Mr. Nicolet.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It might be interesting for the members of the Commission if you briefly summarized the structure of your board of directors, because I presume that your opinions... and your brief has been sanctioned by your board of directors. Who are the members of your board of directors, and how is your corporation financed?

**Mr. Radermaker:** Our corporation, we have nine members, we have two microregions in the RCM and we have the city of Mont-Laurier, so there are three members who come from the city and two members per microregion, with one microregion in the Lièvre valley, which represents three members, and three members in the Rouge valley. All six members from the RCMs are appointed... We suggest them to the RCM, and the RCM appoints them every year, and the city appoints three. These people come from various sectors: commerce, industry, forestry. That's how it works. The funding is obtained locally. Forty-two per cent is funded locally, by the City of Mont-Laurier, the only city in our territory, and the remaining fifty-eight per cent is funded by the municipalities, by the RCM. As for the remainder, there's a

government program and other income from various sources.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Having said this, are you aware of a recommendation by the Conseil des affaires sociales that provided for or recommended the creation of regional-development funds financed in the regions by the RCMs, by an SPEQ-type mechanism that would make it possible to raise funds in the regions, which could be administered so as to encourage the creation of SMBs or stabilize existing businesses?

**Mr. Radermaker:** I don't really know what you're referring to. We have a fund that's placed in trust every year and we use it, we'll use it in cases like the ones you've cited. But I don't know what recommendation you're referring to.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Where does this money or these funds come from? You said you had a fund. Where does the money come from?

**Mr. Radermaker:** The municipalities.

**Mr. Hogue:** The municipalities themselves contribute. What is the amount of this fund on an annual basis?

**Mr. Radermaker:** It's \$ 3000 every year.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** For the remaining time, two or three minutes, we'll go back to the Government party and Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** In your decentralization project, how would you finance the RCMs? By a local tax or by a provincial equalization system that could take into account inequities, differences between the regions? How do you see this financing being provided?

**Mr. Radermaker:** The types of financing that are subject... There's already been part of the sales tax for the region. That can be a source of income on certain levels. There are obviously property taxes. It's obvious that the RCMs and the municipalities could benefit if they were all alone in the property-tax field. That could be another type of financing. There are ways of having a consultation. Obviously it has to be fair and equitable. I agree with a form of equalization.

**Mr. Dalcourt:** We might add that just as we finance education and social affairs, the gouvernement du Québec could also make regional development a concern and create a fund expressly for this purpose, which could be allocated to the RCMs.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** But with a hypothesis like that, and I'm thinking about this because I too am definitely for decentralization, I'm telling you this because I want to show my colours. There's a question that's been going through my head for the last little while. We say we want out of the federalist system because it's unacceptable to us, but it seems to me we're creating the same thing with the regions. In any case, maybe I'm wrong, but should we be fighting fire with fire? I don't know. I'm asking the question.

**Mr. Radermaker:** I think at this point it's time to say where we're going, and I think that we should patriate all powers and then sit down and decide on the mechanisms. When we used consultation for the development plans, consultation tours, Bill 125 provided for consultation mechanisms, and the situation evolved. Some people were afraid. Some people had no confidence in the municipalities, but I think the municipalities responded the right way. It'll be the same thing. It doesn't scare me one bit.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Back then, I was...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** A quick answer, Mr. Bélanger?

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Yes, back then I was a municipal councillor. When the RCMs were being set up, I lived through the little wars between municipalities and the power struggles to establish our positions, all the problems of representation, etc., but that's not my point. My point is that if we establish a provincial equalization system for... I have the impression that we're recreating a type of federation within Québec, so I say to myself: If it didn't work once, why are we getting into it all over again?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** An equally brief answer, please.

**Mr. Radermaker:** Well, what I'd say is let's not put the cart before the horse. We'll take the powers and then we'll see what we do with them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So on that note, which leaves the question a bit up in the air, but we'll have to see... I would just like to thank you for your extremely interesting brief and the views you have expressed. Members of the Comité intermunicipal de développement économique de Labelle inc., Mr. Martineau, Mr. Dalcourt, Mr. Radermaker and Mr. Saint-Jean, I would now ask you to proceed quickly to the other side of the room so the members will

behave in an orderly fashion and congratulate you there and nowhere else, and the next group, which is the Association des intervenants forestiers des Hautes-Laurentides, represented by Yves Latour and Denise Julien, can take your places.

Mr. Latour and Mrs. Julien, welcome to the Commission. Which of you would like to take the floor and introduce the other?  
(3:00 p.m.)

**Association des intervenants forestiers  
des Hautes Laurentides**

**Mr. Latour (Yves):** Good afternoon, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Yves Latour, and I am president of the Association des intervenants forestiers des Hautes-Laurentides, as well as general manager of a forestry cooperative. I'd like to introduce Mrs. Julien who is director general of our association.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'd like to ask you to give us the summary, or a verbal presentation of the basic points of your brief. You have five minutes to present your summary and then we'll begin the question period. You now have the floor.

**Mrs. Julien (Denise):** We'd like to start by introducing our organization. The Association des intervenants forestiers des Hautes-Laurentides is an association of about ten forestry firms, that is, eight sawmills, one peeling mill and two forestry cooperatives which work the public timberland of the RCM, Antoine Labelle. The members of the AHL decided to appear before the Commission to share their experience and their concerns because, at a time when Quebecers are called upon to redefine the social contract which unites them, they thought it important that the regions and businesses contributing to their development be able to voice the conditions which they feel are essential to this development.

Since a new forestry system was set up in Québec, forestry firms, which receive their wood from public timberland, have been experiencing an interesting situation involving decentralization and government-business partnership. We'd now like to briefly explain both the characteristics of this situation and its impact on regional development.

With the passage of the Forest Act, in 1986, the government intended to give users more responsibilities in terms of planning what to do and give them new responsibilities in terms of developing public timberland, with the idea of rationalizing the use of available resources. With this in mind, the government retains ownership of the resource and is responsible for optimizing its use on the basis of the principle of sustained yield, which in turn benefits the entire community. The government still has the

power to direct and control, but associates itself with partners to accomplish its mandate.

In concrete terms, this means that firms which are supplied by public timberland must, from now on, take on the reforestation of the territories they exploit according to the variety of needs of all users. For its part, the government agrees to invest in the future by accepting that a relatively substantial portion of the revenues it receives be reinvested in developing the forest resource, according to the regulations which it determines.

By introducing a new rate structure, based on the market value of wood, the government assigns the forest resource a value which ultimately enables it to generate the money needed for its development. This not only ensures the government its fair share of income from the forest fund, it enables users of wood to develop the forests they need, while also giving them an incentive to optimize use in order to make legitimate earnings which they can count on.

Generally speaking, under the old system, mills paid for cutting rights and then were responsible for harvesting wood. As for the government, it was in charge of forest renewal and each year decided how much could be invested in this operation. The result: harvesting was done with no thought to renewal, and renewal depended on the government priorities of the time. Today, the money generated through harvesting forests can be used for renewal of the same piece of forest because licensing fees may be paid either in cash or in reforestation work.

Instead of simply providing supplies, resource regions become forest production areas where the government agrees to reinvest according to the level of wealth these regions help create for the community. This is a major turning point. There is, however, one stumbling block: inflexible standardization. Standardization is essential to ensure fairness, but the standard is based on the average. And the average remains an abstraction which cannot take into account the diversity of real life. There isn't just one forest, there are many. There isn't just one region, but many regions.

To respond to this situation, the government should, in our opinion, retain its residual powers, but should also agree to adjust its policy and hand over responsibilities to its regional bureaucrats and partners. We tested the relevance of such a formula on the retraining of workers when a new forestry system is introduced. With the establishment of the new system, those working in the sector, from managers to forestry workers, had to drastically change their way of thinking. Nothing was planned, however, to facilitate this change. Our association therefore decided to inform over 300 regional workers and did so by taking advantage

of the seasonal period of unemployment which our harsh climate imposes. According to the current standards of training programs, such an operation is still completely unthinkable. To succeed, we had to mobilize both levels of government and both educational institutions located in the territory. We also had to set up a committee on worker adjustment and convince the representatives of elected officials, various economic and social organizations and the world of business. A large-scale operation to succeed in having all those concerned work together so they would agree to adapt the standards related to implementing their programs to meet the specific needs of our community. The implementation by Immigration Canada...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Julien, your time is nearly up. Perhaps you'd like to summarize, or else... in a few sentences.

**Mrs. Julien:** Yes. The only conclusion we would like to draw from this, is that we experienced all this, and we see that it's possible to standardize while leaving control with the government. We hope that this is also possible on the level of management and resources and that the government agrees to give regions the methods to ensure their development. Also, when you're invited to think about a new division of power, we hope that part of your recommendations take into account the existence of regions, their need for development based on fairness and the active role they must be able to play in their development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Congratulations, you have efficiently used your 30 seconds to land on the concluding sentence. We'll now move on to the questions. We begin with the party of the Official Opposition. Mr. Chevette.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to thank you for your brief. I think you've made it clear that you don't want to go through that chaos again. Particularly on page 4 when you say that it's completely unthinkable and, to succeed, you had to take many steps, assemble people who were difficult, gather together structures. On the other hand, a little higher up on the same page, you say: retain its powers. But you go so far as to say that development may differ from one region to another. Are you saying that, first of all, you'd like to have a single government contact instead of two? And, secondly, that such a government, which would hold all the powers, would negotiate with each region according to its distinctive characteristics?

**Mrs. Julien:** We're starting from the ground up. We'd like to have more responsibility at this

level. We've noticed that the current structure treats those working in the regions like children. Having two levels of government where the division of power is ill-defined and where the areas of intervention are also not very clear can sometimes help us, sometimes hurt us, and all the time confuse us.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mrs. Julien:** Sometimes it helps us, when one level of government thinks to itself, "I could bypass the other if I went directly to the population." One example of this was the CADCs which were an interesting tool for us because it was the first time that we, on a local level, were entitled to make a recommendation, on a central level, on adapting a standard for a regional program. That was interesting. But another example is that of federal-provincial agreements where it is clear that the forest is under provincial jurisdiction and we're very satisfied with that, we have an interesting relationship. But when it comes to business development, is it under federal-provincial jurisdiction? As a forestry business, do we become provincial-federal? For the last four years we've been unable to get a program going in our region under the Canada-Québec agreement on everything having to do with forestry, and that hurts us. In our opinion, it's nearly impossible on a level such as ours, where energy is limited and businesses have enormous economic challenges to meet, to always have to reconcile politics too. It's very complicated, and it's not due to the fact that our regional bureaucrats are not nice, smart people. Both sides are nice, and they're smart, but it's complicated for both.

**Mr. Chevette:** Therefore, if I've understood you correctly, you'd like to get things sorted out.

**Mrs. Julien:** That's right.

**Mr. Chevette:** You'd like the people of Québec to get things sorted out, and one level of government is needed to do so. But my question is the following: do you see all the powers related to employment and training on a national level which would naturally be Québec?

**Mrs. Julien:** As far as that's concerned, we can tell you that we support the position developed by the forum for employment, particularly in the section about local and regional development. I don't think I need to reread these recommendations to you, but we'd align ourselves with this type of recommendation. We followed the work of this round-table forum and found it very interesting.

**Mr. Chevette:** In the text of your brief, you've used the term "government" sometimes, but very often the word "state". When I saw "state" seven or eight times, it struck me. When you talk about the state, are you talking about the Québec government?

**Mrs. Julien:** Those of us who work in forestry, the state we deal with is the Québec government, and the danger we've found is the one pointed out today, that government, regardless of its level, has a natural tendency away from decentralization. When we discussed forests, we did manage to make the current government recognize deciduous trees, which are characteristic of our region. But we're afraid that the government, when it later manages a resource which is a community resource, if it doesn't take into account the characteristics of the regions, it may lose, or in any case, make the regions lose, the chance to truly influence their development through the system of regulation and standardization.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We'll now move on to questions from other members. Mr. Dufour will be followed by Mr. Larose and Mr. Deschamps, who is replacing Mr. Proulx today. Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to continue along the same lines as Mr. Chevette. Ever since this morning, we've heard a lot of talk about decentralization, about deconcentration. You aren't using these words, to my knowledge. Rather, you are talking about division of power which, in any event, is the same thing. In your document, I had some trouble identifying the exact problems you've had because of jurisdiction which is either provincial or federal. A moment ago you identified vocational training by referring to the forum on employment. My very specific question is, under current circumstances, because you don't want to experience the same problems for years to come so let's try to settle them quickly, under current circumstances, under renewed federalism, what exactly do you need to settle the problems you've alluded to, but never very precisely explained? What field gives you the most trouble when you're trying to accomplish your objectives?

**Mr. Latour:** The objective of our brief was not to identify which of the two governments could do this, but what we mean, in the end, is that two bosses, two employers, with the same mandate, are too much for us. When you have limited resources like we do, it's important to clarify this.

**Mr. Dufour:** Yes, but two bosses, fine, that's the example of vocational training. If

there were only one, well-defined boss, but in the vocational training sector it's Québec; immigration – because you often need workers and immigrants – it's Québec; transportation, it's Ottawa. If the powers in the current context were better clarified, would that be, for you, could you accomplish your objectives? You speak of two levels, I agree with you. But let's try to identify one without necessarily changing current circumstances.

**Mr. Latour:** I'd simply answer perhaps by asking one question. Is it possible?

**Mr. Dufour:** Of course it's possible.

**Mr. Latour:** We should know by now.

**Mr. Dufour:** It's completely possible, I mean, in the field of labour, we agree with the main points of the recommendations. Mr. Béland told me it hasn't happened yet, but I must say that this doesn't mean that your request will be met much faster. I want you to name me three sectors in which you really have problems. We'll take them into account and we'll discuss them. I agree with you about vocational training. What about two other sectors?

**Mrs. Julien:** Another sector which gives us problems is the entire field of technological development, business development. This always has two levels of intervention and, at the moment, we're not blaming anyone, but it's something that completely boxes us in.

I'll give you an example. We made an important development following the introduction of the forestry system. We made a manufacturing development which, for us, is very big. It's not much for Montréal, but in our region it created 72 new jobs, consolidated 400 jobs and took in \$10 million in investments from businesses in the region. Our businesses weren't entitled to any federal assistance because they were in a forestry sector which is covered by the provincial government and jurisdiction between the two isn't settled.

If we'd been any other manufacturing sector, we would've been entitled, we met all the criteria. Because we were in a region under forestry development, we weren't entitled to anything. We had to do our own development.

I'd like to say that we're not looking for a scapegoat. All we're saying is that at the moment, because of the way things are organized, when a resource region wants to develop itself, it runs into major difficulties. We know that, at the moment, central intervention hasn't been exceedingly efficient in the area of regional development. Therefore, we're saying that we lack methods.

**Mr. Dufour:** OK. You've had a problem, but.

elsewhere, in a paragraph, you talk about Immigration Canada's implementation — therefore, a federal program — of the development program...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You've run out of... Your time is up, Mr. Dufour. Hurry up.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Immigration Canada's introduction of the community development program facilitated this operation and was a success. So, finally an example of a federal program which was a success.

**Mrs. Julien:** We never said that the guilty party was always, always, always on one side. We said that the system was...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like — because some people have already alluded to it, and because we are outside the big urban centres, and because we feel the pressure, when redefining Québec — not to miss our chance to also redefine relations between citizens and the government, relations between regional communities and urban or central communities. I'd like you to give us more concrete details on how the dynamic of regional development is organized, in a sector as specific as yours. Who contributes to this development, how are they brought together, and what objective do they target? Then, the question I'd like to ask is, how is this decentralization or this attempt to make communities and regions more responsible articulated? How should it be structurally organized? In other words, how, exactly, is this done?  
(3:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Latour:** Perhaps Bill 150 is a good example for forestry. We have a deciduous region and, in Québec, deciduous forests represent 10 % of the total harvestable wood. A law was passed, Bill 150, which was a law concerning coniferous trees because it aimed at settling 90 % of the problem, the problem of coniferous trees. However, by enabling manufacturers... This law meant that manufacturers have to reforest. This meant a local dynamic was created and, in the end, people realized that they had problems with standards, but a dynamic was created and the region expressed a desire to the government which finally agreed to recognize deciduous trees in its law. Now, we manage, with a great deal of hard work, however, I must say, to practise forest renewal which suits our deciduous trees. If you ask who contributes to this, in a region, to be effective, very nearly everyone: the RCM, CIDEL... We'll seek out any group or association

which can support us because it's very hard for a region to do everything itself.

**Mr. Larose:** But the model being developed in the field, it doesn't have any, how shall I say, political structuring around it, in other words, the current participants. Do you feel the need to have a decision-making level on the regional level or if...

**Mr. Latour:** Not on our level. In fact, decentralization doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to create a local government. In our case, we have one type of decentralization, giving businesses more responsibility, and it's being done by individuals and it works very well. There's no political level involved.

**Mr. Larose:** Therefore, if I understand the proposal, even if there are decision-making centres which could be in Québec, I'd understood that you didn't want two bosses — that's going to mean one member less for our friend Ghyslain Dufour — you didn't want two bosses, you want one, at the same time, you don't want the local reproduction of lower management, if I understand you correctly. What you do want is the space needed for a dynamic and an interaction between the various participants in your sector, but this could be a valid model for all sectors.

**Mrs. Julien:** What worked for us was making links between political partners and socioeconomic partners. That's how we managed to score points. We feel that the Québec government, which owns Québec forests for the community, must remain the manager with the greatest power because it has the greatest responsibility. But when it made its major guidelines, decided its major... To do that, it must also consult its regions. The current government consulted its regions. If the parliamentary commissions hadn't consulted us at the beginning, deciduous trees would have disappeared in the short term under the law. OK? The fact is, the region took itself in hand and said, if we look at our own development, we're going to have to get ourselves a development strategy. First of all, we need the methods to give ourselves a development strategy.

Second, once we have the methods to give ourselves a development strategy, we need the methods to go and defend this strategy before the various governments. And we achieved this. But, after that, once we got a law that said, OK, we'll take deciduous trees into account. It's okay, they'll be taken care of like coniferous trees are taken care of, after that, we have to be able to, on the other hand, go back to the major levels of government and we thought that by working locally with our regional bureaucrats

we'd be able to do this, when we needed to have our say on standardization and regulation, because we could lose. A power can be designated in the law and then, when you get home, when you try something, then the government says, yes, but wait a minute. My SYLVA computer system, which we invented, has 26 million cubic metres that it can handle, and you have two million, which can't be processed. You see, we'll leave out your two million. But I have a problem: my two million are all mine. I make a living from these two million. I can't afford to leave them outside of the government's machine. Which means that at the very least, I'm going to need some way of having it convert factors. That's what I want. We want to be able to come back and make recommendations, and say, because our experience is like this, we think that you're going to reach the objectives you want to reach, but in such and such and such a way. We want to do this by working with the bureaucrats from our region. And that's what's happening now in our region, and that's what we'd like kept in mind when any political proposals are made. We don't want the number of participants to multiply, but we do want to be able to influence our development. We want to be able to work with our participants and our local elected officials on influencing this development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now move on to Mr. Serge Deschamps.

**Mr. Deschamps:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to discuss an aspect of your brief which is absent, in my opinion, and which has not been raised by any other commissioner today: the economic aspect. Several forestry producers are also agricultural producers and, therefore, members of the Union des producteurs agricoles. They often tell us about certain concerns with respect to the export market and, consequently, the prices for their products. I don't know if you are comfortable discussing this matter, but considering the list of people you represent and who seem to work primarily in the field of sawn timber or the pulp and paper industry as well, I don't know, I'd like to know the effect of the current Canadian policy on interest rates, the fixing of the Canadian dollar on export markets and, consequently, on the financial health probably of the businesses you represent. I don't know if you're in a position to answer this question, but I'd appreciate your views, your opinion on the matter.

**Mrs. Julien:** Generally speaking, we have the same problems that Québec manufacturing concerns on the export market have. The difference between us and those you refer to is that our businesses are, first and foremost, supplied by public timberland. They buy

everything which is available from private forests, but, here in Québec, public timberland represents 80 % of the forest, therefore we're tied to the public forest. Therefore we're not wood producers, but forestry businesses. But I think that in the case of all businesses, as Mr. Dufour could tell you, high interest rates and a strong Canadian dollar aren't much help on the export market.

**Mr. Deschamps:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We'll now move on to questions from the Government party, and Mrs. Hovington has the floor, I believe.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Latour, Mrs. Julien, on behalf of the government, I'd like to welcome you to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec and congratulate you on your brief. And I'd especially like to congratulate you for explaining the importance of the forest to everyone who's listening to us.

Your brief actually deals with public forest management as it is practised since the new forestry system was introduced, since Bill 150 was passed by the Liberal government, not that long ago, bringing with it, in fact, a partnership between businesses and the government, which meant much-improved regional development. Bill 150 is also based on sustained forest yield, so it's very important. Resource regions become forest production zones where the government agrees to reinvest according to the level of wealth that they help create. In fact, Bill 150 and the new forestry system constitute an historic turning point.

You put a great deal of emphasis on the fundamental orientation of the forest which is directed at generating a great deal of economic activity in the regions. The benefits, and perhaps this will answer the question asked a moment ago, the benefits are that the forestry sector generates directly and indirectly close to 190 000 jobs. It is the economic fulcrum of several hundred RCMs in Québec - I can attest to that - especially those in outlying regions.

In 1988, the total value of forest product exports reached \$ 5 billion. This represents a lot in Québec: nearly 22 % of all shipments outside Québec, holding the lead among exported products. And that's extremely important. I'm also a representative of an outlying region, where forestry employs 80 % of the labour force. But it's also a sector where the federal government's general use of spending power can be a trap for the Québec government in its management of natural resources. This is when there is duplication of action, you talked about it. The governments try to outbid each other for beneficiaries.

In the Gaspé Peninsula and Lower St. Lawrence regions, the federal government, to get involved in regional development, set up the plan for Eastern Québec, and this really is interference. How does the federal government intervene in the forest in your region, at your level? Was a special program set up, like the one in the Gaspé Peninsula and Lower St. Lawrence regions?

**Mr. Latour:** No, simply in the negotiation of federal-provincial agreements. At this level, we haven't had any federal intervention, but there isn't much in the federal-provincial agreement concerning deciduous trees. Unfortunately, we had to put so much energy into the provincial level, on this level, that we didn't go any further. But obviously, we didn't benefit from these handouts, so to speak, because it wasn't part of this, from the beginning.

**Mrs. Hovington:** In your brief, you talk a great deal about inflexibility and standardization. If we were to have just one government with powers, regardless of which one, do you think it would be that easy to deal with, so to speak, standardized programs, because it's always a case of public funds, which require standardized programs, but we'd be able to adapt them to the needs of a region. How do you see this? What powers do you need to be able to do this?

**Mr. Latour:** It's a matter of regional dialogue. When I talk to the local administrator of our region's forests, I can reach an agreement in five minutes. If I go to Montréal to see my regional administrator, it takes an hour or two. If I go to Québec City, it takes me two days. You have to get closer to the real situation. People who experience the problem with me can see the solution immediately, that's what it is and it's settled very quickly. Standardization must simply be adapted. I'd say the thing to do would be to put in the necessary input and it would be easy enough. But the people from the regions must be involved, people who know what kind of input is important. That's all there is to it, people must be involved. This is pretty difficult because the centre generally perceives this attitude as a loss of power for them and a loss of control. That's generally where we have problems.

**Mrs. Hovington:** You also talk in your brief about giving more power to regional bureaucrats, does that get back to what you just explained? How do you see this? In terms of vocational training, in terms of managing specific budgets for each region? Could you give us an idea of how you see these powers for bureaucrats?

**Mr. Latour:** In terms of forestry, it would  
\*I just said. At other levels, I haven't...

**Mrs. Hovington:** Let's go further. For example, other groups have appeared to present briefs and they talked about increasing decentralization towards the regions and when one is a regionalist, I think that it's somewhat understandable. But how could regions be prime contractors? Which powers would they possess?

**Mrs. Julien:** We in forestry feel that it's not necessarily a question of being the prime contractor, but of having the power to influence things and make recommendations. For example, at the moment, telling forestry businesses to reforest a given type of forest for long-term production. The goal we're striving for is sustainable development, so we have businesses which are based on quality trees. But we know that in Québec, for example, we only have to look at the ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources, the budget for forests includes \$ 94 million which goes to conifers. Not even \$ 1 million goes to deciduous trees. The government has developed great expertise with coniferous trees, but not with deciduous trees. When it meets with us and asks how a yellow birch grows, there's a very good chance that we know more than the guy from the government.

Therefore, at this point in time, the government has to realize that there are zones, like the deciduous tree zone, for example, which have problems that it can't completely overcome, and then it will join forces with its partners, who stop mistrusting it, agree to work together and are willing to receive recommendations. That's why we gave the example of job training, the entitlement to job training, just so we could warn our guys that there's a new system coming. Tomorrow morning your foreman will tell you to stop mowing down the little spruce trees, on the contrary, you have to go around it because it has to grow back.

The system has changed everything. The worker hasn't gone crazy, it's just that all of society has changed its attitude. Do you understand? It's not a struggle, it's serious. The guy cares about that, but he has to be warned. But then, we weren't allowed to warn him because it hadn't been 26 weeks since he'd been on unemployment, since he'd been on seasonal unemployment. And I can't ask him to take a course when he comes out of the forest at 6:30 p.m. and he hasn't finished gassing up the skidder. I'll take him in April when there's mud everywhere, when there's no one left to get in the way. We'll sit down and chat. We made a recommendation to the minister and the minister said that it made a lot of sense. Zoom, they were put on unemployment, they received a week-long course. I'm sure that this was a big help for developing the entire region. That's what we want to be able to do. OK. You have an idea of how things are, you're headed for a given objective. Fine. We want to tell you that

if you want to reach this objective in our region, you're going to have to take this and that and that into account. We're ready to do this, are you able to come and work with us a bit? That's what we want to be able to do.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** And on that note, Mrs. Julien, I must thank you for your particularly detailed and encouraging recommendations, it leaves us with the thought that we may perhaps find a solution, not only to your problems, necessarily, but to our problems as well. You have cast an interesting light on a very specific and detailed aspect of "deconcentration", giving local bureaucrats more responsibility, in any event, we all understood, even if we don't have the precise term, and I still have to thank you too, Mr. Latour, and ask you to kindly make way for the next group: the Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:31 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:33 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I was under the impression that the members of the Francophonie étudiante would be much younger than you seem to be. You're surely very young at heart. We'll learn a great deal. I'd like to remind you that, in this half-hour period, you'll have five minutes to present a verbal summary of your brief and then we'll move on to the questions.

Is Mr. Lefebvre going to introduce the group?

**Mr. Lefebvre (Yvon):** For the brief?

#### Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well, I'd like you to start by introducing the people. I have their names here, but the rest of the group doesn't know exactly who is where, and then, who you'll select to present the brief.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** Normand Venne is the manager, Nathalie Charbonneau is the vice-president, Line Poirier is the secretary-treasurer and I'm the president.

**Mrs. Charbonneau (Nathalie):** We're going to start with the summary. Good afternoon, my name is Nathalie Charbonneau. Because the history of our people and the history of our education follow parallel lines, we are presenting a brief today to propose a better sociocultural environment for young people in a new Québec. The student milieu, our language and our culture are our primary concerns, so it is our duty to put in all the effort needed, with the prospect before us of Québec becoming a

country, to study, defend and promote interest in our educational system as well as the students who use it.

If Québec has attained obvious maturity, superior economic strength and a higher international profile, it's due to the courage and determination of its people and the education they gave themselves, but surely not to the federalist system which, in addition to being obsolete, has never, over the course of history, encouraged the growth of the Francophone nation of Québec for we've always been a minority in the land of Canada.

Nothing fair can be negotiated when it's ten against one. When Québec becomes independent, the economic agreements we'd like to establish with our neighbours will be negotiated between equals, between countries.

**Mrs. Poirier (Line):** For a strong Québec, capable of asserting itself as a nation, without fear of losing its identity at every step of the way as was the case in the past and even more recently, we, the Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière, propose that a powerful law protect and promote the French language throughout Québec. Bills 178 and 101 are not completely ineffective but are clearly not enough to reassure a population which has not let down its guard. The effects of this are harmful for everyone, especially the ethnic minorities who suffer from our intolerance which is caused by our fears of being assimilated, for we ourselves are a minority. We propose that laws be enacted to protect and promote Québec culture in all its forms, for culture is, along with language, the fundamental identity of a people. It is our duty to take the steps necessary to avoid being drowned by the mass culture surrounding us. We propose that, while French is made the primary and common language in Québec, we open classes specifically for each ethnic group in French schools located in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods so that ethnic communities may take full advantage of their cultures and languages. Once people have gotten over their fears, this project will be very worthwhile to both Quebecers of French ancestry and immigrants.

We propose that the freeze on school fees be re-established in its entirety, providing basic protection for our advancement. The right to an education is clearly stipulated in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, so it is up to the government to see that this right does not become the exclusive privilege of a certain class of society.

We propose that the ministère de l'Éducation review the system of loans and bursaries. This system is outmoded, costly for the government and puts students at a disadvantage by saddling them with an, at times, phenomenal debt when they enter the job market. A system in which students are employed

and paid during training periods like the apprentices they are, would be more advantageous for all concerned. Such structures already exist elsewhere and have had much success.

We propose that all current or future taxes affecting the cultural sector be abolished and struck down. We propose that the ministère de la Sécurité du revenu review certain clauses in Bill 37 which discriminate against students and which display obvious inconsistencies with the system of loans and bursaries. We propose that community organizations enjoy special status and be able to obtain the tools needed to fight the social plagues destroying our society. Considering that families and governments are no longer involved, these organizations have become a priority for a so-called civilized people.

We propose that tax laws be reviewed and corrected to implement a fairer system for everyone. The current system has a tendency to widen the gap between rich and poor, creating situations of frustration which lead to violence, drug addiction and crime. The homeless are increasing in number and the situation doesn't seem to be getting any better. It is a matter of public safety. We propose that the aboriginal peoples, especially students, be appreciated. The feeling of going unnoticed is what leads to violence. It would be deplorable if respect for the First Nations was visible only before the media. This must also be seen on paper as well as in the faces of people, for our future social peace depends on it.

**Mrs. Charbonneau:** In conclusion, Québec's future as a Canadian province was severely compromised by the death of the Meech Lake Accord. The entire population of Québec as a distinct society was held up for ridicule for the second time in 10 years. The majority of the population, 85 %, had already rejected the accord long before the Natives of Manitoba and, in a democratic system, this counts for a great deal more than an agreement in principle signed by 11 people, even if they are premiers and a prime minister. This leaves indelible marks. In view of our proposals which we feel are easily accomplished by a now mature Québec, and given that Québec's five minimum conditions were refused and that nothing indicates that the situation will improve under a federalist system, we, the Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière, propose that Québec free itself from this outmoded system and take off on its own. An economic association is, moreover, always a possibility once we've obtained our status as a sovereign country.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you for your presentation. We'll now move on to the questions from members. Mrs. Pagé will go

first, followed by Mr. Assad and Mr. Bouchard. Mrs. Pagé.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Thank you. I'd like to welcome you before the Commission. My first question, I'd like you to tell me who the Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière is. Do you primarily represent college students or high school students or such?

**Mrs. Poirier:** The Francophonie is made up of students from regular high schools, vocational high schools, continuing education programs, colleges and universities.

**Mrs. Pagé:** In the Lanaudière region.

**Mrs. Poirier:** In the Lanaudière region, that's right.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Approximately how many members do you have?

**Mrs. Poirier:** We have approximately 200 members and are currently recruiting many others.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Oh, I don't doubt it. Ha, ha, ha. Thank you for answering my first question. In your brief, I don't think you'll mind if I react at the very least to everything you say about education, because I believe that at a time when Québec has to think about its political and constitutional future, you've just reminded us that accessibility to education and the democratization of our educational system must always remain at the heart of the social and community plan we have to bring into being, and you mention that, at the moment, certain steps being taken with respect to this, run somewhat counter to the methods we'll need when we consider, among other things, the ever-increasing phenomenon of school dropouts and the failure rate. At one time, 85 % of young people graduated with a high school diploma, while only 68 % do so now, and the drop continues. I think that you're right to emphasize the importance of education in the choices we're going to have to make.

And, consequently, I have a question about your proposal to open specialized classes for ethnic groups in French schools. I'd like you to tell me, in this proposal you've made, would the language of instruction in these classes be the mother tongue of the various ethnic groups, or would it be something else? Secondly, aren't you somewhat afraid of ghettoizing the various cultural communities, and when would there be time for interaction between cultures if each ethnic group were in its own specialized class... It seems to me that there's a risk involved, and I'd like you to tell us more about this proposal of yours.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** First of all, the project we mentioned is not a class so that ethnic groups would be in the same room all day, it's just one course so that ethnic communities can continue to learn their mother tongue.

**Mrs. Pagé:** It's currently called the original languages teaching program?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** Exactly.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Fine, OK. Therefore, it wouldn't really be classes which put together...

**Mr. Lefebvre:** No, they wouldn't be closed classes...

**Mrs. Pagé:** ...Italians, Greeks, or...

**Mr. Lefebvre:** No, no.

**Mrs. Pagé:** Fine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Pagé?

**Mrs. Pagé:** Yes, that's fine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Assad.

**Mr. Assad:** Thank you. So, I see that you're making a radical proposal, but that's normal. I remember when I was a student, I held very radical positions. Except that you've explained, and I recognize the terrific boom that Québec has experienced for many years now, ever since the beginning of the sixties, the economic boom, "entrepreneurship," and so on and so forth. No one can deny this. I think that you should recognize that, under Canadian Confederation, there were certainly some positive elements which helped Québec develop at that point in time. And it's quite hard to hear that you think that these were a drawback. I believe that there certainly were elements which helped Québec develop in all this, and this proves that there were elements which we can still save today, don't you agree?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** I'd like you to name some for me.

**Mr. Assad:** Excuse me?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** I'd like you to name some for me.

**Mr. Assad:** In the field of investments in education. Take Radio-Canada, for example, I don't think the man sitting across from us has suffered under the federal system.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Lefebvre:** No, but these are all things...

**Mr. Assad:** You say that they're... I could, not just this minute, in a few minutes...

**Mr. Lefebvre:** These are all things that we can do ourselves.

**Mr. Assad:** I could give you a number of reasons for saying that federalism, as we knew it, wasn't perfect. What system is perfect? But I'm going to show you a system which did give, under which we developed; or did we do that in total isolation here in Québec? All our social programs, did they... Credit must be given to the old NDP, the CCF, the old-age pension, all social laws, we didn't invent these things. We took advantage of them and helped them advance a bit further. We didn't live like an island independent from everyone. We shared things together, we certainly took advantage of elements which are extremely important for our development. We can't deny it.

**Mr. Venne (Normand):** When you say that Radio-Canada received investments, are you comparing the investments made, for example, in the news show "Le Point," or "The Journal"?

**Mr. Assad:** You've just answered that and I don't have any details.

**Mr. Venne:** I think that in terms of...

**Mr. Assad:** But everything I'm saying, the few minutes I'm allotted are not enough for us to elaborate on all this, but of course I could supply an ample number of arguments, and I'm sure that as the days and months go by, we'll have them.

I'd like to ask a second question, I was very happy to see that you mentioned an issue that I take into account and I was surprised for students, but I'm very happy that you've brought it up, point number 9, the issue of the tax system which is unfair and I agree with you there. I'm glad that this was raised, I find that it's one of the most fundamental elements in a democratic society, the fact that we have a tax system which is completely unfair and inequitable. For the last 25 years, the financial elite in all the provinces have used a tax system to get richer and it's true that the gap is widening.

(3:45 p.m.)

You mentioned a point and I hope that... This perhaps isn't the place, but certainly, you raised it and I intend to follow through, I find it very interesting. I'd like to know, point number 9, where did you get the idea of raising the fact that our tax system needs review or certainly an in-depth study?

**Mr. Venne:** We could start by talking about what is contemporary, namely the GST. With the GST, we're going to have the pleasure of being taxed on everything considered cultural. It'll mean the taxation of books, records, shows, and, in the end, everything of a cultural nature. We're well aware that in Québec, with regard to the representation of Francophone culture in relation to Canada and the Canadian system, we've experienced a lot of problems and we're still experiencing a lot of problems. Therefore, the people who've already made a name for themselves, who already have recognized names and who're well established in terms of...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We'll now move on to a question from Mr. Bouchard who will be followed by Mr. Turgeon. Mr. Hogue has also requested the floor. We'll then have approximately five minutes. If the first speakers work quickly, there'll be enough time for the last. Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. We talked about the investments that the federal government made in education. In fact, the Constitution reserves this sector of activity to Québec and if the federal government made any investments in education, it did so with money from Québec and in fields which weren't under its jurisdiction. What is presented as an advantage is a major drawback for us because Québec claims responsibility for managing its education according to its own demands, its own culture. The same goes for Radio-Canada. We're capable of spending our own money according to what we want to do. I wholeheartedly endorse what you're saying about the problems you emphasize concerning the negative impact of federalism on Québec culture.

In the field of economics, for example, the business people of Québec, the Chambre de Commerce du Québec itself spoke of economic federalism in terms of failure, in terms of bankruptcy. I don't think that it's time for discussion, I think it's time for solutions. These old debates have all been done. The conclusion you've reached is that, for Québec, which was recently rejected by the Constitution once again in spite of all the nice speeches, all the wonderful rhetoric, by all those who promised us a renewal of the Federation, the solution you're proposing is sovereignty.

You don't, however, say how this is going to be done. You haven't determined which procedure must be followed in order to declare sovereignty and then accomplish it. For example, I know this wasn't your main goal, but what do you think of holding a referendum beforehand or a referendum at the same time? Do you have any ideas to suggest?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** For negotiations to be valid

and fair, independence must be declared and then...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Excuse me?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** Declare independence before and negotiate after. The referendum should be before.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...Mr. Turgeon, Mr. Bouchard? Yes. Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you. Listen, first of all, as for Mr. Assad's fears concerning the role of federal institutions in the field of Québec culture, I'd simply like to refer him to the brief tabled by the Union des artistes last week. It seems to me that the matter was dealt with quite clearly and conclusively.

As for you, that said, you've centred your entire brief on language and culture and that's normal for they are what is going to give form to the sovereignty you demand for Québec. But I do have one question. You spoke about the moral obligation that Quebecers must have towards aboriginal peoples, towards various cultural communities, but nothing specific about the Anglophone community as such. Is there a reason for this or do you include it in the various... Don't you think that Anglophones here have specific rights? I put the question to you.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** I think that the rights of Anglophones here are very respected, are even overly respected in comparison with other minorities. I think that, in a sovereign Québec, Anglophones should be treated like all the other minorities.

**Mrs. Poirier:** I'd also like to add that, in my opinion, the panic we're seeing right now in the Québec Anglophone community is not because they're in the process of losing rights, but rather privileges.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue? Mr. Turgeon? Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You're students and, it goes without saying, you're familiar with decision trees and critical paths. Within a critical path, how much time are you allowing for the introduction of your 10 proposals? That's my first question. My second: on one hand, you propose a law more powerful than Bills 101 and 178 to protect French, and I can't agree, I put the question to you. On the other hand, classes offered to immigrants in their language. How do you reconcile these two proposals? That's my second question. And the third, you make a number of proposals which could all be carried out within the current system if the areas of jurisdiction were

rearranged. Why then do you propose that Québec separate?

**Mr. Venne:** First of all, we propose that Québec separate...

**Mr. Hogue:** Do you have the first question? Let's be practical.

**Mr. Venne:** OK.

**Mr. Hogue:** The answer to the first question. Let's be practical.

**Mr. Venne:** Well then, your first question is how long.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, how long will it take. A critical path.

**Mr. Venne:** How long? This will depend on whether Québec obtains sovereignty.

**Mr. Hogue:** No, but you've already done that, you...

**Mr. Venne:** No, no, but it'll be connected to how long it will take...

**Mr. Hogue:** No, but really, how long will it take to set up the system?

**Mr. Venne:** OK. To set up the system. Well, look, that'll depend on various organizations and various points of...

**Mr. Hogue:** How long?

**Mr. Venne:** Well, listen!

**Mr. Hogue:** I've merely asked you a simple little question: the critical path.

**Mr. Venne:** I don't think it'll be a matter of months.

**Mr. Hogue:** ...matter of months.

**Mr. Venne:** It'll be a matter of years.

**Mr. Hogue:** Second question...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think we'll have to go faster, Mr. Hogue. Could you perhaps answer the second question?

**A voice:** What was the second question?

**A voice:** The reconciliation between a stricter Bill 101 and Bill 178; it goes further, and education and training in other environments.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** OK. We know that Bill 101...

**A voice:** Reconciling these two proposals.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** ...protects, in a sense, the primary and secondary levels of education. We'd like it applied to colleges and universities.

**Mr. Hogue:** And universities. How do you reconcile both proposals, the one you've just made and which appears in your brief, and, on the other hand, classes offered to immigrants in their language?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** We said earlier, in the proposal, that they wouldn't be closed classes, they'd be one course. A course given in a classroom, among Greeks, for example, or Italians or English. But once the...

**Mr. Hogue:** In their mother tongue...

**Mr. Lefebvre:** In their mother tongue.

**Mr. Hogue:** ...regardless of what it is.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** Within a French school.

**Mr. Hogue:** Regardless of what it is?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** Regardless of what it is.

**Mr. Hogue:** That's fine. The third?

**A voice:** Could we specify...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now move on to the group representing the government. Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I'd like to thank the Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière for presenting this brief. In your brief, you exhibit an open mind and I'd like to cite a few passages, those which affected me the most. On page 4, you say, in reference to the methods proposed, that the effects are harmful, and you try to highlight the problems of integration facing cultural communities, and you refer to, perhaps, intolerance. Your text says that the effects of this are harmful for everyone, especially the ethnic minorities who suffer from our intolerance which is caused by our fears of being assimilated, for we ourselves are a minority. On the other hand, you say a little further on - Mrs. Pagé asked you a question about it and Mr. Hogue tried to - you again exhibit an open mind concerning minorities by saying that you would even be ready to give them specialized classes. I'd like to know what these "specialized classes" for cultural communities would be and then I'll have a second question. Go ahead, Mrs. Poirier.

**Mrs. Poirier:** Let's just say that this isn't a question of creating ghettos. In any event, we know that ghettos already exist, probably because the population of Québec is, in fact, a minority on the continent of North America, and so its fear of being assimilated creates a certain apprehension towards all foreign cultures. And this has often, but not always, meant that the Québec people haven't been open to new arrivals. This has even created ghettos.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** What do you suggest be done to perhaps better integrate these new arrivals and create a more harmonious, more open society?

**Mrs. Poirier:** First of all, this just happens to answer Mr. Hogue's question somewhat. I believe that when the language of instruction is truly French, when it's the common language, then new arrivals here won't find themselves faced with a choice between English or French. They'll know what to do. On the other hand, as we integrate new arrivals into our community, the community of the majority, we show them that their culture is respected and that it interests us.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Alright. Earlier you said, in response to Mr. Turgeon, that Anglophones here in Québec didn't have rights, but rather privileges. I must say that I don't agree with you there because, in my opinion, the Anglophone community does indeed have rights here. Do you agree with the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Longueuil which presented its brief last Tuesday in the Montérégie region, in my territory, which included the Parti québécois from Taillon and the Parti québécois from Marie-Victorin who told us that, in the event of a sovereign society, a sovereign Québec, they would even be ready to give the Anglophone minority guarantees that their rights would even be enshrined in a constitution? Even an ex-MNA from the Parti québécois went so far as to say that these rights should be enshrined in a future Canadian constitution. Would you be willing to live with this?

**Mrs. Poirier:** Concerning the beginning of your statement, I believe that I was misunderstood. I didn't say that Québec Anglophones didn't have rights; I said that they currently didn't lose any rights under Bills 101 and 178.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Alright, I like that better. Thank you.

**Mrs. Poirier:** They don't lose any rights, they lose privileges. And even then, they still have some left. That's different.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Alright. As for the method of giving them such rights, would you agree with the statement I just made: giving guarantees like this and even enshrining them in a future constitution?

**Mrs. Poirier:** I'm going to let the president of our association answer this question.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mr. President. Go ahead quickly, for I have another short question.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** If we look at what's going on in Saskatchewan, it's already in the province's constitution and Francophones are forced to sell sunflower seeds to support their schools. We'll have to see.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Go ahead and ask your short question, Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Yes. In fact, it's that... on page 5 you propose that the ministère de l'Éducation review the system of loans and bursaries, the system is outmoded, and so on. I must say that I agree with you, students aren't very rich. But, I'd like to remind you that the system of loans and bursaries was reviewed not terribly long ago. There was a parliamentary commission which lasted quite a long time, thank you, which completed its work last February. The system was reviewed. We added \$50 million, a more open-minded policy concerning loans and bursaries, and so on. I'd like to know: did you present a brief to the parliamentary commission, at the National Assembly, on this very system which was reviewed after 20 years of obsolescence? Did you present a brief to the parliamentary commission?

**Mrs. Poirier:** No, at that point our organization wasn't quite complete. Our team wasn't big enough yet.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Poirier:** On the other hand, if we look at the letter sent to all students, which was included with the application for loans and bursaries, signed by the ex-Minister of Education, Claude Ryan, we notice that within this very letter, there are inconsistencies and contradictions. For example, this will improve students' standard of living, etc., and more open-mindedness as well.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I'd just like to say that I was one of those who supported raising school fees and I think that we have to do it, eventually... Especially when you compare with the other provinces in Canada. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr.

Chevrette now has the floor.

**Mr. Chevrette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to congratulate you because, first of all, we didn't have to draw your position out of you, you express it very clearly. Secondly, I think that you've reminded the Commission here that it's not enough to take a stand in favour of a political option, we also have to remember that there will be problems to deal with in a sovereign Québec. And I believe you've made us think a lot about the problems you meet, especially in the sectors you mention. How will a sovereign Québec behave towards ethnic groups? How will a sovereign Québec behave towards language? Will it strengthen it? Will it strengthen its tools?

I think that it's extremely important, a sovereign Québec vis-à-vis culture, for example, or taxation. In fact, we're in the middle of a debate on taxing books and we know that measures will probably be announced soon, to correct what was first announced. I think of immigrants. But I'd like to ask you two short questions. Because five minutes isn't much time.

(16:00 p.m.)

The first is, what advantage does political sovereignty hold for immigrants or immigration as such?

**Mr. Lefebvre:** I think that it sends a very clear message to those who arrive, to new arrivals, that Québec is French and not bilingual. As Line was saying earlier, they don't have to make a choice. They know that Québec is Francophone and that French is the common language of Francophones. Like when you go to Germany, you learn German.

**Mr. Chevrette:** Now, you wrote one sentence about the economy. You don't really talk about it. I understand that one cannot specialize in everything, and I understand you. I would, however, like to ask you if you basically believe in the importance of maintaining an economic tie, afterwards. How do you see these economic ties? Do you see them as part of a treaty on free trade or something else? How do you see them?

**Mr. Venne:** It's very simple; first of all, I think that as soon as Québec becomes sovereign, Ontario is still going to want to sell cars in Québec, at least I think so. And I also think that everything on the shelves marked "Made in Ontario" will continue to be sold in Québec. As the president of Bell Canada once said, when interviewed before the referendum, we're not going to move the telephone poles to Ontario. I think that once we're taken seriously in terms of sovereignty, on the contrary, it'll be advantageous for all the associations which exist,

from north to south and from east to west, and as much for us as for them.

**Mr. Chevrette:** One last quick question, I know it'll be fast. Are you in favour of holding a referendum immediately following this Commission?

**Mr. Venne:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Chevrette:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Before thanking you, I must say that one of your proposals leaves me a little puzzled. You talk about Bill 101 on the level of colleges and universities. If I understand correctly, this would mean that a Francophone, born in Québec, couldn't go to university in English in Québec. Which would mean, as a result, that someone who had, for example, a bachelor's in engineering from Polytechnique couldn't do a master's at McGill, he'd have to do it in the United States and pay \$ 10 000 a year instead of having free tuition, while an Anglophone could easily do a bachelor's at Polytechnique and, if he wanted to do a master's at McGill, it wouldn't cost him a thing. This proposal seems a little strange to me. Perhaps I've misunderstood. That happens to me sometimes, towards the middle of the afternoon.

**Mr. Lefebvre:** What we want is to protect our language, our culture. Therefore, if the student has made it to...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** If he has made it to university and still needs his language protected, regardless of his language or his country, isn't this student a little weak?

**Mr. Venne:** The problem we see with universities is that, at the moment, many of the books we need at university are definitely Anglophone and all that. And we know that 85 % of everything circulating in the world is written in English. We're aware of all this. Except, at the same time, when we look at a lot of reports, we also see that most grants to universities go to English universities, if we compare...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'm not questioning all this, it was your proposal to apply the language law to universities which intrigued me. However, listen, we've run out of time. It's not that I want to disagree with you. I just wanted to leave you with this thought. You'll continue to think about it, and we will too. Unfortunately the time is up. I mustn't set a bad example by running over the scheduled time. So, thank you for your presentation and I'd like to ask you to kindly and quickly make way for the Ville de Sainte-Thérèse.

**Ville de Sainte-Thérèse**

**Mr. Fallu (Élie):** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to introduce the councillors: Luis Da Costa, Jean-Guy Fillatrault, Roger Cartier, Louis Lauzon, and the director of legal services and communications and court clerk of the city of Sainte-Thérèse, Mr. Jean-Luc Berthiaume.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now, please go ahead and present your brief, in whatever order you like.

**Mr. Fallu:** Mr. Chairman, We hope that at the end of these hearings your Commission will recommend to the National Assembly that a referendum be held on full national sovereignty for Québec. We also hope that at the end of the hearings you will recommend to the National Assembly that it make public its intention to respect the treaties and agreements already signed between the Québec and Canadian governments, for national sovereignty must be understood, from the onset, as the ability to define the limits of our interdependence.

We also hope that you will propose that the National Assembly put forward a plan for a treaty on an economic and monetary association with the Canadian government. We would like you to recommend that the ability to defend and promote democracy in Québec be written into the pages of our Constitution, for, after 198 years of parliamentary life, Québec has one of the oldest governments and is one of the oldest democratic peoples in the world. We would also have to recognize the First Nations, and recognize in the Constitution their right to self-determination within the territorial limits of the Nation of Québec.

As for the Anglophone community, their historical rights must be recognized on issues such as culture, education, health care and social affairs, including management of the institutions established to achieve these goals. But please, above all, let us tell you about the kind of society we would like to live in. If we are all calling into question the British North America Act of 1867, it is because we need both to review the municipal constitutional legislation of 1840 and to continue with the analysis carried out by Lord Durham at the time regarding non-administration or administration within this State. Consequently, the concept of a single State with only one government must be immediately reviewed, corrected and significantly decentralized.

As we envisage it, decentralization will be based on five conditions. First, power will be delegated on the basis of the area of activity, and provide autonomy of action, that is, decision-making as well as implementation and regulatory powers. Second, the State will ensure

autonomous resources through a formal agreement. Third, municipal and school corporations, regional corporations and regions will be given the right to execute these powers. Fourth, the existence of corporations and regions will be written into the Constitution in order to preserve their permanence and their inviolability. Fifth, a permanent mechanism will be established to adapt functions and relations between the State and the corporations.

What is to be decentralized? Whole sections of government administration, powers related to public services, will have to be transferred to the corporations and regions. Topping the list are the tools necessary for regional economic development. Then, in the area of culture, the corporations and regions must have the authority and resources needed to promote the cultural expression of their fellow citizens.

For the most part, the environment will be under the jurisdiction of the corporations. Corporations will be in charge of transportation, especially public transportation and tertiary roads. Education will also to be decentralized: at the central level there will be a simple national commission rather than a department, and local corporations will be given enough staff and credits to be able to adapt to regional development. In the area of social and health care services, in order to ensure equal access to all, each region will be given the powers necessary to adapt services, equipment and practices to the needs of the region. The corporations will be in charge of housing.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is almost up. Would you like to wrap up with a sentence or two.

**Mr. Fallu:** The civil register and the judicial system will also be reviewed. A ministry in charge of the corporations and the regions will be created. And this country must be in operation within one year at the latest.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It is now question time. First, for the Government party, Mr. Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to welcome the mayor of Sainte-Thérèse, and the councillors and the court clerk of that city. I would like to thank them for presenting and, of course, preparing their brief. And I would like to extend special greetings to Mr. Fallu, with whom I had an opportunity to sit in the National Assembly until 1985.

I have been taking a look at this; I have tried to sort out all the areas of jurisdiction that you would like to see handed over to regional authorities, to school commissions or to various regional corporations. And, after listing

all of them, I began to wonder whether, indeed, what you are really looking for is not a confederation within Québec or a quasi-federation. The point is that, of course, in principle, I am personally in favour of the decentralization of powers, but I think that you take it a little too far. I do not mean to say that I am entirely against it; I am just wondering whether, as I said earlier, you are not actually looking for some kind of confederation within Québec. I was also wondering whether you have consulted with the Union des municipalités du Québec about your proposals, because I know that they adopted some general principles last September and I would like to hear your opinion on them. And, as you know, a dialogue is currently under way between the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the various corporations and unions with respect to possible transfer of jurisdictions and transfer of responsibilities.

So, my first question was whether you sought the opinion of the Union des municipalités du Québec regarding your proposals. And secondly, with respect to financing, what are your plans regarding the area of taxation which would be handed over to the municipalities, and will the taxpayers' load, in general, be maintained or increased or reduced.

**Mr. Fallu:** I hope that this Commission will really clarify the vocabulary. I suppose that is the wish of every one of us. It is obvious that administrative decentralization is not confederation. It is not a question of creating RCMs and municipalities or regions of the provinces of Québec. The era of federalism is over. That is what everyone seems to be saying.

Therefore, administrative decentralization means delegated authority and, as you know, whatever is delegated can be withdrawn at any time. However, the difference this time is that the power will be delegated by areas, and not just at the implementation level, as is currently the case in the municipal and school corporations.

The Union des municipalités is currently taking part in the discussions between Québec and the municipalities held within the framework of Canada and Québec as they currently exist. Therefore, the few changes that are required are minor ones, given our present laws, that is, delegating the ability to act. But our brief deals with the future, that is, within the context of a sovereign Québec.

(4:15 p.m.)

**Financing.** Well, certainly not the reverse financing where the government decides to unload its school debts onto municipal taxes, onto municipal property tax. Certainly not that, because it was never negotiated, it was never decided. We want to establish quite a different type of relation with the government. But still

with autonomous financing, autonomous areas of financing that can give responsibilities to elected officials. You know, a city like Sainte-Thérèse is 99.8 % autonomous and decisions made by the municipal council are made freely and with the direct participation of the citizens. In this respect, a province such as Québec is not even 75 % autonomous, since more than 25 % is directly dictated by law, or by federal-provincial agreements.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...another quick one, Mr. Dauphin?

**Mr. Dauphin:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the status that the regions will acquire, what would be their status? What kind of procedure would be put in place for appointment to positions available in these regions? And have you thought about holding elections?

**Mr. Fallu:** Yes. No, the regions...

**Mr. Dauphin:** At those levels.

**Mr. Fallu:** Yes, well, very quickly, but I think this is more of a suggestion, a preliminary rather than a definitive idea. The regions should substantially be those that we are in the process of discovering, those which have been emerging, and for our society, this is a recent phenomenon, since 1969. Therefore, we mean regions which receive grants from the State in order to act and not regions which would be mere regional councils, as in France. At least that is our idea for now.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now, Mr. Brassard of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mayor, Councillors, we thank you for coming to appear before us. First, I am pleased to see that you start by taking the issue of sovereignty for granted and are now pondering what Québec would look like, particularly a sovereign Québec, with respect to the regions. And this is an issue which is being discussed now and which will be discussed even more when we visit the regions. It is really the issue of the regions' taking their destinies into their own hands, the issue of decentralization. I think it is the very same issue that has been discussed here since we started this morning. I find this extremely interesting, but if I understand you correctly, and please tell me if I am wrong, and if I also understand those who spoke before you, I would say that for real decentralization to be at once consistent, effective and clear, lucid, it must be carried out in the context of a sovereign Québec, or else it becomes difficult, and its consistency and effectiveness may be compromised. Have I understood you correctly?

**Mr. Fallu:** I will start by saying that sovereignty, as such, is not yet taken for granted but that for us it is a precondition for administrative decentralization, and I would answer your question by adding that it is truly a precondition. At the present time, municipal groups are asking for changes, but they are not asking for the kind of administrative decentralization that we are proposing today. And I have never heard, in our society, in the context of our situation as a federation, that anyone wanted to see this small State of ours weakened in any way. We have all had the firm intention of keeping it as strong and able to govern as possible, and we have refused, as a group, I believe, to decentralize powers. The notion of decentralization goes hand in hand with that of sovereignty.

**Mr. Brassard:** I understand very well what you mean. Real decentralization must in some sense come from a government with full powers. I think that is your assumption.

**Mr. Fallu:** If you will, I would add that it's even more.

**Mr. Brassard:** Even more?

**Mr. Fallu:** Even more; they should be done together. We cannot do one first and then the other. We cannot imagine that the new Québec government, the State of Québec, would be the product of two governments, the federal government piled on top of the provincial government. That is not the society in which we want to live. The central government must have the powers of a central State, but should, in the context of a full State, leave those powers which were given to the provinces in the past to what are the proper places at the time, that is, no longer to the Québec government, but rather to the places closest to the citizens, in order to provide the best service.

**Mr. Brassard:** One last question, I still have a minute. When you say that the existence of corporations and regions should be entrenched in the Constitution, enshrined in the Constitution, there, I can assure you that I am a little concerned, because once something is in a fundamental law such as the Constitution, it may stay there for a very long time and it becomes difficult to change or modify. What would be in the Constitution, just a matter of principle? What would be entrenched in the constitution?

**Mr. Fallu:** The Union des municipalités proposes the creation of a charter of local communities. Yes, this is one of the formal ways by which a society can acknowledge the powers delegated to the institutions it establishes. Personally, I am inclined, and we are inclined as

municipal council, to go up a notch, at least with respect to identification. So that at least for once the existence of municipalities should be mentioned in the Québec Constitution, at least for once, so that thereafter we can really refer to it. You know, under Québec legislation, at least the proposed constitution of Québec, the existence of municipalities, their geography, their powers, the daily exercise of their powers - I call it their daily liturgy - is defined down to the finest detail by the laws of the National Assembly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We shall now go on to questions from the members. We have about ten minutes and possibly three members will have a chance, Mrs. Drouin, Mr. Nicolet, and Mr. Beaudry. If we do this quickly there might be time for all three members, but in any case the first two certainly have a right to their five minutes each. If they would like to spare some of their time for others, so much the better. Go ahead, Mrs. Drouin.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I am very pleased to see what seem to me to be very positive points in your document; among other things you are presenting a concept which calls for consultation. It is a bit similar to what we are calling for in the school boards. You also speak of delegating powers according to area of activity, and you speak of possibly including the acknowledgment of the existence of corporations, including school boards, in the Québec Constitution, and you also speak of decentralization. It is clear that we currently have local authorities, you say so yourself, that do not have the tools required to act intelligently and efficiently. You provide examples, which I find very pertinent, when you mention that the municipalities have to wait for years for a bend in the road to be straightened out, and in the case of schools we are bewildered to see how much time it takes to get classrooms built. I think this is similar to what we think. However, there is a slight difference when, concerning what is to be decentralized, you place special emphasis on the area of education. You state that the ministère de l'Éducation would be reduced to a national commission, you make particular mention of the fact that, and this I find interesting, the financing which will be allotted to school corporations would be an annual grant, and that one could also have an independent line of credit which would make it possible to act in response to need and in continuing dialogue with the population. First, I would like to know, in concrete terms, what this independent line of credit would be for the school commissions.

**Mr. Fallu:** Let us deal with the issue of

need first. It is clear that the school boards must be able to act locally, build schools when there are none. We had a shortage of 47 classrooms at the beginning of the year. To be able to act in the area of training, and goodness knows how important that is, for what we are asking is that economic development mean the power to act in the regions, that is, regional development. Yet one of the main powers of action in regional development is education, particularly adult education, continuing education, vocational training. And we must be able to act and react rapidly, with industry in times of crisis, with social groups, with administrations of all sorts.

So the need is there. It is clear that a central State is not able to react. It only provides national standards. If we understand and agree on this need, we will be able to find the sources of revenue because it is obvious that with this kind of decentralization, property tax cannot be the only independent source of revenue, let us make that clear.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you. This is all for now. I will leave...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Well then, we shall go on to Mr. Nicolet.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get you to briefly play Lord Durham? If we go back to the context of 1840, he noted what amounted to the absence of intermediate administrative levels at the local level. Given today's context, could the same comment not be made? When we look beyond our borders, and I am thinking especially of European countries, where there are intermediate or local levels, there is always an experience, a structure and a geographical entity with a historical reality. I am referring to the Swiss cantons, the Belgian provinces, the German states, the French départements, they have a historical reality.

During the creation of the RCMs, the PQ tried to get around this difficulty by the concept of kinship among communities. By trying to create an administrative region, are we not trying to redo Lord Durham and thus create a new level which is not yet a reality in the life of Québec?

**Mr. Fallu:** What I was trying to say a few minutes ago, Mr. Chairman, when I stated that the regions have had a very short life, that they do not have the experience of our municipal corporations, or our school corporations, that they are levels which would have to be financed through grants; these factors lead exactly in the direction you suggest, namely that we do not have provinces in Québec as France does, or Italy or Spain or Portugal, etc. That is obvious.

Besides, in my mind and in our minds, management power will not belong to the region. We should remember that it will always be the prerogative of the corporation.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you. I have more to say, but I must leave time for my colleague.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaudry, it is your turn, and if there is still time, Mr. Turgeon will be next.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. First of all, I understand that you have opted for sovereignty. I would like to know if you declare your choice to be sovereign in your capacity as a municipal council, as a legal entity, or if you do so as individuals, or on the basis of a poll you conducted in your municipality. That is my first question.

**Mr. Fallu:** May I answer?

**Mr. Beaudry:** Yes, yes.

**Mr. Fallu:** All right. Well, this is the municipal council here before you. And, as a municipal council, we did not conduct any polls, but we know that the idea has taken root, is very popular. You may know that even the federal Liberal Party in our region, the Laurentians, has come out unanimously in favour of Québec sovereignty. Besides, for your information, they all resigned in a block, it seems, during their last congress.

**Mr. Beaudry:** All right. My second question is related to your fourth condition - Jacques Brassard spoke to you about it a few minutes ago - about entrenching or enshrining corporations in the Constitution. You speak of permanence and inviolability. In this sense, could you explain what you mean by the term "inviolability"? Are we talking about the geographical territory of these municipalities or what?

**Mr. Fallu:** No, of the institution.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Of the institution as such.

**Mr. Fallu:** Yes.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Do you believe that if the powers which you find as a delegation in the first paragraph of your conditions are not included in the Constitution, if these powers are not entrenched in the Constitution, do you really feel that, regionally speaking, your municipalities would have adequate protection? Because, as you indicated earlier, delegated powers can be withdrawn at any time by the central government.

**Mr. Fallu:** Yes. The existence of corporations recognized within the Constitution in terms of power, you will find in another paragraph the American concept of "checks and balances", meaning possible review on a continual basis, but formally instituted and not just on an occasional basis, and of course based on the experience acquired from the Québec-municipalities round table, but created as a formal government mechanism yet not included in the Constitution as such.  
(4:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Beaudry:** O.K. One last question, a very short one. You are suggesting that the Québec central government be significantly decentralized. You suggest that the ministère de l'Éducation be reduced to 200 persons and the ministère de l'Environnement to 100 persons, and these are only examples. So, if I understand you correctly, decentralization will result in a significant loss or reduction of civil service jobs in Québec City. What do you intend to do with all those civil servants, sir?

**Mr. Fallu:** Send them where they are needed. Put them at the service of the citizens.

**Mr. Beaudry:** So, you want to force these people to move and settle in the regions?

**Mr. Fallu:** Well, they are already, for the most part, in the regions, except that they are there at the service of a department. Do you realize that education takes place in the schools, in the field, and that everyone whom the government... I am not questioning the ability of our civil servants but rather our society's practices, and all those who are currently creating obstructions. Obstructions do not serve society.

**Mr. Beaudry:** So, you would empty the buildings if necessary, move these civil servants, send them where you think they will be most effective, move families, etc. in order to make your regions more productive and more efficient.

**Mr. Fallu:** Do not compare the State of Québec with what it is today. Think in terms of what it will be like as a new State, a central State, a State which, among other things, will reclaim powers that are now held by another level of government.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Why am I asking all these questions? Because I come from the Outaouais, and I want the civil servants there to stay in the Outaouais. If you empty office buildings in Québec City to send civil servants into the regions, my civil servants will be taken away and sent to Québec City.

**Mr. Fallu:** Mr. Beaudry, you will never have

enough, among those you already have from Québec, when Québec...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaudry, the third question before that one was the last. Well, there is time for one very quick question. Mr. Turgeon, if you will.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Mr. Chairman, I would simply like to extend special congratulations to the elected officials from Sainte-Thérèse, since I lived in the beautiful gateway to the Laurentians, as one might call it, for about fifteen years and am still a taxpayer there. There is one question, Mr. Fallu, that is still on our minds. Fine, sovereignty is a goal that must be achieved; but before that, how do we go about achieving it? Briefly, can you please tell us how?

**Mr. Fallu:** We have at most a year, I suppose, to do all these things at once. That is what it means for a society to be determined. We have started off quite well, the Commission is going well; in a few months, you will make recommendations to the National Assembly which will call for a referendum. Six months to put together a constitution. We know that these are completely reasonable deadlines. Other nations have done this before, why can't we?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So it remains for me to thank Mr. Fallu and the entire council of the Ville de Sainte-Thérèse. The Commission does not have the privilege of hearing from a city council every day, especially since it is we, who moreover pay our taxes elsewhere, who are asking the questions, and you who are giving the answers. So, thank you for this presentation. I would ask that you please leave the witness table for Mr. Roger Lemoine, who is the spokesperson for the Comité des usagers du transport de Deux-Montagnes.

**Mr. Lemoine,** you will want to introduce those with you and, as required by our rules regarding half-hour presentations, you will have five minutes to outline the main points of your brief, which the members of the Commission have already received and read.

**Mr. Roger Lemoine, Mrs. Yvette Lafontaine  
and Mrs. Hélène Robert**

**Mr. Lemoine (Roger):** Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Allow me to introduce to you, on my left, Mrs. Yvette Lafontaine, on my right, Mrs. Hélène Robert. All three of us are here before you to present a brief as residents of Deux-Montagnes. Mrs. Yvette Lafontaine on my left will explain to you how we are going to proceed.

**Mrs. Lafontaine (Yvette):** Thank you. Ladies and Gentlemen, we wish to demonstrate to you

today how our management of the railway network will undoubtedly promote the economic and industrial development of Québec. This brief will have three parts. First of all, I will give a short outline of the part played by the railways in the history of Canada. Mr. Lemoine will demonstrate their economic importance, and Mrs. Robert, in the third part, will present the disastrous consequences to the Laurentians region of cuts in railway services. Following this, we will be at your disposal to answer your questions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You will have about five minutes to do all that.

**Mrs. Lafontaine:** Yes, yes. In 1836, the first railway line from Montréal and Champlain was put in service and was used in particular for transporting freight. In 1867, the Dominion of Canada was born with its Constitution and in 1886 the first transcontinental train was put into service. At the turn of the century, the Montréal region was served by a number of suburban lines: Pointe-Calumet, Sainte-Gertrude, Cartierville, Saint-Hilaire by Canadian National and Sainte-Thérèse and Farnham by Canadian Pacific. Today, what remains of these? The Laurentians region began to develop with the coming of the railway, the P'tit Train du Nord. It was more than a means of transport for skiers. It was the catalyst for development in the North as far as the Abitibi region.

Railway transportation is being developed everywhere in the world, except in Canada and particularly in Québec. Sovereignty will restore to railway transportation the importance which is due to it. Only as masters in our own house will we be the sole judges. Deregulation, privatization and free trade restore to the regions the opportunity to develop their commerce along the north-south axis by increasing the viability of private and public business. The railway will be the best means of reducing transportation costs. This is a challenge to be met and Québec must be prepared.

In 1970, 668 miles of tracks were abandoned in Québec, 535 miles were proposed for abandonment and 107 miles were actually abandoned in 1988 in Québec alone because of operating deficits. Abitibi and the Laurentians will have to turn to trucking, substantially increasing their operating costs.

According to the Bureau de la statistique du Québec and Via Rail's report for 1989, for every 100 million dollars of cuts in Québec's railway network, 3 490 jobs are affected and the impact on the general economy is of the order of \$ 163 million, a multiplier effect of 1.6. We believe that the time has come to obtain the constitutional and political tools required and adopt the measures necessary for the aspirations of Quebecers regarding the quality of life. Thank

you very much. I now give the floor to Mr. Lemoine, who will speak to you about the economy of the Laurentians.

**Mr. Lemoine:** According to the data provided in the first quarter of 1989 by the Office de planification and de développement du Québec, Bilan socioéconomique des Laurentides, we find the following details for the Laurentians region. The population increased by 33 % in 15 years, between 1971 and 1986. The unemployment rate in our region is higher than the average in Québec. Average income per inhabitant is less than the Québec average. To this information we should add that there is an important railway infrastructure, an attractive personality unique to each of our RCMs, a collective awareness of our potential resources, a desire to capitalize on these resources to develop our economy and tourism. There are projects presently on the table: the use of the tracks for regional public transportation, restoration of the P'tit Train du Nord above Saint-Jérôme, the concept of a linear park between Saint-Jérôme and Mont-Laurier for possible transformation into a bicycle path and regional cross-country ski trail, and also a rapid train between Mirabel International Airport and Montréal and Dorval. All of this is threatened by the dismantling of the tracks in the Laurentians. The Québec government, the Corporation du développement des Laurentides, the mayors and the citizens' groups have brought pressure on Ottawa to prevent this dismantling. Unfortunately, the pressure has not yielded results. The tracks are removed and our projects are in danger of collapse. If we had a sovereign Québec, do you think that this would happen this way? We somehow doubt it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have to speed up a little, we have perhaps gone a few seconds over, but still it would be good if you could give the main points of your part.

**Mrs. Robert (Hélène):** While the history of the train is intimately linked to the building of Canada, present policies maintain the lines in the West. The abandoning of the tracks in the East - which will obligatorily favour north-south trade - militate in favour of a politically sovereign Québec. This is where the famous election slogan "Maîtres Chez Nous" takes on its importance. Therefore, to build a passenger railway worthy of the 21st century, to maintain rail freight transport adequate for the needs of our businesses and of our population in remote regions, to develop economical, rapid and efficient public transportation centred on the suburban line, we urgently need to hold the levers of political decision-making in our own hands. This is also true for other important matters such as full employment, self-sufficiency,

and the environment, which are fundamental concerns which only a sovereign Québec appears able to defend and act upon in the spirit of participation and solidarity which alone makes it possible to meet the profound aspirations of society.

Your Commission has received a mandate to explore all avenues. We think that only political sovereignty constitutes a response to our present constitutional problems, if only because of the overlapping of jurisdictions and the divergent interests of Western Canada, Ontario, the Maritimes and Québec. We firmly hope that your report will present a choice of solutions and that the people of Québec will be able, in total democracy, to choose its constitutional system.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now go on to the first group of questions. The Official Opposition will begin, Mrs. Caron.

**Mrs. Caron:** Mr. Chairman. I must first thank you for your brief, which throws a new light on a very specific area of activity, and this is an extremely important area, the railway network, since, as you point out so accurately in your brief, the history of the train is closely linked to the building of Canada, and the dismantling which is presently taking place in Québec perhaps presages the dismantling of Canada. You have very clearly demonstrated the need for a sovereign Québec for the proper operation of railway transportation and the development of its system. You have recognized the need for sovereignty in several areas of activity. Would you go as far as to say that sovereignty is necessary for all areas of activity and that all powers must therefore be reclaimed?

**Mrs. Robert:** When we speak of sovereignty, it is very clear that sovereignty is a prime necessity for all areas of activity. This is not something which can be compartmentalized. When we speak of a sovereign people, we mean a sovereign people, not half, not a tenth. I think that I have already seen somewhere, where they were talking about pregnant women among other things, that you can't be a little bit pregnant. Either you are or you aren't. Sovereignty is like that. Of course, afterwards we can talk about arrangements, exchanges, participation with neighbours in order to have a better way of life, but the fact remains that our society must be sovereign.

**Mrs. Caron:** Now, since this position is very clear, I will return to the matter of the railway system: do you think that the railway and highway systems that Québec has developed with the United States within the Canadian federation are adequate and sufficient and in a free trade framework, what would you wish for in a

sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Lemoine:** Well, the neoconservative policies of the early 1980s have shown one thing: that trade must increasingly take place in a north-south direction. We have an existing railway infrastructure which could be used if we were able to keep it, on the one hand, and to subsidize it so that it could become an efficient means of conducting trade between the North and the South, on the other hand. A sovereign Québec would first allow us to keep our tracks, which is not the case in Québec. We know that there are subsidies to the West which mean that their tracks stay, but in the East there are cuts, and in Québec, we have seen, the cuts are large-scale. So, if we do not have the leverage to keep these tracks, an important tool is lost.

**Mrs. Caron:** So you consider that you have in fact lost many tools under the federal system. I would like you to give us more details, for the benefit of those listening to us, of how the decisions of the National Transportation Agency of Canada, the federal agency, serve the economic interests of the regions of Québec and of their businesses.

**Mr. Lemoine:** Well. The new National Transportation Agency of Canada allows companies to make cuts much more easily than in the past. Now, they no longer have to prove that their service is financially viable. They only have to say that it is financially viable and given that they are entitled to cut 4 % of their total system annually, well, they do it where they can. It is in the East and in Québec that this is done and the consequences are dramatic, in particular for Montréal: direct and indirect job cuts, loss of an infrastructure which could be used. We saw it in the brief that was presented to you, there are many projects in our Laurentians region which will collapse if these tracks are actually removed. As we do not have the means to keep them, well, this business is pretty dramatic. And the Québec government itself, through its Minister of Transport, has brought pressure several times on Ottawa to prevent this dismantling. The result: it continues, the dismantling continues.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now go on to the Government party, Mr. Bergeron.

**Mr. Bergeron:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lemoine, my first question, I would like to know: how can sovereignty play a role in public transportation?

**Mr. Lemoine:** Mr. Bergeron, you are the member for Deux-Montagnes. You know as well as I do that the Laurentians are crisscrossed by two main networks, CN and CP. You know that

to go, for example, from Oka, which you are very familiar with, to Saint-Jérôme presently takes something like six hours. It costs us nearly \$ 14 for a round trip, while by car, it takes one hour for a round trip. You have an infrastructure which would make it possible to develop a really efficient public transportation system using the suburban trains and bus services.

(4:45 p.m.)

Moreover, the Corporation de développement des Laurentides and suburban mayors... and you are a former mayor of Deux-Montagnes; you know as well as I do that this would make it possible to develop something. Now, CN and CP are under federal control. So if they want to make cuts, we cannot do anything about it. And if they cut these lines, well, that is a major tool, the tracks, which in this case we are losing, and we are thus deprived of important regional public transportation.

**Mr. Bergeron:** Now, your point of view greatly surprises me. Because I have been working with you for 10 years on public transportation, particularly on the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes line, on its modernization. I have been working with you for 10 years now and, during the past 10 years, I have not heard you once, and I do not say twice, but once, speak to me at any of our many meetings, where we met everyone. You have never spoken to me, you have never brought up, except here this afternoon, the question of sovereignty for public transportation. We have been working together for 10 years, and you have never breathed a word.

**Mr. Lemoine:** Mr. Bergeron, I would respectfully point out to you that probably you do not read the newspapers or else you do not listen to the news. But each time we met, we spoke of the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes suburban line. You know why. The Montréal-Deux-Montagnes train... modernization drags on and is making hardly any progress. And you could have read about it. This is not the first time that I have presented a brief and, each time, I have spoken of the importance not only of modernizing the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes train but also of developing a regional public transportation system throughout the Laurentians. You know that as well as I do.

**Mr. Bergeron:** Yes.

**Mr. Lemoine:** So, I realize that the farther it goes, the more the federal government removes the tracks. The farther it goes, the more we are deprived of an infrastructure which is absolutely indispensable for regional public transportation in the Laurentians.

And I am surprised that you are surprised

that I say to you today that without this tool, which is indispensable for us, we are depriving ourselves of something which would make it possible to develop regional public transportation in the Laurentians.

**Mr. Bergeron:** In fact, you are avoiding the question. I have not said anything about what... I have not repudiated anything today of what I have been doing for 12 years. What I mean is this: I have been with you on the modernization of the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes line and we are in agreement on that, we have worked on that. There has never been any question of sovereignty. The only goal we sought was the development of the Lower Laurentians through modernization of the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes line. When we met, we never said, we are on the CN line and we should not be concerned with that, it is federal. That has never happened in the discussions. On the contrary, we had only one goal - and we are prepared to make it a reality by 1992-1993 - the modernization of the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes line. And you never objected, saying we were on the CN line, which belongs to Ottawa. Listen, perhaps I have a short memory, but this, I have never heard of it in my life.

**Mr. Lemoine:** Mr. Bergeron, are you attempting to make political capital here or what?

**Mr. Bergeron:** Absolutely not. I do not need any. I am sitting...

**Mr. Lemoine:** Each time we have met, Mr. Bergeron - we have met three or four times, to my knowledge - we have spoken of the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes train, period. We have never spoken of political options and...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Guy Bélanger?

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** You are speaking of political capital. I would like to intervene because here, I think that this is becoming a little indecent. When I am told that the future of Québec depends... Whether we need sovereignty to have trains or not, I am sorry, but all our discussions are being derailed. And I have shown respect for everyone who has come before us so far, but here, today, I've had it, I'm not willing to be taken for a ride. There is a limit to propaganda and all that. I am getting off here.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You are being taken for a ride with or without a rail line, Mr. Bélanger?

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** I have had enough.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So we... No, unfortunately. Time is up. I will check. Is time... Ah! you still have half a minute, we will say one minute to round it off.

**Mr. Bergeron:** Very well. Very quickly, Mr. Lemoine, "Maîtres Chez Nous," sovereignty, so tell me what is the link, the relationship that you are going to make between the TGV that you want and the identification of a new constitutional system for Québec.

**Mr. Lemoine:** The TGV is a concrete example of what we could do if Québec had its own economic levers. You have Prime Minister Bourassa, you have the mayors of Montréal and of Québec City, not to mention all the citizens' groups and others who have already said, who are working hard so that the TGV can serve as a vehicle for Quebecers to travel from one end of our territory to the other.

**Mr. Bergeron:** And the...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Fine, we will now go on to Mr. Hogue, who will be followed by Mr. Larose.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Lemoine:** Who said no to all that? It was Ottawa.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I beg your pardon, but your time is up. We have just said that your time is up. We give the floor to Mr. Hogue, who will be followed by Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Lemoine...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...time was up. Unfortunately, you are like many others: you have to follow the rules. Dura lex, sed lex.

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Lemoine, I would not like to make fun of your presentation, but I find it hilarious. Will your rapid train do the Montréal-Toronto, Montréal-Ottawa corridor or will it do the Montréal-Mont-Laurier corridor, your rapid train? And I am not being ironic, I only want to bring you back to economic reality. Once we are sovereign, with our sovereign Québec, yours, mine, everybody's, will we start to lay tracks, and have trains and buses and pollution from cars? What do they all have to do, as Dr. Bergeron said, with sovereignty?

**Mr. Lemoine:** It is...

**Mr. Hogue:** And my second question, and I

will stop here, you believe that there is only one solution to the problem of overlapping, that is, sovereignty, and you ask us to present the people of Québec with a choice of solutions. Do you see solutions other than sovereignty? Or do you think that the people of Québec will come up with solutions other than sovereignty?

**Mr. Lemoine:** Listen, I will begin with the second question, if you will permit me. We hope that this Commission, at the end of its work, will come up with two or three alternatives. There may be federalism as we know it today, although no one wants it any more, but federalism that is, shall we say, decentralized. There may be political sovereignty at the other extreme. Between the two, there may be something like a superstructure which should perhaps be defined. But once you have presented these two or three choices to the population, what we hope is that this population may, with the help of a referendum, for example, decide very clearly on its political future, on what it prefers as a political system.

As for the TGV train, obviously the TGV train must be run on the main lines and not on the secondary lines. Mont-Laurier is fine for the P'tit Train du Nord or for serving small businesses along the way. I do not see how the P'tit Train du Nord, for example, or the removal of the tracks can help federalism or the cause of Canada.

**Mr. Hogue:** But that is it, but you relate sovereignty to the tracks and the absence of the Petit Train du Nord. Is the P'tit Train du Nord financially viable or is it not financially viable? Would a sovereign Québec make accounting and economic analyses to verify whether the Train du Nord is financially viable? This is the point of the question, Mr. Lemoine, and answer it quickly.

**Mr. Lemoine:** Is viability measured only in economic terms? Are there only pluses and minuses that are adjusted and... Pardon?

**Mr. Hogue:** Viability is measured in taxes...

**Mr. Lemoine:** Viability is measured in several ways, and you know that as well as I do. It is not measured just by adding up the pluses and minuses, it would be too easy, otherwise.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, I am a little surprised that Mr. Bélanger took the bait. I would advise him to read Stanley Ryerson, who is not a member of the Parti québécois or a member of the CSN - who is an eminent Anglophone historian, who has written a book on

Confederation published by Parti pris — and who very clearly demonstrates that it was the train, the Seaway, transportation and communications that built Canada. So I find that our friends' demonstration is completely relevant and not propaganda; and indeed the highway system, in Canada, was built in relation to Canada. It was not built in relation to Québec. And if my friend Jean-Pierre is interesting in knowing if the P'tit Train du Nord is financially viable, I will ask him is the Autoroute du Nord financially viable? Is Highway 20 financially viable? Because money spent on the highway system, curiously, is not charged to each motorist. But when we put a tie on a railway, or we change a track, we actually count that. So, we should not get any more excited than necessary. In this sense, I find that in a sovereign Québec, the highway connection infrastructure could very possibly be built in terms of our development, not in terms of the Québec City-Windsor corridor. And in this sense, I would remind you that the ineptitude of the federal government, as shown by Mirabel airport, well that was the last straw. That was not done for Québec, that was done for Canada. And done backwards, pushing people around without any good reason. So I don't want people to get upset, and in particular I don't want people to get me upset...

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Larose:** And in this sense I find our friends' presentation entirely relevant, and I encourage all members of the Commission to travel with two suitcases. This is what I have been doing for weeks to read all the briefs. It is strange how many things we learn about Québec, and we learn it from the ground up, including from the railways. So we don't have to have the mentality of a rail worker to be on the same track, but we have to look at what is going on around us.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Would you by any chance have a question, Mr. Larose, after all that.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Larose:** No, well I had one, you have given me five minutes, I had a comment to make instead.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you for your discipline, and I won't encourage you to go further.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** ...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** With you have there, we can call on you,

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** It's not to show my angelic disposition, I'd just like to say to Mr. Larose that I have participated in the Montréal-Laval-South-Shore transportation plan, that I have studied the question of the train that Mr... from all directions, in all ways. I know the subject very well, I know its importance for this region, all that. But from that to tell me that it is a sine qua non and that... but the threshold of Québec sovereignty, I am sorry... But I find that this statement has absolutely no place here and I maintain what I said just now.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Almost all of you are going to invite me to demonstrate my knowledge of railways, but I don't want to, that would make the debate even more confused. It happens that we have come to the end. Perhaps we could give the floor to the group for one last sentence in the interests of conciliation, while maintaining, of course, what they have a perfect right to: a political option. But perhaps by accepting that it is not obvious that it is a result of the railways. You have the floor.

**Mrs. Robert:** I would perhaps like to mention, I spoke of it in my little statement just now, we seem to forget, well... We speak of economic viability, etc. Sovereignty is above all a way of thinking, a method, a way of doing things. And when we say, we have explored everything to do with transportation, we have looked at everything, it absolutely does not work. We have perhaps not asked the question which should be asked at this time. The people of Québec are creative, the people of Québec are capable of finding their own solutions, and the solutions which they themselves will find will be much better than solutions imposed by others or handed down by others. And it is in this sense, and in particular, I think...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think, madam, that I have to interrupt you now, unless there is something more urgent. I leave you the floor for one last sentence.

**Mr. Lemoine:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to greet our MNA and invite him to continue to work very hard for the modernization of the Montréal-Deux-Montagnes train. At any rate, I read in the newspaper, today or yesterday, that the Liberal Party is also becoming sovereignist. So perhaps, Mr. Bergeron, eventually, soon, we will be in the same camp and we will keep our tracks.

**A voice:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, now that everyone is on the same track, even if

we do not know exactly where it goes, we are going to decide that this part of the presentation has ended. So, it remains for me to thank you for this debate, which has been at any rate warm, or has given off heat, and to invite you, Mrs. Lafontaine, Mrs. Robert and Mr. Lemoine, to relinquish your places to Mr. Dean.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:00 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:02 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Order, please!

Mr. Dean, good afternoon. We welcome you. The day is getting on. It is already five o'clock. Mr. Robert Dean has submitted a brief. You have, for this half-hour presentation, exactly five minutes to give the presentation and I give you the floor.

**Mr. Robert Dean**

**Mr. Dean (Robert):** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, thank you for this opportunity to bring before you a few reflections. What I would particularly like to speak to you about is fighting unemployment and poverty through a policy of full employment and the sovereignty required to carry this out.

Unemployment is unfortunately a part of the history of Québec. Without mentioning the period of colonization and exile to the factories of New England, we find that, since the end of the Second World War, Québec's unemployment rate has constantly and without exception been higher than the Canadian average and higher yet than the rate in Ontario.

Today, after seven years of almost unprecedented economic growth, a long period of growth, the rate of unemployment in Québec has not gone down, or barely, below 9 % and, with the first stroke of the recession, it has already begun to rise and all that. After seven years of growth, the Conseil des affaires sociales et de la famille speaks of a Québec broken in two, of this poverty which saps remote regions as well as neighbourhoods in our large cities.

The economic, social and human costs of unemployment are enormous and unacceptable in a society which claims to be humane and modern. But this unemployment is not inevitable.

Other countries, small sovereign countries, have succeeded in maintaining a much lower, a very low rate of unemployment in spite of recessions, in spite of economic cycles, in spite of inevitable restructuring. They have done this by developing a common will to make employment a priority for economic and social development and they have undertaken a process of consultation which functions on a national, and in particular on a regional basis, and which makes consistent, rapid and flexible use of

government powers as well as macroeconomic, budgetary, fiscal, monetary, and commercial powers, industrial and regional development and measures in the labour market and in the areas of labour, vocational training, and income security.

In the present situation, such a policy would be impossible in Québec because of the two jurisdictions, of the two networks of services, of the two series of priorities, of the two systems which work against each other more often than in the interests of the public, business, workers and the unemployed.

Since the 1982 recession, there has been a growing consensus in Québec among economic and social participants that employment must be the centrepiece of an efficient economic and social policy which will assure the economic and social security of the people of Québec.

The implementation of such a policy requires speed, consistency and efficiency, which are unfortunately absent from the system of two states, two jurisdictions, two networks, which engenders confusion, contradictions and failure, and it is the unemployed, the poor, and business which pay the heaviest costs. Only the sovereignty of Québec can allow a concerted effort by government and socioeconomic partners in Québec to attain the objective of full employment, an objective which still brings dignity and hope.

I will make a few recommendations to the Commission but, in particular, I would ask you to recommend the holding, as soon as possible, of a referendum which would allow the people of Québec to decide lucidly, calmly and democratically on the future of Québec. I thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Dean. We will now go on to questions from the Government party. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good afternoon, Mr. Dean. You have brought us some points of view which are based on your experience as Minister of Labour and, from this point of view, I think we must pay a lot of attention to your remarks.

You say in your brief, among other things, that to meet these objectives, preventing unemployment, full employment, etc., it will be necessary first to have models for action regarding three facets, namely, macroeconomic stabilization and development policies, labour market policies, and regional development policies. In other words, with all your experience, how would you redefine for us these policies and the powers that would be necessary?

**Mr. Dean:** Macroeconomically, these are budgetary, fiscal, monetary, commercial, industrial development and regional development

powers. And on the labour market, manpower, everything affecting the inventory, training, placement, and relocation of manpower, income security, unemployment insurance, social assistance and even the Régime de rentes. Because, in a full employment policy, it is not inconceivable to use funds to be given as benefits in order to create useful jobs for people. Instead of not working in order to receive benefits, they would have wages for working. And this type of operation is impossible in the present system.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** From your point of view, you tell us that social assistance should be integrated into full employment policies.

**Mr. Dean:** Yes. Income security in general would be part of a system of full employment in that, if a person did not work, he would still need assistance, except that everything would be done so that this person would work. But if he had no work, the person would be entitled, as he is today, to income security.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** How do you distinguish in your measures between those able and those unable? And there is a category of population which is unable, for example, certain handicapped persons...

**Mr. Dean:** Obviously, those who... When we speak of full employment, we say, those willing and able to work. But I stress that the full employment countries have done an enormous amount in the area of protected workshops, for example, for able persons who are not capable of taking their place on the, let us say, ordinary labour market.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** So, if I also look at the conclusion of your report — because we have very little time for our questions — you say, in conclusion, that a policy of full employment cannot be attained within the confusion and contradiction brought about by the existence of two levels of intervention. This has also been demonstrated in training program policies, etc., that the two levels create... and that there was a great loss of capital along the way because there are too many people in the structure. For you, only sovereignty can settle this problem. Sovereignty is the only solution. Is there no other form of economic link with Canada which could protect these factors, for example?

**Mr. Dean:** I do not see any because, as the saying goes, too many cooks spoil the broth. Even in a hotel kitchen, there is only one chef. There are assistant chefs but there is just one chef.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Well now, I am going to keep some time for the end.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, you are keeping time for the end, Mr. Bélanger. We will now go on with questions from the other members, Mr. Claude Béland, who will be followed by Mr. Dufour and Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dean, yesterday we heard from economists who came to tell us that a sovereign Québec would be viable, could continue to develop and provide a quality of life for its citizens. Except that we were given two scenarios. One scenario saying: if this is done in harmony, all will go well, if, on the other hand, this is not done in harmony, there could be periods of turbulence and this could cause some temporary difficulties.

When I look at the presentation that you have made before us, it intrigued me a little because you say that for 35 years you have... I am going to read to you; it will be simpler. You say, I have known many people in Canada and in the United States. You mention all the sectors. And you say, all this experience has made me what I am today: a sovereignist Quebecer. This intrigued me a little. On the basis of this experience, I do not know if your phrase is aggressive or if it is in harmony. Do you, according to your experience... Because we are going to have to make a choice. The economists, yesterday, did not choose scenarios. They said, we do not know. You, knowing these people, do you anticipate, if Québec declared its sovereignty, that it would take place in harmony or in turbulence?

**Mr. Dean:** I believe that the people I have known, both among employers and unions, and in government circles, in the rest of Canada and in the United States, were, as a general rule, pragmatic, realistic and business-like people in many cases who, after taking rather strong positions, when faced with the facts, the details, end up adopting realistic, calm and pragmatic decisions. I am convinced that, in the context of sovereignty chosen democratically by the people of Québec, where we would have the courtesy to inform our partners elsewhere, I am convinced that there would be very strong voices, both in English Canada and in the United States, who would take the mike to say, Québec is independent. It doesn't matter; life goes on. I am convinced of this.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must first say that it was the title of Mr. Dean's

brief which attracted my attention: "Sovereignty or unemployment and poverty." And in conclusion, it says: "Unemployment, poverty and decline." I am sure that if we had the opposite title in a federalist brief, we would have been criticized. In spite of that, I have known Mr. Dean well as Minister of State for Employment, during the rule of the Parti québécois. I have always known him to be an apostle of full employment; so his thesis does not surprise me. And because he has had this power, and has had the opportunity to exercise it as well, I ask him the following question: If at this time, Mr. Dean, you really had what you are presently asking from the federal government, that is, the complete repatriation of the area of vocational training, would you still be arguing for the same thing?

**Mr. Dean:** Only that with vocational training, we would be a bit ahead but we would not have all the necessary powers. It is fine to have vocational training, but if we do not have some influence over interest rates or exchange rates, or budgetary policies, or fiscal policies which influence the labour market, which influence employment...

**Mr. Dufour:** Do you...

**Mr. Dean:** ...It would be very nice to have vocational training...

**Mr. Dufour:** What do you say, in short, Mr. Dean, to the 11.2 % presently unemployed in Québec, that in a sovereign Québec we will have full employment?

**Mr. Dean:** I say, Mr. Dufour, that in a sovereign Québec we would have the possibility of adopting a policy of full employment.

**Mr. Dufour:** Because, when you make comparisons with other small sovereign countries, it is still necessary to make accurate and relevant comparisons as well. You are very familiar with the industrial structure of Québec, which is an industrial structure, not only GM in the industrial structure of Québec, we have textiles, shoes, etc., which often have structural difficulties. We know very well, also, that there are labour costs, which are higher in Québec, if only because of the problem of transportation. I am not referring to increases in wages demanded by the unions. Transport costs, energy costs. There are real costs of labour in Québec which often create difficulties with respect to just this problem of unemployment and of full employment. Reading your brief, Mr. Dean, I think that there is nothing new in relation to what you were already calling for some time ago. And if there is anything, I would hope that you would identify it to help me try to understand the

subject.

**Mr. Dean:** This is becoming a dialogue between you and me. Of course, there are no new elements because we always come back to basic principles. Except that I have mentioned in the brief... There is a wide consensus which is evolving without assistance either from government or from myself, because I am not part of this process, because of my political colours. But there is a major effort by a number of socioeconomic participants who are exploring the question of employment in increasing depth, and coming to the conclusion that employment should be the economic and social priority of Québec. And that to do this takes a long list of government powers, which resembles my list.

**Mr. Dufour:** I end, Mr. Chairman, by saying that I in no way contest Mr. Dean's objective, on the contrary. I do think that giving a job to everyone in Québec who wants one, I think that everyone is in agreement with that. But we can't have illusions and say that because we were sovereign we would have full employment. It's not right to say that.

**Mr. Dean:** You are right and I did not say that. And that should not be interpreted from what I said. What I have always said was that a full employment policy is a policy. We bring together tools, equipment, and good will to work in one direction. This direction is to reduce the rate of unemployment, to restructure the economy, to strengthen the economy and to do everything necessary so that, eventually - as soon as possible - everyone who wants to work will have a job.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Dean, on page 11 of your brief, you have harsh words about free trade with the United States. You know that this debate - which was raised around free trade during the general election of 1988 - was greeted basically when it was concluded as a sort of victory for Québec. Since the rest of Canada did not want free trade, Québec, at any rate, most of Québec, if I may say, saw it as favourable to its interests, although there were people, including the unions, in particular, who objected to free trade. But there are many people who think that maintenance of the free trade treaty with the United States is a condition of success for the market economy that sovereign Québec will want to maintain. So, when you pass negative judgment on free trade, does that mean that for a sovereign Québec you would envisage a policy of cancelling or of maintaining the treaty?  
(5:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Dean:** No. I think perhaps... Besides, I cannot find my...

**Mr. Bouchard:** On page 11, at the bottom, the last sentence.

**Mr. Dean:** Page 11, yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You speak of it in particular in relation to the absence of retraining, which endangers the weaker sectors.

**Mr. Dean:** It is not free trade as such, Mr. Bouchard, which is the problem, it is the total lack of retraining and support tools for affected workers and of retraining and support for affected business. This is the problem. I am very aware that our Québec markets, more and more, are becoming oriented as much towards the south as towards the west. But free trade should have been accompanied by many special measures to assist business to adjust and also to assist in retraining workers who are the short-term victims of free trade.

**Mr. Bouchard:** In other words, you see a sovereign Québec as having to maintain the present free trade treaty in order to deal with the United States to obtain its extension to a sovereign Québec. And you see in the fact that Québec would accede to sovereignty and reclaim all its powers in the area of labour the very means of mitigating the negative effects of the treaty.

**Mr. Dean:** Of giving ourselves the best tools to ensure adjustment.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now have time for one more question from the members. Mr. Assad.

**Mr. Assad:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to raise the same question asked by Mr. Bouchard regarding your question of free trade. As a former union member, I am going to ask you... the effects of free trade, to date, we must say, this is not a secret even if it is unpleasant, have been disastrous, and I would like to ask you... you say rather that it is the lack of retraining programs and of assistance to industry and you do not place any blame on the fact that we hastily negotiated a free trade agreement.

**Mr. Dean:** Listen, perhaps we could have negotiated another sort of free trade treaty, but we are stuck with the treaty that we have. I think that I may even, looking at the employer representatives here, affirm that in addition to these measures of assistance to workers and to business which are lacking, the government which negotiated free trade has also maintained

and continues to maintain interest rates and an exchange rate which are absolutely aberrant for Québec's export industries. Besides, I see some of these familiar faces in the present delegation, and I'm not laughing because it's not funny.

I agree with them that it is another power which is poorly used, while everything we could have done to facilitate free trade, that is, control interest rates, keep the exchange rate a little lower to favour exports by our Québec businesses, in addition to our not having set up a transitional system of assistance to workers and assistance to business, means that, even if the treaty were a good treaty, we would very well risk losing out the way we are doing.

**Mr. Assad:** Mr. Dean, in closing I must say that, even with the mistakes that have been made, the deficiencies in federalism, free trade was not part of the option when this country was formed at Confederation and I hope that it will not become, later, when we see the total failure of free trade, another thing to blame on the federalist system, but rather a decision by a government which negotiated at the last hour to save its skin.

**Mr. Dean:** At any rate, the future is the future.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Assad, you tempt us to tell you about a famous Liberal prime minister named Wilfrid Laurier, who had certain views on free trade, but we will not because it is not nice for the chairman to do that, particularly when it is getting late. We now go on to Mrs. Marois and then we will come back to Mr. Bélanger for the end of his time.

**Mrs. Marois:** All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome our ex-colleague. I must say that I recognize him, that I recognize the quality of his reflection. Obviously, I also share the point of view which he is defending and this is the case with the members of our political party, but I would like, in questioning your document, to see the reflections on what you propose to us as a blueprint for society pushed a little further. That will perhaps also reassure the co-chairman of the Commission, Mr. Bélanger, who was concerned with the fact that blueprints for society, on this occasion, meant "payment of additional sums in benefits and in subsidies"...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That was before we no longer had any railways left.

**Mrs. Marois:** Pardon, I did not understand the beginning?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** That was before we no longer had any railways left.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mrs. Marois:** But in particular what I mean is that this blueprint for society put before us in fact suggests that we create wealth and then share it more fairly. That being said, one of the key elements of the plan for full employment is consultation. You do not speak very much about it in your document. I know that you yourself have had experience with consultation, particularly in establishing the first round table on employment in Québec. We are going to remember that. You do not say very much, therefore, about this element. Now, from my point of view, one of the major impediments to consultation is the federative system we are in. And I would like you to speak of that a little, from that angle, and particularly also taking into account a new element – and Mr. Dufour will agree – a new element in the Québec landscape, the forum on employment.

**Mr. Dean:** Yes, when we looked at the measures taken or the programs adopted in countries which have achieved full employment, these were characterized by very close consultation between employer circles, union circles, the government and the other socioeconomic participants, which makes it possible to settle a certain number of the problems which Mr. Dufour mentioned just now. In asking his question: problems of industrial structure, problems, shall we say, perhaps in certain exceptional cases, Mr. Dufour, of wage rates a little high because the patron is off his trolley, or the union pushed a little too hard, we agree, fine! But when there is a concerted approach by the economy and society, this makes it possible for the social partners... because there is something at the end, there is employment security and the sharing of wealth which comes with this employment security. If it is not security for life, it is at least a relative employment security which allows each partner to make sacrifices, to give up some of his traditional ways of acting in the interest of the common good, if you wish, in the interest of the nation, of the economy, and which may allow employers, unions and others to adjust their ways of thinking towards wishing to attain objectives which are mutually acceptable and desirable. In Québec, I had the privilege during a very short period, that's democracy, for a year I was the Minister of Labour, asked by René Lévesque to set up and begin implementing a policy of full employment. Our first step was to create a national round table, around which sat many of the people present here: union leaders, executives from the various employer groups, chambers of commerce, manufacturers' associations, Conseil du patronat, women's groups. And we had already begun, in the regions, to develop regional round tables on employment

constituted in about the same fashion. And in the little time available, before the election which expressed a change in the point of view of the people of Québec, we all noted that the process was well established and Québec was able to begin to speak as a family. Quebecers from all stations of life were talking to each other about projects which united all the factions.

After this election, there was one process which continued, a completely apolitical process which resulted in the Forum sur l'emploi last year. The Forum decided to continue its activities and this work of consultation among employers, unions, and all socioeconomic groups continues. There are businesses in Québec where union and business leaders have succeeded marvelously in the area of consultation, in seeking greater efficiency and greater productivity, in participatory management, different factors which make it possible to change traditional ways of acting and to act for the economic welfare, and consequently, the social welfare of the population.

**Mrs. Marois:** Do you believe that such a project would be possible from sea to sea, in a context like the one that you express or that you define?

**Mr. Dean:** No, because there is... Even at the level of Québec unions, we often have a very great deal of trouble functioning within Canada-wide structures. It is not for nothing that the Fédération des travailleurs du Québec has been, for all practical purposes, sovereign and associated for a long time, in fact if not in law. This is no secret at all. I think that, among Quebecers, we have already proved that we can do great things. And among Quebecers, with a common goal which is the economic and social development of our people, in a spirit of consultation, we are capable of very great things.

(5:30 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Guy Bélanger?

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Yes, so Mr. Dean, first, just one small clarification. You speak of sharing wealth. Regarding the question – I asked the same question the other day of the Conseil des affaires sociales, which spoke more of the creation of wealth, and I am totally in agreement with them – I prefer the creation of wealth to the sharing of wealth because when you are sharing a cake, it is not long before it is all gone, but if we set out to make cakes, we are going to have some for a longer time and for everyone. At any rate, this is a difference which appeared important to me, but my question is on another matter. And here, I show my blissful ignorance in this area, I admit, but,

when we speak of a policy of full employment – and take as target a region like the Gaspé where we know that unemployment and employment problems are quite chronic – how can we arrive at a policy of full employment in a region like the Gaspé considering – and I ask you the question in all seriousness – the existing regional disparities? There are regions where I see this as very possible, thank you, but there are regions where I have difficulty imagining it. I would like to hear your clarification on that.

**Mr. Dean:** There are regions which have farther to go than others, but I think in that connection that a policy of full employment brings together all those from the regions who call for a transfer of more powers and of resources to the regions. Who better than the region to know the region's possibilities, the region's resources, the region's possibilities? So, decision-making power with respect to employment, the labour market, regional development should be truly decentralized toward the regions so that regional participants can take development in hand and achieve it. And in reference to your question of creating and sharing employment, perhaps I have been misunderstood. A policy of full employment, by definition, attempts to increase collective wealth by productive and remunerated work, in order to share it with those who cannot work, but a policy of full employment also provides social benefits, because we speak often of sharing wealth through subsidies. A policy of full employment speaks of sharing wealth through a self-actualizing job, a useful job for each individual. If we work, we share in the wealth. If we do not work, we have to receive a cheque from somewhere. So, it is both creation and sharing, but not a sharing by cheque, a sharing through work.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Then thank you, Mr. Dean, for submitting this brief and appearing before us, for answering our questions and in particular for leaving us with the hope that by creating wealth, we will succeed in better sharing it by working. Working, which is a concept well known to the members of this Commission, moreover. Thank you, Mr. Dean, and I would ask you now to relinquish your place to Mr. Brisebois, who will give the last presentation of this afternoon session.

Mr. Brisebois is the mayor of Mont-Laurier, but he has prepared this brief and brings it before the Commission as a private citizen, since, at the time, there were still problems, not problems, but the elections for municipal councillors were still on in Mont-Laurier. Although he is the mayor of that city, his brief is personal. Mr. Brisebois, you have half an

hour – I was going to say like everyone since that makes several this afternoon – and you have five minutes to give your presentation.

#### Mr. Jacques Brisebois

**Mr. Brisebois (Jacques):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I would first like to apologize for some typographical errors and mistakes in French that I have just found in the brief I submitted. I ask your pardon, in light of the circumstances. There was a municipal election campaign, and I was working very hard, so I had less time to reread what I had originally written. And as the Chairman just mentioned, in spite of the choice I had of submitting it to the municipal council, I was unable to do so – there were new assignments for everyone, and also there was always one member missing. So, given the importance of the subject, I preferred to keep the brief in my own name.

I don't want to dwell for too long on the first part, which, of course, is theoretical, but it is an argument you have probably heard many times. But I think it is important anyway to review the essential points of this argument based on federalist practice.

Federalism carries its own contradiction within it, since the quality of statehood belongs simultaneously to the composite entity, the federal government, and to the member units, the provincial governments. So at the heart of federalism, essentially, there is a constant tension between the composite entity, the federal government, and the provincial governments, the member units. The composite entity, the "federating" power as I call it in the brief, must therefore apply a certain amount of coercion to the member units to allow its operation, survival, and effectiveness. And I think history shows quite clearly that the more power it can acquire with respect to the member units, the more this natural tendency is accentuated. Federalism is based on a strong central government, which ensures the legal precedence of federal laws. In any case, it has a tendency to ensure the legal precedence of federal laws. And this strong central government, to be exercised, must be able to count on strong nationalism. In Canada, this is where the crunch comes, since there is no Canada-wide nationalism that has ever been shared by a majority of Quebecers. There have obviously been Quebecers in Québec who supported centralized government, but I think a majority of Quebecers have always rejected this view of Canadian nationalism. The centralizing tendency inherent in federalism has manifested itself in Canada as much as it has in the United States and other parts of the world.

In contrast, the resistance of the member units, in particular Québec's resistance – since

the course of political evolution has allowed Québec to have its own personality and identity - has resulted in the situation in which we now find ourselves, that is, the impossibility for Canadian federalism to operate according to its natural tendencies, in the direction of centralization, with Québec as a member unit. And I think Québec is ready to exercise its quality of statehood fully.

I am going to pass on quickly to development and decentralization. I think another foundation, another *raison d'être* of federalism, in any case as the theoreticians of federalism perceived it, was in some sense to guarantee the distribution of resources and development throughout the member units. I think we cannot help seeing that federalism has failed in this respect, and it is even more evident in a region like ours.

Far from attaining this objective, Canadian federalism, as history teaches us, has tended, like all federalism, to become centralized in an easily identifiable region. In the east, the further we get from Toronto, the more we find poverty, a high rate of unemployment, and underdevelopment. Some 45 % of our population is inactive. Our rate of unemployment is consistently between 15 % and 20 %.

Who is responsible for that situation? Clearly, Mr. Hogue, I will not say that federalism is totally responsible for the situation, but I think we should seriously question the validity of a system that allows such discrepancies.

We are supposedly in an era of consultation and cooperation. Nonetheless, not a week goes by that we do not hear some new detail of the dispute between Québec and Ottawa. What are we to think of the manpower and employment policies?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Brisebois, the five minutes have passed very quickly. Perhaps one last sentence, more or less long, will allow you to conclude.

**Mr. Brisebois:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would still have a great deal to say, but I'll say anyway that...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The questions are going to give you a chance to say a great deal.

**Mr. Brisebois:** Yes, that's true. I'll say anyway that when you live in a region like mine - and we were talking a while ago about acting together, Mr. Dean - the Antoine-Labelle RCM is the 95th RCM out of 99 in average household income and 94th out of 99 in rate of unemployment, I'll say that as far as regional development is concerned, it has passed us by.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will go on to the questions now, starting with the members of the Commission. Mr. Roger Nicolet is first, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Brisebois, two questions. First: you make a statement and you haven't had time to talk about it this evening - but I think it is interesting - about the number of municipalities. In principle, I agree with you. I think any observer of the municipal scene is forced to concede that there are too many municipalities in the territory overall. However, I would like to hear what you have to say on the whole subject of population density in regard to the territory. Isn't it true that for a democratic way of life, a local way of life, to acquire its true meaning, there has to be a relationship among the people who live in that elementary democratic unit, the municipality?

**Mr. Brisebois:** But once that point has been made, I think there are examples, for instance in the Antoine-Labelle RCM, where there used to be various groupings: Mont-Laurier is an example, combining two municipalities which at that time had a population of about 2 500. I am also thinking of Desruisseaux, our neighbour, which was an amalgamation of three municipalities which today, I think, have become fairly homogeneous territories. Even if there is some distance, the people still are very comfortable with the arrangement.

The place I am thinking about, in the Antoine-Labelle RCM, and I know that my colleagues from small municipalities are not always very happy when I mention it, but I think there are municipalities with 300 or 500 inhabitants that adjoin and wind up taking part in a way of life with somewhat more scope than that low density would permit, and I think it is altogether possible and plausible to think of amalgamation without radically changing the face of Québec. I think it is altogether possible and desirable for amalgamations to exist. And it is a problem, I will admit, a big one. When I think about attending a day-long session at an RCM, where there are 23 of us around the table, with problems that are important for those populations, which are, if you come right down to it, quite small populations, this creates a lot of obstacles to the discussions, I think.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you. We could go on, but anyway... I would have liked to take up another section of your brief with you that you had no chance to present either. Like many other contributors today, you discuss decentralization. Isn't there - and this is another dimension of the debate that has not been brought up yet today - a natural limit to the capacity to decentralize, given the necessity

of ensuring a certain equalization, a distribution of Québec's resources at the level of the regions?

**Mr. Brisebois:** Yes. I agree, and I think the new division of responsibilities will necessitate an intermediate level between the local government and the central government. I have two areas in particular in mind: education and economic development. I don't think economic development can be the prerogative of local government exclusively. In any case, I imagine that, in a region like yours, it would be unthinkable for Mont-Laurier to be responsible for the economic development of the town of Mont-Laurier. They are too small, I think, and what is good for us, when it comes right down to it, is good for our neighbour. I think there is still a regional level, and I think the level of the RCM, the municipalité régionale de comté, has possibilities in that respect. It's the same for education, I think, and transportation. But education... You may have noticed, I was a commissioner of the Pierre-Neveu School Board for seven years, the past seven years, and in the division of new responsibilities that I describe in my little brief, I do not mention the field of education. That was on purpose. I think education could be assigned to the RCMs rather than falling under local government, simply because there ought to be some equalization, some... Programs still have to have a somewhat broader scope than what local government can provide. So I think that in the division of responsibilities, there should be an intermediate level.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is along the same lines as Mr. Nicolet. Mr. Brisebois, there are too many municipalities in Québec; we know that there are approximately three times as many as in Ontario, for example. I wonder what you would do to reduce the number of municipalities, knowing that amalgamation is extremely difficult and bitterly contested at present in Québec.

**Mr. Brisebois:** Mr. Beaudry, I would say that if I am talking about it today, it is in order to advance this issue too. I think we should try to convince people before making such amalgamation mandatory, but eventually I think rationalization will force a government that has the courage to do it. There is no magic formula.

**Mr. Beaudry:** It would be necessary to impose it, if I understand correctly.  
(5:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Brisebois:** Excuse me?

**Mr. Beaudry:** It would be necessary to impose it, if I understand correctly, if people fail to understand the necessity. For example the case you cited in Labelle: 23 municipalities for a population of 30 000. You consider this far too many, and I agree. So the existing government would have to impose its will and amalgamate these municipalities.

**Mr. Brisebois:** I think that in the long term it is the only solution.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Are you saying that in the context of a new constitution, it would be the ideal time, at the point we were deciding on a new constitution for Québec, for Québec to impose its will at the municipal level too? And a second subsidiary question, if you will permit me, on page 10 when you say: and all of this will be accomplished through a new constitutional order at both levels of government, Québec and the municipalities. Do I understand that you would be entrenching the principle of municipalities, whether local or regional, in a constitution?

**Mr. Brisebois:** I think that, yes, I would entrench the principle of local communities, in fact. As for your first question, would the time when sovereignty was being implemented be the right moment? I am not convinced, because there are many... I think there will still be a lot of work to accomplish, and the decentralization that is necessary. Because I think sovereignty will have to be accompanied by decentralization if we want regional Québec to develop. I am not sure that initially this would be a priority. But let's say that it shouldn't be delayed too long afterwards.

**Mr. Beaudry:** One more little aside, Mr. Chairman, since I have the time. You also mentioned on page 12 - and I find it interesting, because this Commission was created under the Liberal government of Québec... I presume that is your point when you say you want some breathing space, you need room to continue to grow because we have gone as far as we can go with a good government. Is this weeping and wailing directed specifically at the Liberal government, or are you speaking of government in general?

**Mr. Brisebois:** Mr. Beaudry, I think I will answer you in the following way. For 20 years - so I am including more than one government - for 20 years in Québec, public administration has been much better, much better than in the federal government. This is how I understand it, and I think one of the reasons that should impel us to implement sovereignty

quickly, very quickly, is the fact that the federal government is a bottomless pit as far as finances are concerned.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You shouldn't draw any conclusions from the fact that I left the provincial administration nearly 20 years ago.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I had left the federal administration 18 years previously. Perhaps there is nothing in that; who knows. All right. Let's go on to Mr. Maciocia.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Brisebois, your brief is a plea for Québec independence, that's clear, and it raises in my mind...

**Mr. Brisebois:** In mine too.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Maciocia:** In your introductory note, you say that, in light of the municipal elections last November 4, and the deadline you had for preparing and presenting the brief to the Commission, you had no chance to submit it to your municipal council, and that is why you presented it to us as an individual, isn't that right? Since November 4, have you had a chance to discuss it with the members of your council and to find out whether they agree with the personal stand you have taken?

**Mr. Brisebois:** That is what I was explaining in the introduction. I could have presented it and gotten it through quickly. I assure you that I am not worried about adoption of the brief by the members of my council. Except that I think I am... I wanted in any case to allow people to properly familiarize themselves with it. When you've just been elected, there are tasks to accomplish. There are legal formalities to be carried out. And as I also told you, there was always one member of my council - there are only seven, it is a small municipal council - one of the council members required hospitalization, so I thought that under the circumstances it was preferable not to do so. But I would also like to add, if you will allow me, that the population of Mont-Laurier, in 1980, demonstrated that it strongly favoured...

**Mr. Maciocia:** Yes, I know, sir, you described it in your brief, that 60 % of your fellow citizens voted yes in 1980.

**Mr. Brisebois:** That's right, in 1980, and I

can...

**Mr. Maciocia:** ...but we mustn't forget that 60 % of the population of Québec voted no.

**Mr. Brisebois:** I can tell the gentleman that...

**Mr. Maciocia:** But I would like...

**Mr. Brisebois:** I can tell you that if a referendum were held today in the town of Mont-Laurier, I wouldn't be afraid to try for 75 %.

**Mr. Maciocia:** But there are no grounds for doing so yet. You are saying...

**Mr. Brisebois:** No, but I can assure you of one thing, we are going to be working to bring it about.

**Mr. Maciocia:** You will be working for one thing, and there are other people who will be working for something else, Mr. Brisebois.

**Mr. Brisebois:** Of course.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Can you tell us, Mr. Brisebois, whether the decentralization toward the municipalities that you are presenting here is a proposal that is shared by people in the municipalities in general, or does it involve you alone?

**Mr. Brisebois:** I think it is shared. Perhaps taking out the paragraph on the number of municipalities, but in regard to a certain number of powers that should be assigned to local government, I think so, it is shared in part. I am not saying that it is as a whole. When I state, for instance, that in my opinion school boards should disappear and their functions be assumed by the municipalities, I don't claim that view is entirely shared. But there are elements, there is evidence in regard to roads, for instance. There are parts of it that I would put a question mark over. If you asked me about public safety, I would say that at present, public safety should come under regional government, not local government.

**Mr. Maciocia:** No, but this is still in a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Brisebois:** Yes.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Are you convinced that the municipalities share your opinion about decentralization for municipalities in a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Brisebois:** To judge by the last

conference of the URMCO, I think so, from what I heard there.

**Mr. Maciocia:** In another connection, Mr. Brisebois, at some point you say that a new constitutional order for both levels of government in Québec and for the municipalities will, after genuine structures have undergone refinement and rationalization, cause these bodies to combine their efforts to ensure the development of Québec. This is very vague. Could you elaborate on it a little? What exactly do you mean by "genuine structures", "refinement", and "rationalization"?

**Mr. Brisebois:** I think that in my introduction, even there I would have liked to say something about it, and you are giving me a chance, which I'm very glad of, obviously. I have spoken of the number of municipalities, that's one example, but I am also thinking about duplication, about the indescribable jumble of structures that litter the landscape: it's unbelievable.

Duplicate manpower centres, unemployment insurance, social welfare, I think Mr. Dean spoke of a full employment policy. There should be synergy. Things are divided that should be indivisible. I'm convinced. There is so much in education and vocational training, everybody has a finger in the pie, and eventually everyone, according to the divergent interests of the whole territory... but there is never any consistency in thinking, there are never any development strategies, there are no job development strategies, and I think there will have to be some refinement of organizations and structures.

**Mr. Maciocia:** If we brought back...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time has just about run out. Perhaps one more quick question, seeing that it's the end of the day.

**Mr. Maciocia:** That means that if we brought back certain powers to Québec, such as manpower, vocational training, and, for example, immigration, education, as well as others, you would agree anyway that Québec could remain within a renewed federalism with repatriation of those powers.

**Mr. Brisebois:** And I say that to work, federalism needs a very strong central government. I don't think that in Canada, if Québec is a partner in a decentralized federalism, well, I don't believe in it, in a decentralized federalism. I say that a strong central government may suit English Canada. I don't have anything against that; they will decide what they want to do with their institutions, but it can't work with Québec as a

partner.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The floor belongs to Mr. Léonard, for the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Léonard:** I would just like to return to what Mr. Maciocia said about making sure what people in the territory are thinking. I think there is a way to do that, namely to hold a referendum after this Commission has completed its task. I suppose that you could advise us whether you agree with that, and when you would anticipate it? As soon as possible after the work of the Commission is finished?

**Mr. Brisebois:** That's right.

**Mr. Léonard:** I would like to hear what you have to say on what you asserted, that federalism is by its very nature centralizing, a centralizing system. And I think you... And that it requires a common desire on the part of its citizens to live together. I think these two main points in your exposition, which was very well constructed intellectually... I would ask you that, I would remind you of it, that you said in your own words, because as far as I understand, you are expressing the same thing that was expressed by a well-known constitutional expert, who has become a minister, and who wrote the following in a book, page 58, volume I: "There remains a fundamental principle of federalism, according to which the national interest of the federation can always take precedence over the interests of a region, a member State, or a constituent nation." It was Mr. Gil Rémillard in *Le fédéralisme canadien*.

The second quotation I would like to bring to your attention is on page 88: "Federalism is simultaneously a union of States and of individuals that must be based on an unshakable desire to live together. This is probably the prime condition for the existence of any federation." This is still Mr. Gil Rémillard speaking. And I think this is essentially connected with what you are saying.

**Mr. Brisebois:** Well, I haven't read Mr. Rémillard, but I have read certain other authors.

**Mr. Léonard:** He thinks the same way you do, if I understand correctly.

**Mr. Brisebois:** I read certain authors when I was a student in political science, theoreticians of federalism, and I think it's an acknowledged fact. And it is pretty much what I am saying in my text, when I state: to take shape and ensure the constituent community the cohesion required for its survival, it presupposes the action of a federal government on a federated government. And I believe that the consequence that is

essential to the success of federalism is the legal precedence of federal laws, a precedence that is necessary to maintain the solidarity that is being sought.

**Mr. Léonard:** I think, given these statements and the consequences involved for member States in particular... You also write in your brief that you want, or rather, that Québec wants breathing space. Can you set forth for us how eventually an independent State, as Québec would be, would have direct access to its international relations, to other countries, and how there would thus be more freedom than within a federation dominated by the central State?

**Mr. Brisebois:** Yes, to start I would say that once it became independent, Québec would not take off for the planet Mars; it is going to remain on the same continent it currently belongs to. So in terms of economic space, in terms of geographical space, we are still going to be right there, and I think we are going to trade and share things with our neighbours, whether they are to the south, the west, or the east. But in effect, as soon as Québec achieves sovereignty, I think it will be able to deal economically and politically with many more partners than it does at present, and in a more complete fashion than it does at present.

**Mr. Léonard:** On another level, you talked a great deal about regional development - I think you will have to answer me quickly - to you, is sovereignty a condition for achieving well-planned regional development, and do you think that if we kept two ruling states, it would mean entrenching the confusion that exists in regard to regional development policies?

**Mr. Brisebois:** I am totally convinced that it would, and I think... Decisions, first there is a principle that I firmly believe in: that decisions should be made as close as possible to the people the decisions are addressed to, and the further one gets from the citizen, the more chance there is that the objectives one is seeking will not be achieved. And I am thinking of the various employment and unemployment insurance programs. One of the problems we have in particular here is that everything is done according to norms, broad norms, except that when it gets down to communities like ours, where we are always outside the norms, they aren't applicable. So effectively, I think that in terms of regional development, there is every reason to discard that level of government.

**Mr. Léonard:** And you could certainly wait for sovereignty to be achieved before dealing with the problem of amalgamating municipalities, surely.

**Mr. Brisebois:** Yes, Mr. Léonard. Moreover, that was just one short paragraph out of several pages, after all.

**Mr. Chevette:** Before thanking this individual, for the members of the Commission, I would like to file a document on the situation regarding rail transport in Québec and Canada, to demonstrate that the subject was a serious one, and in line with Mr. Larose, I would like the members of the Commission to familiarize themselves with it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The subject is certainly a serious one. It must have been on the minds of a number of the members of this Commission, the connection between that subject and the necessary conclusion. It was not among the opinions of the people who have come before us, who certainly have the right to have them. The technical demonstration would have perhaps required more time than we have. Nevertheless, your document is accepted. Having said that, I can now thank... I think you are going to express the region's thanks, Mr. Chevette, which is why I allowed you to have the floor so easily...

**Mr. Chevette:** That's at nine o'clock this evening, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Ah! It's at nine o'clock this evening. We can't permit two epilogues. Ha, ha, ha! Then, Mr. Brisebois, thank you for your presentation.

May I remind the Commission members that we will resume at 7:30 p.m. The school cafeteria will be open during the meal period, and those of you who wish to have a more sumptuous repast will have a bus to take them to the centre of town and bring them back around 7:10 p.m. Is that right? Just about.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:02 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:38 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will resume our task a few minutes behind schedule, and since the meal periods are rather short, there are still several members who are not back in the room yet, but since what I have to say at the beginning is mainly addressed to our guests, to remind them of the program, the rules of procedure, and so forth, the members who aren't here aren't missing anything.

So we can begin. Let me remind you that this evening we will first be hearing, for a one-hour period, the Société nationale des Québécoises et Québécois de Lanaudière and the Société nationale des Québécoises et Québécois, région des Laurentides, and then, at about

8:30 p.m., we will have a half hour with Mr. Gilbert Boulet.

Gentlemen, if you would now please introduce the people at the table, and then, as you know, or if you do not know, I have the pleasure of informing you, this is a one-hour presentation, so you have 10 minutes collectively to present a summary of your views, which you can divide up as you like. Then there are 10 minutes of questions by the Government party, 10 minutes by the Official Opposition, and 25 minutes by members who registered with the Chair, with each individual allowed a maximum of 5 minutes. You now have the floor, and if you please, will one of the presidents introduce your group.

**Société nationale des Québécoises  
et Québécois, région des Laurentides  
and Société nationale des Québécois  
(SNQ) de Lanaudière**

**Mr. Coulombe (Jean):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce our delegation: Jean Coulombe, president of the Société nationale des Québécoises et Québécois, région des Laurentides, on my left, Mr. Guy Mercier, director general of the Société, and on my right, Mr. Michel Gingras, head of the communications committee.

Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, please excuse...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...please.

**Mr. Racine (Jacques):** Mr. Chairman, I am Jacques Racine, president of the Société nationale des Québécois de Lanaudière. On my right, Mr. René Charette, who is our director general, and on my left, Mr. André Lafrenière, who is in charge of the preparation of our brief.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Each of you will take half of the time, I imagine. Please begin.

**Mr. Coulombe:** Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, since time limits us, with your approval, let us review the essentials of our brief. In doing so, it is important to recall the wording of the preamble to the act that established this Commission, which says, in part, and I quote: "Whereas Quebecers are free to assume their own destiny, to determine their political status and to assure their economic, social and cultural development".

This affirmation moves us very deeply since it has been the foundation upon which our Société nationale has rested for several years in putting forward the idea that Quebecers achieve full and complete sovereignty. This freedom to take responsibility for its own destiny having been historically denied by the interventions of

several federalists, we agree that affirmation of this freedom, now, by the Québec National Assembly, gives us the authority to spare you the trouble of setting forth a principle that we have spent about 30 years explaining to the politicians and the other provinces. It is, however, important for us to declare that sovereignty of a people must be defined in an unambiguous way. In that way, we maintain that there cannot be real sovereignty of a people without a well-affirmed recognition of its territorial sovereignty.

We say, along with other parties involved, that Québec's territory has been requisitioned a number of times. Let's remember the powerful image of the Swiss cheese that Québec has become, when already in the middle of the seventies, there were some 5 000 parcels of federal land in Québec, comprising 900 square kilometres, not counting the space taken up by the railways and the sea routes. The city of Hull, alone, lost 31 % of its territory to the so-called national capital. So what happened to territorial sovereignty in all of this?

Mr. Chairman, we hope that this Commission enshrines three basic principles: that Québec's territory is inalienable; that a people may not invoke its political sovereignty if it does not have absolute and complete ownership of its territory; that a people's sovereignty assumes its right to establish its planning and development priorities, and exploitation of its natural resources and collective heritage.

If these principles had been accepted, we would never have witnessed such an excess, such an injustice as the case of the installation of Mirabel airport. We believe it is up to the Québec people and their own political institutions alone to determine the priorities and to set the framework for large industrial or agricultural socioeconomic projects, to name only these two areas.

In other words, we hold that Québec has a right to exclusive control over its development because of its specific character. If the other provinces agree to a concentration of decision-making in Ottawa, that is their right. For the record, this is a political choice that we respect.

Nevertheless, as far as we are concerned, we can no longer accept this duplication of political power which makes it possible for a decision of the central government to literally louse up a development plan that a province such as Québec had spent years putting together. Québec, for example, had no plans to build expressways 13 and 50, but the federal choice of Mirabel for the airport is forcing us today to bear the burden of constructing or extending them.

Let's recognize that Québec has given federalism more than a chance since 1867, over and above its efforts to find solutions to the

constitutional problems, its tolerance and patience, and even its humiliation, which found its expression in Meech Lake.

In our brief we have recalled the example of the choice of the site of an airport in Québec, by including the comprehensive opinion of an expert in aviation law from McGill University. Who does he say has the ultimate power to decide? By right, Québec. For Mr. McWhinney, it is clear that the constitutional aspect of a community's airport as an agent for economic development or an economic catalyst is recognized - in the accepted practice of all the principal federal programs of today - as being a concern of the decision-making power or power to choose of the local community, in this case, Québec. Thus, the main thrust of our brief is territorial integrity. What must we prove? Political science provides some verifiable principles such as: A people develops according to the cultural, social and economic choices it makes; this exercise is made possible by its sovereignty; sovereignty allows for choice and action consistent with the needs, expectations and aspirations of the people.  
(7:45 p.m.)

We are therefore recommending to this Commission: First, endorse the idea of Québec's territorial integrity within its current geographic limits; second, affirm the inviolability of this territory; three, demand the repatriation to Québec of all territory acquired or requisitioned by the federal government; four, formulate a proposal for territory-sharing with the aboriginal peoples, taking into account certain natural rights conferred on them as ancestral peoples; five, propose adoption of the thesis of Québec's political and territorial sovereignty to the National Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we salute the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec and the legislators who, in creating it, have given us the opportunity to speak as a society with deep roots in the Québec countryside.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have only very little time remaining, Mr. Racine, but nevertheless, I'll give you the floor for one and a half minutes, if possible.

**Mr. Racine:** Very well. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the Société nationale des Québécois, which I have the good fortune to be the president of, chose for its theme, culture and communications. And we wanted, throughout our brief, to emphasize the urgent need for Québec to become sovereign so that its people could achieve their full potential in culture and communications. I think that since the beginning, the clarity of the proposals of the Société in the Lanaudière region has been its main characteristic. We know that the

Saint-Jean-Baptiste societies were originally founded to promote and defend the French language in Québec. Through time, discussions being politicized, for over 20 years now we have been advocating full and complete sovereignty for Québec... and the clarity, the consistency of our proposals has no doubt merited us a certain respect in our region.

I must point out that in our brief, culture is taken in the broader sense of the word. Very broad. The broadest possible meaning. That is, it encompasses our heritage, all forms of expression, in short, it means the art of living. We know that for several years, by virtue of its majority, since the beginning, Canada has given itself laws and programs on the cultural and communications levels. This has become culturally unlivable for us and incompatible with our culture. The two cultures are completely opposed, as much in their way of thinking as in their way of viewing things. And precisely because of the precariousness of our position, precariousness that increases continuously within Canada - we represent barely one-quarter of the population - and precariousness above all, on the North American continent. We think that because of this, we must no longer allow another people, another culture, to be responsible for telling us what is good or not good for us. It's up to us as a people to decide these things. And this double jurisdiction that we've had for over 100 years has obviously caused more trouble than anything else. Often, this watered down the intended effects of a measure, of an act, and this gave rise to petty flag-waving that produced little for anyone. And it was probably and most certainly one of the causes of the cultural underdevelopment of Québec.

At the beginning, when Canada was born in 1867, the division was clear. Matters of an international or interprovincial nature were Ottawa's responsibility. The other areas, education, in short, all those we're familiar with, belonged to the provinces, including of course, Québec. But over time, and in the name of all sorts of principles, Canadian unity, the federal authorities took advantage. They took advantage of a war, of every circumstance, and every pretext was invoked to increase federal hegemony over Québec. The result is that the federal government deals with all sorts of matters which, from the standpoint of jurisdiction, are none of its concern. This has been supported by the Canadian courts and the Supreme Court, because these powers were not spelled out and not provided for in the Constitution.

It would obviously be a good idea perhaps, to make a brief tie-in with economics. A study shows that in our region, as, for example, in the Outaouais RCM, our families spend three times as much on culture as on any other type of activity, including sports. I think that shows the

importance of culture in Québec.

Lastly, as straightforward as it may seem, what we are asking for is full jurisdiction, 100 %, for Québec in cultural and communications matters. There is a very close tie between the two domains. My time being clearly up, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We can now proceed with questions. We begin with the block of questions from the Government party delegation and Mr. Houde is first to take the floor.

**Mr. Houde:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. With your permission it gives me pleasure, as MNA on the Government team from the beautiful Lanaudière region, to thank all the members of this Commission, and all those who presented briefs here today.

My first question — first to congratulate you for both of the briefs presented — as MNA from Berthier and parliamentary assistant to the Québec's ministère de l'Agriculture, I would remind you that Lanaudière is the second-largest agricultural region in Québec. As I could see from your brief, you have around 20 000 members in the Lanaudière region. I would like to know whether you number any farmers among your members of the Société nationale des Québécois de Lanaudière.

**Mr. Racine:** May I answer, Mr. Bélanger?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes.

**Mr. Racine:** Thank you. Obviously our membership includes people from all sorts of classes in society. We have professionals, we have farmers, of course, people from all conditions and of all ages.

**Mr. Houde:** In that case, were they consulted about their thoughts on your organization's constitutional position and its consequences for Québec agriculture, of the dropping of joint plans and other subsidies such as, for example, manufacturing milk. As you know, I think, 48 % of the milk manufacturing comes from Québec. I'd like to hear your thoughts on this.

**Mr. Racine:** First, I must confess that we have not consulted, as such, our membership on the content of our brief. Because, first of all, the time we had available to prepare the brief, to write it, and finalize it did not permit us to carry out that exercise. Second, I have to tell you, that the preparation of our brief respected, and I say, wholly respected, all the decisions made at our general meetings since 1969, because it's since 1969 that we have been recommending

sovereignty for Québec, and I have to tell you that our membership has doubled since 1969. So I don't think there are any big problems there. Second, also in accordance with the decisions made in our congresses, and respecting them, and with the decisions, of course, of the various boards of directors we have had. So, as for the representativeness of our brief vis-à-vis the membership, we have respected everything that our structure provides for. We would have liked, as you have probably rightly pointed out, to have been able to call a general meeting and consult our membership on this matter, but the time factor was against us.

**Mr. Houde:** I'm going to go back in greater detail to your earlier ground. The assertion that Québec is culturally underdeveloped is most astonishing. In fact, the vigour and originality of Québec's cultural life has been emphasized regularly over the past decade. What does the SNQ have to back up such an assertion? As you well know, Lanaudière is certainly one of the richest from the standpoint of culture. I would like to hear your comments on this point.

**Mr. Racine:** Mr. Houde, just because we have affirmed or think that Québec is underdeveloped culturally does not mean we are denying the cultural vigour in the Lanaudière region. They are not synonymous. It's not the same thing. And it's just this vigour that allows us to save what we have or to recognize what we have. I would ask you, Mr. Houde, to refer to page 10 of our brief, where we draw on a statement made in 1978 by Dr. Laurin, and let me quote only from the beginning of it because it's a little long. It says that Québec is a culturally underdeveloped society and asks when this happens. It goes on to answer, saying that it's when a group of people does not control its own tools of expression, does not have the powers that would allow it to make its own mark on its surroundings and in the objects it uses to live. It is more or less forced to consume the cultural products of others to the detriment of its own products, which then become relegated to the status of family or village folklore. And I could continue to quote his texts.

Let's take another example. We often speak of the provincial government's 1 % policy which, unfortunately, is not always applied. Fine, we, as a society, are not ready to put all the blame on the shoulders of the provincial government, irrespective of the party in power. We know that it's a target; it's policy that we share, but if the \$ 850 million per year, which the federal government commits to Québec culture in all its forms, was Québec's responsibility or was managed by Québec, I think that each government, whatever its political stripe, could apply this policy much more easily. At least it would manage the money to suit itself. Thank

you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Bergeron, I believe.

**Mr. Bergeron:** I think my first question, Mr. Chairman... It's a problem in which I was involved during the summer, the crisis with the aboriginal peoples. You are formulating here a proposal for sharing the territory with the aboriginal peoples, taking into account certain natural laws. I would like to ask you, you also speak of the percentage that should be allocated to them. The question I'm going to ask you is a concrete one. With all that we've been through for 78 days last summer, how can you think that we could arrive at a solution? And how do you see... What is the percentage that we could allocate to the aboriginal peoples?

Another point that surprises me a little - that will be the second part, you can answer at the same time - and at this time, this evening, you say that you are ready to give a certain percentage to the aboriginal peoples. On the other hand, you say that we put everything belonging to Ottawa since 1867 aside and that Québec takes back its sovereignty and its territorial rights.

So I have trouble understanding when, on the one hand this evening you say that we must respect the rights of the aboriginal peoples, and that you do, and that you are ready to give them a percentage of the territory, while in the same breath or the same discussion, you say that everything belonging to Ottawa, is out, we don't want it.

So I would ask how to reconcile this?

**Mr. Racine:** I noticed that you've been looking in my direction since the beginning. I assume the question is directed at the Société de Laurentides, because the proposals you referred to are in their brief.

**Mr. Bergeron:** Excuse me.

**Mr. Racine:** No, it doesn't matter.

**Mr. Coulombe:** Mr. Chairman...

**Mr. Bergeron:** For me, they are one, they have the same goal.

**Mr. Coulombe:** Mr. Chairman, and the gentlemen of the Commission... Look, I will try to answer your question, but I'm also going to quickly explain a few of the issues that affect us deeply.

It follows that the Société nationale, that for the Société nationale, recognition of ancestral rights is untouched. What we are saying, however, is that we wish to recognize the aboriginal peoples - because there is not

only one people, there are several even within Québec - we wish to grant the aboriginal peoples access to territories and to the powers necessary for their own development. When they speak of development of the aboriginal peoples, we know what they're talking about. They're talking about preservation of their languages, they're talking about preservation of their customs. They're talking about preserving some of their traditions. These peoples do not have the same collective or social configuration within Québec. Some live far from the great urban centres, others are close to much more densely populated centres. So, what we wish is this: grant them autonomy to do what is necessary so that their development is carried out with respect to the things they wish to conserve and preserve and see flourish. But we also wish to induce them to participate in Québec's development. And it seems to us that this is something that should be set in motion quickly through negotiations and this would allow us to make them understand what we are ready to do for them in a sovereign Québec. Autonomy within a sovereign Québec. And I'm not speaking of percentages; we don't wish to play the numbers game here. These are complex questions requiring the presence of specialists, etc., if you will. It's the principle that's important. From the moment we say we recognize the principle of ancestral rights, we are recognizing their autonomy with respect to territories and powers required for their own development, and we ensure that this is all possible within a sovereign Québec.

(8:00 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This exhausts the time allocated for this group of questions. We now go on with the Official Opposition party. Mr. Chevette?

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will take a few minutes and my Terrebonne colleague, Mrs. Caron, will, on the subject of territorial integrity; I will look at the cultural aspect with the SNQ de Lanaudière. I must tell you, Mr. Racine, what would have happened to you if you had been prevented from saying what you said here: your recruits would have dropped out, because it's almost 20 years we've been hearing you talk about sovereignty, of autonomy, of Québec independence, and I really think that those who joined you support these principles, which have been recognized for a very long time. I remember even sometime in 1962, with Marcel Masse, we used to walk around Joliette, francizing some of the street names. Well, that was then not now. That's not what surprised me; it wasn't at this level. I think that the Société nationale des Québécois is completely coherent with respect to your previous positions over a period of 20 years.

I would like to ask you several questions. I will take five minutes so as to leave five

minutes for my colleague. I would like to ask you what are the different perceptions of cultural development when we speak of Canada and Québec? First question.

**Mr. Racine:** It's that when the Canadian government formulates a cultural policy, it has the right to do so, and this right is recognized. We are not saying, for Canada itself, this is a bad thing. That is not what we are saying, but the Canadian government, what it does, is that first of all, of course, it aims at national unity. Often, it argues that this is on a national level and it divides Canada into four or five large regions and one of them is Québec. You also have the Maritimes, the West and Ontario. And what it seeks every time, is overall development of Canada's culture but with very large centres that are those I just spoke of. While Québec's perception is obviously not *ad mari usque ad mare*; it follows that it is a Québec perception. Except that in Québec we want to financially support or come to the financial aid of culture, not only in the supercentres such as Montréal, if you will. Québec also wishes to bring - Québec's policy, for a long time - to make its contribution to cultural development in its regions. If, for example, we find that a regional museum should be developed, it's the Québec government that is often concerned rather than the federal government, which has a much more national or supranational philosophy, if I may put it this way. And this is why we think that if culture was exclusively Québec's responsibility, the aspirations of Quebecers would be better met, not only in the greater Montréal area, but in each of the 15 or 16 regions we have in Québec. And each region has the right to its fair share.

**Mr. Chevette:** When you speak of sovereignty, at the SNQ you have often talked of international relations. What would be the international effects of political sovereignty?

**Mr. Racine:** Marvellous, Mr. Chevette. It would be beneficial in the following sense, in that the people of Québec, of course, have the various traits that constitute a people or a nation in general, which would enable it, first of all, to take its rightful place at the international level. It would enable Québec to make such treaties as it wanted, freely, with the peoples of its own choosing. Québec would not be forced into a subordinate status, for example, at the Francophone summit, treated as a nobody, well, perhaps not a nobody, but like some other province in which the majority isn't even Francophone. It would enable Québec to have its own place at the table.

This would no doubt also avoid the useless "flag wars" we're familiar with. It's not so long ago that we went through the wars over flags.

And Québec would perhaps be able to receive larger contributions from the other French-speaking nations and conclude agreements that could be profitable. The other Francophone peoples of the world could bring much to Quebecers, in the same way that, certainly we also... It's based on exchanges, and we also, I think as a people, we have something to offer the other Francophone peoples of the world. But sovereignty is not limited. Our relations, obviously, would not be limited to French-speaking peoples. No doubt we would favour Francophone peoples, but sovereignty is open to all peoples, including, certainly, Canadians.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you and I fully understood that agriculture nourishes our bodies and culture nourishes our minds. Mrs. Caron.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We don't know which one of the two you should concentrate on, Mrs. Caron, but it's a hard act to follow.

**Mrs. Caron:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I certainly thank the two Sociétés nationales des Québécoises et Québécois since Terrebonne is fortunate to be located in both their regions. You spoke mainly about sharing the territory with the aboriginal peoples. I would like a somewhat more comprehensive picture, in the sense that while Québec is, of course, composed of aboriginal Quebecers, and French-speaking Quebecers who are the majority, it is also composed of English-speaking Quebecers and Quebecers of various ethnic origins. Do you believe that a sovereign Québec would permit us to establish better ties between these Quebecers; more enriching ties that would provide for a harmony in the sense that together, we would have a single country and thus, a common goal?

**Mr. Coulombe:** Madam, I would be tempted to take 20 minutes to answer your question, but I am going to try to make it short because it contains many factors to be considered. On the one hand, would a sovereign Québec be better able to establish better relations with the ethnic groups living in its territory? Surely. Two reasons, two things. Let's take the language aspect by itself. Clearly, the message we are giving immigrants arriving in Québec is an ambiguous one. Do you agree? This is important. For one simple reason: and that is that in Québec things don't happen in one official language. French is not the language for participation in Québec society. And I will let my colleagues enlarge upon this aspect. It is more important in the context of Québec's current demographic evolution. We can no longer allow ourselves this duality of language, this ambiguity, a kind of formalized deception. That's number one.

Second, let's talk about relations with the aboriginal peoples. What message do the aboriginal peoples have, individually, and as a people with respect to the Québec reality and with other realities across Canada? They too are faced daily with this dual legitimacy. We live in a system that cultivates the fine art of power brokering, that shows us governments, particularly the federal government, stripping away, piece by piece, strategy by strategy, the power that belongs to Québec by virtue of the Constitution. This state of affairs is no longer tolerable. This is somewhat how things are in every aspect. We live with this dual legitimacy everywhere and it's completely obvious that the aboriginal peoples, and the immigrants who live in Québec are all confused, not knowing how to establish clear, solid, tangible, unequivocal relations with the Québec reality in its broadest sense.

From the moment Québec has a real identity, one that is known to the whole world, people coming here will know what Québec is, what Québec is about, how they can live in Québec and how they can participate in its development, because this is perhaps the only way to make them understand that immigrating to Québec is no longer like falling into the void.

**Mrs. Caron:** Thank you very much. In your recommendations to the Commission, what you are hoping for is adoption of the sovereignty constitutional option. At the procedural level, what do you think of a referendum?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'm going to suggest a brief answer, since the time is almost up.

**Mr. Coulombe:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** And I presume that this will not require a long answer...

**Mr. Coulombe:** Very short.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ... given the earlier discussion.

**Mr. Coulombe:** Very short. What is of prime importance, is the feeling that those of you around this table are sufficiently empowered to feel it your mandate to ask the National Assembly for a declaration of intent with respect to achieving sovereignty, and that it should be open to public consultation; it's a question of legitimacy, a question of recognition.

**Mrs. Caron:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now go on to questions from the other members,

each one having five minutes, starting with Mr. Deschamps.

**Mr. Deschamps:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would first like to reply to the questions directed to the Société nationale by the MNA Mr. Houde, which were questions related to agriculture. I can very well understand that members of the Société nationale could not answer these questions. But, as they were asked, and there was some doubt remaining as to their importance, I would just like to complete the information, and then end with a question, if I may.

First, concerning the survival of the joint plans that Mr. Houde was asking about. In the event of Québec sovereignty, the joint plans are in the province's jurisdiction by virtue of the legislation respecting marketing of agricultural products and, therefore, there is nothing to stop such plans from being continued or maintained, if need be, in a sovereign Québec.

Second, concerning the question of milk quotas; Québec producers have a quota that represents 48 % of Canadian milk production - and effectively, should Québec become sovereign, this issue of sharing could be disputed or at the least, revised, but this is purely hypothetical, because Québec is also an importer of agricultural products from the other Canadian provinces - and negotiations may have to be started between Québec and the rest of Canada with a much larger view to supplying agricultural and food products.

Third, concerning consultations, you were asked whether the producers in your region had been consulted, giving you permission, authorizing you to take a stand for sovereignty. I would like to remind the members of the Commission that a survey was carried out by the UPA, was published yesterday in the papers and - without assuming the final decision of the producers who are going to make a decision on this question during our next general conference in December - the results of the survey were still pretty eloquent: 72 % of the agricultural producers who replied were in agreement with a form of sovereignty or independence.

This is my answer to the three arguments put forth. I would end now with a question, although it has already been asked: Are you in favour of a form of referendum to follow the work of the Commission? I believe your answer was in the affirmative. And I would like to know whether, while restricting yourself, on the other hand to the fields of culture and communications, did you nevertheless look further into the economic jurisdiction and do you feel comfortable enough in this domain to voice an opinion regarding sovereignty?

**Mr. Racine:** To be very frank, I'm not terribly at ease in the sphere of economics. I am

not a tax expert or an accountant or one of those specialists in the art of making the numbers talk. That's why, moreover, if you noticed, our brief does not deal with the economy as such. But it does mention it. It mentions it when we emphasize, for example, the proportion of expenditures on cultural recreation as compared to other types of recreation. That's why we didn't touch on it. Because it wasn't the objective of our brief and in any case, we weren't interested. Not because the economy isn't important, that's not it at all. It's very important, and we have to talk about it. But, it's only that we were not interested in coming here to get involved in a numbers war, when there are very good specialists in Québec for the two - I was going to say, in the two camps - options, for the representatives of the two options, some very good specialists. There are some here around your table, who are able to deal with it much more competently than we, and without a doubt, much more eloquently as well.

(8:15 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Deschamps, this is the end of your time and permit me to suggest that... of course, you have the opportunity to use the available time as you see fit, but if you were making comments on the issues raised rather than answering Mr. Houde, it would have avoided giving an unaccustomed tenor to the proceedings. That said, merely because without saying it, we give the impression that some questions remain unanswered, and we don't wish to go on in that vein. But you are free to make any comments you like. I understood that you were making comments and not answering questions. Sometimes when you're Chairman you're a little deaf. We proceed now to Mr. Dufour, who will be followed by Mr. Turgeon.

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct myself to Mr. Coulombe first and then, I don't know, the... the one from Lanaudière. It's a comment, not a question. I too am very surprised that you used the words "culturally underdeveloped society" in your brief. I felt it was a misuse of the words. It happens to us all, but I have too much appreciation for Québec singers and songwriters, Québec artists, the people who make our culture to say that they are relegated to the status of regional, rustic folklore. I cannot accept this. All the more so since it is clear that even in a sovereign Québec, American culture or culture from Ontario would always be present in Québec. But this is not a question; it's a reaction, and as I say, often what we write goes farther than what we mean. It happens to everyone, even to us.

Mr. Racine, it appears, is more interested in economics, so I'm going to address myself to him. In the brief, you speak a great deal about

federal assets within the territory to which you refer. Obviously we can talk about Mirabel. My exact question is this: In a sovereign Québec, what is your option, what happens to federal property in your territory?

**Mr. Mercier (Guy):** Mr. Dufour, we are proposing that these properties, including the land on which they are built, be handed over, ceded back to Québec within its sovereign framework. Seeing that unlike you, we don't believe that this is federal property. It's federal property in the sense that under the old system, every citizen paid for that property through taxes, through income tax, and all the rest.

**Mr. Dufour:** If I understand you correctly, you are discussing sharing of the debt and the assets at the moment of possible separation.

**Mr. Mercier:** So well that when we look at the bottom line, it's not a question of exchanging money, it's simply a question of transferring jurisdiction and property.

**Mr. Dufour:** So, a balance between the debt and the assets.

**Mr. Mercier:** Assets that have been paid for by Quebecers.

**Mr. Dufour:** This morning, elsewhere, we heard another group from your region, the Corporation de développement économique, which came to see us with a brief and a survey, and which told us to opt for sovereignty, saying that we should admit that Mirabel and transportation, in general, should continue to be federal responsibilities. I have some difficulty in reconciling these two options, given that they come from the same region, from groups that have some contact, I imagine.

**Mr. Mercier:** I'm not accountable for... I didn't hear this morning's brief. In our case, we believe that at the start it concerns air transportation, maritime issues, that to reiterate, it concerns all the current forms of public services that would be initially transferred to the jurisdiction of a sovereign Québec. Even if it means that later agreements, for logistic reasons, for efficiency - but I say clearly "agreements" - are negotiated between the parties.

**Mr. Dufour:** Yes, but first you repatriate.

**Mr. Mercier:** We repatriate so that we can make our own choices as to what we could delegate or what, by agreement, we could administer together.

**Mr. Dufour:** OK. Then I'm right in sensing the disagreement between your group and the

Corporation de développement économique. Thank you.

**Mr. Mercier:** Which nevertheless... You will allow me, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You still have 30 seconds of your time remaining.

**Mr. Mercier:** ...Which nevertheless, because we are members of it, we know full well, has come out in favour of...

**Mr. Dufour:** Did you take part in the survey?

**Mr. Mercier:** Yes. And I saw the question on transportation. But we also answered that we were, as Mr. Mercier told you this morning...

**Mr. Dufour:** I respect your position.

**Mr. Mercier:** ...for sovereignty-association.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We continue now with Mr. Turgeon, who will be followed by Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Turgeon:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'm going to try to understand what you meant when you spoke of Québec as an underdeveloped society, culturally speaking. I understand that for you, "underdeveloped" means as compared with what Québec could be or could have been, given the extraordinary creative potential of Quebecers. And I think that you've touched a sore spot, because there really is a sore spot.

When you say that in communications, the overlapping jurisdictions, the jurisdictional tugs-of-war make us mark time, don't advance us because there are two levels of government... One obviously aims at national unity while the other aims at its own identity, and obviously, things have gone badly wrong for us. When Ottawa began to talk about national unity, that's when Radio-Canada, for example, stopped promoting Québec culture, and our journalist friends know something about that. They were told that they had to toe the line, otherwise... That's when they cut back, for example, on the foreign correspondents who could have brought us a Quebecer's view of world events and could have shown Québec to the whole world.

But no, they invested instead in correspondents in Saskatoon, Edmonton, St. John's, Newfoundland, who very often had nothing to tell us or nothing to show us but it went on just the same, in the name of national unity. What Radio-Canada had meant in the fifties and sixties in terms of promotion, development and spread of the French culture, was, I think, something extraordinary. We will never see the like again. But beginning in 1970,

the situation began to go downhill.

When Mr. Trudeau said, because we didn't understand national unity in the same way he did, when he said that they were going to tighten up, what he did, it all began there. But instead of tightening up for once and for all, they decided to turn the screw little by little, year by year, cutting back on basics and, even last week, they announced cutbacks of somewhere around \$1 million in the CBC French service alone.

That's it, suffocate us, slowly and cruelly; that's sadistic. So, my question: Are you thinking of this kind of thing - and we could say the same thing about the Canada Council, among many others - are you thinking about this when you speak of Québec's cultural underdevelopment?

**Mr. Racine:** Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Turgeon, we were obviously thinking about this aspect of the question. It's also clear, I emphasized this elsewhere this afternoon, that we thought about what we could do with the \$850 million the federal government spends for culture each year in Québec. This obviously includes the cost of television and everything. Never, never, never, and I want to say this loud and clear, we never, ever wanted to see the quality of our Québec artists, producers and writers relegated to the simple status of regional folklore, we never wanted to do that. Our organization, the Société nationale des Québécois, as one of its central functions, has had culture as a priority for several years, and we have even created two annual prizes for culture. And if we didn't believe in the worth of what is done in Québec, by our Québec producers, in any of the arts - it could be the interpretive arts, artists, and so on, it doesn't matter - we would never have invested the time and money of our employees and volunteers to make our contribution to culture in Lanaudière. And we would have been able to spend this money on something else. But we believe in the value of regional producers. Because, obviously, our activities have a regional character.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have some time remaining, Mr. Turgeon. All right?

**Mr. Turgeon:** If I still have some time left, I would like to ask you...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It's no reason for taking another five minutes.

**Mr. Turgeon:** No. I would like to ask: How do you think that a sovereign Québec will take its place among the Francophone countries?

**Mr. Racine:** In our opinion, it will take its

place in the same way as any other free, autonomous people. This answer may seem oversimplified, but I see no other alternative. It means that we must recover the right to represent ourselves as we like, without asking for Mr. Mulroney's permission: Do I have the right to put my little Québec flag when I go to talk with France, when I go to talk with the African Francophone countries, when I go to talk with the French-speaking countries of Europe? We now have to ask their permission, and if they don't agree, it's no fun. You know: you suffer the rebuffs and there's negotiations. You talk less than me and no more than New Brunswick, and... we put...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** And that uses up your time.

**Mr. Racine:** Well, I'm fed up with all this business. And so is the Société.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Bouchard, to be followed by Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have a question for Mr. Racine. In your brief, Mr. Racine, you were interested in the question of territory. I think that's a very nice idea... Mr. Coulombe, pardon me, it's a very nice idea because we learned yesterday, for example, straight from the economist Pierre Fortin, that there are people at the Bank of Canada who have started to study the scenarios for a common currency with Québec, and I think we can imagine that there are also people already at work on the question of territory, since...

You possibly saw an article by Eugene Forsey in *The Globe & Mail* a few weeks ago in which he asked the question about Québec's territory, of a sovereign Québec. And Mr. Forsey said that it wouldn't be necessary to give Québec the territory it currently has because it would be possible to subtract Rupert's Land, up in northeastern Québec, which was granted to Québec by the Act of 1912. So, I would imagine you've studied these questions because we see clearly that there is also a question of territory. Happily, Mr. Chrétien recently told us the good news that he wouldn't send in the Canadian Army. So we will be able to resolve the problem in a civilized manner, if it arises, but I wondered if you had analysed the problem because I thought I saw an allusion in this conclusion to substantiate the idea of the territorial integrity of Québec within its current geographic limits.

**Mr. Gingras (Michel):** Mr. Bouchard, if you will allow me, I can't give you much of an answer, because we really didn't study the matter very deeply. You speak of this part of the territory. We could talk about Labrador,

which also raises a lot of questions. What we perceive or at least what we became aware of in recent years at our meetings, in drawing up the plans for our future, is that legal opinion is very divided on this issue, very hard to clarify, and we would be content, at least for now, to suggest that the current boundaries as we know them be respected. We have already had trouble making the federal government understand that Mirabel, Hull, and other such territories belong to us, and I think that if we stand firm in this position in our negotiations with Ottawa, with a Québec government that has a mandate, we could clarify a good number of issues at this level. I think there is also — we were talking about it this afternoon — there is a way, here, of negotiating by taking territory into account.

**Mr. Bouchard:** I'm sorry that Mr. Dufour is absent because I was amazed that he raised the question, presenting it as a difficulty, the question of airports and parks, because we know very well there are international principles in international law that stipulate that in the event of partition, as would be the case after attainment of sovereignty, automatic rules have been established. Federal assets located within the territory of the seceding State become the property of the State that is becoming sovereign because otherwise, we would be obliged to go and get the part of the airports we've paid for in Toronto, Vancouver, everywhere. So, we leave them their airports, which we helped them pay for and we get to keep the buildings that the federal government built in Québec, also with some of our money. Next, we settle the problem of the debt. There's nothing so mysterious about these things. They are not scary; they are problems that have existed before in the world, and there are rules established for settling them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now continue with Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** It's along the same lines. If I understand your position, it is to approach the question of territory in the least contentious manner possible and perhaps to even identify some disputes that could be settled beforehand. Example: Labrador. Because it remains contentious for you. Have you thought about the question of the Saint Lawrence River and of the federal ownership of waters and the installations along the shores of the Saint Lawrence? In particular, have you thought about — I was going to say the balance of power — a certain balance of power that this gives Québec in negotiating all contentious territorial points? (8:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Gingras:** You're right, we are along the same lines. We thought about it by approaching it globally. Because what we wanted to do when we gave greater weight to the term "integrity",

it's that we didn't want the Commission or the public to lean towards a somewhat artificial sovereignty with all sorts of proposals for association, etc.

For us, it's clearly sovereignty with the existing territory, and that's inalienable. This is why we wanted to affirm it. Of course, the questions we asked even between ourselves — you can be sure we asked them before we wrote our brief — there were areas, territorial waters, the fisheries, and use of air space that will have to be negotiated, as is done in every country in the world, at any rate.

Currently, Canada has agreements with the United States on air space, on the fight against crime, on the seaways, etc. Why would we not do exactly the same thing with Canada, if need be. And by taking what you just so rightly said into account, Mr. Larose, about our bargaining power, of also having many assets. There are more than just federal assets when you come down to it; there are also the assets belonging to Quebecers, and providing we have legal recognition of what's ours — I'm thinking of the Saint Lawrence Seaway — we have bargaining power, and I'm happy the negotiator in you recognizes it.

**Mr. Larose:** We have not as yet heard from groups who studied every aspect of defending Québec's territory. Not only what is to be defended but the mechanisms we must put in place to defend ourselves. This is the question of the army, the question of air space to which you just referred. Does your society intend to dig a little deeper into such questions? Because I would say they're going to remain important, practical questions for a sovereign state.

**Mr. Coulombe:** Mr. Larose, look. In all honesty, we can't tell you we've started any very searching and profound studies of the various technicalities of the tomorrow of a sovereign Québec. There are areas that we could kick around for a long time.

If we talk about the territory question it's because our reasoning was very simple: A sovereign political country equals a sovereign territory. This principle says that a sovereign Québec has exclusive power to make its laws, to impose its taxes, and to sign treaties with third parties. So, every aspect of accords that could possibly come in the future will be part of this power that Québec will have to enter into agreements. But it's not a question of sharing institutions. This is the system under which we are currently living and that is so irritating to us. We want, first, to repatriate all the powers, the full panoply of powers, which will be possible through bilateral agreements with the United States, with Canada or with other countries. This remains to be done, to be studied. But I still think that those of you here

on the Commission, perhaps you also have a little in your mandate — especially since there are many around the table who have specialties in economics, international politics, etc. — it is perhaps within your mandate to formulate working hypotheses for such and such a face of a sovereign Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, I... you... Excuse me, finish your sentence if you like, Mr. Coulombe.

**Mr. Coulombe:** It's finished, sir.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Fine, I thank you and the Société de Lanaudière and the one from the Laurentides, I thank you for what you have told us. I thank you also for the tone that we were able to maintain throughout this interesting discussion. I ask you now to please leave quietly so that those replacing you for the next half-hour can take your place.

Mr. Boulet, we have one half-hour available for this presentation, which gives you, as agreed, 5 minutes for the presentation of the important points of your brief, which will be followed by a question period with 10 minutes for one group, 10 minutes for the other, excuse me, 5 minutes for the parliamentary group, 5 minutes for the other, and 10 minutes for members of the Commission, the other members. If you will begin, Mr. Boulet?

**Mr. Gilbert Boulet**

**Mr. Boulet (Gilbert):** Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. The concept of sovereignty has greatly evolved over the past few years in Québec. Symbolizing in the past a rampart of our language and culture, it has become more and more a reflection of our affirmation and our control of our destiny as a nation. This change in the attitude of Quebecers is illustrated by renewed confidence in our potential, the behaviour of the majority on our territory, and a new openness to the outside world and within our own borders. Sovereignty is a long process in the maturing of a nation comparable to the stages of life of an individual.

The search for identity from childhood to adolescence is comparable to the development of Québec culture. Gaining a skill as a young adult is like gaining control over the Québec economy. Gaining stability through employment, the young adult develops a network of contacts and relations, like the Québec government has always sought to do, especially through Québec delegations. Then he has a family, and acquires the means to manage its members; he has reached maturity, wisdom which for Québec is taking full responsibility for itself. Despite certain jolts, this irreversible process continues

unflinchingly on.

We must bear in mind and anticipate the stages in the maturing of Québec as a nation. A people owes its existence to an original, distinct culture which is constantly evolving, and open to mixing with other cultures. It goes without saying that we must protect the culture that Quebecers have forged over the years by drawing on our French and Amerindian heritage, confronting our American environment, and acquiring more and more know-how from newcomers. Québec culture underwent rapid development when it became dissociated from the religious aspect and opened up to international trends and other cultures. Today, Québec culture is no longer considered merely folkloric, rather it is thought to be upheld by a living language of international scope, with surprising vitality of expression, given the relative weight of our population in North America and our geographical location. We can now affirm that there is a distinctly Québec theatre, literature, film, and song.

The second stage in our development began with the Quiet Revolution and became very meaningful when the Caisse de dépôt almost took control of Canadian Pacific, the very symbol of Canadian capitalism. In this context, the coming into power of the Parti québécois in 1976 was much more a symbol of our control of our economic levers. Quebecers are now recognized, despite a bias that persists in the rest of Canada, as dynamic, efficient entrepreneurs who are open to the rest of the world. Québec, the land of small and medium-sized businesses, is better adapted to the new economy of segmentation and globalization of markets and, at the same time, can maintain its characteristic entrepreneurial style. Some of our small and medium-sized businesses have become multi-nationals: Cascades, Bombardier, Lavalin and so forth, and some, such as Hydro-Québec, export their know-how worldwide. More and more of our French-speaking Québec directors are taking over senior management positions in corporations like Bell Canada and the National Bank, which enables us to broaden our management expertise and our network of influence in the economic world.

Marked by General de Gaulle's stirring speech and Daniel Johnson's will to broaden our horizons, Québec patiently developed a support network with the governments of various countries and with international organizations thanks to the efforts of Québec delegations, among others. We have to admit that Québec entrepreneurs have now partially taken over, weaving a network of contacts around the globe. We know about Bombardier, Lavalin and Hydro-Québec, but there are scores of other small and medium-sized businesses that have dealings virtually everywhere in the world.

Now that we have reached this stage in our

development, as the majority, we are wondering about our demography, our aging population, our birthrate, our relationship with the minorities living on our territory, and our policies on immigration, an inescapable reality. Without full control of the powers in this sphere, it's impossible to develop a coherent policy for managing our population that will guarantee our survival in the medium and long term, while ensuring the harmonious integration of immigrants into Québec society. The present constitutional impasse is forcing us to make choices...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Boulet, we've used up almost five minutes. Would you please move a little more quickly to the conclusion.

**Mr. Boulet:** The conclusion consists of recommendations. I recommend that the Commission ask the National Assembly to lead Québec in the process toward sovereignty, by taking the following steps in particular: making a declaration of intention voted by the National Assembly and holding a referendum confirming the determination of Quebecers to opt for sovereignty; setting up general estates establishing a blueprint for society that takes into account our wish to live in French, to repatriate all our powers and that clarifies the objectives of our association with other sovereign states; setting up a commission of specialists who would prepare a constitutional text from the blueprint for society and organize a referendum that would affirm the constitutional project accepted by the National Assembly. Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We can now move on to the questions. We'll begin with the Official Opposition. Mr. Chevette.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Boulet, I'd like to thank you. I had at least five or six questions that I had wanted to ask, however, while listening to you, I changed my mind. I know that, as a citizen, you are strongly involved in many spheres, with young people, movements, popular groups, community groups, the SNQ. I saw you work for the economic summit. I also saw you work in 1980 for the referendum. The question that occurred to me while listening to you is: Do people still have the same reactions to sovereignty? As an involved citizen, what do you think?

**Mr. Boulet:** Well, as someone involved in this community, I can assure you that there's been quite a change over the past few years. For example... I just happened to bring a regional newspaper that has an article on the

subject. It's the regional newspaper of Wednesday, May 23. This article was researched by a journalist, Chantal Héту, who went to see people who had worked for the yes committee and people who had worked for the no committee. I think I can give you a few examples, on the basis of her results.

**Mr. Chevette:** Yes, go ahead.

**Mr. Boulet:** If we take the example of the present mayor of Joliette, the new mayor, Gilles Beaudry, who was a member of the no committee, it says here that he regrets having voted no because of the current position of the other nine provinces vis-à-vis Québec. That was printed on May 23, before Meech Lake. He says here that he voted no in 1980 and would vote yes today to the independence of Québec.

Another example is Gilles Ratelle, an active member of the no committee and President of the Federal Liberal Association who says yes to full sovereignty and yet he was a very active member of the no committee. There's also the chairman of the no committee, André Asselin, who says that he'd now be very open to some form of sovereignty-association.  
(8:45 p.m.)

So that's the way it is. And there are many more as well. There's been a significant change, even among people who took a strong stand on the no side.

**Mr. Chevette:** Do you think this change is due to the fact that the economic world has completely altered its approach since 1980? In 1980, you remember, the business world objected. Business people brandished their opposition, arguing that sovereignty was not feasible; but since then, several banks, the Mouvement Desjardins, and a number of important business people have indicated that sovereignty is viable. Don't you think this community is one of the keys to why Quebecers are now definitely in favour of sovereignty?

**Mr. Boulet:** Well, one thing's for sure. There's a new generation of people in business who see nationalism in a much more favourable light partly as a result of education... I think that the most important factor in the business community and in Québec in general is that people have much more confidence in themselves. In the past, we've been reluctant, unsure of ourselves. Now we've gained confidence in ourselves, we know we're capable, we know our abilities and our limitations. Sovereignty is no longer to be feared.

**Mr. Chevette:** Mr. Boulet, you're involved in the student milieu. Are young people wondering about the political and constitutional status of Québec?

**Mr. Boulet:** Of course they're wondering about it. Next Monday at Cégep Joliette-De Lanaudière, for example, a debate will be held among people of differing opinions. Mr. Duceppe will be there, and various people who... And the week after that, there'll be a referendum. But I think that, over the past few years, young people have become proud to be Quebecers; we saw this during the Bill 101 march. There were young people 12, 13, 14 and 15 years of age marching in the streets to defend our language. Whether it's conveyed through our language, the economy, or culture, all of these people, no matter who they are, are striving towards one thing: to affirm themselves and to have control over their destiny.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We'll now go on to questions from the members. Mr. Hogue, then Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just laughing. I said something funny to Mr. Larose. I said that if this kept up, I was going to be all alone surrounded by blue.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose wasn't laughing.

**Mr. Hogue:** But I'm not alone because I'm in Roch Lasalle's milieu. I'm pleased to say that Mr. Gaby Larrivée, the elected representation for Joliette, rushed to leave Ottawa so he could be here. I'd like to say hello.

**Mr. Chairman,** I'd like to take a moment and, if you'll allow me, Mr. Boulet, to stress the quality of the briefs presented today. I'm absolutely delighted. I say this with the same sincerity that my colleague Lucien said it the other day at this same table. I also note an extremely important difference in the speech and the attachment of Montréal and the regions. I noted this morning, this afternoon and this evening how calmly the two SNQ groups made their presentations, compared with the other group that seemed to get a little carried away. I must say Mr. Boulet, after listening to your presentation, that the magic idea of national unity has ultimately hurt national unity and bilingual Canada. I won't take part in the strong central State you spoke of. I think, and I'll say it again, that decentralization and federalism are not mutually incompatible. I understand that the French-Canadian or, as some say, Québécois community is tired, and I think it's a natural reaction. I understand the obligation of decentralization and that leads me to my question, because I can't comment on your... I'd like to go back to the first page of your brief and your allegory of the child. I would have placed the child in the development of a couple.

Then, at the end of the first page, I would have put: "Do we live together or get a divorce?" That's the question you raise: Remain together or separate; create ties or sever them?

You raise two questions, Mr. Boulet: modifying our parliamentary structures, or adapting our institutions within the current federal framework to our specific needs. My question is, if Québec has developed so wonderfully within the Canadian federal system, as you indicated in your presentation, why must this arrangement be changed? Why can't we look at the concept of decentralization which is not a... relic... I'm not a salesman. I'm not in the temple, I'm not selling. I ask the question because... The issue is emotional, the day is emotional. I ask a question which has an emotional logic.

**Mr. Boulet:** And I can answer it. The desire to have control over one's destiny is not necessarily directed against someone, but rather for someone. I think we've got to the stage where, to take full control over what we want to do... Listen, if I go back to the example of the child - it's like a child leaving home. The child does not necessarily leave home to ruin the family, or because he's angry with his parents, but because he's ready to do so. That's the point, but there's also... Pardon?

**Mr. Hogue:** But he comes back home at some point. At least for Christmas and New Year's.

**Voices:** Yeah! Yeah!

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Boulet:** And he can go home for Christmas and New Year's.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**A voice:** For a little tot of his uncle's gin!

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Go ahead, Mr. Boulet.

**Mr. Boulet:** He can go back to be with his family and still be independent. What's more, Québec has suffered from being in the federal system. In the past, we were reluctant, we had a complex so to speak... a little like the complex of a battered woman. That is... we were always being battered but... kept thinking, Canada isn't so bad. My husband isn't so bad. He beats me because he's had too much to drink, but he's a good guy. I don't think we have a battered woman's complex anymore; I think we've now decided to take control of our future as a

nation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** I'd like to tell Jean-Pierre that we'd have no hesitation in having a nice little tot of warm gin at Christmas in Ottawa or Toronto. I'd also like to tell my friend Jean-Pierre that his analogy of the couple doesn't hold true. There never was a marriage. That was fabricated by our grandparents.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Larose:** In that respect, your image falls flat.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I'd like to remind the audience that applause is not allowed: we are a Parliamentary Commission and by extension in Parliament. Go on, Mr. Larose.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Mr. Larose:** Parliament is a bit more slack, at this time of day.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Boulet referred to people who changed their political orientation between 1980 and 1990. That reminds me, in 1980, when the referendum campaign was in full swing, I still had two concerns. Generally speaking, businesspeople were of one mind, and taxi drivers... And it's funny, because for the past few months, I've been getting around Montréal by taxi, and I've been thinking that we certainly couldn't win the referendum with them; they're all against it, with very few exceptions. So, if the Liberals of Canada have to become sovereignists and the mayors who worked for the no committee change their opinion to yes, I think that we'll have to stop the work of the Commission before long. Because there will be an extraordinary consensus. And I can tell you that Jean-Pierre has already done half the work.

**Voices:** Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Is that your question to Mr. Boulet?

**Mr. Larose:** No, I'd like to ask the question... I didn't understand exactly what you do. You probably don't hold a unionized position, but I'm under the impression that you associate with a lot of people who do. Given the work you do in this field - and this is the question I asked the YMCA yesterday - isn't it almost like

a tonic or a psychological boost for people to have a collective project that they can rally behind? But what does it change in the everyday lives of people?

**Mr. Boulet:** My answer to the first question is yes, I am a unionized employee, if that makes you happy.

**Mr. Larose:** Loosely speaking, I imagine.

**Mr. Boulet:** To answer the second question, the real question, obviously a challenge enables a group of people to unite. But why do you think I recommended that the National Assembly ask for a declaration of intention?

Quite simply so that for once, without involving politics, before a referendum is held... the National Assembly, which means the representatives of the people, can test the waters and find out whether people want sovereignty. That's the purpose of recommending a declaration of intention. For once, without involving party politics, we may be able to judge what the people of Québec really want and ask whether they're for sovereignty or not.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you. We'll now go on to the last group of questions from the Government party. Mr. Robert Benoit.

**Mr. Benoit:** We've been holding these hearings for nine days today. We've visited four different cities. And we will have heard 100 briefs by the end of the day. You're the last to be heard tonight and I'm very impressed to see that citizens, people, have come not in a group, not in committees, but alone to give their point of view on Québec society as a whole. You know that our party, the Liberal Party, has historically wanted to promote things economic in Québec.

Now, there's a sentence in your text that I'd like to clarify before I ask my first question. You say in section 2 that when the Parti québécois came to power in 1976, it was more a symbol of our taking control of our economic levers.

I'm sorry, Mr. Boulet, but I can't agree with that. The Office de la planification et du développement du Québec was created by the Liberal Party. The SDI, a large organization in the field, was created by the Liberal Party. The Caisse de dépôt du Québec was created by the Liberal Party. Hydro-Québec was created by the Liberal Party, the Société générale de financement...

In 1976 and in the years that followed, the rate of unemployment among young people in Québec reached 23 % at one point. I'd like to put this in its proper context because we're here

to look at things in their entirety before a common decision is made in Québec. I think it's important to understand that it was not in 1976 that the Québec economy became dynamic, but rather in the 1960s under Lesage.

**Mr. Boulet:** I'd just like to specify... If you look at the previous paragraph, we say that the Quiet Revolution marked the beginning of our evolution and the Parti québécois's coming to power in 1976 was a symbol of our evolution. I clearly state that it began with the Quiet Revolution.

**Mr. Benoit:** I'd now... In section 1, you raise the question of how to protect the culture and people of Québec. You say that we're confronted with the American environment. I think we all agree with that. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal discussed the globalization of communication; it had something else to say. How are you going to protect Québec culture? Are you going to do it by preventing American television from being shown here, are you going to do it through promotion? How are you going to protect Québec culture?

**Mr. Boulet:** Québec culture protects itself. I say in my brief that foreign input is important. I live in an American territory, I cannot avoid an American influence. When I speak of the crossing of cultures, it's because we now have cultural communities that are arriving here and exerting an influence. In Montréal now, Quebecers are eating Indian, Italian and African cuisine. There's a cultural interchange taking place in our society, and I think it's important; it's important to benefit from outside influences, to assimilate them and develop something distinct, something different, something with a genuine Québec character. You can see that, if you want to talk about culture... There's theatre that's typically Québec theatre. We may have inherited it from the travelling circus, which drew heavily on improvisation and is a fairly unique thing in the world, but there is a history of Québec culture. It's borrowed from Europe, it's borrowed from the United States and perhaps it's even borrowed from Canada.

**Mr. Benoit:** That leads me to my next question. Following section 4 in your brief, you speak of the harmonious integration of our immigrants. How - and I ask this question of almost every group that comes here... I agree with you that it is important to Québec, especially with our population aging, and the birthrate... How are we going to integrate the 35 000 immigrants arriving in Québec this year? And there'll be more next year. How can we integrate them to ensure they're happy and can take part in the French-Canadian community?

Mr. Boulet: The first thing that has to be done, I think, is to clarify the situation for those arriving from other countries. It would be clear that the language of communication in a sovereign Québec would be French. All cultural communities, the English as well as the Italian and other communities, could participate, once it's made clear that we're in Québec, that the laws and ways of doing things here must be observed. I don't see how the cultural communities could not actively participate in Québec life.

Mr. Benoit: Quickly, my last question. In the last section of your brief, you discuss changes to our parliamentary structures. Are you thinking of a president here in Québec? Are you thinking of a proportional vote, what are you thinking of when you discuss this?

Mr. Boulet: The brief indicates that we have to start questioning things. As a citizen, I can't really go into these things, but I think that specialists could conduct the proper analyses. We must begin to question things. But I personally do not yet have an answer to that.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Boulet.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédanger): Thank you, Mr. Boulet, for your presentation. Before we end the proceedings, one of the members of the Steering Committee, who knows this area rather well, has asked me if he can say a few words.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank all the people who have participated today, including the citizens who came to hear these briefs. I think that the Laurentides-Lanaudière region has spoken loud and clear. I'd like to thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédanger): On behalf of the entire Commission, its staff and management, I'd like to thank the people from the region that have come not only to make presentations, but to attend these hearings. I'd like to remind Commission members who have come from Montréal and Québec City that the bus will be leaving shortly for both locations.

I'd like to remind everyone that we'll be resuming our work Tuesday, November 27, at 9:30 a.m. in Matane. I declare this sitting adjourned.

(End of sitting, 9:30 p.m.)