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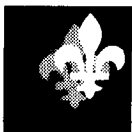
# ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

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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**

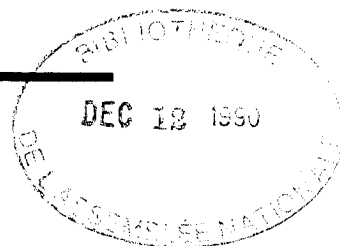
**Matane, Tuesday, November 27, 1990**

**No 10**

**Published under the authority of the President of the  
National Assembly, Mr. Jean-Pierre Saintonge**

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**QUÉBEC**



**Note de l'éditeur:**

Ce fascicule contient une traduction des débats qui se déroulent à la Commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec. Cette traduction est assurée par la Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation du ministère des Communications.

**Editor's note:**

This fascicle contains a translation of the debates being held by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. The translation is carried out under the supervision of the Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation at the Ministère des Communications.

Abonnement: 250 \$ par année pour les débats des commissions parlementaires  
70 \$ par année pour les débats de la Chambre  
Chaque exemplaire: 1,00 \$ - Index: 10 \$  
(La transcription des débats des commissions parlementaires est aussi disponible sur microfiches au coût annuel de 150 \$)

Chèque rédigé au nom du ministre des Finances et adressé à:  
Assemblée nationale du Québec  
Distribution des documents parlementaires  
1060, Conroy, R.-C. Édifice "G", C.P. 28  
Québec, (Québec)  
G1R 5E6 tél. 418-643-2754

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Dépôt légal  
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec  
ISSN 0823-0102

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Québec City, Tuesday, November 27, 1990

## Hearing of organizations and one person

(9:35 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good morning! I declare the 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 again be devoted to hearing organizations or persons that have submitted briefs to the Commission. Here is the list of speakers for today.

At 9:30 a.m., for 30 minutes, the representatives of the Town of Matane; at 10 a.m., also for 30 minutes – in fact, all or most of our briefs are 30-minute ones – the Université du Québec à Rimouski; at 10:30 a.m., the Table des priorités régionales de la MRC Rivière-du-Loup; at 11 a.m., the Association du Parti libéral du Québec des Îles-de-la-Madeleine; at 11:30 a.m., the Conseil régional de développement du Bas-Saint-Laurent; at noon, the Regional County Municipality of Témiscouata; at 2 p.m., the Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de l'Est du Québec; at 2:30 p.m., jointly, the Parti québécois Bas-Saint-Laurent/Gaspésie/Îles-de-la-Madeleine and the Parti québécois Îles-de-la-Madeleine; at 3 p.m., humanities students at the Cégep de Matane; at 3:30 p.m., the Comité d'action sociale anglophone; at 4 p.m., the Conseil de la culture de l'Est du Québec; at 4:30 p.m., Mrs. Éva Côté; at 5 p.m., the Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises; at 5:30 p.m., the Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent (CSN) jointly with the Conseil central de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine; at 7:30 p.m., the Coalition Urgence rurale; and at 8 p.m., the Groupe de recherche Éthos, UQAR.

As you see, we have a very full schedule, and I would like to have the cooperation of the members and, of course, of all our guests, whom we remind that, once their brief has been heard, they are to please go to the room next door so that we can proceed immediately with the following brief. So, our first guests this morning, the representatives of the Town of Matane. Welcome, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Maurice Gauthier, if you would please introduce the people accompanying you.

## Town of Matane

**Mr. Gauthier (Maurice):** First of all, on my far right, Mr. Gilles Bernier, councillor for the Town of Matane; on my right, Mr. Noël Blouin, councillor for the Town of Matane; on my far left, Mr. Armand Mailloux, Mrs. Aldéa Sirols and Mr. Régis Caron.

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

**Mr. Gauthier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, regardless of the constitutional formula that the people of Québec choose for their future, we feel it is essential that the formula take two aspects of Québec reality into account, that is, the role of the municipality in the future of Québec and the place of the regions in the economy of Québec.

It seems to us that the constitutional and political framework of the country must be a substantiation of our idea of the organization of its territory and the development of its economy. It must be such that its objectives are achieved. Do we want Québec and Canada to be an archipelago of large cities in a sea of outlying regions that are economically anemic? Do we want a Québec in which industrial development is concentrated solely in the Québec City-Montréal corridor, and in which the peripheral areas, whose population is declining, are abandoned? Or do we want a territory occupied and used on a continuum, making it possible for each region to achieve its full development potential on an equal footing with others?

As for us, who live in a remote region that has been dubbed marginal precisely because of its remoteness from the large urban centres, we have made our choice. In our opinion, Québec is more than the Québec City-Montréal golden crescent. Québec is not ancient Mesopotamia, in which all the wealth of the nation was concentrated in the magnificence of a few rare cities.

The role of the municipalities. It is therefore important, in constituting the country, for the powers and responsibilities of the municipalities to be stipulated in terms of the type of occupancy of the territory and in terms of their role as dispensers of services to the people, in order to eliminate the duplication of powers, which is still a source of inefficiency and, therefore, still costly for the people.

We are prepared to accept as a guiding principle that any public service that can be dispensed by the municipal level at a lower cost for equal or better quality should be furnished by that level when the service is dispensed to people directly, provided Québec and the municipal level have agreed on how to evaluate the comparative efficiency of the two levels in dispensing the service.

The municipalities must, of course, remain the creatures of the government, which is ultimately responsible to the public for services dispensed by the State. But the municipalities' responsibilities should be transferred under a

legally entrenched charter or general agreement. They cannot be transferred without transferring powers, notably the related financial powers. In short, we share the guiding principles set forth by the Union des municipalités du Québec in the brief it intends to submit to this Commission.

As for the place of the regions in the Québec economy, why does the regional development mission have to be entrenched in a constitution? It seems to us that, if we let only market forces work, the large urban centres alone will experience industrial development, draining the competence and brains, in short, the qualified manpower from the remote regions and leaving non-productive people to their own devices. This would have the net effect of reducing the outlying regions to the status of great national parks or reserves, a fate we will fight tooth and nail to avoid.

In regard to equal development opportunities, it is essential that the outlying regions benefit from customized development instruments. Without industrial development incentives, Québec's regions are doomed to have a subsistence economy, if not an economy in ruin. The past 30 years of history have shown that government action in the field of regional development in Eastern Québec has been aimed essentially at rationalizing and modernizing basic traditional sectors, that is, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. These were among the main objectives of the plan of the Bureau d'aménagement de l'Est du Québec.

But we cannot say that the objective of creating new dynamic activities, notably in the industrial sector, has been given sufficient special attention by the governments since most assistance programs have been for the whole of Canada or just the central regions, where industry has thrived compared with the peripheral regions. Here is the evidence. The industrial development of our region has still not occurred; without it, there is no future for our youth. This is an undeniable fact. This is why it is so important, in our opinion, for the question of regional development to be taken into account in deciding on the political and constitutional future of Québec. We believe it forms part of a true choice by society.

Less than the creation of a regional government, as the CRD du Bas-Saint-Laurent seems to recommend in the brief it submitted to this Commission, the setting up of a regional development board responsible for administering a special industrial development fund and composed of administrators from the region is of paramount importance.

The government in charge must therefore have the power to institute employment and investment bonuses specific to each region, so as to provide comparative advantages likely to influence the decision to locate industrial firms in the region, notably "footloose" firms.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, you will understand that our modest contribution to the work of this Commission is not based on the voluminous technical theses of constitutional experts. It is intended to be the precise expression of my credo, of our credo, for the future of Québec. A regionalist vision, you will say. That is true, but we do not live in the abstract. We believe that the development of the regions, the development of the municipalities of these regions, is the development of Québec itself, the future of Québec. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Gauthier. I neglected to mention the time allotted to each speaker. The Parliamentary group has five minutes for comments and questions, the Parliamentary group forming the Government and that forming the Official Opposition each have five minutes; the other members, no more than five, have 10 minutes and the Chair has five minutes.

The first speaker is Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier, who will be followed by Mr. Poissant, Mr. Sébastien Allard and Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome the Town Council and the Mayor of Matane. It is a pleasure to see that the mayors are involved. Since we have been in the regions, many mayors have spoken before the Commission. And from the start, many mayors have hesitated to take a stand for one option or another. In response to the question about what option they favour, they always say they are somewhat apprehensive about the future. I would like you, Mr. Mayor, to explain to the Commission why the municipal milieu hesitates to take a stand for one particular option, that is, independence, sovereignty or renewed federalism?

**Mr. Gauthier:** First, if we have difficulty taking a stand, it is because we truly represent a population, and it is the population that has to say: We choose this or that option. However, we recognize that the government in power has the obligation to set before us a formula on which our people will be invited to take a stand candidly. But, as municipal officers, we wanted to testify here today precisely to point out the difficulty we often have in regard to our place in any government. We have the impression that we are creatures of the government, not that we refuse this status, but we would like the position in which we are placed to be entrenched, as was said, in a constitution or an agreement, so that we are not pushed from pillar to post at the goodwill of anyone who comes along.

You are aware that we recently experienced certain things, and this is also a little what we have experienced in the municipalities for a number of years. So, at the good will of the

governments, we are given powers and they are taken away the next day, or we are allowed to have one type of communication with one level of government and, the next day, we are not.

It isn't that we are completely opposed to all that, but we would like things to be very clear, clearly stated, so that we can then act in a worthwhile partnership and be respected because these things have been established.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mayor, I wanted to tell you straight away that, before my company located here in the Town of Matane, through your efforts I had met with the environment people to evaluate the social climate since, if we are investing such colossal sums in a town, we want to know its quality from the start. I should tell you, Mr. Mayor, that, after the meeting three years ago, I was very keen on your town. I said to myself: it will be a good site for our plant.

But do you realize that if Québec had been an independent country – and we should be aware of this as should all Quebecers – under the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, we would not have been able to locate here? It is prohibited for federal States, according to what Ottawa and Washington have agreed, to give grants to companies that are to export products to the United States, which means that the Donohue-Matane project would never have materialized. That is important to know. Although it is said that free trade in a sovereign Québec will very simply mean that the word "Canada" will be replaced with the word "Québec" in the Agreement, it is much more complicated than that, Mr. Mayor.

This having been said, I really have only one question to ask you. It refers to page 6 of your brief, where you say, in the last paragraph: "For development opportunities to be equal, it is essential that the outlying regions be able to benefit from special, specific development instruments". What are the mechanisms you would like to have from the provincial government?

**Mr. Gauthier:** In reference to special measures or instruments, or measures that are the same for all the regions, I believe it is important to take the remoteness of the region into account. To be able to compete with a region like Montréal, companies like yours, Mr. Poissant, must of necessity have certain incentives that mean that you will decide to come to Matane, for example, rather than elsewhere. There are all sorts of incentives. For instance, what is quite routinely given to

companies like yours are tax credits, investment bonuses or similar things. I could also mention the possibility of share capital with the Caisse de dépôt, which is, in fact, one of Québec's instruments. Then there is Hydro-Québec, which could supply electricity at reduced rates. Since a plant can be located elsewhere, we are often told that, because there is no industry, it is difficult to get the necessary energy. It's a vicious circle. So these elements have some importance.

And just to remind you, I remember – and everyone else probably does, too – I heard on TV the statement of the president of a large corporation that located its operations near Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, who discovered, at one point, that he had had the wool pulled over his eyes, or something like that. We followed the events from a distance, but what struck me was the comment he made that it was worthwhile for him to force his executives to settle so far from Montréal. When you are 20 minutes from Montréal and call that far away, I don't know, when you think of Matane or Gaspé, how far away do you call that? There must absolutely be incentives, and I have nothing against that, and I am convinced it won't be difficult to accept such things under the Free Trade Agreement.

There is also the GATT agreement, which could, in fact, help us in that regard, that could enable us to have equal development opportunities. And the quality... Once you are here, Mr. Poissant, and other companies are here, you will see that the quality of our manpower, our job stability and all our other assets are not to be scorned. And I would like to say in passing that, before long, perhaps many others will flock here seeking a quality of life, a healthy environment, which may become rare commodities. But, in the meantime, this hasn't happened. Our population is declining and there are very few of us to fight for the development of our region because our best elements have left.

**Mr. Poissant:** Do I have a second, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No. I'm very sorry, Mr. Poissant. Mr. Sébastien Allard now has the floor.

**Mr. Allard:** Mr. Gauthier, you mentioned in your brief... at least you alluded to the creation of a regional government, advocated by another organization. You say: It isn't necessarily that, but we need something that could be called a regional development board. There have been different organizations in the past, some still extant, to see to economic development. From what I have understood of your brief and other briefs, that does not seem to have produced the

desired results. Why do you believe that another organization, with another name, would produce results?

**Mr. Gauthier:** That's a good question, Mr. Allard. You know, when there are all sorts of policies implemented in a region, to serve a region, and they are not coherent, it becomes extremely difficult to get any work done. We have seen this. And, particularly in that case, we have had a rather difficult experience of this in the past. I am not certain, however, that the objective of the mechanisms that were set up was to help us specifically. What is important is perhaps to have... I will give you an example.

When Trois-Rivières had difficulties and the region, Saint-Hyacinthe in fact, because of problems in the textile industry and all, that was called the Laprade Plan... The two governments agreed to set up a structure called the OCRI. This was a similar type of organization, with administrators from the region who could work with government representatives and who, together, because we know our regions, or at least know them or are supposed to know them better than others... At that time there was more likelihood that decisions would be made.

It's not a lack of money in our regions that I am referring to. Millions of dollars have been allocated, but haphazardly, with no structure, with no well defined policy. It's throwing money out the window. I often say that it is important to have a good horse to bet on. When we really bet on major elements, we work that way. I have had the impression - allow me to say this - that, often, there was a lack of political positions or remedies aimed directly at this. We were told... The people in our region were so happy since, when a morsel of bread falls nearby, many gulls swoop down on it because they are all hungry. So it is normal for things like that to happen.

We would perhaps like to have something set up, but not a regional government. That is not our position, but we at least have to have something that will enable us to become involved and to say: This is what we want and we want it this way. We want to participate. There should be participation and partnership in regional development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** OK, Mr. Allard?

**Mr. Allard:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now go on to the Government group. Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I welcome you, let me first thank the Bélanger-Campeau Commission for sitting in

Matane and the Steering Committee for accepting the invitation to sit in the Town of Matane. I hope you had a good night. There was a cool breeze but that clears the lungs.

This said, I must thank the Town of Matane, Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Caron, Mrs. Sirois, Mr. Mailloux, Mr. Bernier and Mr. Malouin for being here this morning and, especially, for having presented a brief of very high quality. They have made us see or at least glimpse regional development and power-sharing difficulties.

You note that regional development now involves two levels of government, the federal and the provincial. You are correct in saying that there often is overlapping and quarrelling between the federal and provincial governments. The Town of Matane is in a position to know this. For 30 years the Matane regional population waited for a major investment in a paper mill. And I believe a lack of political will, or quarrelling between the two levels of government, prevented this from happening. This has now happened with the Liberal government in power, with me, with the people, particularly the will of the people behind its federal and provincial representatives. What materialized was, in fact, an extraordinary achievement, the Matane paper mill, which is gradually being commissioned and which will employ 125 people and, in particular, consolidate the entire Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie lumber industry. This is proof that when we want to work as partners, with socioeconomic organizations as well as with the provincial or the federal government, we can achieve great things. I believe this is a plus for our entire region in regard to economic spin-offs.

But this having been said, you stress in your brief that towns must serve as dispensers of services according to whether they can provide the services at a lower cost. What services are you referring to? Are you thinking of the Régie du logement or the Small Claims Division, to cite two examples? What specific services are you thinking of?

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mrs. Hovington, let me begin by commenting on the first part of your statement. The Donohue plant is a perfect example of what can be accomplished when there is political will and coherent policies. People agree and there is also a will on the part of the entire population. Because you know they tried to trip us up many times in regard to the population - maybe we expected it - and then, there are incentives, we are capable of achieving things. This is what we did. And I congratulate those who did it, but we know how much work it required. In answer to your real question, we have not identified the services. That still has to be done. We, as a municipality, have to identify the services in regard to which we are closest to

the population and which would be better dispensed by us. Studies would have to be conducted, and when we feel it would be less expensive for the municipality to provide the service, we would be given not only the power but the funding as well. I believe that would be more economical. But where that would lead, we can't say.

**Mrs. Hovington:** OK. If I have understood correctly, some towns could perhaps provide a service at a lower cost and others, at a higher cost. Would you consider an asymmetrical sharing of power, in which some would have more power than others, an asymmetrical sharing of power when we refer to... Would that be possible?

**Mr. Bernier (Gilles):** We haven't considered that or studied it in much detail. But it is still important for each population to pay the bill according to its means. This is extremely important in my opinion. That is still at standard, before elements like that are established. Whether we are talking about the police or anything else, including school taxes, it is important for people, for individuals, to be taxed according to their ability to pay. So these standards have to at least be abided by.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Madam, 15 seconds.

**Mrs. Hovington:** On page 7 of your brief, you are critical of regional development programs that are applied to regions where the economy is thriving or where industry is thriving more. In the Québec of the future, should we consider refusing assistance to some of the larger, richer regions like Montréal, to give one example?

**Mr. Bernier:** No, no...

**Mrs. Hovington:** Would you go that far?

**Mr. Bernier:** ...absolutely not. This is why we mention incentives, taking into account the immensity of the territory and the government's obligation to manage or administer fairly and equitably. I had in mind, since when you write something you always have examples in mind, that, while we had the plan for Eastern Québec, which was recognized by and the envy of all of Québec... The Laprade Plan came out right in the middle of all that. Then, even the people of Matane were better off settling near Trois-Rivières, with the Laprade Plan, than in Eastern Québec, with the plan for the East. I, myself, lost money in that, but that's neither here nor there. But it's still odd.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Hovington. We have now come to the five minutes for the Parliamentary group forming

the Official Opposition. Mr. Jacques Parizeau. Mr. Brassard?

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, I would first like to take the opportunity to deplore the fact that some commissioners have attacked the content of briefs heard in the regions of Québec. The tour is not over yet. I think it is important to realize that scorn leads nowhere. We have to understand, first of all, that many regional organizations have neither the financial resources nor the human or technical resources of the large national organizations and often do not have the means to pay professional writers to prepare their briefs. I think it is important to point this out.

Furthermore, the issue of decentralization is a major concern in the regions. It is one here today in Matane, and it will be one everywhere else in all the regions we are going to visit. It is entirely normal for the regions, as part of discussions involving substantial changes in Québec's political framework, to want to obtain more powers in order to take full responsibility for their development. Therefore, in my opinion, decentralization is an unavoidable issue from the perspective of a sovereign Québec, in fact, from the perspective of renewed federalism as well, in which jurisdiction over regional development would be left entirely to the Québec government. The issue is therefore far from being a secondary, incidental or futile one for the Commission; it is central to its deliberations.

I would therefore say that, rather than somewhat cynically criticizing the people from the regions, we should perhaps listen to them. The grassroots of Québec are speaking. Perhaps some people are not used to listening to them, to this voice of the regions. They should perk up their ears rather than finding what they say a bit of a bore.

These remarks having been made, you just gave us, Mr. Mayor, a description of the tangled mess, the sterile overlapping in regional development that the two governments have got us in. Therefore, your conclusion is that we need only one government to handle regional development. I have clearly understood that, in your mind, this government is the Québec government.

**Mr. Gauthier:** In our mind, it is the government capable of managing and stressing regional development in the framework of a constitution. It would really serve no purpose, Mr. Brassard... I really liked the expression at the beginning, where you put certain people in their place, because they really were shocked. It was not the proper occasion to say it and that is very important. We think we have our place in Québec and in Canada, but it serves no purpose at all to set up another form of government of whatever kind if no account is truly taken of

this effect in the new constitution of a government, whether it is the Québec government or another one - I'm weighing my words carefully - if it does not really ensure that a region has a place in the scheme of things. Here I will come back to what Mrs. Guylaine Saucier said when she was President of the Chambre de commerce: "A Québec without its regions is not a Québec". I believe that's quite important to think about.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Brassard, 30 seconds.

**Mr. Brassard:** Allow me to insist a bit. I wouldn't want Mrs. Bacon to feel I'm trying to impose my views. But, simply, in your opinion, and I am not asking you to take a stand on Québec sovereignty, but, in your opinion, of the two governments, Québec and Ottawa, which one is in a better position to have full jurisdiction over regional development? In your experience as mayor and as an inhabitant of a region, in your opinion, is it the Québec government or the government in Ottawa that would be more likely, more capable of properly assuming responsibility for the development of the regions?

**Mr. Gauthier:** In my opinion, and I want to express my own personal opinion, it should be the Québec government. I am not certain whether this has always been so and I particularly do not want us to have a form of government that continues to do the same thing. Aside from that, I am not absolutely for one or the other. I'm not for either one.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of the Town of Matane, I would like to thank you for your contribution to the work of this Commission on the future of Québec. Mr. Bernier, Mr. Blouin, Mr. Gauthier, Mr. Caron, Mrs. Siros, Mr. Mailloux, thank you for your contribution.

**Mr. Gauthier:** We thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing us to express our views. It is quite rare for us to have an opportunity to do so before such an illustrious assembly. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** It was our pleasure to hear you. If you would please leave the room rapidly so that we can keep to our schedule.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:08 a.m.)

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We welcome the representatives of the Université du Québec à Rimouski. Mr. Marc-André Dionne, I

understand you will be making the presentation.

**Mr. Dionne (Marc-André):** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You know the rules concerning the time allotted; you have 30 minutes in all. Before beginning your five-minute presentation, would you introduce the people accompanying you?

**Université du Québec à Rimouski**

**Mr. Dionne:** Certainly. On my right, Mrs. Hélène Tremblay, vice-rector for education and research, and Mrs. Johanne Boisjoly, professor; on my left, Mrs. Danielle Lafontaine, director of the Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire en développement de l'Est du Québec, and Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay, professor.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Dionne, you have five minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Dionne:** Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, UQAR has come here to affirm that its members are neither avoiding the problems of Québec society nor neutral in their regard. We want to help identify certain parameters that should guide the Commission in this crucial debate on the future of Quebecers. UQAR will not take a stand for one specific political option. However, we will suggest the thrusts that we feel are of the utmost importance in this debate for the future of Québec.

Some of the grounds for the creation of this Commission provide an outline for a redefinition of Québec's status. They are intimately linked to the very characteristics of our society, which we want to redefine. They deal with democratic values, human rights and freedoms, the importance of ensuring the status of the French language, and recognition of the rights of the Anglophone and Amerindian communities and of the contribution of the cultural communities. However, lawmakers have not specified the respective importance of each of these fundamental characteristics nor the links there may be among them. This is, nonetheless, what we must do if we are to draft a blueprint for society, and we believe that the redefinition of Québec's political status must be associated with an explicit blueprint for society.

Because of our mandates in terms of access to higher education and the reduction of regional disparities, we can shed light on this redefinition. The mandates of the Université du Québec were shaped during the Quiet Revolution, an era marked by political, social and economic reforms unprecedented in the history of Québec. Québec must now rely on the achievements of that era and later progress to redefine itself.

But, although these achievements are major ones, we must now reflect on the degree to which the objectives of social justice, equality and development in which they were rooted have been met. The context has changed and we must ask ourselves what means and instruments a redefined Québec needs.

With regard to university attendance, we note that it has increased considerably over the past 20 years, but that we have not yet caught up with English Canada. Québec still has regional disparities. We feel that, to remedy these disparities and to ensure the development of all Québec's regions, in addition to administrative decentralization, we must envisage a decentralization of powers, that is, a decentralization that would provide each region with more opportunity to define the choices it believes are the wisest for its social, economic and cultural development.

Such decentralization could be possible if the powers and responsibilities of the various levels of government, including the regional and municipal levels, were clarified. Such clarification should facilitate the integration and harmonization of development efforts by specifying the role of the partners involved.

UQAR therefore recommends that, in the political reform of Québec, the political, social, economic and cultural role of all the regions of Québec be confirmed. The objective of ensuring the development of all the regions is so important because Québec cannot be founded solely on the Montréal metropolis.

UQAR recommends that, in the reform, the political and economic means of narrowing the ever-increasing gap between Montréal and the rest of Québec, notably in regard to the ethnic and linguistic composition of the population, be determined.

If Québec's demography indicates that we should welcome new immigrants, it is perhaps important for us, in drafting the reform, to think about the means whereby immigrants can be dispersed more over the Québec territory.

We know that the issue of the territorial mobility of immigrants is a very delicate one because it involves once again the whole question of collective and individual rights.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I am forced to ask you to state your conclusions, Mr. Dionne, because of the time.

**Mr. Dionne:** I will continue, Mr. Chairman, by saying that UQAR feels that institutions of higher education must play a front-line role in achieving the objectives of improving Quebecers' capacity for innovation and creation, and that we must stress the importance of knowledge throughout Québec's territory. Thank you.

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

you, Mr. President. We now give the floor to Mr. Georges Farrah, who is Mrs. Christiane Pelchat's substitute.

**Mr. Farrah:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Firstly, I would like to thank the members of the Commission for the privilege of sitting with them, since I am not a permanent member. Considering that the Commission is sitting in a region, I am very grateful for the privilege you have given me. Thank you very much.

Firstly, Mr. Dionne, Mrs. Boisjoly and Mrs. Tremblay, welcome. It is our great pleasure to welcome you this morning, given the importance of the Université du Québec in the Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie region and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I feel that you carry out the mandate of bringing as much higher education as possible to the people in the regions very well with the means at your disposal.

My first question is as follows. The third recommendation you make is: That, in the political and constitutional reform, the political and economic means of narrowing the ever-increasing gap between Montréal and the rest of Québec, notably in regard to the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Québec population, be determined. Have you thought of mechanisms or do you have any suggestions to make to narrow the economic gap between the various regions in Québec and, notably, between the rural and urban regions? I mean essentially from an economic standpoint.

**Mr. Dionne:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out, Mr. Farrah, that the main points of the brief we are submitting are intended to constitute a plea for collective concentration on the regions. The regions, especially the resource regions, have been the suppliers of raw materials in Québec. We are convinced that, in the present situation and in the situation challenging us with the globalization of markets, the social and economic structures of the regions must be based, to a great extent, on knowledge, the development of knowledge and the quality of education.

What we call the tertiary motor consists of, for the whole of the regions in Québec including the resource regions, obviously important input variables that support economic activity, because no one is asking for assistance measures. We want to see programs that take realities into account; we want to see programs that are tailored to each region. But we also know that this development must be bolstered by a climate of cooperation among the parties involved, and by knowledge, for knowledge is increasingly becoming the key to development in all industrialized countries.

**Mr. Farrah:** Now, to improve the

development of the regions, in your introduction or in your comments a moment ago you referred to decentralization, the decentralization of powers I assume. What powers are you referring to and which government would they come from?

**Mr. Dionne:** We feel that the first element, among others, is that regional parties working together have a very good ability to analyse and evaluate the problems confronting them, and these parties demand structures that facilitate things from every standpoint. We know that we first have to have a climate of cooperation and such structures. It is clear that there are powers that must be repatriated. There is a set of powers now held by both federal and provincial authorities. There is a whole set of powers. There is an approach that must be reviewed in this regard. I don't think I can provide a simple answer in the time allotted. It would perhaps be a simplistic answer because the reality is too complex to grasp in so little time.

**Mr. Farrah:** Mr. Chairman, a last question, if you will allow me.

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

**Mr. Farrah:** OK. You mentioned the "notwithstanding" clause or... that is, individual rights versus collective rights. In your opinion, is it proper to invoke the "notwithstanding" clause in applying Bill 178, that is, is it proper to suspend individual rights in order to give priority to collective rights?

**Mr. Dionne:** First, I will reaffirm that, in this entire issue of collective rights versus individual rights, the broadest possible consensus must first be sought. This is the first element I would like to remind you of.

I will ask Mrs. Tremblay to provide the rest of the answer to this question.

**Mrs. Tremblay (Suzanne):** Yes. I think we have to adopt a somewhat detached attitude to answer your question. What we see as very important is that the question of the connection between individual and collective rights be posed.

In my opinion, collective rights could be defined generally as a society's obligation at a given time in its history to preserve or promote the values deemed priorities.

However, we feel that, in pursuing this, it is also important for a democratic society to have safeguards to protect what we call individual rights, which are universal rights also deemed to be priorities. Therefore, I believe we should not look for a mathematical rule that would enormously facilitate our work and that would say: In one case, it will be collective rights and, in another case, it will be individual

rights. That's not possible. These are the two sides of the same coin, which must always be considered together. Therefore, we must also recognize that this question of collective rights and individual rights will come up again and again, and we will have to find a specific solution each time.

There is no mathematical rule. It is a matter of judgment and intelligence. Even the charters say that, for they lay down rules of interpretation according to the circumstances. They should not be viewed as antagonistic. They are complementary.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. We now go to Mr. Gendron, who is Mr. Guy Chevette's substitute.

**Mr. Gendron:** Mr. Chairman, dear colleagues, members of the Commission, I would like, very quickly, to thank the people from the Université du Québec à Rimouski. Mr. Dionne, I find your entourage particularly fine. It is perhaps an example for the other groups, with the four women in management posts.

**Mr. Dionne:** ...its place in Rimouski, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Gendron:** It is worth pointing out.

My second comment... Since you have university autonomy and academic freedom by law, I would have expected you to go somewhat further in choosing a more specific constitutional option, because the reason why you have this academic freedom and university autonomy by law is so that, from time to time, in issues of great import, you have the opportunity to take a stand. I nonetheless congratulate you for being here, for it is important for an institution of higher learning to have the occasion to collaborate closely in such important issues as these.

Quickly, since the time is very short. My first question deals with the fact that you seem quite determined to associate the redefinition of Québec's political status with an explicit blueprint for society. You associate the two elements very closely, whereas, in my personal opinion, it is more urgent and more timely to first justify the need for a new constitutional system, since the notion and the obligation to define a blueprint for society would seem to me to be the responsibility of any responsible government. Do you not feel that it is, first, the constitutional system that means we are unable to have the society we would like to have, given the constraints it imposes?

**Mr. Dionne:** I would first like to mention that, by virtue of our academic freedom, we



have the right to speak. The university is also a forum that generates and develops thought on the problems confronting us. What I want to mention, when we talk about this explicit blueprint for society, is that we have to know... The choice of an organizational vehicle is one thing; the vehicle itself is another. We have to know its content. There are many elements, many thrusts in the Act creating this Commission, political, economic and cultural thrusts. What we say is that the importance of education or knowledge must be added to this blueprint for society, as must the importance of considering the regions, the political and economic role of the regions. These are basically the two elements we want to see in this collective blueprint. Mrs. Lafontaine, if you would like to add something.

**Mrs. Lafontaine (Danielle):** I would add that, in our opinion, the first two grounds for creating the Commission, according to which Quebecers are clearly free to determine their political status, are an integral part of the definition of the future. We believe that we are in the process of renegotiating a new social contract. This is what we are doing with others. We are trying, with others, to identify the thrusts of a constitutional blueprint, economic, cultural and political thrusts, and we feel that, in the Act creating the Commission, there are already economic, political and cultural thrusts, which, as we said, we support. We are simply voicing our desire to have two aspects added that, on the one hand, give priority to education and, on the other, tend to constitutionalize the role of the regions. And our desire to constitutionalize the role of the regions is also found in the framework of this statement of intent, which, in our opinion, clearly gives the people of Québec sovereignty, that is, makes a sovereign people able to negotiate its social contract. So we believe that, in this framework, on this basis, our goal in seeking to constitutionalize that aspect or a regional political authority also consists in providing a counterweight, i.e. stating that, on that basis, the sovereignty that the people will also delegate to higher authorities originates with Quebecers, who agree to delegate it to higher authorities, among which the system of counterweights could be introduced to, I would say, provide an original solution to the problem of articulating individual collective rights in such a way that the citizen is not left naked, in quotation marks, before the power of the State.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Gendron, 15 seconds.

**Mr. Gendron:** I would have like to hear what you have to say quickly, in 15 seconds. Since you want Québec to do much more in

regard to manpower qualification and research and development, do you think it can, when we know that Ottawa now has more of these vocational training and post-secondary powers in terms of research budgets, among other things, when we know that most of the funding goes to Ontario? Do you feel Québec can do more if we remain in the same situation?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Can you give a brief answer?

**Mr. Dionne:** The Université du Québec, as a network, has a brief on this subject that pleads in favour of the integration of those powers, and we support this.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We have eight requests for the floor for the following block of questions and we only have 10 minutes. First, Mr. d'Anjou, followed by Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** I thank the Université du Québec à Rimouski for its excellent brief. I imagine that academic freedom gives you the right to take a stand, but also the right not to take a stand. Some people are pondering the matter, and have not taken a stand because they want to know all the pros and cons beforehand. (10:30 a.m.)

You suggest that forums be held on particular aspects. I am thinking, for example, of the political role of a region in regard to its development. I imagine that UQAR has expertise in this domain since you have a regional development department. You also mention a forum on the articulation of elective and individual rights. Here again, I believe you have expertise in ethics. It would have been interesting if you had set forth basic principles to guide us, in the hope that a forum would enable you to go further, if possible.

**Mr. Dionne:** Mr. d'Anjou, thank you for your question. I want to say that we realize, as citizens, the importance of the question before the Commission and the debate it has aroused in Québec. It is fortunate the Commission is peripatetic because it has aroused great interest in the regions as well. This is a matter of capital importance that we must resolve. A suggestion has been made that the work might be extended so that seminars on these subjects could be held in the regions. Mrs. Lafontaine, would you like to add something about this?

**Mrs. Lafontaine:** Well, the idea... The question of decentralization has been brought up here, before the Commission, but also "board", "regional government", "authority". This question is a very complex one.

More important than the word defining authority, I believe is need. What does this word

cover? It is the need for a coordinating authority which will make all these cultural, social, industrial and other kinds of regional facilities more effective, but whose interfaces and connections are not made in a manner to promote effectiveness. Then, the question of the government or the authority, we will not quibble about the word, it is the reality of the thing that it is important to look at more closely and, especially, its interface with the power of the RCMs and of the municipalities. The whole question of accountability and electoral methods...

There is also the problem of parliamentary reform, of the possible creation of a body that would act as the voice of the regions in the Québec Parliament. These questions demand, of course, a great deal of thought on the part of all partners.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two points in particular struck me in your brief. First, the analysis of the Québec of the regions. I think it is important to say that too few people and groups make such an analysis because Québec, it is limited to two urban communities, for most Quebecers. It is important that one say these things even though they are not pleasant given the decline and so on, particularly in our discussions here, in the rural world, at the present time, in the estates general.

Second, it is your association also of the importance of developing a blueprint for society, associated, in fact, in this definition, with new policies, new political and constitutional societies. My first question would be: Don't you think that if Québec had, by way of expertise, you have nevertheless... if Québec had all the economic levers, it would be in a better position to define fairly, to properly define this blueprint for Québec society?

**A voice:** Listen...

**Mr. Proulx:** When I speak of possessing these levers, I mean as well having the money, naturally.

**Mr. Dionne:** I would like Mrs. Lafontaine to begin the answer, if you don't mind.

**Mrs. Lafontaine:** I would say that there are certainly limits to the control we can exercise over economic problems that are structural. And we cannot necessarily directly control the economic forces that have their own logic and that lead us, that circumscribe very complex world spaces, over which we do not have direct

control. But from the moment when we set up action units, when the coordination of different actions is more rational, better circumscribed, better defined, the indirect power one can have in connection with all these economic exchange circuits, can be very important. I believe it is necessary to develop our idea that we can directly control and that it would even be desirable to try to control the mobility of economic spaces. It would probably be risky to suggest this. Nevertheless, we could do a lot with control and coordination levers.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Proulx. It is now the turn of Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue. I know Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue as a former university professor will want to talk to his colleagues. Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Good morning. Yes. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I find the tenor, the quality and the questions and answers extremely refreshing and interesting. But the answers... And as in the region we visited last Thursday, Joliette, we see the whole strength of what you call the region. However dealt with by the universities, I find that necessary and personally I do not have to speak in the name of the community but in my name as an academic. I thank you and I would find it easy to associate myself with your work.

That said, I am going to act the university man a little and make three statements... Okay Gérard? Gérard is my guardian angel, he is on my left. We have the concept of decentralization of powers, and when one talks about decentralization of powers one implies two concepts: authority and responsibility. It is not a facile concept. We also broach the delicate matter, and it has come up often, of individual rights and collective rights. In answer to one of the speakers, I would raise the question of planning, and I know that you are able to answer it. The third aspect has to do with the commission commonly called Parizeau, after our friend and colleague, Mr. Parizeau. The messages from the regions were clear: decentralization, autonomy, regional sovereignty, etc., which would make possible innovation and creativity. You speak of relativity. Is this done in the application, in writing, which comes first, the chicken or the egg, like in your collective rights and individual rights, or is it done in a series of acceptable and more or less inevitable steps when communication and decision must take place?

**Mr. Dionne:** That is one big question, Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, but you can give a quick answer.

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

**Mr. Hogue:** I'm not asking for a course.  
yes.

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

**Voices:** Yes or no?

**Mr. Dionne:** Mrs. Tremblay, you have the greatest summarizing ability. You answer!

**Mrs. Tremblay (Hélène):** What has been said, for it comes down in the end to the question of decentralization, what seems to us extremely important at the present time is to recognize the objective proposed when all the regions come to us and say that they want decentralization. The objective, in reality, is to be able to develop as rapidly and harmoniously as possible where the regions see themselves as real partners rather than the dominated party at times. And that is the objective pursued, and we have to think about the best means to do it. It should be said that the means are first of all traditional; to depend on the state of the society in which we live; they may be different in 10 years time. But at the moment, the thought being given to this in the region, as a reconnaissance, it has never been felt within a region that endogenous development was necessary, but not a kind of development that would cause the administrative decision-making centres to leave us to develop on our own. It is understandable, we need the cooperation of everyone involved in this matter. The objective pursued, I have explained it. Therefore we must reflect upon the best means for achieving it. And defensive means would surprise me. I think that we have more or less exhausted the defensive possibilities by saying: they are going to give everything to the municipality, the provincial level or the region. We achieve nothing that way. I think that we must really see the problems for what they are and always remember our objective, and for every problem identified find the best possible solution.

**Mr. Hogue:** ...in the federation...

**Mrs. Tremblay:** Forgive me. What appears extremely important to us here today...Our presence, it is justified in several respects. As a university, a university group, we wanted you to realize to what point, for us, a regional university, we wanted to pursue our university role, because one plays a role perhaps more, but let's not make comparisons, but we are convinced of the strategic importance of our regional mission, both for accessibility to knowledge and for research and development, the advancement of knowledge and community support and therefore support for regional

development. And I think this explains very well why we are here; we wanted you to know it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Tremblay. Unfortunately time is passing. The time for your hearing has run out. Mrs. Boisjoly, Mrs. Hélène Tremblay, Mrs. Lafontaine, Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay and Mr. Dionne, thank you for the time you have devoted to the progress of our work.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:40 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:42 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The people of the Table des priorités régionales de la municipalité régionale de comté de Rivière-du-Loup. Mr. Normand Provençal, if you wish you may introduce the people in your group.

#### **Table des priorités régionales de la MRC de Rivière-du-Loup**

**Mr. Provençal (Normand):** Yes, Mr. Chairman. First, at my far right, Mr. Jean-Léon Marquis, Mayor of the City of Rivière-du-Loup; Mr. Émilien Michaud, Chairman of the RCM of Rivière-du-Loup; and Mr. Harold Lebel of the community group, Action Emploi, in Rivière-du-Loup.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A hearing of 30 minutes, not very long unfortunately. You have five minutes for your brief. Then for the questions, it is always... It seems to upset everybody, but questions can be answered quickly, and that allows me to go on to more speakers.

**Mr. Provençal:** Fine!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The floor is yours, Mr. Provençal.

**Mr. Provençal:** Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, our brief is, in itself, a reflection on our determination and our capacity to assume responsibility for the development of our region. Having suffered the difficulties of shared jurisdictions, the centralization of public administration, the lack, in government programs, of adaptation to the characteristics of the regions, the inequitable division of resources in the various regions of Québec and, basically, the lack of involvement of people in the regions in the design and management of programs, having observed the creation of economic development structures with inadequate financial resources, and the need for the regional powers to resort to creating crisis situations in order to get results, it appeared to

us essential to make to the Commission recommendations that clearly show that local agents want to take over and assume responsibility for development in their regions.

Here are six recommendations: first, an end to double jurisdictions in matters of regional development and recognition of the Québec Government as solely responsible for regional development policy; recognition of the essential role of the RCMs as the preferred spokesmen and in charge of regional economic development planning. It will also be necessary to provide the financial means required to fulfill this role, and the creation of a structure to coordinate government action, at least for each administrative region. This structure would be made up of the RCMs, MNAs, directors general of government departments and socioeconomic agents. The redrawing of electoral districts with a view to respecting the territorial limits of the RCMs and to ensure in this way the administrative and political cohesiveness of the regions. We feel it is essential that all the municipalities in a RCM belong to the same electoral district. Next, government services should be offered that are consistent with the characteristics of the RCM as regards modulated decentralization of the public administration. And finally, the creation of a mechanism that would allow consideration of the impact on regional development of the location of government infrastructures and services.

These concrete means have been recommended with a view to enabling each region to find its own solutions according to its own specific needs.

In conclusion, we believe that increased regional powers will make possible more adequate adjustment of the determination and capacities that will strengthen all of Québec. In this perspective, we intend to be party to the major decisions that affect the economic life of our region. That's it Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Provençal. First questioner, Mrs. Louise Harel.

**Mrs. Harel:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. What you advocate in your recommendation is very clear, that a single government be responsible for regional development policies and, for you, that would be the Québec Government. And you recommend that the driving force, the lever be the RCMs. You have, I am sure, read the recommendations in, for example, the brief of the CRD Bas-Saint-Laurent, proposing a regional government. The Town of Matane, which preceded you, spoke more of a regional development office. Myself, I am going to ask you, first, why the RCMs? And then, how do you see the coordination of this role? You also say in your brief that regional power must,

unfortunately, at present resign itself to creating crises in order to get results. And you mention a number of them. You might also have said that you are forced to plead your misery to benefit from exceptions, derogations, exemptions from government policy criteria, national policies, in the end.

I want to pose the following question; it was asked on a Radio-Canada broadcast recently, entitled "L'Est du Québec, l'est de Montréal, le même problème, même combat", in fact it is almost that, but which described a situation, found in all the studies of the Conseil des affaires sociales where, in the end, it is not Montréal against the regions. There is a certain conception of development throughout Québec the result of which is that in certain districts of the large cities, as in the rural zones, there is real underdevelopment and that this reality is expressed in your region. Six of the most disadvantaged RCMs in Québec and one which is among the most prosperous, Rimouski-Neigette. You are going to say to me: one out of seven. But there is nevertheless a reality there, ambivalent in your region. I would like to hear you on this.

**Mr. Provençal:** You stress the problem of the City of Montréal. Last year, at the national forum on employment, I took part in a workshop which said exactly the same thing, and that awakened me to various aspects. It was said that one district of the City of Montréal had 100 000 inhabitants and that unemployment was 25 %. Now, that means 25 000 people out of work. When we look at the regions, where the proportion is about 15 % spread throughout the region, it is not the same kind of problem, but it is one nonetheless. And we try, I think, to resolve these problems in our own way, as far as possible. In our region, I think that what is important is to see that our resources, all our human and physical resources, our primary resources, are evaluated and that we take careful account of them so as to take our place in regional development. And when I say take our place, it is that...When we say the RCM, the RCM is the first coordination unit that is really organized. They have already evolved a development plan. The environment is already... The RCM is concerned more and more with the environment because the government increasingly gives it responsibilities in this field. And it seems to me that this first coordination unit could be more active than it is. And in this regard it has been given the task of regional development planning.

In the second place, at a minimum, in the administrative regions, we are told that there would be a coordination structure which could coordinate all that. Along the lines of what Mrs. Côté mentioned earlier with regard to the Université du Québec, it wouldn't do to give all

the powers to the regions, just as it is not necessary to give all the powers to the government. These must be shared. But what we feel is important is to say to the Commission today that we are even more prepared to assume these responsibilities. We have the will to do it and I think that increasingly we have the ability to do it. We don't say that this assumption of responsibilities is going to take place within six months or a year, but over a period of time, if in fact there are funds, responsibilities that have been transferred to the RCMs, I think we are even more ready to assume them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Next speaker, Mr. Roger Nicolet, to be followed by Messrs. Ouellet and Beaumier, if we have time.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like, of course, to take this opportunity to greet my colleagues from the RCM of Rivière-du-Loup. I also want to congratulate them on the amount of work they have accomplished through the Table des priorités régionales, in extremely difficult circumstances. They have proved that a community with the determination to operate independently can advance its cause even in sometimes difficult conditions.

If you will allow me to ask a question, with particular reference to your second recommendation, in which you deal with coordinating structures in regional administration. In the picture you present, is it a question of conferring executive power on this level or of essentially consultant authorities?

**Mr. Provençal:** It is clearly more, we think, than a matter of consultant authorities. We think that the RCMs should become the preferred, responsible spokesmen in the planning of their economic development, even that, would be sufficiently... I would say, to use the word decisive, it would be sufficiently decisive to achieve a coordination structure and be able to speak with all the confidence required to make decisions, with others, in the administrative regions, because we are talking about each of the administrative regions and want to involve as many people as possible in the making of decisions. When we speak of coordination, for me, it means more than consultation, it is truly a matter of coordination decisions.

**Mr. Nicolet:** Would this level be accountable? Would it be of an elective nature? Because we have received a number of recommendations, from the AQORCO, in particular, to consider, to constitute, in the administrative regions, an administration of elected officers, in a manner of speaking, who would be answerable to their electorate. Is this the direction in which your proposal is leading?

**Mr. Provençal:** It is not only elected officers we are talking about. When we speak of the RCMs, it is of course the Members who are elected, but we speak as well of regional departmental offices and socioeconomic agents. It is the regional departmental office that is important to me, extremely important, in connection with your question, because we have to bridge the gap separating us from the public administration, or the public administration has to move closer to the regions. In that sense one could say: to modify this public administration, let the departments that are concerned with the regions come to the regions, and there, we will discuss our problems with them. Ideally, all the departments would have offices in every region, but we know that this is the ideal, utopian even. But if we wish to be very practical, to play our role in our community, this means we should also work with those in the regional departmental offices and they are not necessarily elected officers. They are government employees, but employees who have been appointed or who have come to the regions and who are aware of the realities of the region.

**Mr. Nicolet:** You are thinking in terms of the existing CRDs, in the end. If I understand you, the organization you propose would be based on the existing CRDs to which you would add some government employees.

**Mr. Provençal:** In effect, yes, with certain reservations. Perhaps Mr. Lebel could answer that question.

**Mr. Lebel (Harold):** That is possible. There are many structures in existence, this has been said many times. When we speak of double jurisdictions, we are talking about federal as well as provincial structures. I think we need to do some housecleaning. It is not, then, a question of rejecting certain structures but in seeing to it that, among other things, with regard to economic summits, there is a regional structure to follow up the summit. We have to organize such a structure and give it a precise mandate, not duplicate other structures. We hear about coordination structures that could be based on that of the CRDs and of the follow-up of economic summits. Something else completely new, the regional employment commissions, resulting from the Forum pour l'emploi, which could also contribute to that.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As an elected municipal officer, I am of course involved in the RCMs and regional development.

In your brief, there are questions that come to mind to which I cannot find the answers. Among others, in your fourth recommendation you say: The redrawing of the electoral map with a view to respecting the limits... To save time I won't continue, I will simply ask the question: Are you calling for new RCMs? Because we know that there are RCMs that group perhaps three or four ridings, RCMs that include other ridings and ridings that are in two RCMs. Are you asking for new RCMs? That is my first question.

The second is: We know that in some RCMs there is a problem of financing. What method of financing would you recommend for the RCMs? Would there still be a division? This method of financing leads to inequities, in the sense that representativeness by the vote is not always in accordance with what one pays as a penance, but in your proposal what would happen with this?

**Mr. Provençal:** With regard to electoral districts, it is not the RCMs that have to have their boundaries redrawn, it is really the electoral districts. All with the object of being coherent; so there is not, unlike what happens in your region, an electoral riding, that is to say one and a half RCMs or two and three quarters RCMs in one riding. Then, if there are three RCMs in a riding, the riding will have to be altered, quite simply, to fit that geography.

As to your other question, you'll have to forgive me, I was concentrating on something else.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Financing.

**Mr. Provençal:** In matters of financing, we see it unequivocally as a transfer of government funds, because there is a transfer of power and a transfer of money to exercise that power. It is not an additional taxation power.

**Mr. Beaumier:** That's fine, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** It gives me great pleasure to meet with you this morning and I particularly appreciated the reading of your brief. I'll tell you why and I am going to admit a few things a little naively, even though there are probably some around the table who will try to pick up on that in order to attack me afterwards. But I don't mind that; I'll say it anyway. I admit it, I am naive.

In my caucus, often there are performers who come on stronger than others and there is one who staunchly defends the regions at all times. This is Henri Paradis, who is forever crying: The regions! You are always forgetting the regions. I am also going to admit that,

sometimes, that irritates me a little. You know, he is always for the regions and Farrah who jumped on the bandwagon and Mrs. Hovington. I said: Listen, the regions, what's your problem? And making the rounds, because, in Saint-Hyacinthe, in Joliette, and elsewhere as well, we are always faced with the same problem: the need for powers in the regions and decentralization and the problems met also because of the concentration in the major centres as opposed to the regions. For me, this is a new sensitivity. I come from Laval where one is fairly comfortable in one's misery, therefore, these are questions that weigh less.

Having said that, one aspect of your brief in particular strikes me. First a remark. There is one RCM that seems richer than the others here, that was stated earlier. Is this because the political decision-making agencies and authorities have been centralized there or what? It is more or less the chief place of the region, I think, Rimouski. Has this concentration not favoured this region at the expense of others? What am I to understand?

**Mr. Provençal:** Of the six RCMs that make up Eastern Québec, the Rimouski region is particularly wealthy. The City of Rimouski as such is an important centre for Eastern Québec. It is the City of Rimouski, I think, that is the centre of this wealth in a special way, despite the fact that the Les Neiges RCM, if my memory serves me, I think that is the name, also has rural problems, think of the Coalition Urgence rurale, and that includes all the RCMs.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Fine. My other question is the following. Like you, I am in complete agreement with the decentralization wanted for the regions, and I can even say that the further that goes the more I agree. My question is this: How are we going to organize the Québec of tomorrow? Are we going to build it on the cumulative powers of the regions or on a central power that will go out to the regions? How do you see it?

**Mr. Provençal:** Well, I think that when we speak of regional development and that this is centred on a Québec reality of regional development, because when we speak of a policy, it can be in terms of a given territory, also in comparison with other countries on which regional development should be centred and the means we should have.

If part of that is transferred to the power responsible for planning, for us that is more effective. In the final analysis, it is in general more effective regional development that we want. The society of tomorrow in relation to regional economic development is a society that may perhaps acquire the means to allow all the people to take part with their means in Québec's

development, but in a more organized fashion and more responsible as well.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good. Is there time for further questions?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes, go ahead. But I think your colleague had a question.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Yes. My colleague, Mr. Farrah, had a question. Go ahead.

**Mr. Farrah:** Thank you Mr. Chairman, but it is a little along the lines of my colleague from Mille-Iles and of Mrs. Harel as well. It is precisely, I think that we must be aware that we can demand decentralization and I think that is a good thing, except that it must be done properly because, in concentrating in the regions, one can settle part of the problem, but I do not think we will settle the whole problem. Concentrating in Rimouski, and I have nothing against that, far from it, and so much the better if they are developed, except for one observation that must be made: Rimouski is very, very well developed and the neighbouring regions or the neighbouring RCMs suffer the same fate as before.

I think this is a statement that must be made. In decentralizing, it is necessary also to make sure that we do not concentrate in a single centre at the expense of the other RCMs and the neighbouring regions.

**Mr. Provençal:** This is why we talk about coordination structures in order to extend a little more in relation to each RCM. I am in complete agreement with that.

Perhaps Mr. Michaud could enlarge on this.

**Mr. Michaud (Émilien):** Sir, I think there is another thing. First of all, that depends on the political determination at the Québec level or of the higher levels of government to decentralize certain things. For example, it was said that Rimouski, and I have nothing against it, is the metropolis of the Bas-Saint-Laurent. They have therefore had positive spinoffs that we, from outside regions, have not had. I believe that our economic development is slower for reasons such as that.

Therefore, the determination of the higher levels of government or the Québec Government to perhaps carry out a certain decentralization to the regions that we call here 01 would be welcome in our RCM in any case.

**Mr. Farrah:** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Michaud, Well, Mr. Marquis, Mr. Michaud, Mr. Provençal, Mr. Lebel who represent the Table des priorités régionales of the RCM of

Rivière-du-Loup, thank you for your contribution to our work on the future of Québec.

The next group is the Association du Parti libéral du Québec des Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:05 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:06 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is it Mr. Marcotte who will make the presentation?

**A Voice:** Mr. Sumarah.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Welcome then, Mr. Sumarah. Accompanying you are Mr. Marcotte, and I think Mr. Farrah. You have five minutes for your presentation.

#### **Association du Parti libéral du Québec des Îles-de-la-Madeleine**

**Mr. Sumarah (Robert):** First of all, I want to thank you on behalf of the Association du Parti libéral des Îles-de-la-Madeleine and on that of all the "Madelinots" for hearing us today. I would first like to give you a brief but poetic description of our islands. Bathed on all sides by the sea, with no land bridge, marked by their contacts and affinity with the Maritime Provinces, proud of their standing as a Québec tourists' paradise, that several of you may have visited, symbol of tolerance where Francophones and Anglophones live side by side, the Magdalen Islands, they are all of that and more, you see.

The struggles of our fishermen with the sea, today and in the past, have perhaps taught us that a ship that knows where it is going or one that seeks to know where it is going must first of all be solid. For the people of the Islands, it is important that the crew plot a course that will best take into account the winds and the tides. Accustomed as we are to recognizing the rights of a small group, we continue to affirm that, in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, there is a little something that is not the same. It is for this reason that we offer you a few thoughts which, in our opinion, must not be overlooked, and the debates over which will make, or not make, of Québec a society with a status different from the one it has today. Québec is preparing to undergo important changes in the coming years, which will aim at a clear definition of the aspirations of Quebecers with regard to their political status.

Given the particular position of the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, which you are aware of, on Québec's political checkerboard, the local association of the Liberal Party in the Islands has proceeded to action by undertaking consultations that will enable us to defend, we sincerely hope, the interests of the people of the

archipelago. In pursuing this matter we have met with workers in the following sectors: fishing, to be sure, transportation, which is a trouble spot, and tourism. We have also met with people from the economic and municipal sectors.

Having said this, today, because time is short, we shall pinpoint the specific problems or questions having to do with the fishing sector. Then, Mr. Marcotte, who is on my right, will talk about the transport sector.

I'll go right on to the fishing sector if you will allow me. You understand that this is an activity of primary importance to the people of the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, both traditionally and economically. More than half the population of the Islands live by this activity, whether by fishing or by working in plants. It is important that any change in Québec's political status take account of the specific nature of this archipelago. When we speak of our fish resources we refer to two groups. The term sedentary species is used when speaking of mollusca and crustacea and we use the term migratory when we are talking about fish such as plaice, cod, haddock, mackerel, herring and so on. The fishermen and the Association des pêcheurs of the Islands are less uneasy about the sedentary species, because they are managed locally. There is nothing to indicate that in a Québec with full jurisdiction in the domain of fishing it would be otherwise. The case is different for the migratory species. As we know, these species travel the various regions of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, obeying the natural laws of their kind. These resources are therefore available to more than one province; this is the cornerstone of the fishing domain. Given our particular geographical position, we want to make you all aware of the following: in the event of a political change or a change in political status, we must be assured that negotiations will be undertaken as quickly as possible with the Maritime Provinces to ensure an equitable sharing of available resources.

These very important negotiations, you understand, will have to allow Québec access to the existing fishing zones and to the 200-mile zone as well. The result of these negotiations will be vital for Québec and you can see why. If such negotiations were to drag on, this would place us in a weak position vis-à-vis the fishermen of the Maritimes.

Such a position of weakness, if I may express it in that way, would be caused by the fact that the final decision resulting from the talks would fall to an international court which makes its judgments on the basis of our traditional performance in fishing. Now, our traditional performance, with regard to fishing for Québec, in fishing that one calls Maritime, is 7 % of Maritime fishing. The Îles-de-la-Madeleine account for only 3 % of that 7 %. You can see how much our value in terms of

traditional performance would be reduced. Taking this possibility into consideration, our fishermen would be confined to very much reduced fishing zones, which would have a harmful effect on the local economy as well as on the lives of the inhabitants.

For the fishermen of the Magdalen Islands, who are accustomed to cooperating with fishermen from the Maritimes, a major constitutional change could mean certain risks. In order to preserve a certain equity in the sharing of catches, Québec Government authorities will have to foster management mechanisms allowing our fishermen to seek their fair share. On the other hand...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There are barely 15 seconds left. Do you want to go on to your conclusions?

**Mr. Sumarah:** In matters of fishing? General conclusions?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perhaps you will find a way, by answering questions, to conclude your presentation.

**A voice:** Agreed

**Mr. Marcotte (Yves):** Agreed. Finally, the Association du Parti libéral des Îles-de-la-Madeleine wanted, I think, in the name of the people of the Islands, to present to you certain elements which must be considered in future constitutional negotiations. What we want to achieve, in the final analysis, is to make sure that no Québec riding suffers prejudice as a result of a change in political status. Therefore, the concerns of all the Québec regions will have to be enshrined in any new constitutional agreement. This is the conclusion to which we, the members of the Association libérale des Îles, have come.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Marcotte. We will now go on to the questions. First question from Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. I would like to welcome you to the Commission. I am also very pleased to see you here since you will perhaps be the first section of your political party to express your views on the future of Québec. We could perhaps even today give you the opportunity to begin.

Your brief is of great interest because it seems to be carried by a sea breeze. It has a freshness which is very, very special. And, in particular, it seems to me to be a brief of the post-sovereignty period. You pose problems which are for settlement once we have achieved sovereignty in Québec, and you say: We Magdalen



Islanders, what are the problems we are going to have to settle in the event of, on the morrow of sovereignty for Québec? Am I correct or is it... (11:15 a.m.)

**Mr. Marcotte:** That is what is suggested when we have... Because, we, it is said: We are going to achieve this democratically; we are going to meet different people in different sectors in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. The question we ask - because a constitutional committee has been set up within the Association - these people have asked the question: Fine, certainly no one is going to accept the status quo as we have known it... Political changes will occur in Québec. That means that we are going to go to those involved in the principal sectors concerned on the Islands and ask the question: What will happen, what will be your main concerns in the event of a change in Québec's political status? No one has mentioned sovereignty, no one has spoken about Confederation or a superstructure. The way in which the change in political status will be made has not been envisaged, but we know that we are going... In any case the title of the brief tells us well enough. We speak about the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, a changing Québec; but I want to say, that has not been put as a question, as you seem to think.

**Mr. Bouchard:** No, no, I understand.

**Mr. Marcotte:** If Québec sovereignty... We have not asked that.

**Mr. Bouchard:** No it's not that. But you do put yourselves in a Québec that has changed status politically, in which the 200-mile limit has been acquired, for example.

**Mr. Marcotte:** Let's say this. It is because of the uncertainty of the milieu that we want to emphasize in the sense that if...

**Mr. Bouchard:** I understand, you want to maintain your fishing rights?

**Mr. Marcotte:** ...that if the people win sovereignty in Québec we are speaking now about the maritime barrier; one talks about maritime frontiers. It is this that we must pay attention to. Because we have discovered with those involved in fishing that our balance of power was nonetheless reduced because there was no agreement with the Maritime Provinces as to the sharing of this resource. An international court will decide in this matter and the Islands represent only 3 % of the traditional fishing performance ratio.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Hence, traditional ratio; a ratio that existed under the federation?

**Mr. Marcotte:** Yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Which already existed. It is therefore the federation that has acted so as to... It is federalism which has acted so that a very minimal portion of the fishing wealth... And that brings us to a problem that we shall have to resolve if ever on the morrow of sovereignty our portion of this maritime wealth, this fishing resource will have to be renegotiated.

**A voice:** Absolutely, yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You put the question. You know that it is not only a court, not necessarily an international court that will have to decide on the matter. For example...

**Mr. Marcotte:** If there is no agreement.

**Mr. Bouchard:** No, no, but in the absence of an agreement. You have, for example, in the case of the Islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon... France has a problem of the division of fishing territories with Canada because of the reciprocal attribution of the 200-mile zones. An arbitration board was formed, an ad hoc board. There could therefore be some room for manoeuvre. But as you say, a sovereign Québec should ensure that the 200-mile zone is respected and at that time conclude an agreement, if not obtain a judgment from a third party to settle the matter. You have posed the question; you have tried, if I understand correctly, to list the difficulties that will have to be resolved should Québec become sovereign. Is this your point of view?

**Mr. Marcotte:** If a change is made.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Well, a change that would involve asking these questions?

**Mr. Marcotte:** Only that it is necessary to identify, as such, sovereignty or whatever else is chosen.

**Mr. Bouchard:** But it is a radical change you envisage since it is a matter of transport between different territories; it is a question of a 200-mile zone. That has a strange resemblance to a change to sovereign status?

**Mr. Farrah:** What we said, Mr. Bouchard, is that, it is in effect more a strategic question as well at the moment. We did not want decisions to be taken without, in the final analysis, consideration of the possible consequences. The question I ask myself, and it was also the Association's objective to give the opinions of the people of the Islands and to enlighten the Commission with a view to possibly offering hypotheses to the government; then at that time to make sure that, no matter what decision is made, it is not harmful or negative for the

Islands or for Québec as a whole...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Just a word to conclude...

**Mr. Farrah:** ...then, in this sense, you mentioned Saint-Pierre and Miquelon earlier and I think is the perfect example. It is necessary to take precautions beforehand, not afterwards. This is how I think we want to intervene.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Just one word. I find that interesting because it is very positive. You don't say: Let's not change the political status too radically because that will create problems. What you say is: Let's see what problems are going to come up. And you propose solutions.

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

**Mr. Holden:** In the spirit of collaboration that exists between us this week, I want to cede my time to Mr. Libman.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will make an exception to the rules of the Chair for this one time and allow Mr. Libman to use your time.

**Mr. Libman:** The important thing is to work as a team, Mr. Chairman. You say on page 1 of your brief: "In the event of a change in political status we will have to make sure that negotiations are entered into as quickly as possible with the Maritime Provinces with a view to an equitable division of available resources." You say also, on page 4: "We propose that the free movement of people be maintained in its present form." And on page 5: "It is imperative that there be no tariff barrier to trade with the Maritimes."

To continue along the lines of what Mr. Bouchard has been saying, I know that you don't want to take a stand on the constitutional choice of Québec, but in the light of your statements and because of the delicate situation in the regions, would you not admit that sovereignty is an enormous risk or more difficult for your region? Economic negotiations between Québec and Canada will be long, emotional and could easily fail. And all that, in effect, if the rest of Canada remains intact. This is my question then: Are you not prepared to admit that sovereignty is too great a risk for your region?

**Mr. Farrah:** For me, with regard to sovereignty as such, I think the question it

would have to pose and the fear of negotiations that is suggested, and there, I speak more personally, I don't want to speak for the Association or the Party, far from it, I think we are in the process of trying to decide whether it would be a good thing. With the exception of traditional negotiations in Québec, particularly during the past 30 years, and the failure of Meech Lake, which goes even further because it meant renegeing on signing, then that, from my point of view, is very very serious.

From this angle, in analysing the past, it is certain that, if radical decisions are taken, and again I speak personally, I am not sure that we are going to be able to come to a satisfactory conclusion, with much cohesiveness, in negotiation. The strategic choice of the road to take, we must make sure that it does not affect our region too much. And that is the light in which we want the situation of our Islands to be seen. We do not reject any option, but nevertheless we must take account of the existing political situation so that we won't have to get down on our knees and pray. Listen, anything can happen, given the background of negotiations. And so much the better if that were to change, we all want that. However, given this background, if, to be sure, we find ourselves in a difficult position because we have no choice, there may be negative consequences for the milieu. It is important that the Commission give thought to this matter, to make sure that the effects are the least harmful possible, as positive as possible.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Farrah. The time is up. I see two persons who would like to speak. We shall allow some of the Chair's time and hear first Mr. Ouellet and then Mr. Larose...

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you for the contribution your brief has made to our work. I have not studied it in isolation, but in conjunction with that presented by the Parti québécois des îles-de-la-Madeleine. Whereas the latter think everything will be fine, marvellous, and find absolutely no problem, you present a set of conditions that seem to me to be essential for the people of the Magdalen Islands, so that, as you say, they do not suffer from any change in political status. I congratulate you for having done this without trotting out the usual bogeymen, as Mr. Bouchard says. You have given thought to the problems, the practical problems, the specific problems, and say to us: Be careful. These problems must be resolved because it could be dangerous for the "Madelinots" in some ways if they were not considered.

A question. You know that fishing jurisdictions are a federal-provincial matter. Previously, there were agreements that allowed

Québec to manage fishing matters almost entirely. After 1982, and above all put into effect in 1984, the Canadian Government, in 1984, took back part of the management of fishing, in fresh waters, for example, in salmon and eel fishing. Do you believe that all that must be returned to provincial jurisdiction, and that the agreements that prevailed, before, that the federal authorities would not concern themselves with that, but would leave the field and fishing management to Québec, do you think that it should not be like that in the future?

**Mr. Sumarah:** Listen, in the consultations we have had with fishermen and with the Association des pêcheurs, that has been clear, as an answer. We are told that the present administrative structure meets the needs of Québec's fishing sector very well and very effectively. In that respect, we have been told also that our assets are modern and of good quality, all of our real concerns in the matter of rationalizing this resource, everything that has to do with our quality control standards and the training we offer to fishermen and others who work in the field... We are told, very clearly, that Québec is strong in that regard. But we are also told, and we are a little hesitant about this, it is agreed that we are strong in this field, in the fishing domain, but we are not forgetting that the research sector is very important and that we must make more progress, particularly in new fishing techniques and in new processing methods.

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

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I very much enjoyed the allegory in the introduction to the text, saying that first one must know where he wants to go and then make sure the boat is sturdy. Nowhere do you say that one must always stay on the quay in case it clouds over.

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

**Mr. Larose:** Still, it's interesting...

**Mr. Sumarah:** Especially the wind.

**Mr. Larose:** Especially the wind and the tides.

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

**Mr. Larose:** I tried to figure out what you are getting at in the text, since I really find it quite interesting, precisely because it outlines the points to be resolved, irrespective of the option we may choose. There are issues that cannot be ignored. And I thought I had found

the key to interpretation of the text when you say: "To have greater access..." Because this is exactly it, when we speak of an historic performance of 3 % for the Islands and 7 % for Québec. We want to have a greater share, to have access to the 200-mile zone, because this is one of the problems that will have to be solved. You tell us: Our assets are the river and the Seaway. And so, if they block those 200 miles, they could quite possibly stay outside of the 200 miles, because we can block the river. I admit that, having examined how an independent Québec should defend itself, this issue is very similar, in that making the resource available, both from the river and the 200-mile zone, is in the interest of both parties. In a way, you say the same thing with respect to transportation in the Maritime Provinces; that is, a rail, not rail, but a maritime link, is still useful, even for the Maritimes, since it generates several million dollars. So, in this context, can we expect to be treated differently than we already are in North America under the Free Trade Agreement, where people, goods and an increasing number of services circulate freely? I remind you that we do not even need a passport to go to the United States. Should we expect a different, more discriminatory kind of treatment from a possible partner?

**Mr. Farrah:** Your observation may be accurate, except that the area's economic and social frailty, mainly its economic frailty, is also a problem. So that in this whole debate that could arise, and I am not hoping that it will, in light of the deals, exchanges and so on, will the area be able to withstand the blow? So that's the question we are asking and the reason why, ideally, and I think that the Commission has the mandate for it, regardless of the option we choose, we must ensure that all doors are left open, ensure that, if there is a period of transition, possibly a difficult one, we find the means, that we, ourselves, as a region, and as Québec in general, can find a way of getting through that transitional stage. Because, looking at the medium term, I personally think that those things can be corrected, given that we need each other. Will we be able to hold out over a very difficult negotiating period which could last... however long? This is the question we are asking ourselves, because, in that eventuality, we will not be of service to our community, since our milieu is fragile.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Farrah. Thank you, Mr. Larose. Now the time reserved for the Government party. Mr. Cosmo Maciocia.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Association libérale des Îles-de-la-Madeleine for presenting a brief to the

Commission. It is a very interesting one and, I believe, very pertinent to this Commission's deliberations. In your brief, you summarize quite well the main concerns of the people of the Magdalen Islands, their specific geographic situation, their small population, since there are only 15 000 inhabitants in the Islands if I am not mistaken, and the frailty, shall we say, of their economy. The study I carried out is a little different from Mr. Bouchard's, in that the situation and, as I just said, the fragile economy make the Islands a vulnerable region in the event of a political change in Québec. That is the thrust of my study, and I found one aspect, which no one has mentioned yet, to be very interesting: The very important aspect you highlight in your brief with regard to a possible political change, which deals with the constraints of a transitional period, whether it be in fishing, or trade, or tourism, or transportation, etc. My question is the following: In your opinion, in which field, or which powers should Québec appropriate from the central, from the federal government?

**Mr. Marcotte:** I think that it's... Mr. Sumarah answered this question indirectly when talking about fishing. I believe that Québec can seek full autonomy in the fishing sector, and, as Mr. Sumarah mentioned, we must be cautious in regard to research. If it gains autonomy in the fishing sector, the Québec Government should then continue to expand the research sector by developing new species in order to ensure economic expansion of our region.  
(11:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Maciocia:** OK. My second question is as follows: If Québec gains independence, in your opinion, how would this affect the Islands, and, as a sub-question, how would it affect relations between the Islands and the Maritime Provinces?

**Mr. Marcotte:** I think that goods and people should continue to circulate freely between the Îles-de-la-Madeleine and the other Maritime Provinces, because, let's not forget that, in terms of commercial transactions, we are talking about \$ 38 000 000 in annual trade between the Islands and the Maritime Provinces. In addition, as producers of marine products, for us, that maritime link is the shortest route and allows easier access to the American market, because there is a ferry between Prince Edward Island and Souris. So, it is an open door to the American market and is much shorter than going by way of Québec. But, we must not forget either that, in the last few years, there has also been a considerable increase in trade between the Islands and Québec.

But trade with the Maritimes must not be interrupted, because, as I have told you, it is worth \$ 38 000 000 and provides easy access to the American market, and, in terms of fish

exports, you know that these go to Boston, where all the brokers are and where fish prices are also finally set. Therefore, we absolutely must keep the door open to the Maritimes in order to preserve this trade. We also have to import milk and other perishable goods. A great deal is also imported from the Maritime Provinces.

**Mr. Maciocia:** OK. Do I have...

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

**Mr. Maciocia:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. This means that first we have to ascertain whether we would be able to negotiate and have the Maritime Provinces' cooperation before we really take a drastic step like Québec independence.

**Mr. Marcotte:** Well, we must ensure that goods and people will circulate freely between the Îles-de-la-Madeleine and the Maritime Provinces, as they do now.

**Mr. Farrah:** As I see it, if you would allow me, Mr. Chairman, all that still falls under strategy. There are many businesspeople around the table. I think it might be necessary to come up with a strategy or a strategic plan. If plan A does not work, will plan B work? In my view, these questions are so important that we must not go in blindly. And I think that it is the Commission's mandate to assure us that, whatever decisions are made, they will benefit the Îles-de-la-Madeleine and the Québec people collectively.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mr. Marcotte, I would first like to tell you that I think your brief is exemplary. Of course, you do not want to take a stand on the nature of the political or constitutional changes that may occur. In certain places, when you speak of major political changes, we definitely realize that you are really speaking of sovereignty, but you say: If that took place. If that took place, we would need to be careful of this, or we would need to be careful of that. It is very concrete, it is very precise and it is very enlightening. I hope that in other regions people will also come before us saying: If there is, to use your terms, a major constitutional change, watch out for this, or watch out for that! In the process that is beginning to take shape, few things can be as enlightening as that kind of approach.

You inform us of certain expenses that the Québec Government would have to become

responsible for, and possibly develop, such as transportation, particularly the maritime link with Prince Edward Island and the airport. In the area of transport, you point out a few spending substitutions. The moneys that the federal government will no longer be spending there, Québec must not forget to spend, in order to ensure that services will continue and even expand.

Your message about free movement with the Maritimes and the north-eastern United States is understood. I think that here your situation is not very different from numerous other regions: the question of free movement is always important. I have a problem, however. I would like to ask you the following question. When, on page 2, you say: "For the Magdalen fishermen who are used to having alliances with Maritime fishermen, a major constitutional change may represent certain risks." Let us put aside the 200 miles; I will talk about that in a moment. I think I know what you are referring to, but could you clarify this a little? Are you afraid that these alliances with the Maritime fishermen will be broken or...?

**Mr. Farrah:** May I respond, Mr. Parizeau?

**Mr. Parizeau:** Why, of course.

**Mr. Farrah:** What happens is that the climate between the fishermen's alliances in the Maritimes and the Islands is still one of cooperation and dialogue. Because, we must not deny that, to the federal government, Canadian fisheries mean Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Québec are forgotten. Therefore, a certain bond, a certain balance of power, a certain unity is created, especially between New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Québec, to defend our quotas before the federal government. It is said that Newfoundland is like electricity in Québec, everything has to be there. In Nova Scotia, they have access to the Atlantic zone. So, an affinity develops, and often those people, in defending certain quotas, will help us obtain additional quotas, since it is also to their advantage. We must not deny this; this is a business matter. All the same, a possible major political change in Québec must not cause all this to crumble, because this balance of power we still have is still a beneficial one. Furthermore, when we speak of fishing zones, of access to 200 miles of the Atlantic, we belong to Canada, until we find evidence to the contrary, and we do not have access. So, there is not a lot of change in that respect, and I believe that the federal government's incoherence must be pointed out.

But when you take from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in which Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and even part of Nova Scotia lie, they are all linked, so that if a line is drawn

according to international law with Québec on one side and Prince Edward Island on the other, it must be said that there are a lot of Magdalen boats, especially from Madelipêche, which currently go into the Gulf for ocean perch, into a zone where, if there were a line drawn down the middle, either at 10 or 20 miles, regardless, we would no longer have access. I am not sure whether you understand.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Yes, very, very well.

**Mr. Farrah:** So, I think it is important to consider that effect, because the boat which comes back safely into port represents factory jobs and the economy. This is why we are saying we have to make sure a system is in place to provide us with as much protection as possible in the transitional period.

**Mr. Parizeau:** I understand.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have 30 seconds left, Mr. Parizeau.

**Mr. Parizeau:** As for the 200-mile zone, here we fully agree that the situation... If there were, to use your expression, a major constitutional change, in terms of the 200-mile zone, the situation could not be any worse than it is now. If I understand correctly, we have been denied access to the 200-mile zone three times.

**Mr. Farrah:** I totally agree. And the French boats...

**Mr. Parizeau:** Things can only get better with a major constitutional change! Ha, ha, ha!

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

**Mr. Farrah:** Except that, Mr. Parizeau, and I know exactly what you're going to say...

**Mr. Parizeau:** Ha, ha, ha! You are quite right.

**Mr. Farrah:** ...there can be only improvement in this regard, except not to the detriment of another fishing sector.

**Mr. Parizeau:** I know, I understood.

**Mr. Farrah:** Well, when the time comes, we must not trade six of one for half a dozen of another, either.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Correct.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Marcotte, Mr. Sumarah, Mr. Farrah, thank you for making the trip to come before our

Commission. Since other people from the Îles-de-la-Madeleine are coming later in the day, let us hope that there will also be other spinoffs and that more Quebecers will go and spend their holidays in the Magdalen Islands. Thank you.

**A voice:** Welcome.

**A voice:** Let's hope.

**Mr. Sumarah:** Thank you very much.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:40 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:43 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Please come to order!

We will continue with the Commission's proceedings.

Now we will hear the Conseil régional de développement du Bas-Saint-Laurent, chaired by Mrs. Paulette Griffin. So, Mrs. Griffin, could you introduce your colleagues?

#### **Conseil régional de développement du Bas-Saint-Laurent**

**Mrs. Griffin (Paulette):** Good day, Mr. Chairman, Commission members. At the table this morning, we have: to my right, the Mayor of Rivière-du-Loup, Mr. Jean-Léon Marquis; Mr. Robert Gagné, General Director of the CRD Bas-Saint-Laurent; Mr. Émilien Nadeau, who is Principal of the comprehensive school in the Town of Dégelis.

Given the time we have been allotted, I am going to begin with the summary and, if I may, perhaps explain our brief just a little this morning, so as to stay within the five minutes.

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

**Mrs. Griffin:** Well then, in the Bas-Saint-Laurent, what we are presenting, we have presented a brief in four parts: The CRD Bas-Saint-Laurent and regional cooperation. We situate the CRD Bas-Saint-Laurent and define regional cooperation as a practice aimed at introducing a regional view of development into the government apparatus.

To explain this a little further, the Conseil régional de développement du Bas-Saint-Laurent, like other cooperation and development organizations in Québec, is a meeting place for a great many social, political and economic leaders from the eight regional county municipalities in the area with which we are concerned.

Our board of directors, which is composed of 48 people, acts as a permanent multisectoral and intersectoral cooperation forum for the regions. In our public involvement and

corporate activities, we endeavor to transmit regional aspirations and to act in the best interests of the regional parties. This is how, together, we support regional promoters in implementing innovative projects and carry out work related to the creation and follow-up of the planning and cooperation instrument we call the socioeconomic conference. Therefore, the cooperation which is taking place in our region is within a very special framework. In a moment, we could perhaps answer your questions.

In the second part, we deal with the regions and the national issue. We demonstrate that the questions of regional development and Québec's constitutional future are closely related by the very fact that the regions are open systems that are not satisfied with the duplication of the jurisdictions that oversee them, which means that we expect a constitution to define the main parameters of a national system into which the regions would be integrated. The coherency of this sort of system lies in the complex set of interrelations, which must also be as complementary as possible. The constraints at the very root of regional development in a way force the regions to turn to a coherent system. They must constantly make choices that take into consideration the political context, national policy, as well as the place they occupy geographically within the system.

The broader public reflection that is being made possible through the work of your Commission gives us hope that there is a way of finding a solution to the thorny issue of double jurisdictions in regional development.

Third part: the federal-provincial disagreement over regional development. Regional development, where things stand in the matter. We present key elements of two documents — you will find them in your folder — that seem to guide the divergent initiatives of the two levels of government.

If you turn to page 11 of your document, there it is. It says that, in Québec and in Canada, the federal and provincial governments have signed agreements, and, having gone through the complex procedure, we realize that we did not obtain the results we expected. If I look at 1988, agreements were signed for \$ 970 million. And, if today we look at the \$ 210 million which has been put at our disposal for this year, 10 % is for spending. Although we had a great deal of support when we presented those Canada-Québec agreements, today, we are still at the wait-and-see stage. We could cite other examples for you; we will discuss these a little later.

We also speak of two explicit cases, specific cases — I have just mentioned one — but also of socioeconomic conferences we have held in the Bas-Saint-Laurent which affected the Canada-Québec general agreements and have resulted in delaying the handling of matters,

simply because the jurisdictions have different powers and they are not always in agreement when it comes time to make a decision.

Therefore, a choice needs to be made. And, for us, the choice, the alternative, is regional development. We believe that this should be the sole responsibility of a supraregional government where one of the two levels of government disappears. And, for us, the jurisdiction that should have the responsibility is Québec. In our recommendations, we say that regional development depends on the following elements: only one government being responsible for regional issues; the government in question adopting an official regional development policy; decentralizing the political or administrative powers currently held in Québec City and in Ottawa in favour of the regions; confirming...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I will have to interrupt you soon.

**Mrs. Griffin:** I have almost finished. Confirming the existence of an intermediate level between the municipal and national levels, and establishing a regional development board in each of Québec's administrative regions.

I will quickly conclude by saying that, on the question of regional development, the foregoing implies that we no longer believe cooperation between the two levels of government is possible.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Hovington, the first comments are yours.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First allow me, on behalf of my political party, to thank your regional development organization for shedding a new, very interesting light on regional development for our Commission members. I want to congratulate you, Mrs. Griffin. I believe last weekend you were appointed, elected President of the AQORCD, the Association québécoise des organismes de concertation et de développement régional du Québec. Congratulations! I think this is the first time a woman has been at the head of that organization.

**Mrs. Griffin:** Yes, this is the first time. Thank you.

**Mrs. Hovington:** You have my most sincere congratulations. This said, your brief contains some very interesting ideas. We will examine them a little later, but first, I would like to correct certain statements, among others, to the effect that the government does not recognize the juridical value of agreements that come out of socioeconomic conferences. You conclude from this that the government does not recognize regional autonomy.

You must remember that in the first generation of economic summits, set up by the preceding government, there was no bond between the parties, neither the government nor regions. I think that the new generation of summits set up by the Liberal government has improved the gatherings by linking the two parties, since there is nevertheless a general agreement, an agreement which has been signed between the governments and the regions. I think that there is a willingness, that this is a sign of more willingness to establish a partnership, in my opinion, between Québec and the regions. I think this is a plus, although certain aspects still need improving. I am sure that Mrs. Griffin will suggest these to us, to the government, in due course.

Economic recovery agreements have also been signed. The Denis-Riverin RCM, which is in my riding, for example, is the poorest RCM in Québec. It was therefore chosen to be part of an economic recovery agreement, which will support development priorities in this RCM.

You say, furthermore, that Québec refuses to have federal representatives at the summits. I would point out to you that, since the signing of the agreement on the development of regions, the Québec government has offered the federal government a place and even invited it to come to the summits with us, but it has chosen to abstain.

Having said this, it was... In your brief, I see that you speak of a presence, of a new intermediate level between the municipal and national levels. You speak... you request that a single government become responsible. I wonder, logically, what type of operation should be favoured in making regional development work, together with the people from the region, as it should with a jurisdiction such as this.

**Mr. Gagné (Robert):** Here, it is important to mention that we have not gone as far as to simply call for a regional government straight out. When we speak of a jurisdiction as such, we are not sure it is obligatory or absolutely essential that we have a jurisdiction, one with legislative authority, between the municipal level and national government. What is important for us in this debate is to get people to recognize that the regions of Québec have the possibility of administering a certain number of tools that are directly related to their development. This is why, in our brief, we referred to a jurisdiction, either a political or administrative one.

For the time being, in our region, as in regions all across Québec, the debate has not gone far enough to provide you with a precise model of what that jurisdiction could be. We put forward the idea of a board, having in mind a board like the one announced by the Minister of Health and Social Services. We are looking forward to viewing its content and, above all, to

seeing how, within the model that is proposed, we will solve the whole issue of accountability.

In our view, at the administrative level, there will surely be a way of better connecting the region's decision-makers with the decisions affecting the development of their own region.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Alright. What type of operation... You have not considered...

**Mr. Gagné:** No.

**Mrs. Hovington:** ...what type of operation there should be between the regions and Québec and amongst the regions themselves.

**Mr. Gagné:** Yes. It certainly is unthinkable. What is important for us is to first have the principle of decentralization recognized and, when this principle is recognized, fully recognized and made official, either in a draft constitution or legislation, then I think it will be easier to look at the mechanism, the mechanisms or models that will be adapted to this principle of decentralization.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Is that it? Because there is much talk of decentralization and the problem was raised a moment ago by my two colleagues: If certain powers are decentralized or repatriated from the federal to the Québec government and Québec decentralizes in favour of the regions, what must be done to avoid the concentration of development within a single region? The Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie are experiencing this problem, you know.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Could you give a brief answer?

**Mr. Gagné:** Yes. I believe that, more and more, in the past three years, Mrs. Hovington, you will have noticed that in the CRD Bas-Saint-Laurent we have favoured an approach which respects each of our eight zones by agreeing that our zones are our RCM territories... And this is one of the characteristics which is somewhat of a trademark of the CRD Bas-Saint-Laurent in the whole process of cooperation and in the regions.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** It is Mrs. Marois' turn.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to take my turn to welcome you and especially Mrs. Griffin at the head of the delegation. I think she is the first, this morning at least, who is head of her delegation. So, welcome to our sitting.

Your comments were clearer in your initial presentation than in the brief with regard to the conclusion you come to on the responsibilities

that the various levels of government should have, and that, among others, the seat of the regional development level should be Québec City.

I also wanted to tell you that your brief is particularly noteworthy; and I believe it is the first to outline the regional development philosophies that have been adopted in Ottawa, and in Québec City, through various reports that have been submitted. I think this is the first time a report has provided such an extensive outline of these.

Well, having said this, I am going to ask some very precise questions, since what you are requesting implies many changes. Major changes, and changes which we may agree on, but we must know exactly what these entail. You say: Decentralizing political or administrative powers currently held by Québec City or Ottawa in favour of the regions. Have you drawn up a list of those powers that your regions should have or of the areas in which you must act?

**Mr. Nadeau (Émilien):** We have not identified a specific area, although, from experience, when we look at how departments have operated, especially by sector, it seems to us that, with regard to regional development, there should really be decentralization in the management of tools, and that we no longer operate, if you will, by sector. Here we are referring to regional development. Among other aspects, we are also thinking of vocational training, which, in our opinion, should be the responsibility of a single level of government, any level, as should regional development, and some of these powers should be acquired by a level, again this could be any level, and given to us so that we can exercise them.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine. You are fully aware that under the umbrella of regional development, since you have already signed agreements, you know exactly what this entails, or the areas that are discussed. We are talking of road transport, tourism, cultural facilities, sports facilities, and so on. This can therefore be a vast field in which to act. Are there priorities that should be established from the beginning in a perspective such as the one you envisage, and what would these be, in your opinion, since you are currently experiencing this in your region?

**Mr. Gagné:** I think this touches upon an extremely important aspect, one which we also attempted to develop in our brief, that regional development is horizontal and multisectoral. Quite often we come up against an extremely hierarchical and compartmentalized departmental approach, so that we could give you the simple answer: We would like to be able to influence all the departments. But I think that each region of Québec should identify two or three priorities



and, from these priorities, we should be able to define precise decentralized mandates specific to that region. We are against provincial models, where an attempt is made to fit everyone into one room, which is decorated the same way. These wall-to-wall solutions create problems.

(noon)

**Mrs. Marois:** An expression that we in fact used to use...

**Mr. Gagné:** Wall-to-wall solutions.

**Mrs. Marois:** ...yes, wall-to-wall solutions...

**Mr. Gagné:** There it is.

**Mrs. Marois:** ...used to use quite frequently. As a CRD, you encompass representatives from all sectors, the economic, cultural and social sectors, municipal officers, and so on. Your brief seems to be saying: Let's preserve the RCM, which is the base, and establish another institution, somewhere between a national Québec government — at least, this is what I am presuming. You mention a board; this could also be a group of elected officers. The model you have now, the CRD, which is not especially easy, since you in fact have few powers, do you think this could be retained as a model, perhaps adding a somewhat clearer delegation of power?

**Mr. Gagné:** I think that an important advantage in the representativeness of our cooperation organization, which is also our administrative council, is that we already have leaders in public opinion who represent the entire Bas-Saint-Laurent region and are equally divided among all our poles, and we also have a multisectoral representation, including municipal officers, owners and presidents of business firms, socioeconomic groups and institution people. In a word, in this organization we have all the people who have the most power to influence their own levers of development.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Alright? We will now go on to the other group. I understand that Mr. Guy d'Anjou has a special reason for commenting.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I am one of the founders of the Conseil régional de développement. Back then it was the Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie, a vast region. I want to congratulate Mrs. Griffin, who has become the Chairperson.

The question I want to ask you... Very clearly, your orientation is toward decentralization in favour of the regions. Do you make a distinction between administrative powers

and political powers? And, do you favour a decentralization of political powers in favour of a political level, officers elected by universal suffrage, in whatever area, although, from an administrative viewpoint, this is obviously different? Political power necessarily brings with it administrative powers, if one holds the political power. I would also like you to tell me a little about your idea of a regional development board.

**Mr. Gagné:** Actually, as I mentioned a moment ago, the debate over political or administrative powers is truly necessary, not only in our region, but in all the regions of Québec. Just last weekend we concluded a provincial strategy conference, where our organization was asked to put several matters in order and to make some suggestions for solutions. Therefore, it is very difficult for me, this morning, to provide a very clear answer to that question. But we are under the impression that it is perhaps not essential to have legislative powers in order to be capable of influencing the implementation of or the decisions about regional development programs. We have to delve into this question, of course, and discuss it within the milieu. However, we think that, at the outset, we could join with the government which is responsible for regional development in attaining a number of development objectives and be able, perhaps in budget packages, to promote certain sectors.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** The time you take to answer counts as part of the time we have to ask questions. I am going to ask you an even clearer question: Do you perceive that by giving more responsibilities to the local governments, whether to school or municipal boards, the regions become more responsible or there is more decentralization?

**Mr. Gagné:** Yes.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Now, I would also like to have an answer on the regional development board that you envisage.

**Mr. Gagné:** We think that the regional board could be something like our regional cooperation group with our own board of directors. We believe that the CRD, with broader mandates and powers, could play that role for certain, very precise activity sectors. In the Bas-Saint-Laurent, priority is presently being given to developing employment and manufacturing firms. With this type of strategy, we think we could negotiate budget packages with the government responsible in order to promote development in those sectors.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** You know that when the CRD started out, there were regional officers on it, with the exception of provincial or federal officers. Do you believe that, in order to have real cooperation, regional officers should be on the council along with the other organizations?

**Mrs. Griffin:** In my view, Mr. d'Anjou, this is essential. Regional officers must be on it. If I take a look at the Bas-Saint-Laurent, we currently have eight RCM chairpersons, three mayors elected from the coastal region and two mayors elected from the back country. So, 13 of the 48 people actually represent the municipal officers. Each RCM chairperson returning to a region where all those officers gather... So the actual vehicle is in fact the RCM chairperson who brings in ideas, and we are also fuelled by municipal officers from our eight RCMs in the Bas-Saint-Laurent.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Now we will hear Mr. Claude Béland, followed by Mr. Bruno Roy.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. President. You know, I think that, since November 6 we have been hearing briefs three days a week, and rarely has a brief been presented here without the suggestion of repatriating powers. Most of the briefs say: Powers must be repatriated. For some it is a few, for others it is a great many, and for others it is all powers. And I have started to think that at some point we will have to say: How is this done? Because I do not think that you will be satisfied with us if, in our recommendation to the National Assembly, we said: Powers must be repatriated. Because I think that we have been hearing this for a long time. I would like you to tell me how you perceive the matter when you say: A single government must be responsible for regional development. Because when we speak of regional development, we are speaking of development. This involves a great many powers, as I see it. I would appreciate if you could help us out a little with the how. And I hope that you will not tell me: Well, we are not experts in that matter, because all of us at this end of the table are just like you. We are representatives of the milieu. We are not experts. They have lent us a chair for a few months. I would like you to talk to us a little. Help us a little to say how one goes about repatriating all the powers to have a single government that is responsible for development in Québec.

**Mrs. Griffin:** In our opinion, with... in light of what is transpiring in Québec, Québec is going to be redefined. The regions of Québec want to be part and parcel of Québec's development. We want to occupy our territory, and we want to occupy it well, and we want to

occupy it in a positive way. If, in the regions, there is no one who is involved in the milieu, certain powers... because we believe that the closer we are to people, the more we can protect our interests, the more we know their needs, and I think that, together, we are capable of finding solutions, even if we are an outlying region, and those are the powers we want. Right now it is difficult. There are two jurisdictions.

**Mr. Béland:** If we want to give powers to the regions, we have to have those powers. Someone has to have them. So, how do we go about getting them? That is my question. I would really like to write...

**Mrs. Griffin:** If we want to have them, Mr. Béland, they must be included in a new Québec constitution. Furthermore, in a new Québec constitution, we have to say that Québec is appropriating that responsibility and to establish, as well, that we have a regional development department. Last weekend, all the regions...

**Mr. Béland:** But, what do we do with the other one?

**Mrs. Griffin:** With the other...

**Mr. Béland:** What do we do with the other jurisdiction?

**Mrs. Griffin:** Well now, we do not know what will become of the other jurisdiction.

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

**Mrs. Griffin:** We are presuming that agreements will be drawn up. In any case, eventually... We would perhaps not be in favour of maintaining the status quo, but we believe people in Québec may have some good ideas for a jurisdiction.

**Mr. Béland:** I understand you. You're saying: If we write this into in the Canadian Constitution, we have solved the problem. The fact that we have written it into the Canadian Constitution means that we have repatriated our powers. Is this what you are telling me?

**Mrs. Griffin:** I am not talking about the Canadian constitution.

**Mr. Béland:** A Québec constitution, excuse me.

**Mrs. Griffin:** OK.

**Mr. Béland:** Is that it?

**Mrs. Griffin:** So, if you negotiate, Mr. Béland...

**Mr. Béland:** I wanted her to contradict me.

**Mrs. Griffin:** If, Mr. Béland, you negotiate broader powers, regardless of how you are going to negotiate with the federal government, we are saying that those powers should be entrenched in a new agreement. Let's call it that for now. And that Québec should be given... If we say that the emphasis, if we want the regions of Québec to take part in that development, there needs to be a department that is responsible for it. In that regard, the OPDQ is doing a good job, but it is a... I would say that it is place where the government's poor children are dropped off, in my view. And we believe that it is not a question of being repatriated in order to be against the government, but of repatriating powers in order to be with it, to participate in that development, to participate in that new Québec.

**Mr. Béland:** We will talk about this again. Thank you.

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

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Roy is a "supplement" to Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Roy:** Supplement? Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I am sorry, sir.

**Mr. Roy:** A big supplement, he would say. I certainly measure up.

**A voice:** He's a bonus.

**Mr. Roy:** Given the lady's response to Mr. Béland, I think that the question I wanted to ask follows exactly the same logic. First, it says on page 10: "giving a single government responsibility" - and it does not say "one government", it says "giving a single government responsibility for the regional issue" - and you even added: "We have made our choice, it is Québec." My question for you is: What kind of Québec are you referring to? A sovereign Québec, yes or no?

**Mrs. Griffin:** The Bas-Saint-Laurent has not taken a stand on a Québec constitution as such, because, in our region, we did not have time to go and verify the viewpoint of each of our members. So, it would be difficult, this morning, to honestly say to you: it is one kind of Québec more than another, but what we want is for it to have responsibilities. I do not believe that the status quo after... In any case, we want to see what is going to happen, but we think that there

will be a new definition, and the region wants to be present.

**Mr. Roy:** My question for you is: Why do you chose Québec?

**Mrs. Griffin:** Because we feel that...

**Mr. Roy:** What does that choice imply?

**Mrs. Griffin:** It implies that it is the level closest to us.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Time has unfortunately run out. Mr. Marquis, Mr. Gagné, Mrs. Griffin, Mr. Nadeau, thank you for your presentation, and I am certain that your presence here will be of help in our deliberations. Thank you.

**Mrs. Griffin:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** To the Témiscouata regional county municipality, welcome. I understand that Mr. Jean-Pierre Laplante is going to give the summary of the brief.

#### Regional County Municipality of Témiscouata

**Mr. Lemay (Alonzo):** Mr. Chairman, I think we are going to alternate in the presentation, if that is all right with you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. Could you first introduce the members of your group?

**Mr. Lemay:** On my right, Mr. Émilien Beaulieu, Mayor of Packington; Mr. Pierre Bérubé, researcher and writer; on my left, Mr. Jean-Pierre Laplante, Director of the RCM; Mrs. Paulette Griffin, Mayor of Cabano; Mr. Serge Pelletier, Mayor of Rivière-Bleue.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead. You have five minutes in which to present your brief.  
(12:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Lemay:** Mr. Chairman, this morning, we had to shorten our brief a little in order to stay within the five minutes. Still, we will try to show discipline.

It is an honour for the representatives of the vast region of Témiscouata, on behalf of the Témiscouata RCM, to appear before the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. It is because of its distinctiveness within Québec and the long history of its territorial organization in this

province and in this federal State that we believe it is worthwhile stating our position before the constitutional Commission with respect to the place of the regions within this State which we all have the task of defining.

Our view is constitutional, because it focuses on the region's official status within a State of Québec.

**Mr. Beaulieu (Émilien):** In other words, the Témiscouata RCM does not limit the constitutional approach concerning Québec's status to its relation with the outside, but seeks to make the Commission sensitive to Québec's status from the inside. That is, in relation to the communities that tangibly determine the reality of the daily lives of their inhabitants.

When the Canadian State was formed, its parts were immediately defined as provinces. In the United States, the stars on the national flag symbolize the organizational process of the State. The State of Russia, inside the Soviet Union, also has its official interior boundaries. This also applies to modern Québec.

Témiscouata bases its evolutionary experience with development exclusively on its outlying location, where a mainly rural population covers quite a large area with a homogeneous geography that groups its inhabitants together. The analysis of this framework, which is also found in Québec, has been popularized by one of our fellow citizens, Mr. Pierre Bérubé, coauthor of the latest policy statement of the Conseil des affaires sociales du Québec, "Agir ensemble", in which he clearly outlines the problem of the exodus from the regions in terms of Québec's territorial organization. He concludes that Québec is responsible for ensuring that its territory is occupied.

**A voice:** A State responsibility.

**Mr. Lemay:** Also, speaking of the changes in territorial boundaries, the serious problem of the exodus out of Québec's regions is the result of, among other things, phenomena that are relatively recent and directly related to territorial organization. On the one hand, for the past 20 years or so, the State has proceeded to divide the territory in various ways, each one different from the last, without showing concern mainly for the citizens occupying this territory.

For the most part, the various boundaries are drawn according to the administrative operations of the government apparatus, rather than to the regional communities already in place. Superimposing the federal and provincial electoral ridings, RCMs, administrative regions, in addition to the specific boundaries for each department and for public organizations such as school boards, CLSCs, and so on, destroys the group spirit of communities of kinship. How can

a method of cooperating in regional or community development possibly work, when the parties involved in one regional community have been grouped with another?

Since they have neither the proximity found in the city nor a major urban centre, the regional communities spread out across the territory are more vulnerable to administrative boundaries, which tend to split them up or annex them, entirely or in part, to another region. This is the case of regions such as Témiscouata, Lotbinière, Bellechasse, Pontiac, Kamouraska, Mégantic, Matapédia, Charlevoix, and so on.

Drawing territorial boundaries with no regard for congeneric communities demobilizes the spirit and dynamism of a population that has the same problems and the same needs with regard to development. On the other hand, the phenomenon of rearranging these natural communities is coupled with stripping them of their manpower centres, Sûreté du Québec stations, options in comprehensive schools, Small Claims Divisions and various departmental services, etc., depriving the regional community of the tools it would need to develop as a distinctive territorial entity.

The so-called administrative streamlining or standardization of services for economic reasons is transformed by an even higher cost for society: taxpayers are abandoning the regional community that is already organized and structured.

Thus, the destructuring or demobilization of community dynamics together with the stripping of kindred regions finally reaches a point where we lose our identity as a community. Organizing these regions one way for a particular service, dividing them in a particular way for a particular function, or annexing them onto a particular territory for other reasons, in addition to an increasing lack of services adapted to the regional community, creates a kind of heterogeneous spirit, which results in the citizens ceasing to identify with their corner of the world.

Over the course of Québec history, there have been three types of regional entities which Quebecers have identified with: the former electoral riding, the county council, which usually corresponded to the electoral riding, and the diocese. In more recent times, in the early 1980s, the Québec government conducted a broad public consultation, in accordance with the Act respecting land use planning and development, asking regional communities how they saw themselves as entities and how they wanted to be divided and organized. What effects has this had 10 years later?

**Mr. Laplante (Jean-Pierre):** In conclusion, the essential premise for recognizing regional Québec and the Québec people is that natural communities obtain constitutional recognition as

State districts modelled after the RCM territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There it is. Mrs. Pauline Marois will begin the questioning.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome you to our table. Your brief is a plea for the respect of what you call the realities of people's daily lives. I am using your own terms. So, you believe that, if the community of kinship is not respected, there is a definite risk of demobilizing the local and regional dynamism, participation, and ultimately, people's will to progress and develop.

You say: The RCMs should be State districts. You cite the European model, mentioning Switzerland, Germany and France in your brief. Have you thought about the weight a person has in one RCM as compared to another, if you were to get rid of the population's problem or its reality related to numbers? I would like to hear your comments on this matter.

**Mrs. Laplante:** Is it the weight in terms of numbers or the weight in terms of the people representing the number that you want...

**Mrs. Marois:** What I want to know is, now when we vote in Québec, and this is the debate that exists over the electoral map, we attempt to have one vote in Gaspé, in Rivière-du-Loup, in Rouyn or in Montréal carry about the same weight, since each electoral district, if you will, represents a certain number of people, which can be compared from one place to the next. OK? Therefore, if we accept what you are suggesting, we obviously accept another principle. We can decide that it is another principle, but I want you to tell me about this.

**Mrs. Laplante:** OK. It is perhaps that very experience which regions such as ours find difficult, because we see the population continually declining. And the electoral districts are currently based on the size of the population, and perhaps not on the size of the territory as such, which creates numerous problems for outlying regions. Perhaps this is why we mention the matter in our brief this morning. Because, in Témiscouata, we have tremendous difficulties with the electoral district. We have had them in the past, we almost had them very recently, they stopped not long ago, for a time, we do not know how long, but the Témiscouata RCM alone currently belongs to, has belonged to, three provincial electoral districts. In my opinion, it is a mishmash, it reduces our strength, and this is the feeling we are trying to get across in our presentation of this morning's brief.

**Mrs. Marois:** Alright.

**Mr. Bérubé (Pierre):** I would perhaps add something, Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Yes. I would like to hear what you have to say.

**Mr. Bérubé:** Regarding the idea of ruling on a method of official State demarcation, certainly, in terms of the number of voters, one can say: Ah! Well, that does not respect, let's say, a certain number of voters, but still we have forgotten something. Here in Québec, we have always thought of the democratic aspect, but we have never considered social organization. So, I will give you a very concrete example. If, for example, in a very small, very sparsely populated region, outside Québec, shall we say, you will notice that even though the district is small - it does not have a large population - at least it has official boundaries as a State district, and the smaller the population, the fewer powers it is given... I am citing the example of the department of Aveyron in France, sparsely populated, a tiny capital of 26 000 inhabitants. But next door is the Bouches-du-Rhône, whose capital city, Marseilles, has a population of 3 500 000. Still, the people of this little region can develop their territory as they see fit, even according to their own specific character.

The electoral perspective, which is a very, very important one - and I would emphasize this - is based on demography. Social organization is also very important. Here, on the basis of the State district, we can say: This is the official district, and then, we can go from there with sections of the population...

**Mrs. Marois:** I see! Alright.

**Mr. Bérubé:** ...but, the foundation is the region.

**Mrs. Marois:** So then, a kind of proportional representation could be introduced without necessarily going to the true proportional...

**Mr. Bérubé:** I forgot one detail, Mrs. Marois. I should tell you - because this is very important - that I work at the ministère des Affaires municipales and that all the opinions I have expressed here do not commit my department in any way. I should have mentioned this. So...

**Mrs. Marois:** Alright. Fine. Let's return to our core proposal. I think it is important to mention, but let's return to our core proposal all the same.

Then, in order to respect what you describe and what I believe in - and I am very aware of

it — a system that retains the elements of proportional representation, as we in fact find in certain European countries, wouldn't modified regional proportional representation — actually there is an array of possibilities — meet your expectations by respecting the basic regional entity, which is the socioeconomic and cultural reality, adding a proportional element to ensure a balance and to respect democracy?

**Mr. Bérubé:** Mrs. Marois, democracy is very important. I mean, it is fundamental. But, another principle which is also fundamental has always been forgotten. At the UN, the Seychelles, which have a population of 68 000, have one vote, and the People's Republic of China has a population of over 1 000 000 000.

So what we are telling you is that, here in Québec, we have true regions. By ruling accordingly, private enterprise, and everyone in turn, will eventually begin to operate on the basis of the State district, statistics, department offices and everything according to the State's reality.

**Mrs. Marois:** I'll put it another way: Are you ruling it out completely?

**Mr. Bérubé:** Pardon?

**Mrs. Marois:** Are you completely ruling out the possibility of using proportional representation?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bérubé, with a yes or a no, because it is essential that we respect the timetable.

**Mr. Bérubé:** No, this is not our way of doing things in Québec, in my view.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Alright. Mr. Gérard Larose, followed by Mr. Roy and Mr. Nicolet.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to continue the debate that has been initiated. The question of a vote by proportional representation is a problem in itself, irrespective of geographic structure. In my opinion, there is a problem of representativeness at the National Assembly, if only because of the diversity of political groups. I find the bipartisanship somewhat intriguing for a society that claims to be ultrademocratic. In itself, it is a problem. Combined with the proposal you are making, this seems feasible, by reestablishing — because I think that you are touching upon an important point in redefining the relation between the State and its citizens, between Québec and its regions — by managing to establish the demo-

cratic foundation, of development and of social organization, in natural communities. But, I am told that there are 95 RCMs in Québec. Do you actually think this could really be done without an intermediate jurisdiction? That is, do the large administrative regions, the way they are defined — I think there are 16 — do they lose their pertinence in this context?

**Mr. Lemay:** I would like to say something here, perhaps. When we spoke a moment ago of proportional representation, I would like to go back to a point which seems important to me. Given the present situation, we are always caught in a vicious circle. Our populations are constantly declining therefore, we cannot meet the standards of electoral districts, and the reason why our populations are declining is that we have little or no economic development. If we examine the exodus of our young people from regions such as ours, we realize that we will never find a way out unless the provincial government, or the national government, is present, as we would like it to be, and truly establishes a regional development policy. (12:30 p.m.)

For a long time, we have been reservoirs, natural resource reservoirs, human resource reservoirs, and we have nothing against this. But, now we are saying, maybe it's time we receive our due. And, what this boils down to is that we want powers to be decentralized. We want government programs, whether provincial or federal, to be adjusted, and we also want to be active participants in our development. We no longer want to have standards and administrative rulings imposed on us from above. We want the people from the region to establish them.

**Mr. Larose:** But I think there is a consensus developing on this. Your contribution is original in that it says: The realities of people's daily lives must be determined by territory.

**A voice:** At the RCM level.

**Mr. Larose:** There, you are suggesting the RCMs. The question I was asking: Is there an intermediate level that disappears?

**Mr. Bérubé:** Mr. Larose, it is a question of identity. You, the Larose family, your parents, the place you come from, this is a natural dynamism. The true regions of Québec are not regions 02, 04, 06 and much less region 06a. They are Lotbinière, they are Mégantic, they are the...

**Mr. Larose:** Although they are the ones that are preferred!

**Mr. Bérubé:** Those are the true regions, do

you see? So, it is to allow the common spirit of a particular community, which has the same goals and the same interests, to be able to work together, since it has a common destiny. From the moment you have 20 municipalities, 8 of which are in that electoral district, but of the 6 remaining, 2 are part of the transportation system of a... What you create is a heterogeneous spirit. The true region is the one determined by the 18th and 19th century surveyors who said: You extend from such-and-such a place to such-and-such a river and to such-and-such a lake. This is in fact the reality of the geography and of nature. It is what has always existed. These are the former riding councils and the former electoral ridings. And when they were consulted in 1980, the people said: I, with my parish, I would like to go there. Not there, but there. It is the same consensus of the past, present and future. It is the true region.

**Mr. Larose:** I think what you are saying is packed with good sense. I think it is an original and very interesting contribution.

**Mr. Bérubé:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Larose. Unfortunately, the time has expired. If you would kindly answer the other question, Mr. Roy.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy with what I've just heard, because identity has been discussed, and consequently, culture. And interestingly, you use the term... Not interestingly. I should say: You use the term "community of kinship", and I was going to ask you the question. The underlying meaning of these terms "community of kinship"... it seemed to me to imply the notion of identity, therefore, of culture. How, in fact, can culture help to organize, and not disorganize these communities of kinship, as you mention in your brief?

**Mr. Bérubé:** ...and by studying the scope of a community's involvement, how can we know where this community of kinship is located, where the "beat" of people's lives actually pulsates? In fact, what I did at one point was to look at how people moved about from one place to another by automobile, how people telephoned each other from one area to another, what people read, what was so-and-so's newspaper, what areas it reached. People telephoned each other from which place to which place?

This way you can see what your community encompasses. And that, let me tell you, is determined by geography. When you come from farming country, even the store that sells to people is selling to farmers. People have the

same problems, the same destiny. Then, when you allow the people to develop in all ways, which is, in fact, a common culture... Everything comes from the earth, from the soil, from the very facts of nature.

As a result, you are culturally predisposed to develop agricultural themes, and music will have a rural flavour. I don't know how to explain it in a more concrete way... If you come from a forested region, you will have a woodlands festival. Culturally speaking, everything ties in with the realities of the territory. It's the real territory, and is not to be shared any old way. I think at this point I'll tell you something. Myself, sir, for 17 years now I've been racking my brains because we're losing our identity. There, you have mayors who come from the area, who live there every day, and it's a combination of theory and practice, if you will.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Nicolet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course, I appreciate the opportunity to greet my colleagues from the Témiscouata RCM, which, thanks to arguments such as the ones you put forward here this morning in fact, has become one of the best known in Québec. I think you have really done a remarkable job in spreading a notion which was tending to get snuffed out.

I particularly liked your conclusion, which very clearly establishes priorities for a future Québec blueprint, which we want to build by returning to the basics, to the organic foundations, to the functional unit of society, the administrative regions becoming a point of reference for other objectives. But I don't want to embarrass Mrs. Griffin who presented a brief earlier with a slightly different bias; but do you all agree in confirming unequivocally that the basis for any future organization should still be the organic unit, which is the community of kinship?

**A voice:** You want to answer.

**Mrs. Griffin:** I would like to answer you, Mr. Nicolet. I think what we are trying to convey this morning is not incompatible. And that is, that the basic unit is really the RCM because that is where the sense of belonging is. Our need for an identity, those needs, we provide for them together, and then we join with our neighbours, our neighbouring RCMs. We have affinities, in any case, that can't be forgotten. We have our differences but we also have our affinities, and together, with the RCMs, using our differences and our strengths, we want to be able to consult with each other so as to arrive at a consensus on how to develop our

the basic unit which is the RCM. I don't think it's incompatible with what we are trying to convey.

**Mr. Nicolet:** To be very precise, would this constitutional recognition, if there should be one, be implemented at the municipal level rather than at the level of the administrative region?

**Mrs. Griffin:** I, myself, would want recognition at the municipal level, first. That is basic. Whether the municipal level or RCM... The municipal, because we must keep in mind that we are an RCM. For me, only the municipal, I think we're too small. We must be with the others as well. Now that we are becoming allied on a regional basis, on a level at which, together, we can make decisions, I think, then, it's compatible. It will work. It can work.

**A voice:** I thank you.

**Mr. Nicolet:** I could perhaps respond also by saying that I don't think we've reached the point of defining the exact structure we want to have. What we are simply saying is that this should be implemented at the local and RCM levels, first. We also sense that there is a need for concerted action, which should take place in the regions. Hence the importance of so-called regional structures, somewhat like the CRD and all the others. I don't think we, ourselves, have reached that point yet.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...the next speaker, Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** It gives me pleasure to welcome you here today. And I must tell you that your brief... I will paraphrase what my colleague, Mr. Larose, said the other day: It's a brief I would like to have written myself. Well, on reading yours, I thought the same thing, in the sense that its thoughtfulness and content are extremely interesting and will enable us to go further in our own thinking.

Furthermore, I strikes me that your brief has already become a classic, since pages 5 and 6 have been cited in extenso in other briefs. Pages 12 and 13, which we will look at this afternoon, will be discussed by others. But, already, the word is spreading, which is extremely impressive. So we are not the only ones to appreciate what you've done.

Your notion of a Québec soul seems to suggest to me the emergence of Québec nationalism. I think we have forgotten how strong the concept of nationalism or regionalism is. And it's a concept I find present here. You speak of your region with such pride and such fervour, wanting to protect it and organize it. The future you envisage for your region, in any

case, impresses me and excites me. And the term "excites" is a very measured one.

In that sense, when you say, for example, that the present structures and the duplications have had very negative effects, and have led, among other things, to an exodus of your population... You were saying a while ago that you felt like reservoirs for the large centres, which are Montréal and Québec City, and that, ultimately, what is done is always to the detriment of your region, and that your dynamism and desire to build counts for little.

You want to bring back a lot of powers here. But what bothers me... Not what bothers me, but what is less clear to me, is that what you are in the process of reconstructing looks like a federation. And that's what I said to other regions, in a perhaps less straightforward way. Basically, you reassume regional powers, etc., the autonomy of the regions, etc. And I agree, but I say to myself: Good heavens! By saying that we have two levels of intervention and duplication of structures, do we not risk repeating the same pattern we have vis-à-vis the rest of Canada, which we disapprove of so strongly? In situations where all kinds of powers would be decentralized to the regions, do we not at some point risk duplication between the central, provincial government and the regional government, or whatever you call yourselves, I'm not sure?

**Mr. Lemay:** I would perhaps like to intervene, Mr. Bélanger. Basically, without detracting from the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and all its members present here, we know for a fact that you are working, quite specifically, toward a potentially new political status for Québec, be it sovereignty, sovereignty-association or a superstructure. I think there is perhaps one word which was eliminated at the outset, the so-called "status quo". That is already a plus as far as I'm concerned. In this, I should make it clear, I speak for myself. But there is an element which seems to me to be important.

Looking at the political status in relation to what pertains outside Québec is terribly important and essential, but what we say is this: That's great, that's a big step for Québec, but over and above that, we should look at the political status within Québec's own territory as well. And within Québec territory, in our opinion, it's the big urban centres. It's the big urban centres alright, but it's the regions as well. And we do not want to be left out of this whole process, because a change for us, for our population anyway, can mean a plus. A plus means a plus for the people in the regions. We don't want a Québec geared to Montréal or the other large centres. We want a Québec for all Quebecers.

At that level, I think it's essential that you



keep in mind the deeply felt issues and questions raised by the people of the regions. Without being nasty, I would also like to add that we are a bit tired of being treated like the beggars of the system. We are not beggars, we want to be participants, full-fledged players. This is how we come here before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, for that matter: To tell you our expectations for a future Québec. And it's terribly important in our eyes.

**Mr. Bérubé:** May I add something, Mr. Bélanger? When you refer to federation, in constitutional parlance, it is the idea that must be remembered, above all. We're talking about powers that could be decentralized, and all that. What we've come to say to you, in fact, is that we constitute an entity. And at present, the way the Québec territory is organized is that you pass the boundaries for the transport districts, in such a way, without considering, even though the people... Let's see...you have four municipalities in one transport district and eight in the other. And in those eight, there are two in such and such electoral district.

We lose track of the real entity. In other words, let's put things in their proper place. And when we speak of creating a sovereign State, a sovereign associated State...when the United States were created, the Soviet Union, immediately they said: How do we divide this up? The Canadian federation? It's in provinces. In the Soviet Union, they are States. In our case, we should say how for our own protection, because we constitute a population of 20 municipalities, and, ultimately, we want to go on living and making decisions appropriate to the singular nature of our territory.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bérubé, thank you.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** If you will allow me to interrupt, because we cannot, in five minutes, do justice to the work you've done. Its contents would take hours to discuss. I find that very unfortunate, Mr. Chairman. We have no more time, unfortunately. But I hope there will be other forums for asking you other questions, because it's most interesting.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Messrs. Beaulieu, Bérubé, Laplante, Lemay, Pelletier, Mrs. Griffin, thank you for throwing some light on our deliberations here, and on a future for Québec that includes all Quebecers.

A few announcements for the members of the Commission. Check-out time is 1 p.m. Two or three rooms have been set aside for baggage. You may get information at the reception desk. Dinner is free. Work begins again at 2 p.m.; I would ask you to be here at 2 p.m. sharp so that we can start on time, since we still have a very

full schedule for this afternoon and this evening.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:45 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:04 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We have with us this afternoon, the Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de l'Est du Québec. Mrs. Éveline Langlois, I understand you will present the brief. So, we are happy to have you with us. Would you kindly introduce your two colleagues?

**Mrs. Langlois (Éveline):** Yes, on my right is Mrs. Micheline Laroche, the coordinator of the Regroupement des femmes de Matane. Here on my left is Denise Barville, director of Ficeilles pour l'accès des femmes au travail.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very well. As I explained to you before, you have five minutes in which to present your brief. The floor is yours.

#### **Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de l'Est du Québec**

**Mrs. Langlois:** Thank you. I would like to thank the Commission for hearing us, and, at the same time, reassure it about the quality of our brief, even if it is only regional. Having said that, the Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de l'Est du Québec was founded in 1983, and brings together some fifteen nonprofit organizations. These women's groups are divided between the two administrative regions of the territory, the Bas-Saint-Laurent and the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine. The Table de concertation's principal mandate is to intervene in all situations in which the interests and rights of women are adversely affected, first, at the local and regional level, and then, at the provincial and federal levels.

We wish to take advantage of this opportunity for redefining the constitutional future of Québec to point out to the Commission that the women of the Eastern region are doubly concerned by this historic debate. They are concerned as citizens of Québec, but also as people living in the rural regions all too often neglected by our decision-makers whose priorities are socioeconomic.

A few statistics from the last federal census confirm that there are great disparities in disposable income and promising employment opportunities between the women of this region and their women colleagues in the province as a whole. La Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de l'Est du Québec also believes that the overlapping of federal and provincial jurisdictions has a marked effect on various aspects of the living conditions of women. The funding of their organizations and alternative associations,

abortion, occupational training, health, day care services and social services are but a few examples.

In other respects, the Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de l'Est du Québec considers that a new blueprint for a Québec society should, in establishing its priorities and direction, take into account regions such as ours whose difficulties give cause for alarm.

The Québec of tomorrow should work closely with local and regional initiatives in order to help these areas in their development. Changes in the standards of certain programs and criteria for their application are also needed if they are to be better adapted to the socioeconomic realities of this region. Finally, although Québec society has taken the first step toward achieving equality between the sexes, the Québec of tomorrow should, clearly, continue to move forward by taking unequivocal stands vis-à-vis the inequalities women are subjected to.

As feminists and citizens, women rightly consider that all political or constitutional changes made to the present system are of great concern to them. All too often left out of the great historic debates, these women have decided to be present at this memorable rendezvous, and, with respect to this blueprint for society, are determined to voice their aspirations loud and clear.

In concluding, the Table de concertation believes that, regardless of what form Québec society adopts, the following elements should be retained: In shared federal-provincial jurisdictions, respect for the comprehensive practices advocated by women's groups and, consequently, total funding which also includes all resources coming from the various levels of the present governments; freedom of choice with respect to abortion; the institution of realistic employment training policies that take the real needs of regional populations into account; the setting up of adequate social programs, health and day-care services that meet the aspirations and specific needs of Quebecers; in the regions, the adoption of a real policy for regional development, support for the local and regional initiatives of women's groups, and the establishment of administrative standards adapted to the characteristics of our remote regions; with regard to the pursuit of equality between men and women, the adoption of firm positions vis-à-vis all forms of sexual discrimination, and financial acknowledgment for work done by women's groups and associations. In brief, any political and constitutional framework should allow the development of a blueprint for society that recognizes the legitimate ambitions of women and women's groups. For the building of a future Québec will be accomplished with efforts such as theirs. Québec. Thank you.

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

you, Mrs. Langlois. We begin with Mr. Marcel Beaudry, who will be followed by Mrs. Côté.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for your brief, which I found very interesting. Your brief states that, despite the fact that great strides have been made in the last while, you consider that there is still a great deal to be done, and I completely agree with you, the sooner the better for all concerned. You spoke of regionalization and decentralization in your brief. I think it's an issue that many people feel strongly about, because ever since we've been in the regions we've been discussing this problem, which ties in naturally with the needs of this milieu. You also state in your brief: "Any political and constitutional framework should allow the development of a blueprint for society that recognizes the legitimate ambitions of women..." My question is the following: Do you think, within the present framework, you can satisfy these needs for development? If not, within the context of renewed federalism, if we recovered or repatriated certain jurisdictions, would that be an answer to your question? If so, which jurisdictions would you want to see repatriated?

**Mrs. Banville (Denise):** With respect to the jurisdictions we want repatriated, with Québec keeping its powers, we want to see it in the area of health, we want to see it in the area of training. We also want to see it in family policies, abortion, and everything related to women's issues.

**Mr. Beaudry:** In this context, should I understand that, as far as you are concerned, your group, you would be satisfied and believe that you could achieve your goals if the Québec government repatriated those powers?

**Mrs. Banville:** Look, the table de concertation has not taken a position on a sovereign Québec or renewed federalism. What we can say is that we are hoping for a referendum, in any case, and the women of Québec, as well as the women of our region will know what kind of Québec they want. We have confidence in the choice our women will make.

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

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

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes, there was a speaker a while ago who said: We want a Québec for Quebecers. I think what you just told us is this: We want a Québec with Québec women, who represent 52 % of the population. I think that is the message you are sending us.

When I read your brief, however, I realized

that, as a first hypothesis, you point out that the women of Québec, despite the vulnerability of their achievements, have succeeded in effecting certain policies and services which benefit them, and in this way, are better served than the women of Canada. You especially point out that the Québec of tomorrow should take employment, health services and education into account.

I would like you to tell us... I know that you don't want to take a stand, I understood that, I don't need... I will not ask you that question. Nonetheless, I would like you to tell us, given your experience in the field, and given the brief you've presented, in your opinion, what do you think would be the advantages for Québec women, of federalism in Québec, renewed or not. I don't think anyone wants the status quo. I would like you to tell me what benefits you envisage, which Québec should consider if it decides to become sovereign.

**Mrs. Langlois:** Do you want to know what women would consider to be advantageous in a sovereign Québec?

**Mrs. Côté:** No, the opposite.

**Mrs. Langlois:** The opposite, in federalism...

**Mrs. Côté:** Because you point out...

**Mrs. Langlois:** Yes, yes, OK.

**Mrs. Côté:** ...that the women of Québec have achieved more than Canadian women have. You say that women have made certain gains thanks to the women's movement, to its existence, and to the specific nature of Québec. Very well. You don't take a position, but from experience, you've still seen how advantageous it can be, how advantageous it could be for women to remain within federalism. If Québec becomes sovereign, it should take these advantages we had into account and repatriate them to Québec. That's what I would like to know, the advantages for Québec women of remaining within federalism.

**Mrs. Langlois:** The question is a tricky one... really.

**Mrs. Côté:** I don't want to embarrass you.

**Mrs. Langlois:** Well, we know that in the 1950s, federal government intervention in health and social services was a determining factor. It was a big help for Québec. Except that today, financially also... So, if I speak, for example... I work at a women's centre. Financially, the federal government gives subsidies, grants us funding; so does the provincial government. Perhaps, financially speaking, it would be an

advantage, but I'm not completely convinced either. Today, the opting out of the federal government affects women and women's groups as well. If we look at income security, at unemployment insurance, even at the GST, soon to come, that will have consequences, major effects on the women we help, anyway, and on our groups also.

(2:15 p.m.)

**Mrs. Côté:** It means that if Québec were to become sovereign - since you say that women are able to decide - it would mean that Québec should take into account the federal government funding you had for your women's groups and, therefore, give you the financial means to assure the survival of the women's movement within Québec and in your region. That is what you are telling me?

**Mrs. Langlois:** Yes, that's it. And what we say in the brief also is that, should there be a new constitutional framework, Québec should take into account the fact that we also have a holistic approach to women. That is to say, we can't dissociate the direct services we offer women from our community education activities and our consciousness-raising activities, because, for us, unless you help women on a basic level and, at the same time, on a social level, nothing changes, it produces nothing. Which means that we believe that a government should take our holistic approach into account and fund us accordingly.

**Mrs. Banville:** And when we discuss programs, when we approach the federal government, we go to a region, the Québec region, when we approach the provincial government, we go to more than one region. It's perhaps a bit more advantageous.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is that it?

**Mrs. Côté:** May I add one thing more? Because many groups have spoken about the importance of regionalization, about the importance of decentralization... In the case of the women's movement, if there is to be true regionalization, true decentralization, national policies will have to be very broad, very strong. The broad national parameters will have to be very strong, because if they are not, there will be disparity among the regions, and disparities in relation to the major women's issues. There is a nuance needed here. Do you agree with my analysis?

**Mrs. Laroche (Micheline):** Disparities... we've been living with them for years now. It could be said anyway that the lack of strategy... what is apparent in regions such as ours... it isn't only our region; I think it can be

seen in the different regions of Québec away from the focus of attention, away from the large centres like Québec City and Montréal. These disparities, they've been there for 30 years and are getting worse. So, as we purposefully said, there are women back home who get together and say: It couldn't be worse, you know. Sovereignty can't be worse. A sovereign Québec can't be worse. We're used to being resourceful and getting by on almost nothing, we're used to being inventive. Because I don't know... You're in Matane. I hope you'll be here for more than a day. I'd like you to ride around the countryside and see if you can find the things you're used to living with. It's really an exotic place. It's a change of scenery, here. And we accept living here. There's a certain quality to life here, except that women say as well: We must change our strategies for development pretty quickly because the gap can't keep widening indefinitely. I think we're ready to draw the line right now. Women are counting on the regional repatriation of budgets and... being able to budget and plan... not by thinkers in offices elsewhere. We can think here too, and we are capable of developing our corner of the country. But we want to recover our powers, our regional powers.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Time has expired for the first 10-minute block. We now call on Mrs. Louise Bégin.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I wish to congratulate you on your brief. On reading it, I noticed that you come to the same conclusions as the Conseil du statut de la femme did in its brief, with regard to overlapping jurisdictions, and the conclusions you both come to are the same, except that, in reading your brief, I believe I noticed that you perhaps find... you complained about the fact that you had to approach two levels of government, federal and provincial, to look for funds, for money. On the other hand, as you are women from the regions, you say: In order to develop, we, being women of the regions, must have more powers for the regions. And you say that the programs must be somewhat regionalized. The government will have to regionalize its programs. It will have to take our needs into account. Some speakers who presented their briefs went a little further than you. I want to hear what you have to say about that. They said to us: Very well; the future constitution will have to provide specifically for powers for the regions. That is not in your brief. My understanding of what you say is this: The Québec government should, in future, provide for programs in which we will be given many more powers. Are you agreeing with

what the other briefs advocate when you say: It will be up to the government to decide, even if it means giving specific powers to our region?

**Mrs. Laroché:** We hope the government will develop structures flexible enough to be able to include most of the regions of Québec.

**Mrs. Bégin:** But would you like to see them included in the constitution, or simply within programs to be determined later by a Québec government?

**Mrs. Laroché:** These are procedures which have their importance, I agree with you, but I don't know...

**Mrs. Banville:** The regions are able to manage their own programs using regional standards.

**Mrs. Bégin:** OK. Therefore, you don't go so far as to include them in the constitution. You say later: We will establish programs as long as they are regionalized. That's suits us. That is what I think I understand from your brief. Is it really what you mean?

**Mrs. Banville:** We have not really gone so far as to ask that it be included in a constitution.

**Mrs. Bégin:** OK. That answers my question. No, Mr. Chairman, that answers my question. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mrs. Bégin. Mrs. Jeanne Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good day, Ladies. You point out things in your brief that, to me, are particularly evident, perhaps less so to others. First, that women have really made a contribution and shown their ability to contribute to the economic and social development of Québec, and that you are determined to be the beneficiaries of decisions on the future of Québec. I thought it might be useful to reaffirm that.

You also point out the particularly high costs of overlapping programs and of federal government interference in the funding of certain programs. You mention, among others, occupational training, that it couldn't possibly be worse as far as women are concerned. Would you say that the idea of sovereignty frightens women less?

**Mrs. Banville:** Actually, on the administrative level alone, large sums are being spent on paperwork, and we say to ourselves that all this money could be directly reinjected into programs for clients. We also say that the

women will not be any poorer than they are now in the regions.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Very well. Several speakers from the regions – and it gives me reason to rejoice, unlike others, who have a right to their opinion even if I don't agree with it – the regions give us to understand that, to date, they are unanimous in their very strong support for the idea of decentralizing powers, of choosing development and budget policies.

At the same time you are saying: Depending on who is intervening, it must at least be written in the constitution. And you provide us with a certain number of elements which a blueprint for society should contain. I, myself, feel that it is extremely important to know what status the regions will have in a sovereign Québec. You had to come here to give us some indication, and that is what is happening in an extremely beneficial way.

That being said, we, as commissioners, will have to make a decision later, inviting the population to take a stand on what kind of society they want. Do you think that we could and should first decide on our own powers before talking about distributing powers, and, afterwards, discuss a blueprint for society based on what we've heard? I shall repeat the question since it may not be clear. With many people reclaiming powers, Québec cannot give powers it does not have. It seems difficult to design a plan for Québec with powers it does not hold, and that we are not sure it will ever hold, depending on the choices made. So, do you think we should first go and get a mandate to recover a certain number of powers, or all powers, and, afterwards, sign our blueprint for society?

**Mrs. Banville:** Listen, according to the polls, the population is ready. You're the only one who isn't.

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

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Very well.

**Mrs. Banville:** "You" meaning the Commission!

**A voice:** "You" meaning us.

**A voice:** "You" meaning the Commission.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Very well. Then, you therefore suggest, as before, a referendum as soon as possible.

**A voice:** "You" means the Commission?

**A voice:** Yes, yes. We had to make it clear.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** "We" meant the Commission, in that case. I imagine, yes, it isn't only me.

**Mrs. Banville:** No, no. It wasn't only aimed at you.

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

**Mrs. Banville:** It wasn't only aimed at you. It's because you were speaking on behalf of the Commission.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Fine, fine. Because, I have to tell you, my choice is made. A while ago, you called for a referendum as soon as possible and, if I understand you correctly, it should contain only one question: Do we or do we not want to be sovereign with economic association with the rest of Canada? Would it be that?

**Mrs. Banville:** We think that here in the region, women are ready to hear that question.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Fine. Is it – perhaps as an adjunct to the question, because I still have a minute left, sir – as an adjunct to Mrs. Côté's question of a while ago, if I understand your answer correctly, it is: Anything is better than the present form of federalism, and sovereignty is not frightening.

**Mrs. Banville:** In any case, not the status quo.

**Mrs. Langlois:** We know there is a basic consensus which says that we no longer accept the status quo.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Look, I think, as far as I'm concerned, it's very clear. I congratulate you. I congratulate you on the quality of your brief as well, and for being spokespersons for what seems to me, and to you, to be a very strong current in Québec. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very well. Mrs. Laroche, Mrs. Langlois and Mrs. Banville, thank you for your contribution to the Commission.

We now welcome the Parti québécois Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, together with the Parti québécois Îles-de-la-Madeleine. So, if I understand correctly, Mr. Lebel is the... no... What is your name, madam?

**Mrs. Doyer (Danielle):** Danielle Doyer.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perfect. You are from Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, and the other side, Mrs. Leblanc.

**Mrs. Leblanc (Marie):** Yes, that's my name.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Îles-de-la-Madeleine. So, you have 30 minutes then, you have five minutes between you. Therefore, you have 5 minutes for the whole presentation; you then have two and a half minutes each.

**Parti québécois du  
Bas-Saint-Laurent—Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine  
and Parti québécois des Îles-de-la-Madeleine**

**Mrs. Doyer:** Mr. Chairman, we were told that we had five minutes for the presentation of each of the briefs. That is how we have prepared. We were told we had five minutes to present the brief of...

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

**Mrs. Doyer:** ...Eastern Québec, five minutes for the brief of the Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. In that case you are each going to take five minutes of the Chair's time, and there will be a little less time for questions. Together you will have 30 minutes.

**Mrs. Doyer:** Alright.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You may begin, Madam. But first could you introduce your colleagues?

**Mrs. Doyer:** Certainly, Mr. Chairman. At my far left is Mr. Pierre Dufort, president of the Parti québécois of the County of Matane, Mr. Léonce Deraspe, secretary of the Parti québécois des Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I shall wait till the end, out of politeness, you know... Mr. Harold Lebel, president of the Parti québécois for Rivière-du-Loup, Paul Crête, a resource person who worked on the brief and a member of the riding executive for Kamouraska-Témiscouata. I am Danielle Doyer, president of the Parti québécois for Eastern Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have the floor for the presentation of your brief.

**Mrs. Doyer:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, welcome to the region where René Lévesque was born. The Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec is a unique opportunity for the Parti québécois of the Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine to emphasize, above and beyond any partisan stand, what the Québec of tomorrow should be. We express the view of a significant part of the population of the eight counties, from Kamouraska-Témiscouata to Gaspé, through Bonaventure, Matane, Matapédia, Rimouski,

Rivière-du-Loup, to say nothing of the Îles-de-la-Madeleine.  
(2:30 p.m.)

We are proud to bring you the voice of a region of Québec that has been the largest laboratory for intervention in the framework of Canadian federalism in the past 30 years, with the disastrous results we all know. Today, our region is more than ever struggling for survival. We will take advantage of this hearing to inform you of the conditions essential to that survival, but above all to the economic viability, the political... excuse me, the economic, social and cultural viability of the regions of Québec, without which Québec would not satisfy one of the conditions that make it a nation, that is the use and control of its territory.

In the pages of our brief, we have shared with you some of the political findings that demonstrate clearly the failure of the current system for a region like ours, whether in transportation, communications, fisheries, tourism, or mines. This failure can hardly be attributable to men or women, but rather to the inefficiency of the system. Our observation of failure is based on the political structures that have produced a weakening of our regions. But we wish in particular to convince you of what we can do if we fully assume all our responsibilities and if we develop political structures, an electoral process and tools for economic action that will enable us to realize our potential. Today, we are the champions of all kinds of unemployment in Canada.

Every time a federal government, a provincial government or a local initiative, full of good intentions, has attempted to rock the boat in order to reverse the trend, it has found itself paralysed by confusion over the division of powers between the two levels of government. The clearest example is that of fisheries. Another is that of vocational training. The overlapping of jurisdictions uses up so much energy that there is not enough left to tackle the real problem: a regional development respectful of the regional resources available.

The record is disastrous as far as regional development is concerned. The Canada-Québec agreements, renewed in 1988, on the development of transport, an overall package of \$ 170 million, on the development of science and technology, \$ 60 million, on the development of tourism, \$ 100 million, and on the development of communications enterprises, \$ 40 000 000, generated absolutely no investment in the Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie, and Îles-de-la-Madeleine regions. The desired, calculated choice of developing Canada from Atlantic to Pacific was made at the expense of the Québec-United States axis.

The dual representation by MPs and MNAs in Ottawa and Québec is a source of inefficiency

that makes work for political organizers, but is profoundly harmful to the development of our region, since the representatives of one government or the other change about every two years. The present member, who has half powers, applies half solutions. The present electoral system places the regions at a disadvantage by producing a systematic underrepresentation of the Opposition immediately after the election and we suggest a system of proportional territorial representation.

The Québec of the future will gain in efficiency, quality of life and collective strength if it develops regional structures that respect the will of its regions and have the appropriate powers. Sovereignty would confirm the role of Québec as exclusive master in matters of regional economic development.

In the economic sphere, the creation of autonomous regional investment funds backed by government loan guarantees would provide an opportunity for the community to put forward projects that are its own. In the 1960s, the Caisse de dépôt et placement met our needs for investment capital in Québec. We believe there is a need for a similar initiative in Eastern Québec and in all the regions of Québec. It appears essential to us to provide the regions with budgets consisting of entirely transferable amounts administered by a regional decision-making structure made up of MNAs and local officials.

In conclusion, the Parti québécois du Bas-Saint-Laurent, de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine recommends that the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec send a unanimous report to the National Assembly advising it to grant the Québec government the mandate to achieve the sovereignty of Québec, to propose a draft constitution, to be ratified by way of a referendum, which respects the democratic tradition of Québec, to incorporate with its recommendations a model of a political structure that gives the regions of a sovereign Québec real control over their economic, social and cultural development, both by the system of representation selected and by the powers delegated to its elected officials in a region. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, thank you for your attention.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good, Mrs. Leblanc, it is your turn now.

**Mrs. Leblanc:** Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for agreeing to hear our brief. We represent the Parti québécois des Îles-de-la-Madeleine. The Parti québécois has a little over 700 members for a population of 15 000. The population of the Islands, unlike that of the Gaspésie, is not dwindling. Let us say that it is growing, slowly, very, very slowly, almost imperceptibly. However,

we are confronted with the same problems as the Gaspésie, that is, our children who go away to university generally do not return to the Islands because they cannot find jobs. So they stay outside the Islands, which means we lose some of our skills, if you like. The Parti québécois also represented 49 % of the electorate at the last election. So we think we represent an ideological current which has a certain importance in the Islands.

You are probably wondering why we wanted to present a brief to the Commission, since no other riding executive in our party has done so. It is because, well, we consider the Îles-de-la-Madeleine have a unique character. We knew no brief would really resemble, or in any event have a real similarity to the brief of our islands, the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. It is particularly because of the maritime territory that we think, perhaps the Côte-Nord could claim that territory, but we did not want to take a chance. The Îles-de-la-Madeleine, as I said, are special. First of all, there is our history; 96 % of us are descended from the Acadians. You can tell from our accent. We are Acadians, that is our origin. These are the customs we have preserved and we are very proud of being Acadian. But you can rest assured, we will not ask for the status of a distinct society...

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

**Mrs. Leblanc:** ...as descendants of the Acadians. We are aware that being Acadian is the past. It is our past, it belongs to us. No one can take it away from us, but it remains the past. We have been Quebecers since 1895, when the Îles-de-la-Madeleine became an autonomous county. It began then. We might say that it developed further in the 1960s with State television and communications, that is, the ease of communications. Thus, we are Quebecers, definitely Quebecers. And being Quebecers, for us, is our future. We wanted to put you in the picture, as it were...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You can cut it short, Madam, the time is slipping away.

**Mrs. Leblanc:** Fine, alright. So we wanted to be present in the current debate. We wanted to take part in Québec's progress towards sovereignty.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Ladies. Mr. Robert Benoit, you have the floor first.

**Mr. Benoit:** Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parti québécois, welcome. Mrs. Doyer, in your introduction, you mentioned why you wished to present a brief. I appreciate the fact that you are here, but I do ask myself a question, and

have not had a complete answer. The Leader of your party was in Estrie on the weekend. He indicated clearly that, whatever the response to this Commission at the end of March, his choice was made, that he would proceed if the answer suited him. But if it did not, he would not take what this Commission decided into account. So I wonder, Mrs. Doyer, are you, who are at the grassroots of an association of your party, are you like your Leader? Do you prefer an election before the end of this Commission's work, or even a referendum before then?

**Mrs. Doyer:** I think, Mr. Benoit, that I am like my Leader and that I am for democracy in Québec. Moreover, we are a social democratic party. We have repeated for many months that what is important is that the people of Québec should be consulted, and what Mr. Parizeau probably wanted to say, I think, is that we have a slightly unstable climate in Québec at the moment. I do not think the Liberals have stated their intention yet. They have left things in abeyance, the doors open, agreed. We on the other hand have taken a stand. We have taken a stand for the sovereignty of Québec and that is clear. And we take a stand... Personally, I speak on behalf of the regional association of Eastern Québec and we want a referendum. It is clear for us, and I do believe that Mr. Parizeau is also of that opinion. And an election is also a means of consulting the people of Québec.

**Mr. Benoit:** But this Commission, for you and the people in your association, is important?

**Mrs. Doyer:** Of course this Commission is important. We would not have come if it was not important.

**Mr. Benoit:** Are you ready to work with the conclusion the Commission eventually reaches?

**Mrs. Doyer:** I think I'm going to let Mr. Paul Crête reply.

**Mr. Crête (Paul):** Our basic hypothesis, as well, was to say let our country come before the party. All our action has been to that effect. We have confidence in the Commission. We are entitled to our political opinions, and we are here in a democratic system to attempt to influence people properly to bring them around to our ideas. We have been involved in this for over 22 years and I think we have many achievements to our credit. We find it is very interesting that today more than 20 % of Quebecers agree with us, from one poll to another.

**Mr. Benoit:** I have another question. The brief this morning from the Liberal Party of the Islands said they wanted free circulation of

goods and people between the Maritime Provinces and you, the people of the Islands. You, in your brief, you say, on page 7 or 8 (but you have not numbered them), on page 7 or 8 then, that you do not want any sovereignty that would isolate the people of the Islands from their neighbours. What do you mean when you say that you do not want to be isolated from your neighbours?

**Mrs. Doyer:** I shall let Mr. Léonce Deraspe answer.

**Mr. Deraspe (Léonce):** Essentially, I think what we want for the Îles-de-la-Madeleine is to continue to have regular air and maritime transport between us and Québec. At the moment, we also have a link with the Maritimes, it is true, but it is not so much a trade link we have with the Maritimes, with Prince Edward Island, it is rather a place where we go to buy. The Îles-de-la-Madeleine export very little to the Maritimes, almost nothing at all. The result is that we do not really trade with them, but we go there to shop if you like.

So we think that at the present time, if we had a link with the Gaspésie, among other places, which would be the closest land, if you like, in Québec, we think we would be able to have ties that would be much more significant and satisfactory for us. Contrary to what was said this morning, this is the first thing.

When we talk about isolation, as well, we want to be regarded as a group whose experience is specifically its own, and is not shared by others. In this regard, we think we should have programs that apply explicitly or very particularly to regions like ours. Perhaps also to Anticosti Island or places like that. So that, with regard to accessibility, to subsidy or assistance programs, and things like that, in our opinion there absolutely must be programs adapted to our milieu. In that sense, when we say we do not want to be isolated, we do so because currently most federal programs, and some provincial ones too, often put us at a disadvantage.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is now up. We go on to Mr. André Ouellet.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, I regret that your brief minimizes the importance of the Canadian dairy policy. Having spoken with milk producers many times, I know that milk quotas and the subsidies they receive are very important for them.

Furthermore, the OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, has made a study of these subsidies and considered that the Canadian subsidies were even too generous, in their opinion. They concluded that dairy producers in Canada (obviously this includes those in Québec) receive 72 % of their income from subsidies, compared with 60 % for



producers in the European Economic Community and 56 % for those in the United States. (2:45 p.m.)

When we note that over 47 % of manufacturing milk production in Canada comes from the Province of Québec and that this Québec production is protected inside the country by a quota system controlled by the Canadian Dairy Commission, we have to ask how a sovereign Québec would be able to preserve its acquired rights. Do you have an answer to this? Do these producers... Don't you think that dairy producers in the other provinces would rush into a sovereign Québec to increase their own quotas to meet their own needs?

**Mrs. Doyer:** I'm going to let Mr. Paul Crête reply.

**Mr. Crête:** The first part of the answer is that I think we could easily leave one or two minutes of our time to Mr. Proulx, who is the expert in the matter, to reply correctly. And the second element, I think that Québec, in agricultural terms, it is well known, has been a victim of the federal agricultural system for a long time. We have been made into specialists in a given sector. The federal government has systematically countered Québec's will to become self-sufficient and it is not without reason that today we are making demands to have full control in the field and I believe that the UPA could give you additional information in this regard since they themselves are the representatives of Québec agricultural producers.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I have no problem with discussing the question publicly or privately in any forum whatsoever with Mr. Proulx and I think there are a number of figures circulated by the UPA that should be contested. Unfortunately, Québec producers do not always have the right figures and I gave you figures here which seemed rather important to me.

My second question is as follows. You claim that the agreements signed with the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) did not give you what you expected in terms of economic spinoffs in the Province of Québec. This seems rather surprising to me. In your brief you speak of a disaster. But when we read of the performance of DREE, we realize that year in year out nearly one third of the budget of that department comes into the Province of Québec either under general agreements signed with the provincial authorities or by direct subsidies to industry. My question is the following: How can you underestimate the concrete achievements in agriculture, in the pulp and paper industry, right here in Matane, in tourism and in highway construction, all of which in my opinion are very concrete examples of intervention by the Canadian government,

which may not have brought about the results you hoped for but still had fairly concrete results?

**Mr. Crête:** I repeat that under the agreement that was renewed in 1988 between the Québec and Canadian governments, not one cent has been spent in Eastern Québec under that agreement in the past two years, not because the people have not done their jobs, not because our MNAs have not done their jobs, but because the whole system is all wrong, because it takes so much time to get anywhere and so much energy to get to the subsidies and, at any rate with those agreements, we are still not today, or at least we were not yesterday, on the point of receiving any federal authorization to free the sums tied to that agreement.

**Mr. Ouellet:** No, but I am talking about achievements that date back some 11 years, since DREE has existed, since 1969. Every year since 1969, over \$ 200 million have been spent in the Province of Québec and in the region - I have given you specific cases, in tourism, in agriculture, in highways, and in pulp and paper, specific spending programs in your regions under agreements made by the federal and provincial authorities.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The time is up but, in keeping with a short-standing tradition at the Commission that allows someone who is, not so much attacked, but challenged, to answer, you have one minute, Mr. Proulx.

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is just to... I understand that Mr. Ouellet, since it has been a long time since he has had a chance to examine the real figures in detail, I am sure he did not wish to lead us astray, but unfortunately he did so when he gave those figures. Just to say that 72 % of subsidies is the calculation between the international price of milk powder and the price at which it is sold here, that is false, because it is not the subsidy; just to use an example in another field, if we took the average of lawyers' earnings worldwide and the average of Québec lawyers' earnings, we would have to say that the difference between the figures is a subsidy, which does not make sense.

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

**Mr. Proulx:** Second, even if...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your minute is up, there.

**Mr. Proulx:** ...we produce 48 % of the milk, quotas are established internationally. This applies through article 11, that you join GATT,

whether you are independent or not, you automatically become a signatory and I might remind Mr. Ouellet that in exchange for our 48 % we could swap with Alberta, for we must remember that we eat between 75 % and 80 % of their cattle production.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Proulx. Now we go on to Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When you read the two briefs, there are first some statistics that are pleasant. There are statistics that I wish to preserve. And when we read them, when we look at them, and try to draw a conclusion from all that, it is that things are going badly and that the feds are no doubt responsible for the whole mess. However, there is one little sentence that seemed very important, on page 17 of the brief, when you talk about the economy. Wait, there were two briefs, excuse me, it would be on page 17 of the second brief from the Îles-de-la-Madeleine: "Québec is on the road to prosperity. Were we not the first province to come out of the economic recession of 1981-1982?" This is not the first brief in which I have read that. There has been some development. You even go on to say, you make a comparison, that we are the 11th State, the 11th country in the world when it comes to standard of living. Things are really bad. There are about 200, as you were told not so long ago. But we are in 11th place.

I find that in this we are allowing people to tell us a great many things. Agreed, the piano has some keys that are no longer true. Now we have reached the stage of asking whether we have to change the piano, or only tune the untrue keys. And that is the big problem. It all comes down to that. And I think you should help us find solutions and not go to extremes and say that they are responsible for all our problems. We must remember that the country of the angels is not necessarily paradise. There is even a criticism in one of your reports that is very good. You mentioned Hydro-Québec's problems with the federal Environment Department. Now the federal government has decided not to intervene in this issue. And the problem comes back to Québec. In Québec, we have two departments that dispute the famous Hydro-Québec project. But we still won't get out of it under the present system. I found... at least we could say there was perhaps an independent arbitrator, but things...

But it came back on the waves as "the feds have not assumed their responsibilities". When they take on too much it is bad, and when they don't assume anything, it is still worse. Then we will have to separate the good from the bad in all that and decide whether we have to get rid of the piano altogether or find the means of

repairing it in the present context.

And if we take all the briefs - and I am going to make a summary of everything that is good - 11th country in the world in standard of living is really not negligible. And I, for one, respect your observation. What do you offer us as a possible solution for fixing my piano?

**Mr. Dufort (Pierre):** First I wish to clarify that what is brought out on page 10, it is really because of initiatives of the Québec government that Québec got out of the crisis and not because of the federal government.

**Mr. Poissant:** So much the better.

**Mr. Dufort:** It is very important to say this, in our mind it is very clear, because of all the programs set up at that time. There must be no confusion. There are things that are important to state clearly.

**Mr. Deraspe:** I would like to point out that the spirit of the brief in which we made that affirmation - take a sector like fisheries for example - if we go by territorial division with respect to water, normally Québec would have access to something like 60 % of the entire Gulf of St. Lawrence area. At present we catch something like 7 % of the resources harvested in the Gulf. As far as I know, it is always the same government that makes the laws, grants permits and quotas, subsidizes boats and arranges things so that one place has an advantage over another, or more than one is favoured or disadvantaged.

What we say on the Îles-de-la-Madeleine is that we do not have our fair share of what belongs to us in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We cannot use the natural resources we have in order to develop. Currently we have factories built by the Québec government, which are not operating, which are closed. The key is in the door because resources are wanting. Not because the resource does not exist, but because we do not have the right to harvest it. There are other provinces, our neighbours, that are recognized for their fisheries and have access to the resources, while for us they are there, right at our feet, and we cannot take them. That is what we say in the brief and I think we must bring it back...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** There are definitely some broken keys, I agree with you.

**Mr. Lebel (Harold):** I am not 30 years old and I am not interested in spending my life playing the piano. On the weekend, I was reading a book on regional disparities in an opulent society, published by the Canadian Institute of Public Affairs in 1966. People like

Guy Coulombe, Paul-Henri Lavoie, Clément Vincent, who was a minister, Maurice Sauvé were included. What they said in it was the same story as what you are telling today. In 1966, I was four years old then. I can't get over it! And I say that sooner or later, we will have to make a choice. And I say...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You will have to...

**Mr. Lebel:** No, I'll say that in a bit. It will let me get my breath.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine, the time is up. Mr. Parizeau.

**Mr. Parizeau:** Mr. Chairman, first a few words about the kind remarks made about me a short time ago by Mr. Benoit. I did not understand them very well. I would hardly be in an abnormal situation if I were to ask the government to hold a referendum on sovereignty as quickly as possible. I must be, I suppose, the sixth or seventh person around this table to suggest the same thing. And many people who have come before us have also requested it. I can understand that some may reproach me, with regard to the future of Québec, me and my party, for having convictions and knowing where we are going. It is not because our friends on the other side do not have a very clear idea at the moment of where they stand that they should reproach us for knowing our mind. So I prefer to forget about it.

Now that I have said that, I come back to the brief we have before us, first for a few comments and then for a question. It is true that this region - even Mr. Poissant, in a country which, on a scale of degrees of prosperity, ranks closer to the top than the bottom - is the poorest in Québec, that the usual rate of unemployment in this region is abnormal compared with Québec, abnormal compared with the rest of Canada, abnormal compared with North America as a whole. The situation is abnormal here, it has been perceived as abnormal for a long time. As far as unemployment is concerned, the figures reached in this region produce reactions that are unheard of elsewhere, either in Québec or in Canada. It is certainly one of the last regions where the people gather together at church, where bishops intervene with cries of alarm at times absolutely pathetic. If it were only a question of tuning a piano, heavens, how simple things would be!

On the other hand, Mrs. Doyer, I think you are quite correct to say that this region, perhaps partly for the reasons I just gave, has been used as a laboratory for almost 30 years for every kind of federal-provincial combination. Nowhere has federal-provincial exuberance been pushed as far as here since the BAEQ. No, since

ARDA. That dates back even farther. For those of you who have greying temples like mine, you will remember ARDA. The enthusiasm and effort were considerable. Almost constant failure. A federal-provincial chaos. Gaspésie, Bas-du-Fleuve, Îles-de-la-Madeleine are really the living embodiment of the federal-provincial chaos which we denounce in many other areas, but which has not, anywhere else, reached such an apotheosis as here in this region. In that regard, I think we have to continue pointing out that the emperor has no clothes, and stop being put off with words, as we have for so long in this region, along the lines of federal-provincial collaboration, federal-provincial development programs, "that program may not have worked, but you'll see, the next one really will". I shall stop there since my time must be up.

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

**Mr. Parizeau:** Then, I say to you simply, Mrs. Doyer, nowhere else in Québec can this revelation of the "federal-provincial" aberration be seen with such intensity. Continue to push it, continue to analyse it. Finally the message will have to get through that this federal-provincial system with which we have tried to revitalize the Gaspésie and the Bas-du-Fleuve has failed. It has not failed for two years, but for a quarter century. And prospects are probably more sombre now than they were 20 years ago.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Lebel and Mr. Crête, Mrs. Doyer, Mrs. Leblanc, Mr. Deraspe, Mr. Dufort, thank you for your presentation.

I'm sorry. I would just like to inform people that we have established there would be no applause at the Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:02 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:04 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Have the humanities students from the Cégep de Matane arrived? Please take your places at the table. We welcome the students in social sciences and humanities at the Cégep de Matane. Would the person presenting the report like to identify himself and introduce his colleagues?

**Mr. Audy (Sébastien):** Yes, I will introduce my colleagues. René Bernier, Marie-Claude Perron, Simon Dubé, Jasmine Bernier, Nathalie Lavoie and myself, Sébastien Audy.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good. You have five minutes to present your report. If you could do so in five minutes or a little less, it would be helpful.

**Mr. Audy:** It will take almost exactly five minutes, I think.

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

**Humanities students at  
the Cégep de Matane**

**Mr. Audy:** We are students in social sciences and humanities at the Cégep de Matane and we think it is important for our group's comments on the constitutional future of Québec to be heard. Issuing from a region that is said to be isolated from various communities, both urban and rural, we all have in common an interest in the future of our nation and we hope to do something concrete that may influence, we hope, the decisions to be made concerning the Québec of tomorrow.

**Mrs. Lavoie (Nathalie):** We are young and, for most of us, this is the first time we have taken such a close interest in the political life of our country. The experience we have shared has enabled us to become aware of our imperfect knowledge, our lack of information to deal with such an important subject. However, we could not, we felt, let this opportunity go by. Even though we are young, we are not indifferent to the world around us. We hear you old people talk a lot and we cannot say that you make life, let alone the future, very easy for us.

Every day we hear talk of a huge deficit. Every day we live in an area where the unemployment rate is very high. We see our friends take their training here and then have to exile themselves to the large centres, either to continue their education or to find a job in their field. We can easily imagine that we will have to do the same. The populations in our villages are aging and dwindling. Sometimes we hear a politician, federal or provincial, make great declarations about what he intends to do to assure the future of our region, to assure our future. At the time, we may believe, but we take it with a grain of salt.

**Mr. Bernier (Reno):** When we look at this more generally, we notice that Québec is going through a period of declining birthrates and we understand that we must counter this by attracting immigrants. We also know there are large numbers of immigrants in the main cities. They thus contribute to imperilling our language and culture without offering any solution to the population and development problems of peripheral regions like ours. Who is responsible for immigration policies?

We have been witness, as well, to a great many ecological accidents: tires at Saint-Amable, PCB fires, oil spills in the St. Lawrence and so on. We hear of the global warming trend, of the destruction of the ozone layer. We wonder about

the condition our world will be in tomorrow. You may think of the Bas-Saint-Laurent and the Gaspésie as a region resembling an earthly paradise free of pollution. That means you don't know that one of our greatest resources, the River, you have polluted it. Did you know that we have never been able to eat the mussels that are found along our coast? And yet there are two environment departments to protect us.

In the world of education, we know all the confusion caused by two levels of government. We all know how high the unemployment rate is in Québec; we know it has always been higher than the Canadian average. What is the explanation? And yet there are two departments responsible for Québec development and regional development. The same is true of agriculture. We can see it is in a pitiful state and yet we are told that some of the land in our region is among the best in Québec. But our lands lie idle because of a lack of farmers. People prefer to go away to town, for it is becoming too costly to establish oneself on the land. Agriculture is a particularly critical sector for assuring that all our territory is occupied. But it should be all right. Are there not two departments of agriculture?

**Mrs. Perron (Marie-Claire):** Here are our recommendations. First, to improve its situation, we think Québec should affirm its sovereignty and assume the panoply of its powers. It would be preferable to do this by way of a referendum. We think it would be desirable to establish ties, on both the economic and political levels, with the rest of Canada, in the form of a treaty or agreement. By becoming sovereign, we would no longer be subject to the Supreme Court, and Québec will inevitably have to set one up for its own internal problems, and participate in the institution of an arbitration tribunal to settle potential disputes between Québec and Canada.

**Mr. Dubé (Simon):** Then immigration will undoubtedly become an important tool for developing the territory of Québec. Therefore Québec alone must decide on its policy for settling new arrivals.

Protection of the French language will be assured by Québec's exclusive power to legislate on the matter. With the "Canada Bill", we have seen how an outside jurisdiction could render a Québec law ineffective.

In regard to the cultural and communications sector, obviously we must protect them from being submerged in the mass of Anglo-Saxon culture and the cultures of the immigrants. We must guarantee some kind of continuity for our French culture.

Québec must have all the powers insofar as education is concerned, both to assure the training of our young and to integrate

newcomers. We must nevertheless respect the Anglophone minority. To assure the equitable development of all the regions of Québec, Québec must have all the economic development levers. Even more important, we must decentralize development zones. Québec cannot grow if it is content with developing its large centres at the expense of its languishing regions.

**Mrs. Bernier (Jasmine):** In our view, a prerequisite for regional development is the protection and exploitation of our agricultural potential. We must therefore be in a position to manage this sector on the level of production, choices, quantities, and the like. We must consider renegotiating the Free Trade Agreement to improve it, in particular in the dairy products sector, where Québec is at a disadvantage.

In the environmental sphere, the Québec government should assume full responsibility and make it a top priority. The St. Lawrence River should receive very special attention.

**Mr. Audy:** Before concluding our presentation, we would not wish to remain silent about the effort we put into writing our brief. We took the time to study the subject, to weigh the pros and cons, and our opinion was reaffirmed. It is an opportunity for us to put forward our point of view, and gain a hearing. Just because we live in a remote region, frequently forgotten, we are not uninterested in our future. On the contrary, it lies very close to our hearts. Obviously, our brief will not build the Québec of tomorrow all by itself, but at least we will feel we have done something about our future country. We aspire to a new Québec, a strong Québec that will also reflect its people. We want to be among those who can say: I did something for my nation. I helped it remove its chains. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen. We now go on to Mr. Gendron.

**Mr. Gendron:** First of all, I wish to thank each and every one of you for coming here today. It is a great pleasure to see a group of young people who are interested in the future of Québec. I think we can feel, by the questions you have touched on, your real interest in a process of becoming a more representative Québec. I should like to make a small point, coming from an agricultural region, to quote a sentence to ensure that the Commissioners are at least informed that, contrary to what Mr. Ouellet asserted, between 1980 and 1987, federal spending on agriculture increased six times as fast in the rest of Canada as in Québec. Federal expenditures rose 192 % in Canada over this period, whereas they went up only 37 % in Québec. These are the figures. Federal spending

on agriculture in Québec is in free fall. It dropped from 16.4 in 1980-1981 to 7.7 in 1987-1988. And that is merely to show the Commissioners that we can draw all kinds of conclusions from figures.

I come back to you, dear young people, and I wish, as I have said, to thank you for your brief. I feel you have the same concerns as many other Quebecers. Moreover, in the recommendations you make on pages 6, 7 and 8, in your first recommendation you recognize the obvious need for Québec to assume full sovereignty and to repatriate, not some of the powers, but the entire range of powers.

My first question will be as follows, since you indicate that Québec must affirm its full sovereignty and assume all its powers and you wish, that it would be preferable to do so by way of a referendum. Do you think that this referendum should be held at the end of its discussions with the rest of Canada, because you also suggest economic association, or that it should take place at the beginning of the process, possibly to gain a stronger bargaining position?

**Mr. Audy:** We should hold the referendum first, define our sovereignty and then start talking with Canada.

**Mr. Gendron:** Thank you. The second question I want to ask you. In education, you say, and I share this point of view, it is clear that even though the Canadian Constitution supposedly leaves the provinces entire responsibility for education under their jurisdiction, this is not so in actual fact and you eloquently illustrate your point. You say that Québec should have all the powers in educational matters for the training of the young and for the integration of the young. Then I would still like, since in that part you say you are concerned, and I am honoured by your concern, about respect for the Anglophone minority. But it seems to me you have worries that I have difficulty understanding. Could you clarify for me a little more what your concerns are about respect for the Anglophone minority?

**Mr. Audy:** I will let Jasmine answer.

**Mrs. Bernier:** I think it is not by trying to destroy the others who live among us that we can do something. It is not by saying: You are a minority, I'm stronger than you, I am French, that we are going to be able to do anything worthwhile. I also think we will have to ask the Anglophone minorities to think, so to speak, like Quebecers, and to understand a little about what we ourselves experience, too. They experience on a small scale what we face on a large scale. That's all.

**Mr. Gendron:** In your reading of the situation, because it was more what you have just given as a clarification, and I am very happy with the particular you have added, it was more as if you said: You understand, even if you are a minority. But you have no anxiety about respect for the Anglophone minority in Québec?

**Mrs. Bernier:** No, I do not think we would stop respecting others in order to do something better. I think we will continue to respect the people with whom we live. It is with such respect that we will be able to do something fine.

**Mr. Gendron:** You have touched on important issues like the environment, ecology, what I would call all the values of the modern era, or of a more autonomous Québec. And you have indicated that you would hope, at the parliamentary level, for an improvement in the system of representation. Have you thought about this a little, about the precise kind of suggestions you wish us to make?

**Mr. Dubé:** I think the method of representation could be, as recommended by the group that spoke just before us, representation by region. Because I think that we, from the Gaspésie and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, must make our voices heard loud and clear in the National Assembly.

**Mr. Gendron:** And have you thought about how this can be done? Do you share the views we have been hearing since this morning, justifiable ones, as far as I, as a regionalist, am concerned, that the regions should have better representative structures with decentralized powers as well? Do you think that in a sovereign Québec it would be easier to share certain responsibilities if we assume them all?

**Mr. Dubé:** I believe if we became sovereign, well, we could decide because, first, we are going to be sovereign and, second, we could discuss the question fully by negotiating with the party in power.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Dubé. Now we'll go on to Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you are doing me justice, Mr. Chairman, because at noon it was I who went to the college and I who suffered through the students' questions. So it is simply a matter of justice now for you to give me the right to ask them some. Before asking my questions, I should like to say that I was greatly impressed by your brief. You know, we have seen many briefs since we have been here, prepared by the old guard, and not very many of their briefs went to the

bottom of things and formulated recommendations as precise as yours. I merely wish to emphasize that this might make you appreciate the great freedom of expression you enjoy. You have the good luck not to think that if you state an opinion you are going to lose members or you will lose your friends or perhaps your customers. You enjoy absolute freedom of expression and you carry your thinking to the logical limit. You say to us: This is what we think, this is what we propose as the future of Québec.

I am surprised to find that humanities students take an interest in the question of currency. I do not know whether you talked to your colleagues or it comes from yourselves. But what intrigued me is that: What attracts you in a common currency with the United States?

**Mrs. Lavole:** I will answer the question. First, we thought about a common currency with Canada. If that did not work, we could consider a common currency with the United States. It would be easier for trade. Because if we had a currency peculiar to Québec, that would imply exchange rates, it would imply that it is difficult to trade with others because it is not the same currency. We would have to change everything, what would be the value of our... I don't know if we can call it, I don't know what we can call it, but let's say the Québec dollar, for example. I do not know what value it is going to have compared with the American dollar, or with the Canadian dollar. So, in our view, it would be advantageous to have an association, from the currency point of view, with Canada or with the United States, because it would be easier for us to trade and enter into all kinds of transactions.

**Mr. Béland:** Good, thank you. I am very glad you did not ask me that question at noon today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Allard, then Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Allard:** I would first like to say to Mr. Sébastien the younger that I think he has a very fine name. As one of the old guard you talk about in your brief, I have had mine for a very long time. I am happy to see it getting younger, because we now have many young people called Sébastien.

Now, my question, like that of Mr. Béland, has to do with money. You say in your brief that we could have a common currency with Canada provided we had a say in matters of discount rates. I do not know how we could do that, if you think we could have an influence on the discount rate. We are in a sovereign Québec, the others have their currency, we share it, and we want to have a say. Do you mean you want to influence it? And how could we achieve that? At the end of the same paragraph, you say that

your last choice would be our own currency, since that would be more costly. Can you explain to us why you say it would be more costly for Québec to have its own currency?

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

**Mr. Allard:** Is it because we would have to print bank notes or... no?

**Mr. Audy:** Because we would have to change the whole system, you know, I mean we are used to working with that and we would have to change everything. Even, just as you said, do, I don't know what, establish a Bank of Québec, in a manner of speaking, in the place of the Bank of Canada. All the infrastructures for that, I think it would have to be rather costly. I am no expert, but that is easy to realize, I think.

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

**Mr. Allard:** Then you say that it would be more costly because we would have to print bank notes?

**Mr. Audy:** Well, it is not only...

**Mr. Allard:** It is not because the currency of Québec...

**Mr. Audy:** ...I just want...

**Mr. Allard:** ... would have a value...

**Mr. Audy:** There might be that as well because...

**Mr. Allard:** ...different from that of the others.

**Mr. Audy:** ...precisely because there would be the problem of setting the value of the dollar, I say dollar, I mean the Québec dollar. What would set its value, that could be complicated as well.

**Mr. Allard:** As far as money is concerned, the possibility of a common currency with the United States, you would also want a say about discount rates? Would that still exist...

**Mr. Audy:** Well, unless it were...

**Mr. Allard:** ...between Québec and the United States?

**Mr. Audy:** ...because it would have to be adjusted to the reality of Québec. As at the moment the discount rate in Canada is adjusted to what happens in Ontario, its overheated economy. It is regions like ours that suffer the consequences with the rise in interest rates. It

is for that reason that we would have to have a say just the same, if, let's suppose, it were with the United States, a say in the matter as well to adjust it to our needs and not to what is going on there.

**Mr. Allard:** We would not have the same problem with the United States...

**Mr. Audy:** Yes, that's what I'm saying.

**Mr. Allard:** ...which, according to you, we now have with Ontario and...

**Mr. Audy:** Well, we must have a say in the matter, really. Whether it's with Canada or the United States, it's the same thing. We must have a say, so that we can adapt it to ourselves.

**Mr. Allard:** What do you mean by a say?

**Mr. Audy:** In the discount rate.

**Mr. Allard:** What does it mean, to have a say...

**Mr. Audy:** To be able to set one for Québec.

**Mr. Allard:** What does having a say mean?

**Mrs. Bernier:** It means perhaps being able to adjust it according to what is happening here at home, not elsewhere. Maybe a person about... if we generalize so that everyone understands... basically, it would amount to a person saying: Well now, I want the discount rate to be such and such. Well, for ourselves, we would like that person to discuss matters, and to look at what is going on elsewhere, to see if this only happens this way in one area, or if it's the same everywhere, and try to generalize matters, to make matters more uniform.

**Mr. Allard:** Then, at that point, it would no longer be a common currency?

**Mrs. Bernier:** Yes, it would still be a common currency.

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

**Mrs. Bernier:** I mean for the discount rate, to set it. As Sébastien says, it's set above all in...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen students, I'm sorry about the rate, time has run out.

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

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

Larose. It's your turn.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In reading your first paragraph in which you speak rather mockingly of elderly people. I was hoping you would look toward this end of the table and see that, at least, we're not all old in the same way.

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

**Mr. Larose:** I apologize.

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

**Mr. Larose:** It's a simple text, clear, uncomplicated and, unlike other texts, it has no figures. It reminds me of someone who once told me, after a presentation crammed with statistics, that statistics were to people what a reflector is to an alcoholic...

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

**Mr. Larose:** ...they served to give a certain image rather than throw light on the subject.

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

**Mr. Larose:** So I think that you have deprived us of this enlightenment. I would like to go to your recommendation 10 on the Free Trade Agreement which you would like to see renegotiated. Do I understand that it is only the aspect concerned with dairy products, or should other aspects be looked at as well?

**Mr. Bernier:** The whole agreement needs to be reviewed, not necessarily renegotiated, but reviewed, with the eyes of a free Québec. When we become sovereign, we will have another way of seeing things. Others, like the federal government, have always done our looking for us, they were our eyeglasses almost, or something of that sort. So that's it. But most of all, we should renegotiate with respect to dairy products, but even there, examining the matter so that we do the best we can.

**Mr. Larose:** In your opinion, is the Free Trade Agreement... well, overall, we say it's a treaty which allows free movement of goods, some services, some capital... are you leaning more toward free trade, or do you think that, as a society, through the State apparatus, through the State, we should, all the same, exercise greater control over a number of levers?

**Mr. Bernier:** That is precisely why the Free Trade Agreement should be reviewed, to have more control at certain levels, to have certain levers, as you say.

**Mr. Larose:** And what purpose would having more control serve, what end?

**Mr. Bernier:** Independence.

**Mr. Audy:** The more control we have, it seems to me, the more independent we are. It might prevent industries, such as the furniture industry, which has been left to drift, not to say dragging its anchor... I mean to say, they have serious problems precisely because of that, because American furniture is coming in and coming in, and it's much less expensive, and industries are shutting down. Many people are unemployed. It isn't only the dairy industry; other matters perhaps need to be looked at as well, so that we can prevent being unfavourably affected in some respects.

**Mr. Bernier:** The reason I mentioned the dairy products is that I live in farming country, and my father is a farmer. That was what I saw first. I was brought up in it, and that's what struck me. As Sébastien says, there are many other sectors like this, but what struck me was agriculture, because my father has worked all his life on the farm. He inherited it from his grandfather and worked it all his life. He lived through those hardships, and now, for the last while, he's no longer doing farm work, he's doing paperwork.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up, Mr. Larose. Before calling on Mrs. Hovington who, since she is from the area, might also draw applause, I would like to point out to those present that an agreement has been reached by the Commission to the effect that there will not be any applause. I would therefore like to ask the people, the spectators here, those present, to refrain from applauding. It's your turn, Mrs. Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, in turn, would like to congratulate the social science students from the Cegep in Matane for having presented a brief to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. And I would like to point out to the Commission that these students are the only group of young people in Québec to have presented a brief to the Commission. I therefore congratulate you. It's always said that young people are apolitical, that they're more or less interested in politics; well, you've just proven the opposite. And it's entirely to your credit. Moreover, you've taken a firm stand, in your brief, in favour of sovereignty-association. I must tell you that, within the Québec Liberal Party, certain young people like you have also come out in favour of Québec sovereignty, with



some form of association with Canada.

I would like to go back to your first recommendation, on page 6 of your brief, which I find a bit paradoxical. Could you please explain it to me? You say: "We believe that, to improve its situation, Québec must declare sovereignty and assume its powers in full." So far, so good. "We think that it would be highly desirable to establish not only political but also economic links with the rest of Canada through treaties and agreements." I find this paradoxical because, on the one hand, you want to recover full political power, I think, and, on the other, you want to draw up treaties and agreements on the same political issues with the rest of Canada. What, exactly, do you mean by this?

**Mr. Audy:** What we mean is that we can't remain isolated. We can't cut ourselves off and build a concrete wall between Québec and Canada. We must continue dealing with one another at the economic level. For example, this could involve things like customs tariffs between the two nations, that sort of thing, while, at the political level, we might discuss the army, territorial protection, things like that as well.

**Mrs. Hovington:** The army would still be Canadian?

**Mr. Audy:** That's not up to me to decide, but I mean these are the kinds of things that should perhaps be considered at the political level.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Would the Canadian passport still be used in a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Audy:** No, I don't think so.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Have you ever travelled to a foreign country with a Canadian passport?

**Mr. Audy:** No.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Have you ever been embarrassed to show your Canadian passport?

**Mr. Audy:** I've never been in a country... I don't have a passport, so...

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

**Mrs. Hovington:** But if you had one, I don't think you'd be embarrassed to show your Canadian passport in other parts of the world, since Canada is highly regarded.

**Mr. Audy:** I don't think I'd be embarrassed to show a Québec passport either, I think.

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

**Mrs. Hovington:** Now, in your brief, you refer to immigration as an important territorial development tool, and I agree with you. But how do you visualize this tool? Do you foresee immigrants being obliged to settle in outlying regions or live in specific areas, or isolation premiums being granted? In your opinion, what kind of incentives should be used to encourage immigrants to settle in such regions as the Gaspé peninsula and the Lower St. Lawrence?

**Mrs. Bernier:** I think that this could involve offering them certain advantages. For example, if they came here, well, first of all, the government could set up programs to help them get established. The rest of us at home had a good laugh, we said: Well, we'll give them a piece of farmland and then tell them they're going to take up farming, something which fewer and fewer people are doing out here. But this might be a way of trying to populate outlying regions as well, to create programs perhaps, and give them many advantages... to make them compare these advantages with Montréal, where they live in small apartments and are sometimes obliged to resort to welfare in order to survive. Here, on the other hand, we could offer them alternatives, allow them to make something of themselves, and perhaps become Quebecers.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Certainly. And... Yes?

**Mr. Audy:** And since, when they go to large cities... well, this often leads to creation of ghettos, so to speak. They live in small apartments; they work in factories for \$ 5 an hour. But that might not be the best thing for them. Maybe they should realize this. Before coming here, they should really find out what happens. That's it...

**Mrs. Hovington:** Because our main problem with immigration... you know they almost all live in the Greater Montréal area. Therefore, by introducing programs that encourage them to live in the various regions, we'll also ensure that they stay. It's important to keep immigrants in outlying regions since, in the past, we implemented similar measures for Oriental peoples in an effort to attract immigrants to these areas. But after three to six months or a year, they went back to Montréal. We'll have to think about this as well: programs designed to make immigrants stay... similar, basically, to those designed to keep doctors in the various regions.

**Mr. Audy:** That's right. If they have a choice, well, they'll leave. But maybe we shouldn't give them too much choice either.

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

**Mrs. Hovington:** You recommend....

**Mr. Audy:** I don't mean we should lock them up, but...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** One last comment, Mrs. Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** My goodness! Our time's already up.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** It's already up.

**Mrs. Hovington:** It's gone fast, yes, because I had a number of questions I wanted to ask you... because, when I left you at the Cegep in Matane at noon, I asked you to think about something. I asked you the following question: How would sovereignty help the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé peninsula to develop economically, politically, socially and culturally? How would sovereignty ensure, for example, that there would be full employment in the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé? I don't know if you had time to think about this as you were coming here or have been able to do so since you arrived.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You'll have to...

**Mrs. Hovington:** It's important to think about this.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You'll have to discuss it at some other point. Your time is now up. Without approving or disapproving of what you've said, I can say on behalf of all Commission members how refreshing it is to hear you speak and that, with people like you, I don't think your region is about to disappear. Thank you.

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

**A voice:** Thank you very much.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:33 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:57 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now ask the Committee of Anglophone Social Action to take the floor. Mr. Howard Miller, would you be kind enough to introduce your colleagues?

#### Committee of Anglophone Social Action

**Mr. Miller (Howard):** Good day, Ladies and Gentlemen. J'aimerais présenter les membres de mon comité: à ma gauche, Fiona Watts, membre du conseil d'administration du CASA, le Comité d'action sociale anglophone; toujours à ma

gauche, Johanne Richards, coordonnatrice des programmes du CASA. Immédiatement à ma droite, Ethelyn Vazier, qui représente l'Institut des femmes de la Gaspésie. À ma droite également, Albert Patterson, directeur général du CASA.

D'abord, j'aimerais, au nom du CASA, remercier la Commission de nous offrir cette possibilité d'exprimer nos opinions sur l'avenir constitutionnel de la société québécoise.

Notre position est profédéraliste. On ne devrait pas avoir à s'en excuser dans une société libre et démocratique. La question, à notre avis, est de savoir si oui ou non la société québécoise de langue française est prête à croire à la sincérité de la communauté anglophone et à accepter cette sincérité quand nous proclamons qu'à titre de Québécois pure laine, nous aimons notre province et souhaitons être un élément vital de cette société, et y apporter notre contribution.

Une mythologie soigneusement élaborée nous dénie, nous les anglophones, toute reconnaissance sérieuse ou contribution à la croissance, au progrès et à la destinée politique de notre province. Contrairement à ce qu'on a souvent dit de nous, nous ne nous sentons pas comme "la minorité la mieux traitée du pays" et nous refusons ce que cela implique. Nous ne vivons pas dans l'espoir de revenir au bon vieux temps où les Canadiens français étaient perçus, au Québec, comme les porteurs d'eau des patrons anglais. Nous sommes sincères et n'avons pas deux visages quand nous nous proclamons Québécois, même si nous nous sommes opposés aux lois 101 et 178. Cependant, on nous a amenés à avoir l'impression que si nous n'appuyons pas à 150 % le nationalisme québécois, nous ne sommes pas de vrais Québécois.

La séparation ou l'indépendance pure et simple du Québec va diviser le pays, à notre avis. La souveraineté-association ou une forme de superstructure peuvent sembler plus polies, mais elles auront le même effet. Nous sommes préoccupés par l'intolérance linguistique croissante et évidente dans notre société; nous craignons que le Québec de demain risque de ne plus pouvoir prétendre à une grande moralité. Tous les signes actuels montrent un certain type de ressentiment et d'hostilité envers les citoyens de la minorité francophone hors Québec et les citoyens de la minorité anglophone ici au Québec, comme si nous étions responsables de toutes les injustices linguistiques de l'histoire canadienne.

Of course, French Québec says all the right things: We care about our Anglophones, support their institutions, passed Bills 142 and 107 on their behalf, and treat them better than any other province in Canada. À notre point de vue, le Québec français réussit beaucoup mieux à trouver les injustices commises par les autres

provinces qu'à reconnaître ses propres fautes.

Les Gaspésiens, qu'ils soient d'expression française ou anglaise, ont traditionnellement et de tout temps vécu et travaillé en harmonie les uns avec les autres. De nombreux mariages interlinguistiques se sont produits et, dans bon nombre de nos communautés, il est parfois très difficile de déterminer la langue maternelle des gens. La tolérance et l'harmonie habituelles ont diminué, ce que nous attribuons à l'atmosphère empoisonnée par les nationalistes des grandes villes qui voudraient imposer à notre province un unilinguisme injuste. Nous, du CASA, représentons notre communauté anglophone, qui a déjà, à de nombreuses reprises, manifesté son désir et son bonheur de vivre dans un Québec à prédominance francophone et son appui envers cette cohabitation. Mais on nous a fait sentir que nous ne sommes plus les bienvenus dans la province où nous sommes nés, que nous sommes des étrangers chez nous. Ne vous y trompez pas, nous avons plus d'affinités au Québec avec nos voisins francophones de la campagne qu'avec nos concitoyens urbains de Toronto, de Vancouver et de Calgary.

Les anglophones de notre communauté veulent essentiellement une chose de nos voisins francophones: le respect! Le respect de notre langue maternelle, le respect de notre droit d'apprendre, de parler et de travailler dans la langue du Québec, le français. Nous ne voulons pas être appelés "les autres" ou "les Anglais"; nous ne voulons pas être exclus quand nous entendons "le Québec aux Québécois". Nous nous considérons comme Québécois. Nous ne voulons pas être exclus de la dynamique sociopolitique de la province, mais ne vous attendez pas à ce que nous adoptions des politiques nationalistes qui traitent la vue ou le son de notre langue maternelle de façon pire que la pornographie.

In conclusion, I would like to recount a personal experience, which I think is somewhat symbolic. Last month, at home in Gaspé, I took a short walk with my 19-month-old daughter. At the end of my driveway, someone had written a message... I hope I can pronounce it properly: "Allo les blocs, salut les 'blokes'." I showed it to a Francophone neighbour... all my neighbours in Gaspé are Francophone... and I said: "Look at what's happening here in Gaspé as a result of Québec's policies." And he gave me a suitable answer: "Listen, Howard, everyone's gone mad." And I said: "It's true, but the same thing is happening in Brockville, isn't it?"

It's dangerous when a government uses repressive strategies or laws, because it sends people the wrong message. When a language is threatened, the people who speak that language are perhaps, by extension, also a threat. In our opinion, sovereignty isn't a beau risque. It isn't a calculated risk. It's perhaps a fairly serious risk for all Canadians and Quebecers, entailing many unknown dangers.

And, at the moment, the objective isn't worth the risk. Québec doesn't need a constitution to say that we're different. We have been different, we are different and we'll always be different, with or without a constitutional agreement. In our opinion, French Quebecers will always be a strong and wonderful society with an unlimited future, because they are capable of surviving in the face of all obstacles. English Quebecers have plenty of confidence in their Francophone neighbours; that's why we want to stay here.

At present, Francophones have to think that they're in the majority in Québec, that they have enough power and are sufficiently open-minded to remain in control of their own destiny. And we can still control our destiny in a Canadian federal system, without following the enticing road to sovereignty.

Anglophones in the Gaspé peninsula are your neighbours; we're Gaspésians, we're Canadians and, above all, we're Quebecers. We're proud of this great heritage. We aren't enemies of French Québec. We're your allies. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Miller. I will ask Mr. Libman to make the first comment.  
(3:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. M. Miller, votre mémoire est le bienvenu. J'aimerais d'ailleurs faire quelques commentaires à ce sujet, particulièrement à propos de certains points que vous venez de mentionner. Vous avez dit, et nous l'entendons trop souvent du Parti québécois et du Parti libéral, que les anglophones du Québec sont la minorité la mieux traitée du monde, ce qui justifie la suspension des droits individuels.

Ce que personne ne voit, c'est le fait que les universités, le système scolaire, le réseau des services de santé et des services sociaux auxquels ils se réfèrent ont été bâtis et payés par la communauté anglophone au cours des ans, surtout dans la région très dense de Montréal. Ce que peu de gens voient, c'est le fait que les anglophones des régions éloignées, et particulièrement ceux de la Gaspésie, ne bénéficient pas de certains de ces services fournis aux gens de Montréal, compte tenu de leur nombre. Pourtant, leurs droits individuels sont aussi suspendus.

De plus, avant d'arriver à ma question, vous avez dit dans votre exposé que notre système de services de santé et de services sociaux n'est pas en bonne posture à l'heure actuelle. Le projet de loi 142 n'est toujours pas mis en œuvre, quatre ans plus tard. Le récent projet de loi 107, la nouvelle loi sur l'éducation, pourrait aussi compromettre nos commissions scolaires. Il faut bien voir une chose importante: la plupart des groupes qui se sont prononcés devant la Commission en faveur de la souveraineté ou de la

souveraineté-association ont dit qu'il y a une place considérable pour les anglophones au Québec. Nous devons respecter la minorité anglophone. Mais quand on leur pose des questions, ils ne veulent pas répondre à aucune des demandes ou préoccupations légitimes de la minorité anglophone.

Au cours des années, et particulièrement des 15 dernières années, les anglophones ont montré leur volonté de participer et leur compréhension, ont déployé des efforts, se sont montrés conciliants. Pour obtenir quoi en 1990? Le gouvernement libéral dit maintenant ne plus avoir besoin du soutien des anglophones. On voit que l'effort de certains dans la minorité est demeuré invisible en partie aux yeux de la majorité. Ma question aujourd'hui, c'est: que peuvent faire les anglophones maintenant, en 1990? Qu'est-ce qu'il reste à faire, aux 10 % de la population qui représentent un des peuples fondateurs du Québec? Que doit faire la communauté anglophone du Québec? Comment doit-elle s'y prendre? Comment doit-elle défendre ses aspirations légitimes individuellement, socialement et constitutionnellement? Il faut au moins trouver une autre stratégie, puisque les stratégies des 15 dernières années n'ont pas fonctionné. Comment évaluez-vous la situation?

**M. Miller:** En un mot? Notre problème a toujours été de déterminer la stratégie la plus appropriée, qui ne dérangerait pas nos voisins. Mais c'est peut-être parce que nous avons toujours été modérés que personne ne nous écoute, bien souvent, ou qu'on a rationalisé en nous disant: "De quoi vous plaignez-vous? Vous êtes la minorité la mieux traitée!" Quel traitement, notre communauté de la Gaspésie est en train de mourir! Nos écoles disparaissent, comme le précise notre mémoire, et beaucoup de nos gens pensent qu'il n'y aura bientôt plus d'anglophones en Gaspésie.

Peut-être que nous devrions alerter une sorte de société de conservation pour connaître un meilleur sort? Mais question de stratégie, il faut certainement être plus combatifs; pas hostiles, mais combatifs. Et je pense que nous devons apprendre de nos collègues et pairs francophones qui, je pense, ont fort bien exposé leur cas partout au Canada en ce qui concerne les injustices commises envers les minorités francophones du pays et envers la majorité francophone du Québec, au cours de l'histoire. Je pense que Lysiane Gagnon a dit dans un certain nombre d'articles, je pense, qu'on devrait insister auprès de nos voisins francophones du Québec sur le fait qu'ils forment la majorité et qu'ils doivent commencer à penser comme une majorité. Ils ont une certaine responsabilité dans le traitement des minorités avec respect et considération. Ce n'est pas suffisant de dire "vous êtes bien ici; de quoi vous plaignez-vous? Regardez ce qui se passe ailleurs!" On pourrait

utiliser le même genre de comparaison pour éliminer toutes les plaintes si on étudie le reste du monde. On n'est pas ici pour abaisser le dénominateur commun. On est ici pour le hausser.

Je ne sais pas, M. Libman, si ça répond bien à votre question, mais il nous faut surtout être combatifs, tout en restant équitables. Nous devons convaincre nos collègues de la province que nous sommes avec eux, et non contre eux.

**M. Libman:** Une dernière...

**Le Président (M. Jean Campeau):** ...15 seconds.

**M. Libman:** O.K. Vous parlez ici du projet de loi 107. Je comprends à la lecture de votre mémoire que vous acceptiez le passage des commissions scolaires confessionnelles à des commissions scolaires linguistiques, mais seulement si elles sont protégées par la constitution. C'est bien ce que dit votre mémoire?

**M. Miller:** C'est bien ça. Nous sommes inquiets, comme le dit le mémoire, de la façon dont le gouvernement du Québec a réagi à l'affaire Mahé survenue en Alberta. Ironiquement, ici, quand des parents francophones d'Alberta ont tenté de contrôler leurs propres écoles, le gouvernement du Québec s'est opposé à la minorité francophone d'Alberta et à son désir de contrôler ses propres écoles. Si tel est le cas, nous avons raison d'avoir peur de ce qui risque d'arriver à nos propres institutions linguistiques en vertu de la loi 107.

**Le Président (M. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Campbell Steer.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Merci. Pour continuer dans la même veine que M. Libman, voyons votre point C du résumé; en page 16, vous parlez de l'emploi et des recommandations que vous avez à faire en ce domaine. Pourriez-vous renverser ça pour moi et me dire pourquoi vous pensez qu'il serait bon de promouvoir les six suggestions que vous avez avancées là? Pourquoi sont-elles logiques, non en ce qui concerne les droits ou certaines exigences, mais pourquoi seraient-elles fondées du point de vue économique?

**M. Miller:** Je ne suis pas certain de bien comprendre votre question, mais je vais essayer de répondre en précisant le contexte des recommandations. Comme nous sommes Québécois, nous voulons rester ici. Le problème, pour beaucoup d'entre nous en Gaspésie, c'est que sans possibilité d'emploi, la plupart des gens qui vivent ici finissent par s'en aller ou par recevoir des prestations d'aide sociale. Nous sentons qu'il y a une perte tragique des ressources humaines

de notre propre communauté, qui pourraient sortir de la province.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Donc, si vous me permettez de poursuivre ou de broder un peu sur le but de ma question, c'était: si vous croyez que vous perdez de la main-d'oeuvre, il n'y a donc plus de réserve de main-d'oeuvre dans la région et les employeurs ne voient qu'un groupe restreint de personnes à engager... C'est le genre de choses que je veux savoir de vous. Pensez-vous qu'il est logique, économiquement parlant, que certaines de ces choses soient faites?

**M. Miller:** Mais oui, certainement. Autrement, nous ne l'aurions pas écrit dans notre mémoire. Nous pensons que c'est logique économiquement parlant. Ce qu'on fait, c'est qu'on dit: Voyons, la langue du Québec, the working language here in Québec is French. But give us a chance to participate.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Le point 5, pour plus de précision. Vous demandez l'affichage bilingue. Est-ce parce que vous croyez que vos droits sont violés ou parce que vous pensez que les touristes ne savent pas où ils vont?

**M. Miller:** C'est probablement une combinaison des deux. Écoutez, nous comprenons, et je me souviens du discours de divers politiciens, y compris Gérard D. Lévesque, à propos de la loi 178. Et la loi 178, comme nous l'avons compris à écouter la plupart des politiciens du Québec, était une loi conçue pour Montréal, pour maintenir la façade française de Montréal. C'est très très difficile de faire comprendre à un commerçant de Gaspé, qui gère une entreprise bilingue, qu'il n'a pas le droit d'afficher dans sa propre langue. Ça ne serait pas une menace pour la langue française à Gaspé. Il y a 5 à 10 % d'anglophones à Gaspé. Ce n'est pas une menace. Donc, oui, c'est considéré comme une insulte. Mais je vais vous dire quelque chose: nos gens sont suffisamment bilingues; on n'a pas besoin d'affiches bilingues pour se tirer d'affaire. Mais c'est un signe très inquiétant et c'est toute une gifle. Particulièrement pour nous, en Gaspésie, parce que nous avons vécu pendant tant d'années en harmonie avant ça.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Croyez-vous que ça affecte aussi le tourisme? Le nombre de touristes?

**M. Miller:** Je pense que dans certains cas, les touristes viennent au Québec parce que c'est différent, parce que c'est comme visiter un autre pays. D'autre part, je pense que la politique est parfois mal comprise des touristes, qui ne savent pas ce qui se passe. Chose certaine, pour certains touristes, ça peut aider.

Pour quelques éléments de nos recommandations touchant le tourisme dans notre mémoire – et on ne s'y est pas tellement attardé – nous nous sommes laissé dire par les membres de notre communauté que les politiques unilingues qui sont adoptées nuisent à l'industrie du tourisme en Gaspésie. Notre économie est tellement faible qu'on ne peut pas se permettre ce type de désavantage.

**Mme Campbell Steer:** Est-ce que j'ai le temps pour une autre question?

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

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** I just wanted to know... Je voulais juste savoir le type de protection, la façon dont vous voudriez que les droits de la minorité anglophone soient protégés dans un Québec souverain.

**M. Miller:** C'est une question épineuse, parce que je pense que nous nous sentirions très mal si le Québec devenait souverain et se séparait du Canada. Mais je vais vous dire franchement, nous sommes convaincus que la plupart de nos gens resteraient parce que nous croyons fondamentalement que notre majorité francophone nous traiterait avec respect et équité. Je sais, je parlais avec le vice-président du Parti québécois à Gaspé. Il a dit: "Dès que nous serons souverains, Howard, dès que ça arrivera, nous pourrions être plus généreux." J'espère que ce n'est pas une vision romantique, mais une opinion réaliste. J'espère que tel sera le cas, mais certains des signes que nous voyons sont peu encourageants. À Gaspé, encore, comme le mentionne notre mémoire, sur tous les panneaux de signalisation le mot anglais "stop" a été gratté et rendu illisible. Le conseil municipal n'a jamais rien fait pour ça. C'est insultant pour nous. C'est blessant, comme Brockville est blessant pour beaucoup de Québécois francophones. Ça se produit des deux côtés. Et nous sommes préoccupés, nous sommes nerveux, nous sommes inquiets comme beaucoup de francophones au cours de l'histoire du Québec français et partout au Canada où les minorités francophones se sont inquiétées. Et nous avons le droit d'exprimer cette inquiétude en tant que minorité.

**Une voix:** Merci.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Russell Williams.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Miller, for the presentation you made today. And thank you for having explained your view of the various problems. It seems to me that you have a number of the same problems as several other

groups who spoke here today. Your Francophone7 neighbours agree with you about improving the situation here. I also think that, since you're a fairly isolated group, you might be facing the same situation as several Francophones outside Québec... in Manitoba perhaps... whom we have discussed.

In your brief, you often mentioned, you often used the word "respect", and I think respect exists, yes. Respect requires two voices, I think. I also think you often talked about "belonging". And I think... it seems to me that your concerns are just about the same as those I've often heard expressed here by other Quebecers over the past few weeks. When you referred to yourselves as Quebecers, in reference to other Quebecers, it seems to me that Quebecers have been telling me that the reactions encountered in the rest of Canada are the same reactions as those you've met with in Québec.

Pour l'instant, je vois, si c'est une analyse illégitime. De toute évidence, l'isolement n'est pas la réponse. Mais l'assimilation non plus. La solution est plus complexe que ça. Et je crois tout de même que la rigueur est aussi dangereuse qu'un excès de souplesse. Alors, comme nous regardons vers l'avenir, avec la Commission Bélanger-Campeau, qu'est-ce que vous recommandez pour rompre cette tendance, tant pour le Québec que pour le Québec par rapport au reste du Canada? Comment pourrait-on briser cette tendance?

**Le Président (M. Jean Campeau):** À nouveau, en 30 secondes ou moins.

**M. Miller:** Eh bien, de toute évidence, beaucoup pensaient que l'accord du lac Meech pouvait briser cette tendance. Je ne serai pas capable de répondre à cette question pour vous, M. Williams, simplement parce que beaucoup de gens ont déjà essayé, tout au long de l'histoire du Canada. Quand vous parlez de rigueur, c'est certainement un mot que nous ne pouvons plus nous permettre d'utiliser, ni du côté anglophone, ni du côté francophone. Bien que je déteste faire ce type de division, parce que je crois que nous sommes tous des voisins.

(4:00 p.m.)

Pour répondre à la question, il faudrait évidemment étudier toutes les injustices commises par le passé par le fédéralisme canadien à l'égard des groupes minoritaires francophones dans tout le Canada et le Québec. Évidemment, le système fédéral n'a peut-être pas été assez sensible aux aspirations, aux aspirations politiques de la société québécoise. Mais d'autre part, c'est un compliment à la société québécoise. Nous sommes forts ici. La loi 22, la loi 101 et la loi 178 sont issues du système fédéraliste. La société québécoise a gagné en maturité et a évolué assez pour qu'on soit tous fiers de la société dans

laquelle on vit.

Donc, pour répondre à la question de savoir comment on pourrait corriger la situation, il y a toujours place à l'amélioration. Mais c'est loin d'être aussi grave qu'on le laisse peut-être voir, en ce moment particulier, en cette fraction de seconde dans l'histoire canadienne.

**M. Williams:** Si vous me permettez d'intervenir dès maintenant, je pense qu'on devrait préciser certains des faits, aussi, parce qu'on a souvent cité des chiffres, des lois, etc. Je veux préciser toute cette question du "là où le nombre le justifie", qui semble très importante pour votre communauté. Incidemment, certains concepts du projet de loi 142 du Québec doivent être améliorés et nous devons y travailler. Vous en avez parlé dans votre mémoire et je suis d'accord avec vous. En ce qui a trait au fait que les anglophones ont droit aux services, qu'ils vivent n'importe où et quel que soit leur nombre. Je sais que durant la campagne électorale, le Parti Égalité a adopté la position du "là où le nombre le justifie". Et je n'ai jamais appuyé cette notion. De plus, vous en avez parlé très souvent. Le projet de loi 107 du Québec dit que tout anglophone a le droit à l'éducation, non pas seulement si le nombre le justifie. Donc, le gouvernement, dans les faits, accepte ce principe. Il y a sur la Côte-Nord un certain nombre d'endroits où il y a une école pour un groupe de 15 jeunes seulement. Je pense donc que ce que nous avons à faire transparaît dans ce concept voulant qu'il faut fournir les services à l'individu et ne pas se laisser piéger par le jeu du "si le nombre le justifie". Avez-vous des commentaires?

**M. Miller:** Oui, j'en ai. Je pense qu'il s'agit d'un problème de confiance. Je travaille pour un syndicat d'enseignants. Nous rédigeons des dispositions, mais nous ne pouvons jamais arriver à couvrir tous les angles. Et aucune loi ne le pourra jamais non plus. On en revient à ceci: il faut que les gens aient confiance en leurs représentants élus. La loi 107 nous lance le défi de la confiance, parce qu'elle semble s'éloigner de l'article 93 de l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord britannique, que nous considérons comme un terrain plus sûr, pour énoncer de nouveaux éléments. Dont un reflète certainement mieux la société pluraliste dans laquelle on vit. D'autre part, le problème est que nous sommes humains et que nous mélangeons les pommes et les oranges et quand nous recevons des signaux embrouillés des gouvernements, des signaux comme la loi 178 qui nous interdit de considérer l'anglais comme une source de fierté comme les francophones sont fiers du français... On voudrait être comme eux. Et je déteste parler de «on» et d'«eux», parce que c'est une des barrières qu'il faut abattre.

**M. Williams:** Merci.

**M. Miller:** Mais le degré de confiance pose le même problème dans nos réponses à tout nouveau projet de loi, parce que nous nous voyons à juste titre comme une minorité et comme une minorité emportée par une vague de l'histoire, en danger. Peut-être que le danger n'est pas réel et peut-être que ce sera comme mon ami de Gaspé disait: "Dès que le Québec sera souverain, si ça se passe, les choses iront mieux." Mais vous devez nous laisser le droit, comme minorité, d'être nerveux, d'être inquiets, d'être un peu méfiants, particulièrement quand il semble que notre langue est une menace et doit être cachée.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now ask Mrs. Blackburn to take the floor.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to say how pleased I am to be here. I would like to reconsider the comments made by the Parti québécois president from the riding of Gaspé. It's true that if Québec were independent, reassured, and fully in control, especially with regard to immigration, we would undoubtedly be more generous, so to speak, since, as you clearly explained, it's the insecurity of a minority that breeds attitudes which are often perceived as intolerant. That's why I think there's unanimity here... moreover, it's stated in the preamble of the Act which created the Commission that, if we ever became a nation, we would have to recognize the rights of Anglophones and Native peoples in the Québec Constitution. And, to me, this is elementary. It's a minimum. Moreover, it corresponds to the way in which we've always perceived the rights, and not the privileges, of minorities in Québec.

You've given me an opportunity to repeat this. I must say that you talk about the harmonious relationship between the Francophone and Anglophone communities in the Gaspé peninsula and I agree with you. And, of course, since I was born in the Gaspé, in Bonaventure on Chaleurs Bay, to be exact, I can speak with full knowledge of the facts. I think you're from New Carlisle. One of you is from New Carlisle where, may I add, Mr. Lévesque was born, and the next town, Paspébiac, for those who aren't quite so familiar with the Gaspé coast, which is the hometown of Gérard D. Levesque. These are small towns along the coast, with a few thousand, very friendly inhabitants. I still have family in this area and go there regularly. I can speak from experience. It's true that the two communities live in harmony, but they've done so too often and for too long, as it were, like two solitudes who have not always supported each other's demands with regard to economic

development. But you undoubtedly have the same problems of economic underdevelopment.

I would like to reconsider a few of the points discussed in your brief: in particular, kindly allow me to dwell on the "notwithstanding" clause. Contrary to what we think, the "notwithstanding" clause has mainly been used to safeguard rights. The Public Protector and the Human Rights Commission came to the Commission to remind us how it's been used. It has been used on various occasions. For example, remember Bill 107, which dealt with school boards and was specifically designed to protect confessional rights; and the legislation regarding small claims, the handicapped, publicity aimed at children, and wage equity. In these cases, the "notwithstanding" clause has been used very extensively to protect rights... not to protect them, but to broaden their scope, and with a view to implementing a certain concept of fairness in a society that cannot always be totally covered by a charter.

Moreover, as was recalled during the most recent crisis, the rights of minorities here in Québec... traditionally, I think of Native peoples... have been better protected than in any other Canadian province. They are in better health, are better educated, have a higher income, and are less frequently victims of injustice at the hands of the legal system. Therefore, and I know it poses certain problems from your perspective as far as signs are concerned, I would like you to tell me whether... as I think I can say, not only most, but all, of the members of this Commission agree... whether Anglophone rights should be enshrined in the Constitution of a sovereign Québec? Would you be reassured by Québec's history and the enshrinement of these rights?

**M. Miller:** Ici encore, je trouve que pour répondre à la question aussi bien que je le voudrais, il faudrait un certain temps. Je vais essayer d'y répondre pour vous en vous décrivant ce que je considère comme le signe d'un mariage réussi.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Yes.

**M. Miller:** Quand les gens sortent, quand un homme et une femme sortent, tous les signes qui se manifestent pendant leur sortie, leur façon de se quereller, leur façon de se comporter, montrent comment ils se comporteront quand ils seront mariés. Et je suppose que, selon votre point de vue, la souveraineté du Québec serait le début, pour le Québec et le Canada, d'un mariage différent, bien que beaucoup de personnes hors du Québec pourraient dire: "Ce n'est pas un mariage, c'est un divorce." Si on ne se sent pas vraiment rassurés par ce qui est essentiellement une vision romantique et ouverte d'un Québec capable de confiance, de charité et de

générosité, c'est que les signes manifestés avant le mariage ne sont pas encourageants pour notre communauté. Ils nous découragent. On craint que ça n'aille pas mieux, mais pire, si on se marie effectivement. Et si on laisse à nos voisins francophones le bénéfice du doute – je pense que nous sommes parfois en position de le faire et je ne dis pas ça de façon paternaliste – le problème est qu'un divorce, dans le reste du Canada, pourrait ne pas se passer aussi bien qu'on le voudrait. Il pourrait y avoir un peu d'amertume, et cette amertume pourrait passer sur le dos des minorités francophones de tout le pays, ce qui est mauvais, aussi mauvais. Il y aurait un contrecoup et on serait pris dedans. Donc, on craint, si cette vision romantique d'un nouveau mariage ne se concrétise pas, de subir un contrecoup impossible à atténuer. Les promesses sont attirantes et comme je l'ai dit à mon ami de Gaspé: "You're a true romantic Richard. I hope you're right." Mais vous ne pouvez pas nous blâmer d'être inquiets, parce que les signes sont inquiétants. Nous ne sommes pas le premier groupe et les autres n'étaient pas nécessairement des groupes anglophones, à venir devant la Commission et à vous dire que la séparation, oublions l'économie, parce que nous ne sommes pas des experts, nous ne prétendons pas l'être, nous parlons de ce que nous connaissons. Nos liens avec les gens... et le danger, c'est que ces liens qui étaient si forts pourraient se briser et que personne à cette table ne peut garantir que ce sera un bon divorce ou un bon mariage, selon votre point de vue.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Do I understand you correctly in your...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You may have the floor for 15 seconds at the most.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** 15 seconds. Well, if I understand you correctly, you are especially wary of the reprisals that English Canada might take against Québec.

**Mr. Miller:** Yes.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** But I'm telling you: The first marriage wasn't that bad. During the second, we can give you a certain number of guarantees...

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

**M. Miller:** Je ne pense pas avoir besoin de répondre.

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

**Le Président (M. Jean Campeau):** Eh bien, M. Patterson, Mme Vazier, M. Miller, Mme

Richards, Mme Watts, merci. Merci d'avoir pris le temps de venir ici aujourd'hui et de nous dire comment vous voyez la vie au Québec, actuellement et pour l'avenir. Soyons optimistes!

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:02 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:13 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now ask the Conseil de la culture de l'Est du Québec to take the floor. Welcome. Welcome, Mr. Claude Mongrain, president of the Conseil. Would you be kind enough to introduce your colleagues?

**Mr. Mongrain (Claude):** All right. Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for welcoming us here today. Allow me to introduce, on this side, Mr. Gilles Soucy, first vice-president of the Conseil and the organizer and communications officer for the museum in Gaspé; Mr. Jacques Bérubé, an administrator for the Conseil de la culture and an artist from Rimouski; Mrs. Rita Giguère, director general of the Conseil, and Mr. Norman Grant, executive vice-president of the Conseil and president of the Ecole de musique de Matane.

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

#### Conseil de la culture de l'Est du Québec

**Mr. Mongrain:** Very well, Mr. Chairman. Since the basic mission of our organization is regional cultural development, we will focus our brief on the cultural aspect of development.

Culture as a distinctive feature of Québec. How does Québec differ from Manitoba or Prince Edward Island? Through its demography, land use and natural resources. Québec is truly different in these respects but, especially, in regard to its history, language and culture. These aspects are also what differentiate it from France and the United States.

While, over the past few decades, the French Canadians, now Quebecers, in the territory of Québec, have strongly opposed assimilation by the Anglo-Saxons, they have, since the beginning of the 20th century, asserted themselves as a people with their own special identity.

Like Marcel Rioux, we feel that talking about culture in our modern society means talking about man and his relationship with the world; it means talking about excellence, values, imagination, and creativity; it means asking questions about projects that people must develop in order to fulfill themselves in a world where technology is starting to declare its readiness to find all the answers itself through its computers; it means urging each and every



one of us to realize our potential to the fullest.

In this sense, we believe that the Québec government has a mission not only to maintain the vitality of Québec culture but also to democratize access to the expression and products of culture throughout Québec.

With regard to regional cultural dynamics, it is important for you to understand that the various regions of Québec are not merely receptacles for the cultural products of Montréal or Québec City. The Lower St. Lawrence, Gaspé peninsula and Magdalen Islands have many artists in every discipline and many cultural organizations that provide training and assure the creation and dissemination of modern cultural products that are comparable to the better known products of large urban centres.

In fact, it must not be forgotten that, even today, for work of equal quality, the regions must strive twice as hard to prove their worth and obtain even the slightest recognition. The main concern of large urban centres is not to learn what is happening at the regional level but to open up to the outside world. This ignorance of regional cultural dynamics is based on several factors such as demographic importance, the structure of Québec media, and administrative centralization. In particular, this ignorance leads to the marginalization of regional cultural events, excludes regional artists from positions of control on national associations, and prevents regional problems from attracting the attention they deserve in national policies.

At the cultural level, therefore, we have only partially attained the objective of interregionalization and ensuring that regions are one of the focuses of central strategies.

In 1990, the various regions are still struggling to assert their identity and cultural expression. The forces at work in urban centres make them look outward rather than inward to Québec.

While it is extremely important to export Québec culture, it is also extremely important to ensure adequate support for regional cultures, since Québec culture is the product not of a particular city but of our regional diversity.

Consequently, a department of culture is necessary in Québec. The *ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec* does not cover all aspects of Québec's cultural life. This is true with regard to means of communication and cultural leisure. In addition, the Canadian government is interfering more and more in the setting up of major institutions responsible for disseminating heritage and museology.

In view of this situation and, especially, given the growing importance of Québec culture as a basis for the definition of future Québec society, we believe that it is essential for the *ministère des Affaires culturelles* to become a department of culture. This department would regain control of all the budgets that already

exist in Québec, but that have been spread out among several other departments, and of the powers and budgets that are presently controlled by the federal government: the Canada Council, the Department of Communications, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada and the CBC. This would promote more unified cultural development in Québec and the establishment of veritable cultural policies that would apply to all aspects of Québec's cultural life.

In some countries, cultural policy essentially concerns national heritage and developing the arts at the professional level. In others, it is broader in scope; it concerns not only popular culture, but also scientific culture, regular education, cultural industries, communications, the environment and, in some cases, cultural minorities. In an even broader sense, the notion of cultural policy refers to a global situation in which man becomes the focus of the development question.

The objectives of the cultural policy are thus in harmony with a blueprint for society. Cultural development is no longer considered a component of development like economic and social development. It becomes a way of envisaging and bringing about development. We recommend that, in its future Constitution, Québec set up a department of culture whose basic mission would be to deal with all aspects of Québec culture - that it ensure that the guidelines and policies of this department of culture truly take regional characteristics into account and that it concentrate all the funds allocated to culture, including communications, in a single department that would thereby be responsible for all fields of cultural activity in the territory of Québec. In conclusion, to make cultural development possible, sovereignty must also be political and economic. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Mongrain. We will ask Mrs. Hovington to make the first comment.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you. On behalf of the government, allow me to thank you for having taken part in the work of this Commission by presenting a brief. Welcome to the riding of Matane, even though Mr. Grant is from Matane and the *Ecole de musique de Matane*, which I know very well. I'm pleased to see you here, Mr. Grant.

The *Conseil de la culture de l'Est du Québec*, you have attempted to show in your brief that the *ministère des Affaires culturelles* does not cover all aspects of Québec's cultural life... I'll put my glasses on. The young people from Cégep, and in particular those from the various regions, were perhaps right when they talked about older people. Your brief recommends that Québec adopt a constitution that would include a department of culture,

whose basic mandate would be to deal with all aspects of Québec culture by taking regional characteristics into account and regaining control of the various budgets devoted to culture.

In short, your brief is similar to that presented by the Union des artistes. In other words, you're in favour of Québec sovereignty and the recovery of all funds allocated by Canada Council and the Department of Communications in Ottawa. If we recovered all the funds allocated to culture, how would the Conseil de la culture view regional responsibilities in the cultural sector?

**Mrs. Giguère (Rita):** That's a very good question! At present, in the Québec government, the ministère des Affaires culturelles is the department which has deconcentrated its resources the most. It has devoted considerable effort to allowing regions to participate more fully in their cultural development, but a great deal remains to be done. And I think that the way in which the department has promoted cultural development and access to culture up until now... when I think, in particular, about what went on in the 1970s... the situation in the 1990s is nonetheless an improvement over the past. I think that we should continue pursuing this approach and perhaps talk a little more about decentralization rather than deconcentration with regard to a department of culture. Because, in fact, it's.... Each region is capable of considering its culture development from a global perspective and not only in terms of a specific discipline.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But, for example, which areas of authority could be shared between the major urban centres and the regions with regard to cultural development?

**Mrs. Giguère:** As we said in our brief, we believe that communications are also a cultural matter. At present, communications are the responsibility of a separate department, which does not come under the jurisdiction of the ministère des Affaires culturelles. This poses a few problems. Sometimes, just recently, in fact, we tried to present the viewpoint of the Lower St. Lawrence region to the CRTC and, in particular, the CBC, which suddenly decided to broadcast to the KRTB region from an antenna in Québec City rather than from one in Rimouski. Finally, there was such an outcry from all the organizations working in the Lower St. Lawrence that the CBC went back on its decision. I think that if they had first taken the trouble to consult the regional developers, we would not have been obliged to urgently join forces in order to express our views.

**Mrs. Hovington:** As for the role of the media, people refer to Radio-Québec and the CBC

as vehicles for the discovery and exportation of regional cultural events. What is your opinion about the role these media should play? For example, what do you think their role should be if we recovered budgets and certain powers, if it were necessary to increase these powers? How would you go about doing this, with respect to Radio-Québec? What would its role be? As for exporting culture, you talked about the exportability of regional culture!

**Mrs. Giguère:** First, it would be a good idea for each region to be able to recognize itself in its media. This used to be the case of Radio-Québec. It's perhaps less and less so now. We recently witnessed the setting up of a Radio-Québec office in the Gaspé. Production must be possible in the various regions. We used to have a fairly dynamic film-making sector on the Conseil de la culture, I think. Now, there are very few film-makers and producers in the region. Most have gone to large cities in order to make a living.

**Mrs. Hovington:** In the light of your brief, I would like you to explain what measures should be taken to create a department of culture... this is what you recommend... that would be capable of maintaining and supporting regional cultural products. How do you envisage the department of culture which you are advocating?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Since your time is almost up, Mrs. Hovington, your answer will have to be as complete as it is brief.

**Mrs. Giguère:** I think that the regions should have a bit more decision-making power.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Your time is up. We will now give Mrs. Harel the floor.

**Mrs. Harel:** I would first like to thank you for having been with us this afternoon. In reading the analysis of the briefs submitted to us every day by the Commission's secretarial staff, I noticed that someone had suggested a question for you, based on the summaries of the recommendations made by each group that has presented its views to us. The question reads as follows: In what political and constitutional context would we be able to recover powers and budgets that are under federal government jurisdiction, including the National Film Board, the CBC, the Conseil des arts du Québec, and Telefilm Canada? I think you answer this question in your brief... through sovereignty. Have I understood you correctly?

**Mr. Mongrain:** Perfectly.

**Mrs. Harel:** That is correct.

**Mrs. Giguère:** I would simply like to add that... I don't know if I'm being too simplistic... but most of these organizations include a certain number of Francophones. In any case, most are people who understand Québec very well. Where do their budgets come from? To a large extent, they come from the taxes we pay to the federal government.

**Mrs. Harel:** In that case, talk to us about Québec culture. You have spoken of the enormous challenge to be met in your region which, demographically, you say, is comparable to Switzerland... the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé peninsula... 200 municipalities, six of which, at the most, have over 5 000 inhabitants. I therefore conclude that 195 have less than 5 000 inhabitants. Even so, 85 organizations are members of the Conseil and active in the cultural sector and the arts, and 128 individuals are also members of the Conseil, in a personal capacity. Since this morning, I have been fairly sensitive to what all the groups before you have said about the lack of immigrants in the various regions. And since your brief brings up the question of Québec identity, I wondered about the definition of future Québec society, about how we should broach this question of Québec culture in a Québec where the increasingly Francophone regions of French-Canadian origin and an increasingly multi-ethnic and Anglophone Montréal will probably come into conflict with one another. How do you view this redefinition of Québec society, culture and identity?

**Mrs. Giguère:** I don't know whether we can talk about a redefinition since, at present, both the large urban centres and the regions are extremely dynamic. I think that... we refer a bit to this in our brief... we find it normal that Québec should have a very strong centre of attraction, an extremely strong cultural centre, which, in this case, is Montréal, and which will probably always play this role, and that, ultimately, this centre should be attracted to larger, very dynamic centres, such as New York, Germany, Paris, Toronto, etc. This is normal, and it's a fact of cultural life. It's also a fact of cultural life that artists who live and work in regions for many years, who produce there, want to get ahead at some point and go to other urban centers, or even leave the country, to pursue their careers. This is part of every artist's career plan. I think that Québec culture has always assimilated many elements from other cultures. Québec culture isn't French culture or American culture. Québec culture has assimilated elements from Scottish, English and Irish culture and, in my opinion, it will also assimilate, as far as possible, aspects of other cultures that we are perhaps less familiar with, since their members have only recently arrived in large numbers: Asian, Arab and other cultures. In any case, I'm

very optimistic by nature perhaps, but it seems to me that, since the emergence of Québec's artistic expression, we have been able to assimilate other cultures and will continue to do so if we have the means. And...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The question period is over. We will now hear from Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue and, later, from Mr. Bruno Roy.

**Mr. Hogue:** Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to refer to the passage on page 2 where you quote Marcel Rioux. And very quickly, I would like to ask you a simple question: Can the same be said of other cultural groups in the territory of Canada... that other groups, as Rioux said, have a culture that should be protected, a culture that should be developed?  
(4:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Mongrain:** Yes, I think that's obvious; we aren't merely defining Québec society. I mean, every society has cultural values, and they must be asserted.

**Mr. Hogue:** This was the gist of the answer that Mrs. Giguère just gave: there's a constant interrelationship and much to be gained from this exchange.

Do you think that changes should be made in the current system, and are you sure that federalism and decentralization aren't incompatible? Personally, I would like to repeat this, because I believe it's true. Do you think, since you have managed to develop your particular sector of activity, that it would be possible under the current system... but I'm repeating myself, decentralization and federalism aren't incompatible... would it be possible to continue as we have in the past without being obliged to achieve sovereignty?

**Mr. Bérubé (Jacques):** In reply, it might be said that we haven't seen any proof of this so far.

**Mr. Hogue:** That's your answer... that the past has taught us...?

**Mr. Bérubé:** That's right.

**Mr. Hogue:** And, if we projected ourselves into the future, you would still like to remain attached to the past?

**Mr. Bérubé:** What I'm saying is that we're approaching the future with a sovereign Québec, with Québec culture. We must protect Québec culture in the same way that Canada must protect Canadian culture and France, French culture.

**Mr. Hogue:** And you insist, and we insist,

other things being equal, that cultural pockets in the territory called Québec should be valued as highly as our own has been in the past?

**Mr. Bérubé:** Precisely.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Bruno Roy.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a novelist, Jacques Godbout, who said (and I recalled this this morning at the Cegep in Matane) that the difference between Canada and the United States is Québec. I feel it is important to understand that culture is the very essence of that brief; now I have two questions. First, I would like to hear you speak about the professional artists in the regions. What kind of future do they have, considering the answer you gave earlier, to the effect that their development very often brings them to the metropolitan areas and often Montréal? Do they have a role to play here, after all? And the other question I should like to ask is — I believe you chose to ignore this question in the brief, I think: can you back up the economic importance of culture in the regions, particularly in your own, with figures? Is that possible?

**Mrs. Giguère:** It would be possible if we had the opportunity to study the matter. But, as for your first question, what kind of life... how professional artists can live in a region like ours... well, first of all, most often they do not live off their work. They have another, bread and butter job. But very interesting work is being produced, particularly in the visual arts. The problem that artists in the regions usually have is the lack of critique. It's the lack... There are very few art critics in Québec at any rate. Most are in Québec City or Montréal and very few of them travel around to take in the cultural events that take place in regions like ours. And that's the major problem for artists living in regions like ours. They are often torn between the pleasure of living in a particular region where the quality of life is quite nice, and the fact of having to continually move for their careers to Montréal or Québec City, especially Montréal, to end up as just one of so many other creative artists.

**Mr. Bérubé:** ...concerning the artists, you mentioned their career move... if you can talk about a career move... to Montréal. Obviously, since Montréal is the cultural hub of Québec, that move is only natural. On the other hand, those people are really from here. Therefore, their talent, their cultural work, was developed here, in the region. Let me simply mention a few

well-known names: Nicole Leblanc, from Maria; Normand Lévesque, from Rimouski; Victor Lévy-Beaulieu, from Trois-Pistoles; Françoise Bujold, from Bonaventure; Jocelyn Bérubé, from Saint-Nil, unfortunately no longer with us today; Alain Caron, from the île-Verte; UZEB group; Laurence Jalbert, from Rivière-au-Renard; they are all... their careers are now primarily in Montréal, but their talent was developed here.

**Mr. Roy:** I was asking the question because I was wondering... You claim at a certain point: ensure democratization of access to the expression and consumption of culture. What is consumption in the regions? Does it mean going to see performances? What do you mean by consumption?

**Mr. Mongrain:** Cultural consumption means, obviously, to go and see or to participate in or to "consume", in the end, a finished product, whether it was produced outside the region or inside. And you would be astonished, at any rate, to see the amount and quality of regional production that is "consumed", or taken in, in the regions and that, finally, is beginning to circulate around the other regions, and towards the major centres.

I feel that, if you will allow me to continue, your question would permit me to add that the choice we have to make is fundamental, in the end, as a Québec society, that is, what sort of Québec we are going to build. And does everyone move to Montréal or Québec City as a "branch", or can we, in the end, not have to permit a certain quality of life? What about it? We were speaking earlier of the immigrants who do not come here, etc. There are people here, at the Université du Québec, who come from African countries, from Maghreb, etc. More and more, we are going to have to guarantee in the regions, not only a minimum, but give tools to the regions to ensure this quality of life culturally. If we don't do this, we'll have to close down the rest of Québec and concentrate on Montréal.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** All right; the time is over for this brief. Thank you, Mrs. Giguère, and thank you, Mr. Bérubé, Mr. Grant, Mr. Soucy and Mr. Mongrain. You have shown us that culture is still very much alive here. It is very encouraging to hear that, despite all, local production is still very promising. Thank you for your testimony... I was going to add that, although my colleague left you, it was not because you discouraged him; it was because he had an extremely pressing phone call he had to make, you see? And now I must ask you to leave the premises so that others may take the floor.

Madam, you are one of the people who has submitted a personal brief, and you have come to

present, of course, the opinion that you intend to defend. You know that, for a half-hour presentation, you have five minutes in which to present the essence of your brief, after which time there will be a question period. Please take the floor.

**Mrs. Éva Côté**

**Mrs. Côté (Éva):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, to summarize the first page, I would like to thank you personally and the Commission as a whole for welcoming me here today. And I am going to get right to the crux of the matter, which is in my first paragraph: the role of the Commission.

Of course, the role of the Commission is to gather opinions and then draft a report. That sounds simple, but I don't think it will be. The responsibility of each one of you is certainly vast, given the gravity of the situation, but that of each citizen won't be any less so when he or she will have to answer the question that will be asked. I beg you to make the report on your hearings as clear and comprehensible as possible so that the average person will be able to understand it. Nor should the impression be given that the urgency of the choice is such that the true debates be evaded, or so complex that they discourage even the most valiant of readers.

And I shall get right down to the matter of sharing or patriating powers that Québec should have to enable all of its citizens to live their lives fully, whether socially, culturally or economically. I was pleased to note that, as the various parties have come before you over the last few weeks, on several occasions the maturity and economic development of Québec were mentioned. This means that despite the political structures that some people are denouncing vigorously today (I was going to say vehemently), we have made tremendous progress, and this should continue. Therefore, I have no intention of elaborating further on the subject of the patriation of powers; I do hope, however, that if the conclusion is reached that the most powers possible must be exercised, the will and ability to assume that responsibility must also be genuine, and not just a sham. We have lived through so many situations or occasions where we have been promised the earth; the awakening was all the more rude, and the frustrations more acute. And I shall return to the subject when we speak of regional development.

I should like to discuss the question of French in Québec; the concerns that have been voiced by a number of the previous speakers are the same as mine. We have all noted that the planet is continually shrinking. You have understood that I am speaking of the importance today of communications. We are experiencing events in our homes, on our TV screens, just

like players on the field, if you will allow me the expression, and the "Oka Show" we all lived through from day to day; today we are still continuing with the possibility of war against Iraq.

Furthermore, we are increasingly getting our business feet on the ground around the world. This is sound and healthy, but I hope that we are also aware that, by doing this, we should prepare ourselves better for living with, talking with and understanding the other people who will become not only economic partners, but also friends with whom we could have many things to share (good relations socially and culturally). And how shall we prepare for this challenge? In particular, what are we doing to enable our children to better experience globalized trade, social and cultural exchanges, while remembering that we are first and foremost Francophones, and that it is extremely important for us not to forget our origins?

Our attitudes should also show them that it is rather a source of wealth to belong to the international French-speaking community, and not a necessity that seems exaggerated to them when we live on an Anglophone-majority continent.

It seems to me that we all do best what we love, and loving our language and culture is also part of our education. You know the proverb "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink". On the contrary, you may not be to force him, but you may be able to persuade him, if you do it right. I'm not saying that we should all become bilingual or multilingual, but we should give our children at least as many opportunities as those that other Anglophone Quebecers, as well as Quebecers from other countries, enjoy. Our population must be Francophone because it wants to be, and not because it has to be. We certainly have the right to live and work in French within our boundaries, but we should not deprive ourselves of means to broaden our skills to be more effective and more outward-looking toward the rest of the world. It will be a pleasure for me to read your report on this subject.

Now, to get back to the thorny question of regional development. At the present time we are experiencing an extremely difficult period economically, not only because of the rampant recession, but especially because of provincial and federal government inertia in enforcing the sectorial development agreements signed in June 1988. This is a \$ 210 million project, and the CRD advises us that scarcely 10 % have apparently been expended by the federal government.

This resource development agreement was to replace, in our opinion, in eastern Québec, an economic development plan that was known as the "Eastern plan", or "Plan de l'Est", which...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The allotted time is almost up, Madam. If you could summarize more rapidly...

**Mrs. Côté:** Well, I would like to give you my final word, because I find that the economic situation we are experiencing is horrible. The population of eastern Québec is getting lower every year because we can no longer have our people subsist in our region. The economic development of the peripheral regions of Québec, as is true elsewhere in Canada and in the rest of the world, is the result of a clearly expressed, honestly respected, political will.

We have huge difficulties. Our difficulties in living with the present federal structure should be resolved in very frank negotiations with the rest of Canada. We are a very young country, compared with Europe, but, at any rate, after terrible wars for dozens and dozens of years, the European countries are now discussing very close economic, monetary and political ties. So much has been accomplished since the Treaty of Rome in 1957. We should be able to arrive at a satisfactory result among the different parts of our country; otherwise, as some of your guests have told us, perhaps we have to live through quite long difficult times, and the final goal that we could reach would not be the one we've dreamed about.  
(4:45 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We shall now begin the question period with Mrs. Jeanne Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Mr. Chairman; good afternoon, Mrs. Côté. Mrs. Côté, I read your brief with considerable interest. As a former Liberal member in the Ottawa Parliament, you have been able, like us, no doubt, but not like all other citizens, to become aware of a number of problems that the dual federal-provincial structure causes, and the cost of duplication in various programs. The Chamber of Commerce, on the basis of a study conducted and headed up by Senator Arthur Tremblay, estimated that, in 1978, 60 % of the programs in which there was direct duplication, that is, in 277 out of 465, and that in all activity sectors, except for defence items (veterans) administratively, there was also duplication, which leads to huge costs which are not applied directly to the activity (and that was denounced by, I think, almost all those involved as being one of the difficulties holding back Québec's development).

Now, in your brief, you say a number of things and you deplore, I think, like everyone who has come today to be heard here and all across Québec, but particularly in eastern Québec, the difficulties related to under-development. You also mention the lack of communications links, the lack of support for

business, of special reception programs. You also deplore the uniformity of the programs. And you conclude by saying, but more seriously, that our difficulties in living within the present federal structure should find a solution in very frank negotiations with the rest of Canada.

In this "very frank" discussion, first of all, do you consider that we can ask for the patriation of certain powers? If so, which powers? Taking it from there, please tell me how we are going to succeed in obtaining more in other negotiations, where we were refused less with Meech Lake.

**Mrs. Côté:** You mentioned duplication of programs and very frank negotiations especially. I got that, and I don't think...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** I didn't actually "mention" what you said; I was alluding to your brief.

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes, yes. It's easy for me to admit that. You are correct in saying that I was a member of the federal Parliament from 1980 to 1984. I must say that that was not an easy period, for all sorts of reasons, both political and economic. It is true that there is duplication of programs which constitute, in some respects, wasted energy and money. That is also true. It is also true that, at that time, Québec's plan for eastern Québec came into existence because the provincial government of the time flatly refused any form of economic development agreement with the federal government. Therefore, we found ourselves in extremely difficult economic positions and, to meet the specific needs of eastern Québec, we created the plan for the East, which was a plan, as has been said, for the economic development of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower St. Lawrence regions, that is, the part of the province between Rivière-du-Loup and La Pocatière, up to Gaspé; but it did not apply to the south shore of the River. We agree on that point.

It is true that we did a great many things, with developments, with that program. It is true that we tried to negotiate things with the Québec government - the Parti Québécois at the time. And, I could quote Bernard Landry, who told me it was a definite no for negotiations with the federal government on an economic development agreement. So, since I know how to listen - attentively - I understood the lesson, and then we created that plan for eastern Québec.

Now, it's become a sectorial economic development agreement for the resource regions, and everything's almost come to a full stop. For all sorts of reasons, of which I am unaware, it's a war of flags, a war of commas and semicolons. I also knew that situation during the negotiations. Then, during a time like that, we feel terrible.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** I think you have the right picture, like the other speakers, but the question is a simple one. You say that that would have to be remedied by frank negotiations...

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...would you say that the Liberal Party was not frank during the Meech Lake negotiations? That would surprise me, because I have the impression that we felt there was a great deal of...

**Mrs. Côté:** My dear lady, I was only...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...We felt...

**Mrs. Côté:** Mrs. Blackburn, I was only...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Would you mind? We felt there was a great deal of good will...

**Mrs. Côté:** Mrs. Blackburn, I was only...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** ...what would frank negotiations be?

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes. But I was only referring to what I experienced when I was in a place that allowed me to see how the negotiations were proceeding. Now, if you tell me that you... I would make a value judgment on the type of negotiations that took place within the framework of the Meech Lake Accord, which were more or less sufficient on the part of Québec as a claim or...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** But, after the Meech Lake failure, you have to take it. It's a fact. The government acted in good faith, I think. The National Assembly was unanimous in its feeling that it was a minimum and that, despite everything, was rejected. Do you seriously think that it is possible to negotiate additional powers, or, if that should not be done, as everyone is saying today: let's take the powers; we'll negotiate later.

**Mrs. Côté:** No. I feel the powers can be negotiated.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** In that case, tell us how, with the amending formula. Because I think it's a sector you know well. You were a Member of Parliament and I imagine that you looked into these matters.

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes. But I must tell you honestly that, despite the situation today in Canada, I feel that Canadians in the other provinces are almost... must become just as worried as we are. And I feel that very frank negotiations could be held. If you ask me which powers should be

patriated, in addition to those we already have, I think the range should be broadened. It worries me when the federal government tells me that it will take care of retraining and training manpower, and that it's going to do it unilaterally, even in Québec. I don't know whether it has the intention of doing it elsewhere, but it's probably the same thing.

I am also worried when it comes to me with draft legislation on communications, which affects phone companies, among others. So, I would have to say that we absolutely must talk, and get to the root of the problem. I would admit that... If you tell me that it is not easy to negotiate, you're right. But, before arriving at a new phase, further on, perhaps we should backstep and try to catch up. But you are correct in saying, too, that this situation cannot last indefinitely, and I share that viewpoint.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** You will give us...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We shall go on to another series of questions, if you don't mind, Mrs. Côté. I'm sorry, Mrs. Blackburn, but the time is up. So, I shall first ask Mr. Guy d'Anjou to take the floor, and then Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Hello, Mrs. Côté. You are courageous to come here alone today, but I have known you a long time. You were a school commissioner, and that gave you a shining badge of courage. A Member of Parliament, you are now a member of a city council, a member of the council of the City of Rimouski. You have surely reflected considerably on the present situation over the last few years and, further to your experience in Parliament in Ottawa, there is a question that I would like to ask you. Given the evolution of a situation such as the one we are living through at the present time, what is your opinion of a new sharing of powers, while we can see that the federal government, by its residual powers and by its spending power, has interfered considerably with the powers reserved for the provincial legislatures, and would probably be the cause of the extremely difficult budgetary situation of the federal government?

It's probably the fundamental cause of our poor financial position in Canada. There has clearly been abuse of spending power on the part of the federal government. What would you say to an about-face, where the federal government would no longer have spending power in matters of provincial jurisdiction, and the provinces would have residual power, the residual powers that are not mentioned in the Constitution? Do you think this is the normal course of events if we want to keep our ties with Canada?

**Mrs. Côté:** You are correct in saying that there has been a habit formed, for many, many

years, dozens of years, on the part of the federal government, to take action in areas of provincial jurisdiction. I think we have arrived at a point where these things can no longer continue. We are going to have to get together amicably on these things... on who should do what, and how it is to be done. Furthermore, in special cases — and there I have no particular instance in mind, but I wouldn't want to blind myself to the facts either — perhaps there could be... means taken to reach a consensus for agreements or transfers of powers or jurisdiction. I am only referring to that. That changes nothing as to the Constitution.

As for the residual powers, you see this is probably the situation today, when we speak of communications, since no telephones, TV or radio existed in 1867. Since the Constitution stated that the residual powers would be left to the federal government, contrary to what existed in the United States, surely there are many things that, with changing times, on the threshold of the 21st century, should be rediscussed, to find out who would be in the best position to exercise these powers so that services are rendered better and commitments met better by the various governments.

I think the governments have obligations to their citizens, just as we have towards our environment, our land. You are correct in saying that. But, if you ask me how you should do it, and at what point you should do it, I think the enlightenments you have had for the last while, and that you will continue to have with the specialists who will be coming to speak to you about it, or experts... and I have considerable respect for those people, and I am happy they exist, because without them we would have certain problems. This Commission will be able to make its report. And, as I was telling you, I wanted it drafted in such a way that the layman can understand it. Because it's true that this is going to make for a difficult question to ask. But it will also be difficult to answer that question. Since we also asked you the question, it's the other side of the coin. It's fine to say that we will be a sovereign state, and after that we shall negotiate the necessary association. We have also been warned by those who have said: what will our future be before undertaking negotiations and all that? On that score, if we fiddled around for 50 more years, as we have already done, I think the problem would really have to be broken down into very small components. What I mean is: let's really know what we're talking about to avoid misunderstandings.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'm sorry to interrupt, Mrs. Côté. I must move on to another question. Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Madam, you have said that you feel it is still possible to negotiate

in good faith the changes required in federalism as it now stands. Have I understood correctly?

**Mrs. Côté:** Precisely. As Mr. d'Anjou has said, I'm optimistic and courageous. That's why I'm here.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You were part... I will say what I am about to say with respect and esteem for your political work and what you represent but I have a question that has been bothering me and I want to put it to you, in light of what you have just said. You were part of a government and a political party which, in 1980, during the Referendum campaign, promised Quebecers that if they said "no" to the question, the Constitution would be renewed. The question of trust was posed once again. The team of which you were a part promised the same thing that you are saying today. The Constitution will be renewed. Instead, in 1981 and 1982, you voted almost unanimously in the House of Commons to repatriate the Constitution and substantially amend it without Québec's consent, against the wishes of Québec and the National Assembly.

Before his death, Mr. Malépart told us in the House of Commons in Ottawa that if he had to vote again in the 1980 Referendum, he would say "yes". Knowing as you do today all that has happened, would you still vote in favour of repatriating the Constitution in 1982, against Québec, despite Québec's wishes, excluding Québec from the Constitution as it is still excluded at present?

**Mrs. Côté:** Mr. Bouchard, in 1990 I'm not going to rewrite history. We agree on that point.

**Mr. Bouchard:** What do you mean? That you would say "no"?

**Mrs. Côté:** We agree on that point, I'm not going to rewrite history.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You'd say "no" to repatriation? Is that it?

**Mrs. Côté:** If the situation in 1990 prevailed in 1980, in 1975 or in 1970, I would probably have done as Jean-Claude did. Probably.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Well, how can you still encourage us to negotiate today? After all that, how can you say: Resume negotiations and perhaps they'll finally lend us an ear.

**Mrs. Côté:** Mr. Bouchard, the federal government has changed. The government is no longer Liberal, it is Conservative. There should still be a chance.

**Mr. Bouchard:** So, we must negotiate solely with the federal government, not with the



provinces?

**Mrs. Côté:** You, too, were a federal MP. You were a minister, so you were more privileged than I was and certainly learned about matters that I didn't hear about. That's no problem. What I would like to say is that, in 1981 and 1982, the situation in Canada and in Québec was not the situation that prevails now. We agree on that.  
(5 p.m.)

**Mr. Bouchard:** Well, what do you mean...

**Mrs. Côté:** I...

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...that we could achieve today what we failed to accomplish in the past?

**Mrs. Côté:** I think that we acquire experience, and that history is written from day to day. The political situation has changed in Canada, and so have the parties involved. The proof is that several provincial governments have changed over the past three years.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Wells is still there.

**Mrs. Côté:** What has also changed is...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Wells is still there...

**Mrs. Côté:** ...the Meech Lake Accord.

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...Mr. Filmon was rewarded by being reelected with a majority, and so on. Mr. Peterson was punished; the voters threw him out.

**Mrs. Côté:** Do you think...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Things are getting worse, Madam.

**Mrs. Côté:** Do you think that in 1981-1982, René Lévesque wanted to become the father of the new Canadian confederation?

**Mr. Bouchard:** Mr. Lévesque is dead, we cannot make him speak, but you, you are there, you can answer my question. Would you still vote in favour of unilateral repatriation?

**A voice:** You're making Malépart speak.

**Mr. Bouchard:** No, he spoke before he died. Mr. Malépart said what he had to say in the House of Commons, it's recorded in Hansard.

**Mrs. Côté:** I heard him, Mr. Bouchard, I heard Mr. Malépart make those remarks...

**Mr. Bouchard:** But I am talking about 1982, you understand?

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes...

**Mr. Bouchard:** He was talking about 1980.

**Mrs. Côté:** ...I am talking about 1982, but now it's 1990, soon it will be 1991.

**Mr. Bouchard:** But you were there, you voted against.

**Mrs. Côté:** Things have happened since then...

**Mr. Bouchard:** You voted against Québec at that time.

**Mrs. Côté:** I voted against Québec's separation, yes.

**Mr. Bouchard:** In 1982, madam, 1982.

**Mrs. Côté:** In 1982...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Unilateral, forced repatriation of the Constitution...

**Mrs. Côté:** In 1980, in the Referendum...

**Mr. Bouchard:** ...against Québec's wishes.

**Mrs. Côté:** Let's put things in perspective. In 1980, it is true that I worked for the "no" campaign. In 1982, it's true that I voted in favour of repatriating the Constitution. It's also true that I was distressed by the Parti québécois' attitude at that time...

**Mr. Bouchard:** The National Assembly, madam.

**Mrs. Côté:** The National Assembly.

**Mr. Bouchard:** The National Assembly.

**Mrs. Côté:** The National Assembly, as you wish, I respect the fact that the National Assembly is also...

**Mr. Bouchard:** The Québec Liberal Party voted in favour of the motion repudiating the disgraceful repatriation of 1982. Thus, it was the National Assembly, Québec's democratic institution, it was Québec that voted against the repatriation. You, you were in Ottawa with the others, you voted in favour of the repatriation...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bouchard, time is up. You have 15 seconds, madam.

**Mrs. Côté:** I feel, as I said at the beginning, that I'm not going to rewrite history.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. We now take time from the Chair. Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I will simply continue along the same lines as Mr. Bouchard, because I feel that Mrs. Côté has perhaps given us a hint on page 10. You suggest, Mrs. Côté, that we resume negotiations with Ottawa to repatriate powers and perhaps obtain additional jurisdictions, in any event, that we revive negotiations. In the last paragraph, you write: "The various components of our country, Canada, should be able to arrive at a satisfactory result. Otherwise, as a number of your guests have stated, perhaps we will have to undergo a fairly long, difficult period and the final outcome may well not be the one we dreamed of". Am I to understand, in that sentence, that if the negotiations you are now suggesting fail, you would be in favour of sovereignty?

**Mrs. Côté:** Mr. Beaudry, I am living the same reality as you. What we must ascertain is whether we can live together and focus our efforts on doing so.

**Mr. Beaudry:** That's right.

**Mrs. Côté:** After, I'll do as everyone else does, I'll listen to the question and I'll answer.

**Mr. Beaudry:** No, no, I understand, but it is you who wrote that in your brief. Perhaps we will have to undergo...

**Mrs. Côté:** It's clear, that's exactly what I am saying.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Perhaps we would undergo a difficult period, but what you are saying, in essence...

**Mrs. Côté:** If it's not difficult economically, it will certainly be difficult intellectually, then psychologically, because it is, all the same...

**Mr. Beaudry:** What you foresee, in effect...

**Mrs. Côté:** ...for...

**Mr. Beaudry:** What you foresee, in essence, Mrs. Côté, is that you are suggesting negotiations with Ottawa, opening frank negotiations with the federal government, and you say: Fundamentally, if we fail, we'll perhaps experience a difficult period but we'll have to become sovereign. That is what you're saying.

**Mrs. Côté:** That is what a number of your guests have said, I heard Mr. André Raynaud...

**Mr. Beaudry:** No, no, I know that my guests

have said it, I'm asking you what you say.

**Mrs. Côté:** I don't know, myself, whether we'll have a difficult or an easy time, assuming that we accept some form of sovereignty or other. Nobody has ever told me what would happen after.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Why, then, do you say to us: Perhaps we may undergo a fairly long difficult period?

**Mrs. Côté:** Because some people, for example the Association des économistes, said so. Mr. Ghislain Dufour, among others, also said as much in his remarks; I hope he has the right to say so, to look closely and examine what might happen afterwards, before we get that far.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Well, if I...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** If you'll allow me, we'll now turn the floor over to Mrs. Louise Bégin.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Côté, I have gone through your report and, while reading it, noted that you have extensively praised the "Eastern plan" because you said, when it was implemented, among other things, it would make possible the development of the region. You list a number of projects which have benefited from the plan, such as UQAR, the Cegep, and the construction of university residences. I am indeed pleased that the plan has benefited the region, except that my question is as follows: Do you not think that under this plan, the federal government interfered in what are exclusively provincial jurisdictions? The question is this: Do you not think that under a new federation - because you are a federalist and if we accept your viewpoint - we should not withdraw spending power from Ottawa, spending power which has been denounced by numerous intervening parties here today? I would like to hear your opinion on this matter, Mrs. Côté.

**Mrs. Côté:** When you refer to the matter I discussed, the projects were carried out in post-secondary institutions in Rimouski, that is, the Cegep, the marine institute or UQAR, with the consent of the ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, according to criteria and standards set out by the department. They centred above all on educational institutions. In addition to the eastern plan covering the residences, there was a special federal program called Les caisses d'accroissement des compétences professionnelles. Ottawa and Québec were represented under the program; agreements were reached between governments to carry out extremely important projects such as the radar simulator at the

marine institute.

Now, you ask me about the federal government's spending power, which was also Mr. d'Anjou's question. I think we should limit - I'll repeat here what I said to Mr. d'Anjou - that in areas falling under provincial jurisdiction, it is the provincial government which should act. However, I refer you to my text and add that I am entirely in favour of repatriating powers, even limiting the spending power of the federal government, but I also repeat that doing so must ultimately produce a result. May our will be clearly, succinctly expressed and may we have the will to do what we promise to do. That's important.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Fine, you've answered my question. However, you were an MP. You are in a position to be acquainted with regional needs and you have certainly heard intervening parties from the region say that, in the Québec of tomorrow, the regions will need more powers. Some people have even mentioned a regional development board. Do you agree with that? Do you maintain that the Constitution, whether it is federal or provincial, should include specific powers for the regions?

**Mrs. Côté:** I have the same reservation about the transfer of power to the regions as I do with respect to the other two levels of government. I am in favour of transferring powers to the regions, provided the regions are given the means of assuming such power. However, if we use the methods which have appeared... in any event, in the municipal sector, where I work now, we feel that things were done in a somewhat unacceptable manner.

**Mrs. Bégin:** I understand.

**Mrs. Côté:** Even rather difficult. If it were decided to transfer various powers to local or regional governments because services would be better provided and perhaps at less cost, this matter must also be the object of frank, honest, fair discussions. We must agree on the meaning of the words we use, to avoid misunderstandings.

**Mrs. Bégin:** I do think, Mrs. Côté, that if the Commission concludes that we must seek additional powers from the federal government that we will also have to find additional funds so that the regions or the province can assume these new responsibilities. That goes without saying.

**Mrs. Côté:** If you are talking about transferring powers, there is one thing I would like to verify, that is, the new unemployment insurance scheme paid for solely by workers and employers. I ask myself why that must remain under federal jurisdiction.

**Mrs. Bégin:** So, we can conclude that...

**Mrs. Côté:** I have a number of doubts, but I am asking you the question.

**Mrs. Bégin:** So, we can conclude, finally, that you will not have an answer from me today. I am here to listen and to understand. If I understand correctly, you are saying that we can have additional powers for the regions and a field which you would like - at least, which you have pinpointed, that is, unemployment insurance - to see fall under provincial jurisdiction. That is what I understand. That is what you...

**Mrs. Côté:** That is precisely my question. Why is it not under provincial jurisdiction now?

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you very much, Mrs. Côté...

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Bégin:** ...for this clarification.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman would like to speak, provided he is brief. There is no time left, but he may proceed.

**Mr. Libman:** OK. It's a shame you didn't reply to Mr. Bouchard earlier that Mr. Lapierre also voted in favour of repatriation. My question refers to page 5 of your brief where you say: It seems to me that we do best at what we like, and liking one's language and culture is also part of education. One doesn't force a dog to go hunting. To the contrary, the dog is properly trained, and if the job is well done, the hunter's satisfaction is enhanced. Finally, you say: Our population must be French speaking by choice, not by obligation. I think this is a very important notion. Can you adapt these lessons with respect to Québec's minorities if we talk about incentives rather than coercive measures in order for the minorities to better cooperate with the majority in preserving and promoting the French language in Québec?

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you for your question, but it is a hard one, because when I wrote... I must say it's hard to answer because when I wrote that text, I was referring to what I know about French speakers wishing to study at the university, and I'll give you an example in passing. My son did an undergraduate degree in chemistry at the Université du Québec à Rimouski and the textbooks and notes were more often in English than in French. He had to learn English, and learn it quickly. Now, I believe that English speakers have a responsibility toward French speakers, Mr. Libman. Perhaps you have had a harder time of it in recent years, but I think you have a responsibility to help us

because it is important in North America that the French language be protected and even liked by others, I mean despite what the man from Gaspé - Mr. Miller, I believe - told us. When we talk about the others, it is not at all pejorative, because the population of Québec today is highly multicultural, there are many languages and cultures here. We are endeavouring to maintain the fact that the Province of Québec in Canada, and especially in North America, is the only nucleus of French speakers remaining, with a highly advanced economy, social maturity and culture. I would like you to participate in it and like it.

**Mr. Libman:** Of course, but...

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

**Mr. Libman:** ...can you throw some light on the question of incentives instead of coercive measures? Do you mention...

**Mrs. Côté:** I have always preferred incentives to coercive measures.

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

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...thank you for coming and helping the Commission advance a bit further.

The Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises. I have been informed that they have just arrived after two hours on the road. While we... Do you wish to say something, Mr. Roy?

**Mr. Roy:** Yes, you have before you a happy writer, reader and consumer. Réginald Martel of *La Presse* has just called to say that Québec has abolished the tax on books.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now welcome the Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises. Mr. Ouellet will read the brief.

#### Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises

**Mr. Ouellet (René-Michel):** I'm René-Michel Ouellet.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Would you please introduce both of your colleagues.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Yes, on my right is Me Denis Rioux, advocate and administrator of the Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises, and on my left, Yves Pomerleau, a Rivière-du-Loup businessman and also an administrator of the Centre des

dirigeants d'entreprises.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Ouellet, you have five minutes in which to explain your brief.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Given the limited time available, I will obviously not read the entire brief, because you have all received it. However, I would like to make one point and that is that the CDE, very well known in our region since the organization's inception, was an employers' association and a member of the Conseil du patronat du Québec until last June 30 - except that the CDE in our region has continued to work among company directors. (5:15 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** To make sure you don't overlook anything, perhaps you could start with the conclusions.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Fine, I was about to say that, at the outset, the CDE in the Rivière-du-Loup region decided to prepare a report focusing primarily on its opinion of government deficits and the duality of taxation powers. At the beginning of this Commission's deliberations, we thought that the reports submitted raised problems related to the functioning of the provincial and federal governments but did not clearly indicate the constitutional position or political means to be adopted in order to attempt to solve these matters. Various bodies, when they were willing to take a stand, were lukewarm about the question of whether Québec's sovereignty or its continued adherence to the Federation were the best means for Quebecers to achieve their objectives.

Despite the limited time available to us to carry out such an undertaking, we decided to share with you the results of a survey among our members. We would like to point out to the Commission that our organization is apolitical, that it has never or hardly ever taken a stand on regional or other problems. This is not the aim of the CDE, which is, above all, to endeavour to inform its members to enable the latter to become better entrepreneurs and better company directors. Given the importance of the situation, the board of directors of our organization wishes to share with you its humble perception of the truth, if the truth exists.

We would like to submit to the Commission a number of remarks made by our members which, we feel, reflect the thinking of the vast majority of businesspeople in our community, and are derived from the findings of the survey we conducted and various discussions with our members.

(1) While rejecting the status quo, virtually all of our members indicated that we must dissipate as quickly as possible current constitutional uncertainty.

(2) A clear majority advocates that Québec confirm its autonomy or sovereignty (or both); however, 42 % percent of the respondents in our survey said they did not favour a radical declaration of independence.

(3) We have noted that the opinions expressed by respondents in the survey and our members fairly accurately reflect the viewpoints of businesspeople in our community overall.

(4) We believe that the problem is related more to the objective sought, but also to the means of achieving it.

(5) The executives we represent - we assume that many Quebecers are in the same situation - do not currently have all the information at hand to reach an enlightened decision.

(6) We believe that the ambiguity of the situation and the doubts we now feel are due to fact that answers to important questions have not been forthcoming. Contradictory viewpoints expressed by experts or other people who would like to be experts continue to arouse doubt and encourage some people to opt for Québec's sovereignty or autonomy.

And finally, (7) Many of us thought that the Commission would receive, or commission, reports from experts or groups of experts which would shed light on the major questions raised by the possible declaration by Québec of its sovereignty or autonomy.

Among others things, it is vital that we obtain information on the following matters: What portion of the Canadian deficit is attributable to Québec? What would happen to old age pensions? What would happen to unemployment insurance? And so on.

To conclude, the CDE of the Rivière-du-Loup region is not in a position to provide all the answers. For this reason, we ask the Commission to carry out this preliminary work. Without a clear response to these questions, it will be hard to accurately ascertain Quebecers' opinions on the major question everyone is asking, having taken it for granted that the status quo cannot prevail and that the failure of the Meech Lake Accord assumes on the part of our Canadian partners a clear willingness not to call any aspect of the current situation into question.

We feel that, without explicit information on the main questions everyone is asking, it will probably be hard for this Commission to define options respecting Québec's political and constitutional future. As executives, we must acknowledge that the current constitutional situation cannot last much longer. All of our members are exasperated by the situation and hope that the problems will be solved promptly. It seems to us that a Québec in possession of all its decision-making powers should offer a climate in which each of our companies can maintain its current economic standing and perhaps develop.

Geographic or cultural barriers do not strike us as an essential component of our development.

The economic fabric of a region like ours is mainly made up of small and very small businesses. Prices and the quality of output are the foremost factors to consider in terms of our activities and profitability. Our members who deal with clients in the other provinces and even in the United States inform us that once the language barrier has been crossed, it is extremely easy to solve problems related to geographic barriers, provided that product quality and prices are competitive.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fifteen seconds to...

**Mr. Ouellet:** I have the time to finish. We would like to stress the important role your Commission has to play in determining the political and constitutional future of Québec. Given the increasingly clear desire of Quebecers and our recent constitutional misadventures, your deliberations and the conclusions you draw from them will weigh heavily in the balance when a decision is reached. We insist on the necessity for you to submit an objective report, free of political partisanship. If a Commission such as this one cannot fully, accurately assess the situation, who can? Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Ouellet. We will begin the questions with Mr. Sébastien Allard, followed by Mr. Larose, then Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Allard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ouellet, in your brief you provide a fair amount of information about the survey you conducted among your members. One of the findings of the survey was that 57 % of respondents appear to be highly favourable or favourable to Québec's declaring its independence. Then you list various remarks accompanying the survey. Among other things, someone says, at the bottom of... I don't know which page, but under 6... that many people are doubtful because answers are not forthcoming to questions which they feel are important. If you go to the following page... Among the questions about which information is missing, mention is made, for example, of the proportion of the Canadian deficit which should be attributed to Québec - it's true that this is an important question - and what would happen to the unemployment insurance fund, which is also important. And when we go to (h), what would be the short-term and medium-term economic effects on Quebecers' standard of living?

In trying to understand those questions, I come to the conclusion that there is anxiety and uncertainty among respondents with regard to a question such as standard of living. That fact

notwithstanding, without having the answers to those questions, 57 % of respondents say that they agree with sovereignty or independence.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I will let Mr. Rioux speak, as he is largely responsible for this part of the brief.

**Mr. Rioux (Denis):** Well, I would first like to say that we, too, were surprised by the findings of the survey. It should be noted that the survey was conducted after you began your deliberations, and after the Mouvement Desjardins, brief was submitted. I must say that we were surprised that... If you read just a bit before, in the first question, 92 % of our members... And we think we are highly representative of businesspeople in the region, this should be understood. The president forgot to say that our organization was established during the 1950s.

It surprised us that 92 % of our members are quite favourable or, I beg your pardon, indicated that they were somewhat against or adamantly against maintaining the current situation; that 77 % of our members are fairly unfavourable or highly unfavourable to Québec's attempting once again to negotiate its reintegration into the Canadian Constitution. And 97 of the respondents indicated - this is very important - that Québec should confirm its political autonomy and freely choose its economic partners as it sees fit.

Despite the persistent ambiguity among our members, we have nonetheless reached this conclusion. The finding has shown us that if we had accurate answers to the questions we are asking you - and I believe it is up to you to give Quebecers the answers - we and other Quebecers would be in a better position to reach a decision. I would like to emphasize that our survey was conducted after the Commission began its deliberations, after the submission of the first briefs where you observed that people were not taking a stand. We said to ourselves then: That doesn't make sense, what are they doing there? Despite the fact that we are businesspeople, we took it upon ourselves, Mr. Allard, to say: Well, if we don't do something about it, if we don't do our share, although we don't often do it, well, I think we'll miss the boat, I think that... There's no reason to hide. We would have deprived you of this clarification, we were told - we just arrived - we were told that we were the only economic group from the region to appear before the Commission. I find that rather unusual, but to summarize, Mr. Allard, I understand your asking questions, but I don't think this is contradictory, but it denotes the uncertainty prevailing among us, among businesspeople and, above all, among Quebecers in general which, today, is perhaps proceeding more by national

feeling than reason. We expect you to provide reasoning to enable us to clarify our decisions. I repeat: we are apolitical. Have I answered your question?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No, I'm sorry, Mr. Allard, there's no more... Now, we turn to Mr. Larose who, if he is generous enough to give a bit of time to Mr. Béland, shouldn't be too long. Mr. Béland, if you are generous enough...

**A voice:** ...our colleague and friend.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have the floor, Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** OK, Mr. Chairman, thank you. When we were talking to Mrs. Côté, she agreed that the situation in 1990 is different from that in 1980. One has to believe that some people have changed opinions, and your group bears witness to this. Perhaps, contrary to what you have suggested, people are proceeding instinctively. My impression is that people feel that some things have changed markedly in 10 years and that, in economic terms, the federal system is no longer functioning in 1990 as it did in 1980. It is in this perspective that I would like you to give us some indications, because one of the surprises of the Commission is that a highly monolithic block - I was about to say a highly sensitive one - which is the business block, the employers' block, in relation to that question is now splintered and there are now people who are wondering whether for business it wouldn't be better to make a change and obtain the necessary levers to achieve these objectives. My question is as follows: What is it that small businesses - because they seem to be prevalent in your community - feel no longer works in the shop in 1990? What are the obstacles to economic development? My hypothesis is that, if they have changed their minds, it's because something is amiss in business.

**Mr. Rioux:** At the risk of repeating myself, Mr. Larose - I'll answer part of the question then let my colleague Pomerleau give the second part of the answer - I think it's the uncertainty spawned by the political situation and the exasperation of our members with the political situation that is the main reason they are asking: When are we going to be through talking about that? As was mentioned earlier, once the political climate or the political situation is clarified, we think it will create a climate as favourable or even more favourable to the development of our small and very small businesses.

Once again, I don't want to say something different from what is in our report. We have no

pretence of doing so. We do not claim to give you formulas and recipes. What we mean is that this is a message from the region of Rivière-du-Loup, a service city, one made up of small businesses. Our organization encompasses about 100 of them. We had slightly more requests than that; about half responded to our survey in four days. Something, somewhere, is happening. As was mentioned, perhaps that something means that the economic situation which will be defined once and for all will make our members say: Fine, that's settled. Québec has its powers, we have everything we need, we'll not discuss this question any more, we'll carry on, we'll keep selling our products elsewhere, we'll keep on working just as we worked before, and we'll no longer talk about political questions. That is where I stop. I'll ask Mr. Pomerleau to continue. I think you have a role... I don't know if someone has told you - I'm following the Commission's deliberations as best I can on television - you have an extremely important role to play, and if there a word stronger than extremely I would use it.

Quebecers perhaps expect more of you than you think. Despite a clear trend among Quebecers toward autonomy-sovereignty - call it what you will - toward a regime in which Québec possesses all of its powers, Quebecers expect you to tell them: What will happen to the monetary system? What will happen to pensions? What will happen to unemployment insurance? With this information, they will be able to decide whether there will be a referendum or elections focusing on the question. They will be able to take a stand.

As soon as the Mouvement Desjardins got launched on the question or gave us its conclusions, we noted among our members a clear inclination toward autonomy, because we feel that it is perhaps a movement which is somewhat independent in relation to all that and one which has given us its viewpoint. We have heard economists who have explained that the monetary system is not extremely important were Québec to achieve sovereignty. But they didn't go far enough. Why isn't it important? We were not given the reasons. The following day, everything was contradicted in the newspapers. How can you expect people, first businesspeople like us who are somewhat receptive to the situation, to reach an enlightened decision and, all the more so, Quebecers in general, who will never be able to reach a decision on the matter?

To summarize, something has been happening in recent years. Something has happened since the Commission began its deliberations. The current political climate is unhealthy for our small businesses because it exasperates people. We think it is time to reach a decision and put an end to all that. I'll ask Yves Pomerleau to continue, because...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I like Mr. Pomerleau a lot, but you're talking a great deal... I have just one question for Mr. Béland... He was supposed to speak. If he feels he has been attacked, I'll give him 30 seconds to defend himself. If he feels his position has been confirmed, he may not have the floor.

(5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Béland:** Neither one nor the other. I find you have placed a lot of responsibility on our shoulders. That's all I wanted to say. May I ask one question, on the urgency of the situation? What is the urgency? Ten years, one year, six months, five years?

**Mr. Rioux:** As quickly as possible.

**Mr. Béland:** But what does that mean?

**Mr. Rioux:** It's up to you to say.

**Mr. Béland:** We'll prepare another brief.

**Mr. Rioux:** Pardon? You? Yes, perhaps.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. I now call on Mr. Claude Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to welcome the Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises from Rivière-du-Loup, whose representatives have arrived in freezing rain if I understand correctly. I have been told that it's at least two hours by road, is that right?

**Mr. Rioux:** Over three hours.

**Mr. Dauphin:** You are going to allow me a second question, if I understand correctly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes, Mr. Dauphin, because the answer was short.

**Mr. Dauphin:** We'll continue this way. I would simply like to say to our guests, when you mention on page 10 of your brief that many of you thought that this Commission would receive or commission reports from experts... obviously, with the consent of the other commissioners around the table, we will hear a number of experts before Christmas and others after Christmas. Obviously, we also heard a number of experts at the very beginning of our deliberations, during working meetings. I would simply like to point out that provision has indeed been made, and is very strongly sought, to hear experts. I also noted on page 10 that you ask a number of questions which should be put not only to the experts but which all good commissioners should jot down in their notebooks. They should ask themselves these questions, which are highly relevant. I also think

that all Quebecers should ask themselves these questions. I fully corroborate what you say on page 10.

Second, you indicate through the survey to which 50 % of your members responded, that a clear majority not only wants us to move ahead quickly, but that an even bigger majority declared itself in favour of greater autonomy or sovereignty. Last week, we had the opportunity to hear the Association des économistes du Québec. Reference has been made to the Association throughout the day. If I have fully understood what the economists told us, in the medium and long run, a sovereign Québec would certainly be viable, but in the short term, or rather, during the transitional period, we would likely experience a number of problems, especially in terms of perception, which would be extremely important for our economic partners. Now, I was wondering, given that a number of your members - I believe half of them - favour Québec's simply declaring its sovereignty or independence, a unilateral declaration of independence, I was wondering first of all if you have had an opportunity to talk about it. I have been told that you meet every two weeks. Have you had an opportunity to talk about it? I would also like to refer to a former Parti québécois MNA, Mr. Charbonneau, who told us that unilaterally declaring our independence is perhaps not the best thing to do, that it would be better to proceed with a referendum and then attempt to negotiate, in order to avoid a negative perception among our economic partners.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I'll respond to the first aspect of the declaration. With respect to the questions posed on page 10, as we noted earlier in the brief, we wanted to ask these questions because we thought you would hear experts but wanted to be sure that this type of question would be put to the experts to enlighten the Commission on the final conclusion. With regard to the second part, the others can answer, but personally, I feel that people change. If we conducted the survey this week, perhaps we wouldn't receive the same responses. Changes occur. Obviously, what I perceive personally is that people went through the 1980 Referendum, the failure of Meech Lake, and now there's the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. They want to know that something's happening, as Mr. Rioux said earlier. People want a solution to be proposed as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Dauphin:** The same is true for us.

**Mr. Ouellet:** As Mr. Béland stated, 10 years, I think it's a lot less than 10 years, without giving you an answer. Perhaps Yves could add something.

**Mr. Pomerleau (Yves):** Yes, as Michel said,

our ideas change, you are helping our ideas to change, we try to listen a bit to you every evening when it's possible, especially the summary at 10:30 on television. However, it happens that as we change, new ideas come along, I would like to say that in response to most of the questions we asked, most of the respondents were always favourable or very favourable... Indeed, there were... On one question, it was divided almost 50-50, which shows the caution of businesspeople who were not ready to toss out everything that had been done in Canada over many years. Myself, as a businessperson, I find that it is very irritating to have two levels of government. But we must agree that, little by little, through the patience of all of our political leaders, we have won a number of things in Québec, which means that we are doing fairly well. Somewhere in the testimony we are presenting here, a businessperson who deals with the other provinces and the United States said clearly that once the language barrier is crossed it is easy to negotiate in the United States or in the other provinces. I don't know, perhaps I present another angle to what has been presented today, to the effect that if there were something to confirm in Québec, despite the fact that Canada - I think, like everything that is called law and that you have confirmed for several days - will not let itself be pushed around by having things demanded of it. It is still true that we can gradually win without slamming the door as some people may hope.

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

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome you to our deliberations. I am somewhat like Mr. Larose, I say to myself: The world is topsy-turvy. In 1980, there wasn't a single social agency or university professor who wasn't in favour of sovereignty, while businesspeople were rather skeptical, asked a number of questions, and displayed a number of fears. Today, the same social agencies, university professors and all the rest are making very sound analyses but aren't drawing any conclusions. But you, very practical, down-to-earth people, I imagine, are saying: Well, that's done with, yes, we still have a number of important, significant questions, we are still somewhat skeptical, but we think the best solution is to be found in that direction. This is what your members told you. Obviously, this pleases me a great deal. You know what viewpoint is being defended. I imagine that everyone in Québec is connecting somewhere or other. It would have perhaps been better if you had remained a member of the Conseil du patronat. Perhaps they would have decided to consult all their members and perhaps they would



have come to the same conclusion as you did. Perhaps we could suggest it to them now; they may be listening.

**A voice:** ...we're talking about a type of enterprise... it no longer exists in Montréal.

**Mrs. Marois:** But it still exists in the regions and they told us earlier that they broke away from... Did I understand correctly or not?

**Mr. Ouellet:** We broke away by force, to the extent that...

**Mrs. Marois:** OK.

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...the Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises, as a province-wide organization, under the chairmanship of Mr. Gagné, I think, whom Mr. Bédard must know, finally decided to halt its activities because it was no longer functioning as a province-wide organization, except in the regions...

**Mrs. Marois:** That's something...

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...among others like ours, which is a leader with regard to the provincial CDE, so we decided to continue our activities.

**Mrs. Marois:** OK. It would perhaps be worthwhile if you suggested that they consult their members. I congratulate you on this, because that is what is called doing an about-face and telling oneself that the question will be asked and, instead of having nothing to say to the Commission, seeking the viewpoint of one's members.

I would like to make a remark on free trade, which was mentioned earlier as a possibility, obviously, which was opening up, and that it was indeed worthwhile for companies to do business elsewhere, for instance in the United States. I would add that this is not tied to the constitutional situation but to a political decision which, with or without the Constitution, could obviously have been reached. We agree on this point.

The question was put to you earlier; I will rephrase it. You say: We want this uncertainty and this interminable discussion to end, and we must reach a decision fairly quickly. You raise a number of questions. Yes, the Commission is going to examine them. Perhaps we will not obtain precise, pat answers. We know that 10 economists have 10 opinions. That said, we are going to examine these questions.

Suppose that the Commission submits its report and recommendations as expected at the end of March. Would you deem a referendum in the months that followed to be quick enough if we answered - generally and, if you will, in a fairly specific manner in certain instances - the

questions that you raise?

**A voice:** Perhaps I could ask Yves.

**Mr. Pomerleau:** I'd like to say a few words. While I do not travel extensively, I have been places outside Québec. The question often asked by other people, especially Canadians, is: What does Québec want? Even after all these discussions - and heaven knows we have had discussions about Meech Lake - it appears that the question asked at Meech Lake has not been understood. In the minds of many people, the question remains. What does Québec want?

I think that when whatever it is we decide on, a referendum, a law, a declaration of autonomy, whatever, takes place, things will settle down. I was telling my friends as we were driving here that someone in Vancouver, someone who is an automobile dealer like me, asked himself - because, necessarily, during meetings with other dealers... I was a member of the Chrysler dealers' advisory board in Windsor - he asked himself, outside of our discussions, why Québec was still making demands when everything had been settled on the Plains of Abraham?

What I'm telling you is true. This was a man from Victoria, an Englishman. He told me that the score had been settled on the Plains of Abraham!

**Mrs. Marois:** Was he aware that we still exist? Yes?

**Mr. Pomerleau:** In any event, he looked down on me, it should be said in passing. All the same, if we got on with it and the others stopped talking about it... You'll... Last March, Denis and I were in Vancouver after a ski holiday. Everybody was after us to talk about Meech Lake. At the time, we didn't know much about Meech Lake...

**Mrs. Marois:** But my question, I'll return to it...

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

**Mrs. Marois:** It's a short one. We table our report and answer your questions. Will there be a referendum or not?

**A voice:** That's a big question.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I'll speak as president of the group...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Go ahead...yes or no.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I cannot say yes or no, except that I think that what our survey has revealed is

that people want to be consulted on the outcome. I think that answers your question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The time allotted has run out. This is the first time that those answering the questions answer... and that the answer is longer than the question posed by Mrs. Marois.

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

**Mrs. Marois:** I would ask you, Mr. Chairman, to...

**A voice:** Mr. Chairman, I think we had two and a half hours to think about it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Yes, alright. Thank you very much. Obviously, I thank you for the long drive you made. Special thanks to you for reminding each and every one of us how important this Commission is to the future of Québec. We will try not to forget it.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:46 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:47 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Let us resume our deliberations. The Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent and the Conseil central de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine will appear jointly. It is my understanding that Messrs. Normand Gagnon and Pierre Jobin, Mrs. Lisette Dion and Mr. Jean-Yves Lapierre will appear, and that only one person will make the presentation.

**Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent (CSN)  
and Conseil central de la Gaspésie et des  
Îles-de-la-Madeleine (CSN)**

**Mr. Gagnon (Normand):** Yes, Normand Gagnon. We will make the presentation of the Conseil central Gaspésie et les Îles and the presentation of the Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent.

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

**Mr. Gagnon:** It will be like the Parti québécois earlier, we were told five minutes each, and...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No, that will be five minutes all told.

**Mr. Gagnon:** Hmm!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Listen, we'll negotiate, six minutes all told.

**Mr. Gagnon:** We'll try, we'll read fast.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Now,

could you introduce the people at the table with you?

**Mr. Gagnon:** Yes, I'd like to introduce Jean-Yves Lapierre and Lisette Dion from the Conseil central Gaspésie et les Îles, and Mr. Pierre Jobin and myself, Normand Gagnon, from the Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent.

We'll start with the three minutes allocated to the Conseil central Gaspésie et les Îles.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** To avoid losing them at the end, I would like, if possible, for you to at least give us your conclusions. Do your best.

**Mr. Gagnon:** Yes, we prepared ourselves to summarize...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That way there will be fewer questions.

**Mrs. Dion (Lisette):** Hello, thank you, members of the Commission, for agreeing to hear us. The Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region is currently experiencing serious economic problems attributable to a number of factors, for example, a constantly declining population, affecting young people in particular; an aging population, the result of falling birthrates, the exodus of young people and the absence of young arrivals; undereducation; high unemployment; a record number of social aid beneficiaries, who are undereducated; household incomes below the Québec average; a fishing industry experiencing serious problems; farming whose decline is confirmed by the constant decrease in the number of farms and the dwindling farm population; a troubled tourist industry; and a lack of venture capital.

Geographically, the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region is located far from major population centres, far from the business community, and far from markets. Because its resources are underdeveloped, the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region has for many years had the highest unemployment rate in Québec and, in recent months, the highest unemployment rate in Canada. As a result, the population is being impoverished, the hospitalization rate is higher and, more importantly, residents are leaving for the big cities.

Today, we are talking about a Québec which is different, independent or sovereign. We are convinced that independence will change our living conditions, because opting for independence in order to find ourselves in a similar situation would be futile. We feel that the independence of Québec should enable residents of the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region to develop their region with full control over their natural resources, especially fishing, forests and tourism. A sovereign Québec should make it

possible to mobilize and involve individuals in developing the region. In an independent Québec it should be possible to reverse the declining population, create jobs, establish a climate favourable to local entrepreneurship, in a word, to improve the quality of life of the region's residents.

An independent Québec should ensure that it fully controls its coastal waters. It should delineate the territory with Newfoundland and New Brunswick. An independent Québec would also be sure to negotiate access to the 200-mile zone.

Fishing should remain under Québec's exclusive control, which will ensure from the outset that resources are soundly managed, to avoid waste. To this end, emphasis should be placed on underharvested and unharvested species, fostering stability in the sector, initial processing of species already harvested, encouraging and developing the secondary and tertiary processing of marine products, promoting research in the fish waste sector, developing new consumer products using marine products, training manpower, and developing fishing-related services.

The Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region will supply marine products to Québec; a marketing plan should also be developed with respect to the harvesting of our resources. All facets of the industry up to the marketing phase should be carried on in the region.

The Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region has scenic countryside; water, mountains and beaches are the important basic components of the tourist industry. An independent Québec will ensure the management and development of national parks, which are already equipped to attract tourists. Existing infrastructures can easily be used to enhance and develop the tourist industry throughout the year. To this end, it will be essential for an independent Québec to upgrade the road network, develop rail transportation, and allow various airlines to operate at affordable fares.

Forestry plays an important role in the Gaspésie region. Under a regional economic development program, planned forestry operations would be an inexhaustible source of jobs and collective wealth. An independent Québec should foster the rational use of resources, encourage the establishment of a structuring hardwood harvesting operation, seek wider use of wood and make greater use of wood residues, train qualified manpower to carry on reforestation and forest development work, and develop seedling farms.

We feel that in an independent Québec it will be essential to dwell on regional development centred on the resources available in the regions. Québec has a wide range of mineral resources waiting to be developed. It is essential to continue training prospectors and

pursue the search for new mining sectors to be developed. Québec has all the resources needed for its development. It can readily be compared to a human being. Both have gone through childhood and adolescence; having reached adulthood, they can now assume their own destiny. Thank you.

**Mr. Gagnon:** I'll summarize the summary or if...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Summarize the summary.

**Mr. Gagnon:** The Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent represents some 8 000 workers in all economic sectors throughout the Bas-du-Fleuve region. Since 1945, the Conseil central has defended the interests of workers in the workplace, of course, but also anywhere it has been necessary to do so. It has contributed significantly to regional development.

The Conseil central shares and has helped elaborate the stand taken by the CSN concerning Québec's constitutional future. Our special situation leads us to pinpoint concrete facets of the detrimental federal presence in our region and the discriminatory treatment to which we are subjected in relation to other parts of Canada. We feel that Québec's independence can give us the means of fostering regional development by emphasizing the rightful place of the regions in Québec overall, and by stressing full employment. The independence we are seeking is also an economic, political and social development tool. Here we are talking about the federal presence in our region. In our brief, we highlight various issues which strike us as abnormal. When we discuss discrimination later in the brief, we reiterate that our special situation leads us to pinpoint the detrimental effects of discriminatory treatment. Everyone has had an opportunity to read the brief.

In the fourth part of our report, we discuss development tools. In terms of economic development tools, of course, the volume of investment needed in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region to ensure a level of prosperity similar to that in Québec as a whole will not diminish because Québec is independent. However, certain facets of the economy are likely to change for the better. There will be no more conflicts of jurisdiction, different policy objectives, and overlapping of federal and provincial structures. That is certain.

As for State initiatives, the population of our region will still be only 200 000, but in relation to 6 000 000 Quebecers rather than 25 000 000 Canadians. That, too, is certain.

With regard to social development - I will conclude with this matter, Mr. Chairman - we have presented a number of disturbing data concerning the Bas-Saint-Laurent region.

Personal income is barely two-thirds of the Canadian average; the employment-population ratio is not even 50 %. We must again stress that these are averages. In the region's main urban centres such as Rimouski, Rivière-du-Loup, Matane or Mont-Joli, the picture is generally brighter. This is indeed a slight consolation as it means that, in the rest of the territory, the situation is even more depressed than what the regional averages, already highly disturbing, suggest.

The Matapédia, des Basques and Témiscouata RCMs are among the most disadvantaged in Québec. The population in our region is declining; those who are leaving are young people whom we train at considerable cost in the hope that they will contribute to Québec's growth, first and foremost in their region. If we want to complete the circle, we must find them jobs here and working conditions which measure up to their aspirations. Everything is interrelated: without jobs, the most mobile people leave us. Without qualified manpower, we cannot attract investments in key sectors. The region grows more and more impoverished and its capacity to invest continues to languish. To break this vicious circle, we must stress employment. It is urgent that we do so. If you want the Bas-Saint-Laurent to make a valid contribution to the development of an independent Québec, we must acquire the means of increasing employment. In Québec as a whole, the unemployment rate hovers around 10 %, although the employment-population ratio is 58 %, compared with 48 % in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. There is no doubt in our minds that employment will be high on the list of priorities of an independent Québec. This reflects the priorities of workers in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Gagnon. Mr. Richard will speak first.

**Mr. Richard:** With respect to the Bas-Saint-Laurent region, on page 19 of your brief you raise a number of questions concerning Québec's political organization. However, you skirt around the answer somewhat when you state that the matter will be dealt with when we possess various powers. My first question is: What type of political organization do you want? What type will be emphasized? You refer to bicameralism, a splendid word, meaning a regional government with taxation. What type of government do you advocate? What is your perception of the matter?

**Mr. Gagnon:** With your permission, I'll let Mr. Jobin answer your question.

**Mr. Jobin (Pierre):** You have noted that there are more questions than answers because,

both within the Conseil central and the CSN overall, this is an ongoing debate with respect to which various new prospects have appeared in contemporary Québec. Debate focuses on a number of reforms already introduced or about to be introduced such, for example, as those in the social affairs system. Within our movement, this is no ironclad answer at this juncture.

**Mr. Richard:** Like a number of intervening parties, Mr. Jobin, you have mentioned in your brief a fairly strong demand for regionalization. I would like to know what, in your mind, a region is. Are you talking about an economic region? Do you mean the RCMs? In your perception of the future, what is regionalization?

**Mr. Jobin:** This is not written into the constitution of the Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent, but it might as well be. For us, the region is more or less the territory of the Conseil central, which is more or less the former territory of the dioceses which managed the caisses populaires and the national trade unions, and most of the organizations the region's residents have set up over the years. This closely resembles the new administrative region; we are still neighbours with the Gaspésie region...

**Mr. Richard:** Thank you, Mr. Jobin...

**Mr. Jobin:** ...we're now in good company.

**Mr. Richard:** You have answered my question. Madam, I haven't forgotten you. You made an observation concerning fisheries, forestry and tourism. Why has the federal government failed? Why have its initiatives flopped, as you say? You draw up a list, you say: it's...  
(6 p.m.)

**Mr. Lapierre (Jean-Yves):** I think that under the current federal system, there are too many intervening parties, there are too many governments getting involved at that level. We feel that we possess regional expertise, we have the appropriate raw materials and that we are capable of assuming our responsibilities in Québec and at the regional level, that we are capable of further developing our products, creating jobs, and dissuading our young people from leaving the regions to settle in the big cities. If we are to keep residents in the region and develop, I think we have to create jobs, and to create jobs, obviously, we must develop.

**Mr. Richard:** On the basis of what you have observed, you say that the current method has never worked and that you cannot achieve what you want within the current framework. We must obtain complete autonomy, in order... You refer, among other things, to the 200-mile zone where,

inevitably, we will have to cooperate and negotiate because the 200-mile zone affects other provinces as well, not just Québec. You say: We have noted that nothing has been achieved. When we are completely independent and autonomous we will be more powerful and more assured than we have been until now.

**Mr. Lapierre:** I believe other intervening parties have discussed the matter this afternoon. It is not simply a question of the 200-mile zone. For example, with regard to fishing permits, it is disappointing for those living in regions where fishing is virtually the sole source of income, a raw material, as it is in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I think it is disappointing when one observes that it is very hard to obtain permits to harvest the resources we have. As we mentioned earlier, the more governments there are involved in these matters, the harder it will be to negotiate. Everybody wants to get in on the act.

**Mr. Richard:** Thank you for your briefs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. François Gendron.

**Mr. Gendron:** I would just like to say that you have two excellent briefs which are as clear as can be. You opt clearly for sovereignty and say: After, things will get done. I think the Commission must be pleased to note that there is no imbroglio with respect to your viewpoint on Québec's constitutional future. I would like to ask two questions. The first one concerns the Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent. I feel you have expressed, quite rightly, all of the problems related to the eternal and costly duplications between Ottawa and Québec; you have covered this question adequately. I think it is important to have your viewpoint. Do you think we could settle these problems solely by redistributing powers, of course after very frank negotiations, as Mrs. Éva Côté would put it?

**Mr. Jobin:** No.

**Mr. Gendron:** Thank you. It's in line with your brief, it's very clear. There is a second question I would like to ask you. You say, quite rightly, as far as I am concerned, that a sovereign Québec should be much more concerned about its regions and about rural areas. This is a critical question in Québec, where over 750 municipalities have populations under 800. Obviously, if we occupy the territory and do nothing about rural development, we'll be no farther ahead. You stress political representation for the regions through a bicameral system at the national level, and an elected regional government, through an

autonomous taxation system for the regions, or through other avenues particular to each region. I'd like you to be more specific, because I find it hard... Even in a sovereign Québec, regional particularities will of course continue to exist, but I do feel that, in order to better represent the regions and ensure their vitality, we must provide a uniform structure. Am I interpreting you correctly, or if not, could distortions occur in the regional structure?

**Mr. Jobin:** As I responded earlier to other intervening parties, we have not finalized our thinking on this matter within the movement, either province-wide within the CSN as a whole, or within the Conseil central du Bas-Saint-Laurent. However, we do feel that it is possible to envisage in Québec a number of pilot territories with respect to certain activities. We have already seen the decentralization of this or that activity hitherto the responsibility of the central government, whether Québec or Ottawa, carried on in one region, but not necessarily in another. Other activities could also be carried out in this way, to ascertain at the regional level how it is possible to manage a given field of activity for which the government is now responsible.

**Mr. Gendron:** OK. Mrs. Dion or Mr. Lapierre, with regard to the brief of the Conseil central de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine, you have pinpointed a dramatic situation in the regions, that is, the exodus of rural residents which, unfortunately, is a widespread, growing trend. In your view, how could we counteract such a trend in a sovereign Québec? How can we counteract or reverse this trend which, in my opinion, must be halted? Concretely, how can we rectify this trend?

**Mrs. Dion:** I think that we can keep our young people in the region by creating forestry, fishing and other jobs. Doing so will help a great deal because there are no jobs at all. Young people go off to study and they don't come back.

**Mr. Gendron:** I am pleased that in your brief you link a strong concern in the regions with a policy of full employment. One feels the two are connected and I think that is right. Is it possible to counteract the exodus solely through an enhanced employment policy, or should we not include certain facets of immigration? Have you looked at whether new arrivals in Québec could be better distributed, if we controlled immigration, rather than settling solely in urban centres? Do you not think that one way of counteracting the rural exodus would be to improve regional performance by settling new immigrants and taking advantage of their talents,

of course?

**Mr. Lapierre:** I think that if we succeed in creating jobs in our region, we are receptive to welcoming immigrants. That's not a problem. What is, perhaps, problematical at present, is that we do not have enough jobs to accommodate immigrants. For this reason, we cannot develop educational services, with the result that when our young people want further training, they must seek it elsewhere. We lack the expertise and the schools to provide young people with the training they need to continue working in various fields.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A brief comment, Mr. Gendron?

**Mr. Gendron:** No, a very brief question. In your viewpoint, would a sovereign Québec consider associating with the rest of Canada or not? You don't mention this.

**Mr. Lapierre:** As far as I know, there has never been any question of associating with the rest of Canada.

**Mr. Gendron:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. André Ouellet, followed by Mrs. Rosette Côté.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, I would first like to say that your brief... It's very hard to please you. When the Canadian government doesn't invest, you feel it is an injustice. When the Canadian government invests in the region, you call it a Trojan horse on page 9 of your brief. Moreover, on page 10, you say that the federal government's gifts have a perverse effect. Obviously, in this perspective, it seems to me that it is fairly hard to satisfy people in the CSN. This is hardly surprising because I have been in contact for several weeks with my friend Larose and he rarely agrees with what the federal government does.

I was listening to you, Mrs. Dion, and you presented a fairly long list of things that should be done. What is noteworthy is that you said: The government should do that. You refer a great deal to the Welfare State. In response to various questions, you said: We must obtain powers, recover money from the Canadian government, but not really to give it to a sovereign Québec government, but to give these powers, this authority, this money to the regions, at the local level, to have programs which are more adapted to local needs and better manage different programs to serve local residents.

Listening to you, I have the impression that we can quite easily go over the head of the

Québec government. Programs and funds are being recovered to be put to better use at the local level and, whether we are in Canada or a sovereign Québec, what is very important to you is that they be administered locally to satisfy your needs. I congratulate you because you have been very honest, you say it yourself on page 16 of your brief: "...an independent Québec which fails to firmly emphasize full employment strikes us as a very small achievement." What you are seeking is not constitutional change, but a change in society.

I come from a parish in the Bas-du-Fleuve region. I was born in the Parish of Saint-Pascal de Kamouraska. There was a very important industry there, the Boucher tannery, which employed several hundred people. The CSN came in and set up a union. Finally, the tannery had to close.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** I don't say that to blame the union. I would like to make myself clear. Unions are essential, but there has to be a fair balance of power at a given moment. I see that the FTQ - our friend is not here - created a solidarity fund. They invest, they guarantee a number of jobs and participate in development. What is the CSN prepared to do? What are you really prepared to do to shoulder... Not always wait for the Welfare State, but what are you prepared to do to ensure that these jobs you want stay in the region and that you will achieve the full employment you are seeking?

**Mr. Gagnon:** When the president of the CSN presents his brief, you can ask him what the CSN wants. We are appearing before the Commission to propose a regional plan with respect to duplications of programs and other matters. When we spoke of the Trojan horse - you referred earlier to the Trojan horse - we meant that because we do not have durable industries, we constantly have stop-gap programs which help workers obtain unemployment insurance or social aid if there is nothing else. This is what we mean by a Trojan horse, because the solutions are only stop-gaps that do not solve anything. This is what I can say in answer to your question; as for Mrs. Dion, if I have not understood the question...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Côté? I'm sorry. Time is up for Mr. Ouellet. Do you have an answer, madam?

**Mrs. Dion:** No, that's fine, but I think that when an employer comes to see us and has problems, we can sit down with him and negotiate. This has already happened. One doesn't necessarily shut down industries.

**Mr. Lapierre:** I would like to add in passing that you have in Mr. Larose a very fine work mate.

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

**Mrs. Côté:** Yes, you've completely mixed me up because I understood that you wanted a constitutional change, sovereignty, he said that he hadn't read that, in any event you tell me if I have misunderstood. However, what I have observed is that you make the same analysis of both of your regions that other groups preceding you have done, that is, desertion, rural exodus, the problem of unemployment, and you ask for the means to engage in regional development. I think that observation has been made. You add an important element, full employment, above and beyond what can be said about it, I think that we cannot create wealth unless employment is at the very heart of our concerns.

There is one element which somewhat, which bothers me a bit because you say specifically with regard to the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region that you have experienced explicit relations with the other Canadian provinces. In the same breath you do not talk about any economic relations whether geographically connected or tied to trade with the other provinces. You answered Mr. Gendron's question by saying that in your briefs, there are no economic relations with the other provinces of Canada. I would like you to elaborate on this question. In your mind, there are no economic relations, Québec could be self-sufficient, or there could be some types of economic relations with the other provinces, especially because the situation in the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region is different from the rest of Canada, excuse me, I mean Québec. Oh! the slip of the tongue.

**Mr. Lapierre:** I think I answered that question and perhaps I didn't fully comprehend the question because that is really not what I wanted to say.

**Mrs. Côté:** Is that so?

**Mr. Lapierre:** When I answered, I didn't think that was the question that had been asked.

**Mrs. Côté:** Well, explain, then.

**Mr. Lapierre:** I do not now think that anyone has ever said during any session at the CSN that we would not negotiate with the rest of Canada, with the other provinces. We need the other provinces just as they may need us. If we have resources, we can share them with the others. When I speak of resources, I am talking about the fishing industry, especially for us, I

think that our fish when we catch and sell it perhaps in an unprocessed state, there are other provinces that don't have fish. We can carry on trade inside Canada and outside, with the United States.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Alright? Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Lord is good because I have been waiting for this moment for many years.

**Mr. Larose:** Sixty!

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I see.

**Mr. Hogue:** ...and with my companion on the left, it encourages me to increase by pleasure. Thank you very much...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Don't forget you mentioned the Lord.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, in action, we are going to call a truce and recognize that federalism is not monolithic and that it is a dynamic organization which does not always follow the same tangent. I find both of your briefs very interesting. I have already spoken about it to your President and even asked him if he would allow me to ask the questions I wanted to ask. He said: Yes. While taking the... To start with the Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine region, on page 3, last paragraph, I find a position which is indeed interesting coming as it does from the CSN, which I have for a long time perceived as being very ideological, "will have to change"... Because you say: If we achieve a similar situation, it will be for all intents and purposes futile, and then I see that you add nuances: "should, will have to, will have to". I think that's serious and I congratulate you.

You are not idealistic, you are realistic and have in mind the well-being of the people with whom you are dealing. In the other case, I will refer only to page 5 and page 6, that... the brief of the Conseil central, where you say: "Our group of affiliated unions has clearly, firmly opted for the independence of Québec". This is your right and I do not share your position, as you know. "It is therefore only normal that we follow..." I found that interesting, all the more so as the other two lines inform us that you do not want this normality because your members and workers are involved. Page 6 allows me to ask my question. The second paragraph, the last paragraph. It seems, and this is my first

question, that the CSN developed quickly, in an interesting manner... and you are part of history. There is nothing from the federal government that could have - the word I am using is strong - but which could have ostracized you, nothing at all. You have been able to develop within the federal system and within the province. That is my first question and I would like you to make note of it.

My second question: Is your model for participating in the CSN exportable? Given that the federal government is able to engage in decentralization and it is not incompatible, could your model be exported to the regions from the Central? Could we therefore use the CSN as a model for development between Ottawa and Québec? My second question is just as serious.

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

**Mr. Gagnon:** You are right to say that the CSN has changed and everything has changed around federalism because federalism hasn't budged. It was necessary for the others to budge. That is why our line of thinking has changed. The CSN has always been - I don't wish to enter into the brief the CSN will present in December - with regard to us, we have of course taken a stand...

**Mr. Hogue:** No, I don't want to discuss the position. I only want to say that you, among yourselves...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Hogue, the good Lord has been kind to you until now. I have been told it's your birthday, so I'm giving you 15 seconds.

**Mr. Hogue:** There are shared jurisdictions in the CSN. And you live with that. Jurisdictions would be divided between Ottawa and Québec and we could live together.

**Mr. Gagnon:** We've been trying since 1867 and have had trouble doing so.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Time is up. Thank you for jointly presenting your brief and for discussing it with the Commission and helping us progress in our deliberations.

Members of the Commission will return here at 7:30 p.m. May I remind you that the owner of the hotel has assured us that this evening's meal will be special and that it is worthwhile to eat here. Things will go faster.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:21 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:44 p.m.)

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

Ladies and Gentlemen, we resume our deliberations.

We will now hear the Coalition Urgence rurale. Welcome, Mr. Raymond. Could you please introduce the people accompanying you?

### Coalition Urgence rurale

**Mr. Raymond (Gilles):** Of course. Here with me are three co-chairmen of the Coalition Urgence rurale, Mr. Gratien D'Amours, to my right, who is president of the UPA régionale, Mrs. Ethel Greene, to my left, who is chairwoman of the social affairs committee, Ethel?

**Mrs. Greene (Ethel):** Justice.

**Mr. Raymond:** Of social justice in Québec, and Mr. Daniel Lamarre, who is chairman of the Vallée de la Matapédia RCM. In addition to the three co-chairmen, we are accompanied by several colleagues: Mr. Jean-Maurice Lechasseur, President of the Syndicat des producteurs de bois du Bas-Saint-Laurent, and on my far left, Mr. Gilles Roy, agronomist and one of the founders of the Mouvement Opération dignité in the early 1960s.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your hearing will last 30 minutes. You have five minutes for your presentation.

**Mr. Raymond:** Thank you. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we would like to point out that the Coalition Urgence rurale was established last June 10 during a meeting of nearly 2000 people from all over the Bas-Saint-Laurent region and from widely varying backgrounds. However, all of the people shared a common desire. Some 2000 people in the Rimouski Cathedral, 2000 people got together to determinedly and decisively establish a common front, a coalition to take action. As you know, what was at stake and the challenge collectively delineated by these 250 groups, agencies and corporations, this rendezvous with history was and remains the survival of our threatened rural communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are experiencing a highly disturbing situation here. Our territory's present is fragile and its future uncertain. The residents of our villages and small towns have risen together; henceforth none can overlook or exclude the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. We would like to be clearly understood: we are talking about a region which refuses to disappear, of a rural community which refuses to allow itself to be destroyed. We refuse to allow our villages and towns to empty themselves house by house. We refuse to consider normal and inevitable the exodus of our young people to major centres. We refuse to accept the need for our last families in



the prime of life to pack their bags. We do not accept the fact that the number of our communities in danger continues to increase from year to year. We refuse to walk the road to ruin without raising our voices. We refuse to disappear in the silence and anonymity of a country which has a veritable future to offer only to the central and urban regions.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, you have a timetable, and so do we. We believe in our potential. We have concrete projects to foster and promote. We have resources to develop for our benefit and progress. This winter, under a carefully devised plan, Eastern Québec is going to rise up like a groundswell, and as we say, we're going to do everything possible to stay alive. We have a positive outlook. We are creative and, above all, tenacious. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, this is a declaration of intent which must be taken seriously under the circumstances, not only because of the seriousness of the situation affecting Eastern Québec, but because we feel that it is impossible to contemplate the political and constitutional future of Québec without taking into account the regions, all of the regions.

This is why, from the standpoint of the Coalition Urgence rurale, it is obvious that a Québec which has to redefine its place must necessarily confirm in a new constitution or otherwise that its national territory centres on identified regions which are recognized as such, regions which have rights. Specifically, that we ourselves have the right to establish priorities related to our development, that we finally have the recognized right to elaborate our own criteria, the development programs of concern to us, and methods of implementing these programs, that we finally have the recognized right to fully manage budgets specifically earmarked for developing our regional territory.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Eastern Québec has no choice. Regardless of the extent of our efforts, regardless of the scope and innovativeness of the projects we are about to launch, we will never succeed without the political will to end 20 years of contempt, 20 years of centralization, 20 years of government policies favouring big centres, 20 years of piecemeal planning and pseudo-initiatives from the government, 20 years of illusory decentralization, 20 years of slapping poultices on top of poultices.

If you want something done you had best do it yourself; rural residents in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region want to take charge of themselves and will do so. This is what we have to contribute to Québec. We have already said that without sound rural communities which retain and offer a livelihood to their residents, it is impossible to contemplate maintaining a harmonious future in major urban centres. We

complement each other, like the heart and lungs, and if we limit ourselves to the Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie region, let me tell you that Québec's lungs are in a parlous state. Ladies and Gentlemen, aside from a few details, I do think we know the remedy.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Raymond. We will start with Mrs. Louise Harel.

**Mrs. Harel:** It gives me pleasure to welcome you. I have already had the opportunity to meet some of you and become familiar with the mobilization you have launched in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. After reading your brief, obviously, after speaking for the entire day to intervening parties in the region, we know that repatriating to Québec does not mean repatriating to Québec City, but repatriating for Québec. What I would like to know, because you stress that specific powers must be attributed to the regions, the first question is: To delegate and attribute powers, you must first possess them. You will answer that this is a question which is asked frequently, but you thought it wasn't necessary to take a stand on the fact that we must possess these powers. You take a stand on distributing them. Is that right?

**Mr. Raymond:** The Coalition Urgence rurale is an organization of the people and, as such, we believe, of course, that political parties and political partisanship must play a role in Québec's development and in regional development. What we are advocating, as an organization of the people, is, first and foremost, that the people of Québec play the leading role, whether they live in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region or elsewhere. For this reason, what we recommend to the Coalition Urgence rurale and what we hope to impress upon the Commission is the organization, in the short term, of a referendum to enable Quebecers, here and elsewhere, to answer clearly and without deviousness a simple question: Are you for or against sovereignty?

In this way, Quebecers will be able to decide and, as we noted earlier, it is obvious that in the wake of the referendum we are hoping for, and we would like to impress upon you, whether within a new constitutional project or otherwise, to recognize the rights of the regions, the right to manage their own development.

**Mrs. Harel:** So, you are saying: To the extent that the choice is sovereignty, we must take advantage of the opportunity to redistribute power. And you propose that it be allocated otherwise than it is at present.

In your brief, obviously, you heavily stress... Perhaps I am interpreting your remarks,

but you obtain what you do by pleading your misery and you want to be able to manage your development, not obtain favours, because the situation is worsening.

**Mr. Raymond:** A number of things still haven't been understood after 20 years with regard to development in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. Misery is a fact, hope is what we're moving toward. We have concrete projects, about which my colleagues here can tell you. We have yet to be defined. We have been working since September. Over 200 people participated in sectorial discussions throughout the region, devoted to various facets of economic development, education policy, municipal development, health and social affairs, and even a number of new questions for us such as our mining potential. Together we are assembling these elements and setting our priorities. When I noted earlier that you have a timetable and we have ours, ours is an urgent timetable. We have no choice. After Christmas a far-reaching consultation will take place. It will be more than a consultation, a plan of action which will be adopted throughout the region, in which we will spell out our priorities with regard to reviving agriculture and rural life in general. At that time, you will be called upon once again to support us.

**Mrs. Harel:** Will you carry out this consultation and elaborate the project in conjunction with the Estates General on rural communities to be held next February?

**Mr. D'Amours (Gratien):** Obviously, in terms of farming in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region, it is very clear to us that Urgence rurale came along at a time when we had already done something through the UPA at the provincial level. I think it was inevitable that the farming and rural communities work jointly in this regard, given the alarming nature of our observations. As the coordinator of Urgence rurale says, what is important to us is to see how we take things in hand, how, in the regions, we can decide on matters and make choices. What we are attempting to do focuses on farming; of course, we want to achieve this in conjunction with the estates general. I feel that Urgence rurale came along at a significant moment; we joined forces and I think things have coincided exceedingly well.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ten seconds for comments. Good question.

**Mrs. Harel:** With your permission I'll move on to the coordinator.

**Mr. Raymond:** Thank you, Mrs. Harel. With your permission, to finish the gentleman's

answer, we could give a list of projects and questions which have been assembled here in Eastern Québec, which were really built up from scratch. What happened, when we say that various policies focus on centralization in major centres... whether we're talking about the first tourism development plans, the community development assistance committees, new business projects, or youth initiative support groups, these are all solutions which residents of the region found to try to revive our economy. What happened? What happened is that various levels of government took over, then everything was tossed back with standards with which we don't even comply. Just imagine: we initiated specific development and business support programs with start-up budgets which, of course, were obviously centred in Eastern Québec, and because policies, which focus on centralization toward big centres... These projects were adopted and transformed. People say they were drained of all life, no more no less; they were stretched and adapted to Québec from coast to coast, in some instances, and we ended up - I could list for you the concrete projects in which the region which initiated the project no longer participates in it...

We want this to stop. We want our initiatives to be acknowledged and respected as such, and encouraged. We don't want to get our share back; we don't necessarily want to request new funds. What we want is to manage them ourselves. No more ready-to-wear.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Allow me...

**Mr. Raymond:** No more projects put forward by Ottawa or Québec. We are capable of defining our priorities. For 20 years others have defined them; for 20 years we have been regressing.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Four members insist on speaking during the next 10-minute period. I give the floor to Mr. Jacques Proulx and dare hope that he will be diligent.

**Mr. Proulx:** I was diligent this morning, Mr. Chairman, and lost out because the person who followed me took up my time and his. This evening, I'm going to make use of my time.

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

**Mr. Proulx:** That said, I don't think I need to say at the outset that I agree fully with... You were convinced of that, and there's no need to convince me. From there, it's the rest of Québec... I think you make an excellent observation, because it's distressing to point out the situation, but that's the way things are. I don't think regional development is particular to Québec... It must exist just about everywhere in

the world. In Québec, until now, it has been solely... Few people have understood what regional development is.

It has been used because it has always done the trick, especially for politicians because it was very important and profitable when there were elections. Here in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region, I'd say you're somewhat like the people of Gaul because this is not your first demonstration, bearing in mind the Opérations dignité and so on. Up to a point, this has penalized you because people have developed a taste for it. It's interesting, it's a good show, and you stay at it for a long time. It remains, unfortunately, that regional development has never been understood and we are becoming increasingly aware that there exists a sort of connivance between different levels of government whereby when one says "no" the other says "yes" and each one in turn says "no" or "yes". Everything works out fine under Québec-Ottawa agreements and various other agreements. What bothers me the most today about you, who are an independent group, all the same, is that you cannot agree as a group, independently of government financing. You are aggressive, but at some point you become excessively tepid. That annoys me.

I would like you to put yourselves in the place of the non-parliamentarians here. We have political ideas and leanings but we are not shackled by a party blueprint, and so on. We are here to try to elaborate a constitutional option. That is the reason.

To some extent, I find it irritating to see a group like yours with all the freedom you enjoy fail to make precise recommendations on the matter of "how". I agree entirely with everything you have said, entirely. I have no problem endorsing that and imagine all of your colleagues fully endorse it. The proof is that people responded well to the demonstrations. But you are embarrassed when it comes to telling us what to do. It's all very well to talk about regional development. It's all very well to talk about repatriating powers. These things are well and good but we have to find the "how" of the matter, and we will have to answer that question. The risk is that we answer according to our feelings rather than the nuances we should add and which come from groups. I can understand why some groups don't tell us "how". I can understand, but do not accept, because they derive part of their income from the government or from some other... This is not your case. You're as free as a breeze in that respect. Why don't you tell us how we're going to do that? It seems to me that you have been guinea pigs in regional development experiments for a long time. It seems to me that you should be sufficiently fed up with it to say: That's enough.

(8 p.m.)

**Mr. Raymond:** Mr. Proulx, this undertaking you have just mentioned is being carried out. We don't want it to be the initiative of a number of individuals but, as you know, an undertaking to show the full scope of the Estates General in rural communities. Here in the Bas-du-Fleuve region, we will be holding the Estates General after Christmas. We want this undertaking, these projects, these priorities... We're going to break barriers. We're going to innovate. We're going to present unprecedented ideas. We could tell you about some of them, and Jean-Maurice Lechasseur could announce some of the substantial projects we are using as a base. The underlying principles are very basic. One is the occupation of the territory. We have always based the development of this country on centralizing toward big centres. What is happening between Montréal and Québec City, the two cities, and the 200-km corridor between them? Some 85 % of the population is now concentrated there. The regions are being emptied of their inhabitants. This is happening in our region and when we look at what civil servants call the backcountry in each of the other regions, this is also the case. There is talk of regional development, but we are also talking about rural development.

**Mr. Proulx:** How is that we have been excluded from prosperity for so long, as you put it? Who does it depend on? You've been procrastinating for 20 or 30 years, I don't know, with the first Opération dignité. Who is responsible for its not getting off the ground?

**Mr. Raymond:** The axes of development of the country have been set. It all started with the Higgins, Martin, Raynauld report which stated that the country must develop according to its centres of growth. That's not the only theory put forward in that way. If we look at the relations between developed and Third World countries, it's the same. Then we look at people at Desjardins, for example, we look at their approach in relation to Third World countries. And look at what we are advocating. We are advocating taking in hand our territory, we are advocating projects put forward by our own people and sustaining our economy here, through our savings. We are capable of using them. Indeed, we have included that very concisely and clearly in a social blueprint we will submit in the spring. I would like Gilles, who was involved in the Opérations dignité during the 1960s...

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

**Mr. Proulx:** But what is preventing you from taking your affairs in hand?

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

Raymond, I must interrupt you. You may answer the question at another time. Mr. Beaudry, you have the floor.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Naturally, your brief is like many others we have seen since we have visited the regions. Everybody is talking about decentralization and everybody is saying that the regions are dying, that there is an exodus toward the big centres. Your brief is special in the sense that, on page 5, you say: "...should apply measures designed to produce population shifts in the opposite direction". You leave the big centres, you leave Montréal and Québec City, then you draw people back to the region. What I would like to know is, in rural areas, do you have precise, practical means of saying to someone living in Montréal: We'll bring that person back, we'll interest him enough so that he moves from Montréal to settle in the region, here in Gaspésie. How, precisely, will you go about doing this?

**Mr. Raymond:** These are some of the matters which will be presented this winter and in the spring. What I can say is that, at present, there are people in Montréal who, perhaps following the example of the American philosopher who said that "small is beautiful" would like to find a livable environment, return here with some capital, and perhaps set themselves up in business. We welcome such people. However, in the case of young people wishing to return and engage in farming, we would like there to be a concrete framework for welcoming them. This is what we are going to propose and promote. Among the barriers we must break down, it is not out of the question that with respect to immigration we will put an end to the perception of immigrants settling in big centres.

Rural communities and the regions must be able to participate in ongoing change in our society. What we are saying is that we are prepared to do so. We are prepared to make an effort, to welcome immigrant investors settling in the region, bringing with them other farming techniques. To achieve this goal, our efforts and those of our municipal councils combined with concrete measures will require the support of other levels of government. We are not going to open an immigration office in Hong Kong.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Well, I can understand your not opening an office, but let's talk about immigration, for example. We already know that some immigrants have settled in the regions and that they remained there for a certain time. The first thing that happened is that they came back to Montréal, to Québec City, they moved to big centres. Do you have specific policies to encourage these people to stay in the region

because there are things which may be of interest to them or because assistance is provided? Or do you have something to ask of the government, in particular, to ensure that precise policies are applied in this regard?

**Mr. Raymond:** Mr. Beaudry, Québec is far from being a leader in terms of rural development. One of our colleagues recently attended a convention to find out what was happening in the European Economic Community. I'll turn the floor over to him.

**Mr. Roy (Gilles):** First, I would like to say that we do indeed hope to attract immigrants; I think it is up to the region to adopt measures to welcome and keep immigrants who settle there. We should also seek to draw people back to the region who have gone elsewhere because there were no projects sufficiently interesting to encourage them to stay. One example I'm familiar with is the JAL. When worthwhile, attractive projects are offered, young people return to the community to settle there and become a driving force in its economic development and social life.

I think we must also stress the importance of rural communities and gain recognition throughout Québec for the place rural areas can occupy in the Québec of tomorrow. For the past 30 years or so, rural areas have always been deemed secondary and overlooked in policy directions advocated with regard to regional development. In my view, rural development means engaging in regional development, but the reverse is not necessarily true, because traditional regional development focuses on urban and industrial matters which rarely encompass the true focus of genuine rural development. Some people might respond that my viewpoint is reactionary. I beg your pardon, but perhaps we are not currently following the worldwide trend.

In June, I attended the conference of the Société française d'économie rurale, centred on the theme "What future is there for farming and rural communities?" along with participants from the European Economic Community and the OECD, and I was bowled over. The policy directions these organizations want to adopt to develop rural areas and, in particular, the most disadvantaged peripheral regions... we refuse to allow these areas to falter, decline and die. We want these areas to join together and participate fully in the progress and consolidation occurring in the world economy, while here, when we talk about free trade, we talk about rationalization through centralization.

This message persists today. Parts of our heritage are being destroyed, for example by Purdel and company which headed for the cities under the pretext of streamlining operations, and to acquire the ability to participate in world trade and economic globalization. In Europe, the

opposite is happening. There, people say: To achieve solidarity and fully benefit from such globalization, we must consolidate all of our communities and think about development which does not accentuate regional disparities and gaps between the sub-regions. That is underdevelopment. That's what we got from the theses of Martin, Higgins, Raynald. That people should talk about development while provoking underdevelopment... and alternatives to this approach have never been encouraged, and the efforts we made through the Opérations dignité and JAL, those efforts were achieved through struggle and demanded incredible energy because the political powers that be never listened to us. We were told by technocrats that we did not have the resources. The JAL maple grove, we were told, would never produce a pound of syrup once the tree was notched; we have beaten the Québec records. We exceeded one season: four pounds of syrup once the tree was notched. People know their community's potential. We should let them take responsibility for developing this potential, and have no fear: they will find ways of exploiting it and developing. As my interlocutors in Toulouse, France, said: We must encourage everything that moves and not try to impede them by claiming that we have no legitimacy because we are not elected. Eh?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Robert Benoit.

**Mr. Roy:** In my view, it is an "electocracy" which is being organized.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The next speaker, Mr. Robert Benoit.

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Raymond, I think we in the government are particularly impressed with your Coalition and, traditionally, in my village, when people formed coalitions, they were people with plenty of guts who wished to set things up quickly and proceed to action; it was you yourself who said it. I am going to refer to other questions that have been raised and put them to you again, but this time I am going to give you my five minutes. There are thousands of people who are watching you on television right now who would like to know what you are trying to do and, if I were a businessman sitting in my living room in Montréal this evening, what arguments could you give me for going to live in Matane? Or, if I were an immigrant living on the south shore of Montréal who has been in Québec for a few months, what arguments would you give me today, this evening, to those present here, to make me want to go to live in the region?

**Mr. Raymond:** Here, we inhabit a world that is a world of human dimensions. In Montréal you

have the bagpeople. We do not know what misery is. Here at home I try not to get involved in too many cases, but it is really a shame because I know the people. These are communities where we still have control over what happens. But we are here because we are in the process of losing that, that control over our future. We could create projects, advertise projects on which we are working. A first in Québec, we'll return to this later, it is really a first, the first time that an intermunicipal agreement, that small municipalities get together to set up a fund for mining exploration. And we are putting a lot of effort into it. Who is working on it? They are people of the region, the people who are involved in municipal councils. For the forest, I am going to hand over to Jean-Maurice who can tell you what's happening. Jean-Maurice is an involved person, who is also a forest worker. Gratien is an involved person, and is a farmer. I am an involved person, and I am a writer. Ethel is a nun. Daniel is a teacher and RCM chairman. Gilles is an agronomist. We work together and cannot do otherwise, even if we wanted to do other things, because this community is part of us, we believe in it, and it is not true that it is going to be destroyed. If that is allowed to happen, it is the face of Québec that is going to become dim. Jean-Maurice.

**Mr. Lechasseur (Jean-Maurice):** Mr. Chairman, I think that in processing, for example, it is necessary to involve the producers. It is absolutely essential to develop partnership formulas, which will give back to our people, to those who want to come and invest in our region, a feeling of belonging. I think pride should be encouraged, that it is necessary to inculcate it in the people who live here and those who may want to return here. And I, of course, am a wood producer. We are not going to become rich by selling a cord of wood, because every time we produce a cord of wood there is a study telling us that we have a deficit of \$ 25.

It is to processing that we must turn sooner or later. The Syndicat des producteurs de bois of the Bas-Saint-Laurent has developed a formula, and perhaps you will allow me to advertise this a little. A sum of \$ 3 million has been invested by the people in the Mont-Joli project, for example. The union would be prepared to go up to \$ 10 million eventually. This money is for the producers, the grass roots. Government tells us: You take over and the incentives will follow. We believed in this formula. Of course we want to have the support of our elected representatives. But I think that this is the type of thing that can interest people from Québec City, from Montréal, and perhaps eventually the immigrant who decides to come here to invest.

There are resources in the region. There

are human resources; there are natural resources. I think that Gilles made reference to them; they must be developed here...

**Mr. Roy:** Mr. Proulx tells us that he deplores the fact that the means have not been proposed. Well, for us, speaking of a constitution for Québec, whether in terms of sovereignty with this or that degree of association, or in terms of federalism, renewed to this or that extent, is to speak of the skeleton of the country to come. And to say what this means for Québec City and Montréal, since we tend to refer to them only, is to put a little flesh on the nose and the chin to give it a bit of a face. And if we forget the regions, it will not continue to be attractive. If we forget to flesh out those other parts of the skeleton, the regions, or the appearance we want this country to have, well, speaking about the constitution, for us, is demoralizing. What we want is that it truly say, in the constitution, that the role, responsibility and greater autonomy of the communities, the RCMs and the region are important. That shows how Québec is going to be built. For me, the important word is how, and with that how we come back to the essence, that which is part of us. And as to the appearance of this whole part of the country, we want to point out how the padding should be distributed so that the whole can retain or take on an appearance agreeable to the eye that will allow us to waltz with pride in the dance of nations.

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

**Mr. Roy:** This dimension is important to me, and what I would recommend in the "how Québec is going to be built" scenario. We all want to be there, in the "how"; that is what is important.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Two quick statements for you Mr. d'Anjou.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am very happy to hear the reactions of the group that is before us. I well understand that, whatever the constitutional formula chosen, it could involve centralization, and that that does not favour regional development. It is not only on the federal government side that one finds centralization. I believe that there is some centralization in Québec too. And the message we have had today, if I understand you, is that, in a future constitution or a renewed constitution, no matter which, the place of the regions must be recognized and guaranteed. There must be real decentralization in favour of the regions. It is interesting to hear you on the subject of the attribution of specific powers to the regions. How do you envisage this being done with existing agencies?

**Mr. Raymond:** That is something that we shall have to define. But I think that what we must see is that it is above all the regions, ours and the others, that will have to design a development policy, a development plan. For about 10 years, in Québec, the municipalities, all of us here know this as we are part of them, have had development plans. That is a good thing, a positive step. But that step has been completed, and we have moved on. But where have we got to? We have acquired municipal development plans, RCM development plans, but also a regional development plan. When we say that powers must be decentralized to the regions, we are saying that this must not be done in a piecemeal way saying: I want a piece of roads or a slice of this or that department. Rather than think in terms of administrative deconcentration, of transfer or of shovelling your problems onto the shoulders of others, from the large centres, Québec City or Ottawa... What we say is: Listen to us, we'll define our priorities, our development projects, and together we'll see, on the basis of these priorities, what is essential to us. We'll decide what should be decentralized in favour of the regions.

But first, what must be recognized are development priorities, and you know that does not happen at the present time, the development priorities of a region must be determined by the people of that region. The programs to support these priorities must also be defined by the regions. But we are not getting anywhere. We plan projects and spend almost one half or three quarters of our time trying to fit them into the standards set by the cities, and I'm not joking. I'll give a very concrete example. We have a very good job assistance program. Now, according to the criteria set in the cities, the national, coast to coast criteria, a person has to have been unemployed for 24 of the past 30 weeks to be eligible. This is not a problem in Montréal: if you need people who have been unemployed for the stipulated period you are going to find them. But in a region like ours, where work is seasonal, where everyone becomes unemployed at the same time, you get the picture? It means that for this project, a useful one, the standards are set outside.

I'll give you another example. Recently, a departmental publication boasted that a job development project turned out, here in Mont-Joli, 10 persons trained in aeronautics, which is the priority of priorities coast to coast. But what they did not say and what we know is that the 10 who took the course left the region. This is the world in which we must navigate. Don't ask why we are in a state of decline. Don't ask why we are going down the drain. And don't ask why, calmly, in a relaxed but damnably tenacious manner you are told: We are going there this winter and we are going to have to sit down and look at the priorities in a practical

manner, priorities and programs that are defined by the regions. It's all well and good to define programs, but they have to be managed and they will be managed. Who is going to manage them you ask me? We are capable of defining them. We are capable of sitting down, all the region's leaders, and agreeing on an agency, a head, a mechanism that will manage our development tools, which will manage our capital, that makes it possible to develop.

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

**Mr. Raymond:** We are at that point.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...unfortunately, the time is up. That was very enriching. Thank you all; I think that was interesting testimony. These diverse people are coming together to achieve a common ideal, which is the good of the region. In this, they perhaps resemble the members of the Commission on the future of Québec, who are very diverse but who are here for the future of Québec. Thank you for a fine example.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:22 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:25 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The next group. We welcome the Groupe de recherche Éthos, which is, in fact, the Groupe interdisciplinaire de recherche sur les enjeux éthiques des interventions professionnelles et sociales. Welcome, Mr. Fortin. If you would introduce the two people accompanying you?

#### **Groupe de recherche Éthos (UQAR)**

**Mr. Fortin (Pierre):** On my left, Mr. Guy Giroux, who is a professor at the Université du Québec à Rimouski, and, on my right, Mr. Bruno Boulianne, who is a research officer for our group.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You are presenting the summary. You have five minutes, Mr. Fortin.

**Mr. Fortin:** Messrs. Chairmen, commissioners, the members of the Groupe de recherche Éthos are addressing the Commission because they are aware of the paramount role that group can play in this important period in our history. It is as ethicists that we are appearing before you and that we want to draw your attention to a number of ethical issues raised by the question of the political and constitutional future of Québec. This question arose again out of a stalemate, that is, the impossibility of having the Meech Lake draft

constitutional agreement ratified last June.

The first hope that we formulate before you is that Quebecers acquire, collectively, bravely and with dignity, all the political levers they need to affirm their right to self-determination and to fully promote their economic, social and cultural development. We feel it is essential for the Québec government to declare the complete political sovereignty of Québec before the rest of Canada and before the international community. This step, unprecedented in our history, should be preceded by a referendum that enables the Québec people to take a clear stand on the matter.

If necessary, associations will develop between sovereign peoples on an equal footing so that we can implement our own particular blueprint for society. In our opinion, the question of the political and constitutional future of Québec is inseparable from a blueprint for society. We believe it is essential that, in redefining the political and constitutional status of Québec, account be taken of the ethical dimension inherent in the blueprint for society that the Commission will advocate. We draw your attention to the following values in particular: solidarity, justice, sharing. And the model for a democratic society that garners the support of all of us should ensure fundamental respect for human beings and their basic rights.

We feel it is essential that, in this respect for human beings and their basic rights, the rights of ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities be recognized by favouring their integration into the societal model that we all support.

We also suggest that we grant a particular status to the Amerindians and Inuit who share our territory, by taking their legitimate aspirations into account.

We ask that, in the political and constitutional blueprint proposed by the Commission, there be an equitable sharing of power between the centre and the outlying regions in Québec. That the sharing of political power within Québec itself be compatible with the need to ensure the balanced development of our territory, by taking the regions into account in relation to each other. That a mechanism similar to a council of the regions be set up in the Québec Parliament to serve as a political counterweight in favour of the outlying regions.

We also ask that, in a redefinition of the political and constitutional status, you give thought to the Québec people's responsibility toward the international community, notably developing nations.

Those are roughly the recommendations we are making. We will answer your questions by providing more details if you require them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The first person to speak will be Mr. Lucien Bouchard,

who will be followed by Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue and Mr. Gérard Larose.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Among the issues that you examine in the brief and which are each, in fact, the subject of a recommendation, there are two references that seem to me to be especially important. There is one under No. 3 on page 17, in which you recommend that the rights of ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities be recognized by favouring their integration into the Francophone cultural reality. According to what other speakers have said and what is commonly accepted, it is very difficult to integrate respect for collective values and respect for individual rights, and somewhere between the two, a line has to be drawn, where one ends and the other begins. Do you have a proposal to make to the Commission about the way in which this problem should be handled?

**Mr. Fortin:** I will be frank with you. No. But I think the issue should be articulated the way you have, Mr. Bouchard, as a matter of individual versus collective rights. The issue is now perhaps a bit more difficult to articulate than in a sovereign Québec. Let me explain. Once we have affirmed ourselves as a sovereign people before the rest of the international community, the stakes in regard to the integration of ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities will be much clearer. Then, when people settle in Québec, they will know that everything is done in French here. At the present time, we have to understand the deception and the demands of those who contribute their expertise or enrich Québec's cultural mosaic, we have to understand their frustration because we are not certain that the Canadian and Québec reality is always fully explained to them. So it seems to me that, if the stakes are clear, it will perhaps be easier to articulate individual and collective rights.

**Mr. Bouchard:** What exactly do you mean by the recommendation concerning the aboriginal peoples? You would like the Commission to recognize that they have a special status, but you don't specify what status. Many concepts have been proposed to settle relations between a sovereign State of Québec, or a State period, and the aboriginal peoples, but not many details are given in the brief you have submitted about the way to go about it.

**Mr. Fortin:** I will give the floor to my colleague.

**Mr. Boulianne (Bruno):** In our discussions, we did not arrive at a consensus as such on the specific ways and means. We have not reached that point yet. I believe that Québec's elected officers will have to decide this at the proper

time, but we would like to shed light on this matter. We must, above all, recognize that these people were here first and then be capable of talking with them face to face, together, to see how we can welcome them, what they want to offer us and what they want to share with us on Québec territory. This is, in fact, one of the problems. We saw it in the case of Oka; in my opinion, they no longer know with whom they should talk. When the time comes to discuss matters with the representatives of Québec, this is more or less acknowledged. They always have to work through a third party to understand each other. This, I believe, complicates matters.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Do I have a question left?

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Are you aware of the resolution adopted by the National Assembly, I think it was in 1985, that contained a number of elements forming a sort of checklist for resolving the problem of the aboriginal peoples in Québec? For example, this concept of government autonomy found in the resolution, have you analysed it, have you...? No?

**Mr. Boulianne:** I, personally, have not. We perhaps have to open a dialogue above all. The aboriginal peoples are themselves having a dialogue. They haven't decided among themselves what they really want to organize, what they want. So they, too, have to make some progress in beginning to understand each other, then we will have to welcome them to discuss what we will do together here in Québec. I think that, in this regard, changes will have to be made.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Alright. Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You say in your summary, on page 3, that the Commission should not get bogged down in one form or another of economic or legal reductionism, and I agree. Also on page 3 of your brief, you use a rather strong expression. You say that the future is challenging us, and I think I am going to challenge you, for I'm going to tell it like it is. I felt as if I were with colleagues, you know, in an esoteric club of Ph.Ds while listening to you and reading your brief. There are broad statements in it. You are almost talking ex cathedra and, while reading your report and summary, I noted that you do what you ask us, the members of the Commission, not to do. You engage in ideological and intellectual reductionism.

This said, I will ask my question. You highlight several issues related to the redefinition and self-determination of Québec.



What are the stumbling blocks – now we are getting to the practical aspects) – to be avoided if we want to ensure that the economic, social and cultural development of Quebecers is not impeded by the necessary uncertainty routinely mentioned at this table, in the wake of a unilateral declaration of independence, as you said a moment ago?

**Mr. Fortin:** A first remark, Mr. Hogue; yes, without a doubt...

**Mr. Hogue:** You may call me "doctor".

**Mr. Fortin:** Yes, doctor. A first remark, doctor.

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

**A voice:** Oh! Doctor!

**Mr. Fortin:** ...yes, we are academics and proud of it. We are very close to the team that appeared before you a moment ago and we completely share its diagnosis of the situation of Québec's regions. There is this whole dynamic, this regional soul in the recommendations we make. Unfortunately, you didn't see it. It's perhaps unfortunate for you, but it's there.

**Mr. Hogue:** I won't lose any sleep over it.

**Mr. Fortin:** Good. The second remark I'd like to make is: Can you, Mr. Hogue, name one people in history that proclaimed its independence solely for economic reasons?

**Mr. Hogue:** That isn't the question I asked.

**Mr. Fortin:** OK. Then that's reductionism. You asked me to avoid...

**Mr. Hogue:** Then answer the question from a practical standpoint. Stop pontificating and theorizing. Get out of the classroom.

**Mr. Boullanne:** From a practical standpoint, the first stumbling block is thinking in the short term, from a perspective of 5 or 10 years. What people are saying, what most of the economists who have come before the Commission have said is: For a period of 5 to 10 years, perhaps there would be problems. But you know, political independence, independence is not achieved over a period of 5 years, but over the long term. I believe that Québec is prepared to deal with these 5 or 10 years in order to go on to other things and to develop. I think that's the main stumbling block, thinking in the short term.

**Mr. Fortin:** And it's being afraid that these 5 or 10 years will be painful for us Quebecers. I am in complete agreement with what my

colleague said. There will undoubtedly be a difficult period – we should make no secret of the fact – but we Quebecers have gone through other difficult periods in our history and we aren't afraid of that period if it comes. But it isn't so obvious that that period will be as difficult as some want us to believe.

But I will restate my question: Can you name a people in history that acquired its own country solely for economic reasons?

**Mr. Hogue:** No. I don't want to give you a lecture.

**Mr. Fortin:** That's the stumbling block.

**Mr. Hogue:** I just want to tell you that people like us, like you, should be very humble when mention is made of a blueprint that is so important to the hearts, minds and future of each one of us. We shouldn't lecture. That's the only thing that bugs me. Only that.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Alright?

**A voice:** This is why we...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Hogue. It's your turn, Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Mr. Chairman, I am a little surprised by the reactions of my colleague on the right...

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

**Mr. Larose:** We have had lectures for three weeks, nine hours a day, and I feel that, with people who are before the Commission in an unusual capacity, discussing a few ethical issues and having the research group called Éthos here, yes, that's a change from economics, that's a change from political science. What I find interesting is that, for once, ethics instead of metaphysics has concrete applications. Am I correct in saying that, in your reading of the current state of affairs, a sovereign program involves a whole range of values that cannot be circumvented? And when questions are asked about the aboriginal peoples, and about minorities... You were talking about that exactly. It's a huge challenge to our society to accept differences.

And, contrary to Canadian federalism, which levels differences, denies them and has been a colossal failure because, remember, the failure of Canada is the negation of the difference of Francophones, the aboriginal peoples and the various components of this society. And if the Québec we build starts to make the same mistake, I think we already know the outcome. If you tell me: Listen, in my humble opinion, a

program like the one you cherish implies values of solidarity, justice and sharing, not just Christian charity, which is not really in fashion anymore, but power-sharing, I understand that some politicians may find that a little rough.

But I feel that the challenge is to make all of our communities responsible, and this has been discussed in the regions from the start. If we don't find the means of having a political structure that makes the communities and the regions responsible, well, the program we cherish may just fall apart. Therefore, contrary to my friend Hogue, I think there's a lesson to be learned that's not an academic or a theoretical one. It's a challenge for our daily lives.

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

**Mr. Larose:** I did what my friend Hogue did. I used up all my time.

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

**Mr. Maciocia:** Mr. Fortin, you mentioned in your brief... you convey many ideas. Among other things, in your brief, you touch on a field that has rarely been dealt with until now, precisely that of ethical issues and freedom. I thank you for this because it is a new approach that will probably help us in our deliberations and decision-making about the political and constitutional future of Québec. And, when you mention this ethical issue, you also mention such moral issues as the democracy of society, the development of social solidarity and respect for people of French stock and their dignity.

My first question is: Exactly how does federalism prevent the resolution of these issues?

**Mr. Fortin:** There is one essential and fundamental value in ethics. I think you will agree that it is the freedom of individuals. The same applies, I believe, to peoples. That freedom, autonomy, is an essential and fundamental value. We must experience freedom before we deal with the other, before we have a dialogue with the other, before conviviality, that is a blueprint for society, can exist with the other. I see this as essential in microethics - I don't want to lecture) - as in macroethics, this value of autonomy; this value of freedom seems to me to be paramount and essential.

But you tell me: It seems to me... and that is part of my commitment as a citizen, to affirm such a thing, but I will readily concede that other people have opinions diametrically opposed to mine.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Yes, but it's in that way... That doesn't mean that federalism prevents the fulfilment of these values.

**Mr. Fortin:** No.

**Mr. Maciocia:** On the basis of the principle you set forth: Freedom, autonomy are, above all and henceforth, these characteristics.

**Mr. Fortin:** Yes, but does federalism, as we have practised it since 1867, meet our needs? Does federalism welcome differences, favour differences? That's the question. I personally don't think it does.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Fine. In another vein, Mr. Fortin, in your brief, you mention a better division of political power with the regions and the outlying areas. This is only possible if the RCMs have a more important role.

**Mr. Fortin:** I'm going to give the floor to my colleague, Mr. Giroux.

**Mr. Maciocia:** What do you recommend that the role of the RCMs be and what additional powers could they be given? By giving additional powers to the RCMs, wouldn't we be encroaching on the powers of the municipalities?

**Mr. Giroux (Guy):** It is a pleasure to answer that question, but I will answer, if you will allow me, in a somewhat broader way. As ethicists in the Groupe de recherche Éthos, we do not have to decide on the status of the RCMs and the municipalities, the type of power-sharing that they would like to have with the central government.

When we proposed the sharing of power, we did so from the perspective of achieving a balance, of a political counterweight provided by the outlying areas, possibly at the very heart of a sovereign Parliament in Québec City, where there will be a council of regions, for example, just as the Liberal Party of Québec in 1980 and the Pépin-Robarts Commission in 1979 proposed a federal council or a council of the federation to provide a counterweight to the centralizing power we had traditionally had in the country. The idea was precisely to enable the regions, the outlying areas to serve as a political counterweight.

Keep one thing in mind. The parliamentary system we have in Québec and Canada is a British one, with the principle of ministerial solidarity and party discipline. Many, like Mr. Gil Rémillard, have noted that this type of power is virtually totalitarian in that there is really no separation between the executive and the legislative branches. All the more so when there is no proportional electoral system and the majority... And if we also consider the traditional shift of the population from the outlying areas toward the urban centres, we disqualify the outlying areas from serving as a counterweight to the increasing power of the

urban centres. This is the basis for the idea of a counterweight. This is the meaning of the comments and proposals we made in our brief.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** One quick question.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Yes. You mentioned regional councils a moment ago. My question, naturally, is: Who would sit on such a council?

**Mr. Giroux:** That would depend on the type of power and I mentioned that we were not mandated to take a stand on the type of division of powers that the mayors and the RCMs, for example, would like to have. They have to envisage the distribution of powers, and they have undoubtedly already done so here before you. I believe that this type of arrangement is flexible. The primary concept we set forth is that there should be a balance between the outlying regions and the urban centres. As for the distribution, that could be discussed with the appropriate authorities, that is the municipal level, the RCMs versus the central power.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. d'Anjou, a short question.

**Mr. d'Anjou:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You want a blueprint for society that is in keeping with the history of Québec. You recommend that the rights of ethnic, cultural and linguistic minorities be recognized by favouring their integration into the Francophone cultural reality. You also recommend that the Amerindian and Inuit communities that share our territory be given a special status.

What about the Anglophones who are part of Québec's history and who have helped build Québec with us? What status would you give them?

**Mr. Fortin:** I believe that the Anglophones, like the Francophones, are part of the Québec people. We would have to find out what they in fact want from this country. If the majority of Quebecers want their own country, we will have to find out what special contribution Anglophones want to make. I believe that if we look at history, Québec's Anglophones have contributed a lot, and that by talking with them and working things out while respecting our majority... This is the whole question of individual versus collective rights. I feel that the extraordinary contribution that Anglophones can make in the history of Québec and will make in the future can be put to good use, as it has in the past.

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

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will first say that I find it very comforting and refreshing to finally see academics get their feet wet, become involved and commit themselves, and then tell us, in addition, that one of the essential values on which we must base our blueprint for society and Québec sovereignty, because that was what they are talking about, is freedom, the freedom of people, the freedom of peoples. I feel that this is not in way a boring, indigestible theoretical lecture. On the contrary, I think it is food for thought, good spiritual food, because I note that, for some time, since we began our work, the Québec intelligentsia - I guess we can call them that - has not been heard from much, and it is a pleasure to see that some of them have decided to commit themselves, to get their feet wet, to say what they really think, not to beat around the bush. And they come and tell us: We are part of this people, we are part of this region and we want to participate, we want to commit ourselves so that this people comes into existence and develops, and so that this region, too, takes itself in hand and develops. To me, you are not boring academics. Much to the contrary.

I am asking you a question because I have to ask you one, but I will tell you right away that you do not have to call me "doctor".

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

**Mr. Brassard:** You say that the rights of the ethnic minorities must be recognized. I imagine that you consider the Anglophone community one of them, that the rights of the Anglophone minority must be recognized. But, at the same time, you say that the primacy of French must be ensured throughout Québec as the language of the State and as the normal, usual language of work, education, communications, trade and business.

**Mr. Fortin:** To go back to the grounds in your introduction.

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes. Since we began our work, some people have told us that ensuring the integral and scrupulous respect of the rights of the minority, particularly those of our Anglophone community, is incompatible with having French as the language of society, work, communications, trade and business. You, who have thought long and hard about the ethical implications, you don't see any incompatibility. Have I understood correctly?

**Mr. Fortin:** Yes. I understand the difficulties we are now encountering because we do not yet have our country, and the situation is not clear when people come to Canada, when they come to Québec. But when we have our country, the situation will be clear and people

will know that, if they want to participate, if they want to become part of the Québec people, the Québec community, our arms will be wide open, provided we are respected as Francophones.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** OK?

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Pierre Fortin, Mr. Boulianne, Mr. Giroux, thank you for the thoughts you kindly shared with us this evening. This completes our hearings in Matane.

I have a few short announcements for the members of the Commission at the end of their stay here. First of all, this is going to be the end... Mrs. Hovington has something to tell us at the end.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Yes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No, I am not giving you the floor immediately.

**Mrs. Hovington:** No?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** No, not immediately. I thank the people of Matane for their hospitality. Thank you, Mrs. Hovington, for the shrimp cocktail last night, which was very much appreciated. Everyone, the bus will leave for the airport at 9 p.m. Each person sees to his own luggage. Two planes, one F-27, and all those taking the F-27 have already been notified, those who have not been notified will take the other one.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Work resumes at 10:30 a.m. in the École Manikoutai in Sept-Îles. Mrs. Hovington, you have the floor.

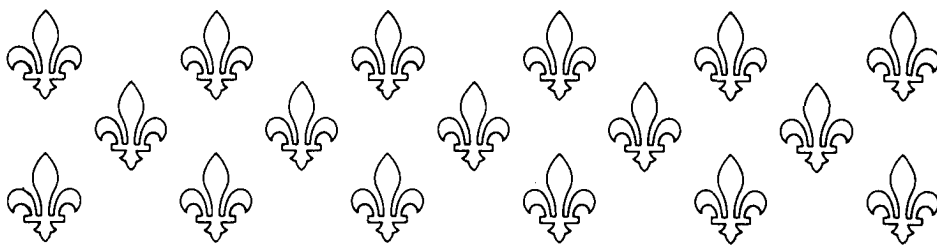
**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, a piece of good news. I am happy that we found out in Matane and it was announced in Matane that the government has eliminated the GST on books. I am very pleased about that and it's a piece of good news to announce. And I would like to thank all the groups that presented briefs to the Commission today here in Matane. I must mention the quality of all the briefs the Commission has received here, and I must respond to Mr. Brassard, who said this morning that he had one worry: that the commissioners seemed bored in the regions. I can tell you that I am sure no commissioner around this table was bored here in Matane today. On the contrary, you succeeded in arousing an enormously important interest in regional development. You contributed new

elements that will enlighten all the members of the Commission and I thank you for this on behalf of all my colleagues, the members of this Commission. And I thank my colleagues, the commissioners, for coming here to Matane today.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You certainly do speak well!

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

(End of sitting, 8:56 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**

**Sept-Îles, Wednesday, November 28, 1990**

**No 11**

**Published under the authority of the President of the  
National Assembly, Mr. Jean-Pierre Saintonge**

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**QUÉBEC**

DEC 10 1990

**Note de l'éditeur:**

Ce fascicule contient une traduction des débats qui se déroulent à la Commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec. Cette traduction est assurée par la Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation du ministère des Communications.

**Editor's note:**

This fascicle contains a translation of the debates being held by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. The translation is carried out under the supervision of the Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation at the Ministère des Communications.

Abonnement: 250 \$ par année pour les débats des commissions parlementaires  
70 \$ par année pour les débats de la Chambre  
Chaque exemplaire: 1,00 \$ - Index: 10 \$  
(La transcription des débats des commissions parlementaires est aussi disponible sur microfiches au coût annuel de 150 \$)

Chèque rédigé au nom du ministre des Finances et adressé à:  
Assemblée nationale du Québec  
Distribution des documents parlementaires  
1060, Conroy, R.-C. Édifice "G", C.P. 28  
Québec, (Québec)  
G1R 5E6 tél. 418-643-2754

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Dépôt légal  
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec  
ISSN 0823-0102

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Sept-Îles, Wednesday, November 28, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations and One Individual

(10:23 a.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. I'll repeat the mandate of the Commission, 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 presentations by the following groups: first, at 10:30 a.m., Innu TakuaiKAN Uashat mak Mani-Utenam; at 11:30 a.m., the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord; then, at 2:00 p.m., the Corporation de protection de l'environnement de Sept-Îles; at 3:00 p.m., the Conseil central de Sept-Îles and, at 3:30 p.m., Mr. Pierre Ducasse.

I would like to remind you of the message that appears on all the tables: smoking is not permitted in the school. I will also remind members of the audience that, since this is a parliamentary commission and applause is not allowed in parliamentary galleries, applause is not permitted in this room either, either before or after the presentations.

The first group to appear before us has one hour, which means that during that period, there will be 10 minutes for oral presentation of the brief, followed by a 15-minute question period for the parliamentary group forming the Government, 15 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition and 40 minutes for members who have registered with the Chair, each... No, not 40 minutes, I'm looking at hour and a half... The procedures that I just read aren't right, we'll start again.

This is for one hour and that means 10 minutes for the parliamentary group forming the Government, 10 minutes for the group forming the Official Opposition, 25 minutes for members registered with the Chair, each member has 5 minutes.

Before moving on to the first presentation, with us here today, among the substitutes, is the Member for this region, Mr. Perron, and I invite him to say a few words.

**Mr. Perron:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. Campeau, it is, of course, a great honour to welcome you here today, to the county of Duplessis and, no matter what my colleagues in the National Assembly might say, you will see that it's the most beautiful county in Québec. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome each of my colleagues from the National Assembly, all the members of this Commission and, of course, the people of Sept-Îles and outlying areas who have welcomed us here this morning. As for me, I want to wish everyone here a pleasant stay, no matter what their political leanings. I also hope

that today will be as fine a day as we can make it here in Sept-Îles. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mr. Perron, that's your sign when you leave the airwaves. We will now move on to the presentation of the first group to appear before us, the Innu TakuaiKAN Uashat mak Mani-Utenam. I'll ask Chief Maurice Vollant to introduce the people accompanying him and then to outline his brief in 10 minutes, Chief Vollant.

## Innu TakuaiKAN Uashat mak Mani-Utenam

**Mr. Vollant (Maurice):** I'll be speaking in Montagnais and will introduce the members and Gilbert Pilot who will translate into French. First, I'll present the members who are here: Georges McKenzie, representing youth, Marie Tshernish, here, Mathieu André, Gilbert Pilot, Réginald Vollant.

(The speaker speaks in Montagnais)

**Mr. Pilot (Gilbert):** First, I'd like to thank you for coming here to Milassiman, our lands, to hear what we have to say about our identity, our culture, our people. What we want is for people to listen, to understand, for there to be peace between peoples. Today's proposal is the result of wide-ranging consultation with all our people, the same exercise you are undertaking now, and the document presented to you is from the people. Before beginning the presentation, Mr. Vollant will give the floor to Mr. Mathieu André, an elder whom we all respect.

**Mr. André (Mathieu):** (Speaks in his language)

**Mrs. Tshernish (Marie):** I will translate what Mr. Mathieu André just said.

First, he greets you, all of you. He's happy to be here with you today, and is very happy that so many have come to listen. One of the hopes he just expressed... he realizes that the work or the process that you're beginning today has a chance to progress. He says that he's been working to protect the environment for 10 years now. In the speech he's given - he says that he's always making the same speeches - and he has had the opportunity to work with Mr. Gilbert Pilot for 10 years. He showed you the flag which stands before him. It symbolizes all the effort we have put into seeking our cultural identity, into safeguarding our heritage.

He says that for him, as an elder, anything that affects nature or the environment, anything that affects it to any degree, concerns him



personally. He is very concerned about the traditional Innu way of life. He knows that it's a different way of life, but all he wishes for, from the bottom of his heart, is for respect between all nations, mutual respect.

One of his wishes is that all nations be on an equal footing with one another, that there no longer be superior and inferior beings. Strength comes from accepting one another, if we want to work together. For the past 10 years, he has been working to stop or prevent the pollution that Mother Earth is currently being forced to deal with. He mentioned, as an example, that the tools we use to extract the riches of nature are inadequate. He mentioned all the dumps he sees on his land when he goes hunting and says it can't stay like that.

He also passes on the message that you, Quebecers, Canadians, you too get something from nature. He reminds you of the extent of nature's wonders, of the beauty of the environment and says that, if you do not act, pollution will wreak its havoc, it'll be impossible to go back. He says that pollution has come here, to Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, and that when he was young, he never saw that. He also says that it's the greatest danger we currently face, even more important than what we're doing right now, it's the permanent loss of nature's wonders. He mentioned, for example, acid rain. If harvests are lost, it could bring illness. All these things are not good for nature.

He also mentions that, at his age, he's not working for himself, but for future generations, the youth of today and the children who aren't born yet. He speaks of the rights of the Innu. He speaks of respect for the animal kingdom, from the smallest animal to the largest. He speaks of saving our forests. He knows about everything that's going on, about the extinction of certain animal species, about animals that freeze in the forests because their way of life has been spoiled.

He says that he's passing on this message in all humility and all he hopes is that all this will take place with mutual respect on the part of both parties. He knows very well that all the messages he's given you can't be taken in all at once. He only hopes that maybe one or two of the things he said will have reached you, and he thanks you for having listened to him.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think it would be appropriate to thank Mr. Mathieu André immediately for his very important message, and to assure him that what he is asking, or proposing, with regard to mutual respect is something the whole Commission can assure him, is our wish too, and concrete conclusions to our work and this meeting, even if we can't accomplish everything at once, is also a hope shared by the Commission.

We'll take a little more time than

anticipated, with everyone's permission, I think, which will delay the next group a little. I would now like to ask Mr. Vollant to briefly present his position, before moving on to the questions.

**Mr. Vollant:** (speaking his own language)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Go ahead, Mr. Pilot.

**Mr. Pilot:** Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen. To be brief, with everything we have to say, we can't beat around the bush so we'll go right to the point.

The Innu's proposals are closely linked to what Mr. André has said. I believe that all of us are thinking about the past, except that when we think of the past we see it through eyes that are here in the present, with the people who are here, who are listening to us and who will determine the future based on what we say. Bearing this in mind, we, the Innu people of Uashat Mani-Utenam, want to tell you the vision that we have of the future. In this vision, there are Innu, in this vision, there are Quebecers, in this vision, there are Canadians, right from the start, I have to tell you that "Innu" in our language, means human being, and "Nitassinan" means our land, not "my" land. And this is the basis from which we want to examine the future.

While here, we hope to communicate with human beings, not presidents of companies or other things, but with human beings. We hope to address people who are aware that being human entails a relationship with the Earth. We speak of equality in this document. We speak about the right to exist in this document. And I believe that being human, adds a certain nuance to this idea: man's relationship with others. This is the idea which forms the foundation of the path we're suggesting.

(11:00 a.m.)

Like everyone else, when we took five minutes to listen to those who appeared before you, what came out was that when you spoke of sovereignty, you followed it up immediately with: Is it economically feasible? And we are trying to bring you to the very basic: Is such sovereignty humanly feasible? Don't forget that in this part of the world there aren't only Quebecers, not only Canadians, there are those whose roots you've tried to pull up. It's these people, these human beings with roots here, who are proposing today, that you recognize their right to exist in Québec, sovereign or not, and in Canada, united or not. That is our basic message.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you.

**Mr. Pilot:** Moreover, in our values, there are things that are... elements that are important to us. The value of sharing... we're raised with

it. This means that, for us, it's easy to share and there's a lot to be shared. Moreover, as Mr. André pointed out, we... the future, we see it as Mr. André's legacy to us. Anything that comes before us is continued, perpetuated from that basis, our culture, our special relationship with Mother Earth. As for the rest, it'll be easier for us to recognize other peoples, the Québécois people, the Canadian people, all other peoples. And when we speak of equality, it's not up to us to struggle up the fourteen steps which show that inequality exists, but perhaps to suggest, humbly, that others come down fourteen steps to draw nearer to the real values that will allow us to live together in harmony. That's the basic message our community is sending out.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Pilot. We'll now proceed with the first group of questions, from the Government, which will have a maximum of 10 minutes, Mr. Christos Sirros.

**Mr. Sirros:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would perhaps like to begin by saying, you said that the word "Innu" means human being, and I would like perhaps to suggest that Quebecer could mean: All human beings living in a territory that might be called Québec or any other name we choose to give it. I would also like to say that it seems to me, particularly in listening to the message of the elder, Mr. André, I think, Mathieu André, that what strikes me is how, ultimately, the fundamental values of human beings, whether they are Montagnais, Greek, or old-stock Quebecer, call them what you will, to what extent these fundamental values are similar. They can be summarized by - for almost all human beings that I know, anyway - love of life, respect for elders and, finally, respect for human beings.

The problem may not be any difficulty we might have agreeing on values, even in terms of respect for the Earth and the environment. I think that, were we to take a few minutes to sit down, we would immediately agree on the need for this. The problems crop up when we try to apply these values. And that's where we begin to discover that certain things are difficult to see or that there are different ways of seeing things or of doing, rather than seeing, things. And what I'm attempting to do is draw a parallel between that and the whole issue of what we might call, in quotation marks, the Native question. I read your brief and I saw that the governments - because I think it goes beyond this government alone - we say, as for the whole issue of smoothing out relations between the Innu, as human beings living in the territory called Québec, and I see the 15 principles that were adopted in 1983 and restated by the current Government in 1988, and your brief, and I say to myself: as far as principles go, we can't

be too far apart. You claim, on page 19, I think you say: "When a people constitute a minority within a State, they have the right to have their identity, traditions, language and cultural heritage respected." The first principle of the *gouvernement du Québec* is: Québec recognizes that the Native people of Québec are distinct nations who have a right to their culture, to their language, to their customs and traditions, as well as the right to control the advancement of this identity. I think that we're not far off.

Is this - and this is my question - in your opinion, what would we have to do at this moment, perhaps attempt the second step of the 15; at least begin to move up or down the staircase, depending on where we're standing, so that we can go from principles to achieving these principles in a specific policy? Can you see this step taking place? How do you see this step, moving from stated principles to a definition, even one from the *gouvernement du Québec*, with Native peoples, to set out in concrete terms what a principle, such as those stated, means, the first of the 15 principles, which is pretty similar to those you are claiming?

**Mr. Pilot:** I think the first step that's needed, is that, in terms of communications, there's what we call listening - we have to listen to people. Then, we can understand them or try to understand them. And then, grasp it, attempt to grasp what they are trying to communicate to us. And finally, accept. I don't know what level you're at Mr. Sirros. I think that you hear us quite often, you listen to us. It seems like you're beginning to understand. I don't know when you'll grasp it, or the instant after you accept this fact, you'll get together with your friends here, the Québec people, and your other friends, I hope, the Canadian people, in order to confirm this common declaration. Afterward, in your policies, you could agree to recognize things, make them official and agree to the same things in our policies. You can't draw people together under the same banner by telling them they have the right to eat three meals a day, but you're going to choose the menu. We want our own menu, and we'll let you eat the way you want. That's the next step. It's very human, it's feasible.

**Mr. Sirros:** What I understand is that in order to understand, you have to listen and you also have to receive, when sitting around the same table, a menu that you can agree on in terms of the discussions that need to be held. The question I'm asking you is this: Is there, based on the 15 principles adopted by the *gouvernement du Québec* and your declaration, where you also set out a certain number of principles, do you believe there's a framework on which, or within which, we can agree? Are you optimistic or pessimistic?

**Mr. Pilot:** Very optimistic. In the sense that, the 15 principles you mentioned, and what's included in the document can draw closer together until, within your little square, you have another. As for us, what we're proposing here is that those who have square menus learn to co-ordinate with those who have round menus. This means that the circle and the square can work together. Personally, we have no trouble moving around the square.

**Mr. Sirros:** Thank you. I'll continue later, if necessary, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think that there's about a half a minute remaining. Do you wish to wait until the end? Fine, we'll now move on to the Official Opposition, Mr. Perron.

**Mr. Perron:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure you'll allow me to welcome representatives from the Uashat Mani-Utenam Band Council, who are also appearing as representatives of the Montagnais nation. Mr. Chairman, since Mr. Sirros already mentioned it, I would like to present the 15 principles that he just mentioned and, at the same time, the March 20, 1985 resolution of the National Assembly on the Native issue.

I want to particularly thank you for this brief, which is, so far, one of the most thorough I've had the opportunity to read. And I can tell you, having read it three times, that it really delves deeply into the heart of the problems which have been experienced not only by the Montagnais nation, but by all Native nations in Québec.

Mr. Chairman, a comment before moving on to my questions. As far as we of the Official Opposition and the Parti québécois are concerned, I wish to stress this: In Québec, there is a Québécois nation, but we also recognize 11 Native nations, and recognize them right away. For us, there is a clear difference between the word "nation" and the term "cultural community," they are very different.  
(11:15 a.m.)

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask, and I'll go straight to page 5 of the document, which I had an opportunity to read, and my question is the following: Should Québec achieve sovereignty, and it seems very plausible and highly likely, and should the people, I mean Québec and the population, prepare, as they undoubtedly will, their own constitution, what I would like to know from the representatives of Uashat Mani-Utenam is what their requirements, in terms of the content of this constitution, would be, assuming of course that the Native nations would remain in Québec? That is my first question.

**Mr. Pilot:** First, it couldn't be a require-

ment. It would have to be, rather, in this highly likely sovereign Québec constitution, it would have to include a common declaration, which would be a guarantee that would allow Native people and Quebecers to aspire to live life the way it was meant to be lived and to let Native people live as they want, their normal lifestyle. For us, that would be the best guarantee of making Québec happy, and of making us happy. That's the guarantee we'd have to work toward. For the rest, I believe that leaving the principles... that we would leave... the mechanics, we would leave for people happy to work on mechanics. They wouldn't forget the nuts and bolts and things would go well.

**Mr. Perron:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Mr. Pilot for his answer. Now, I would like to ask him another question. Considering the fact that, for him and for us as well, it is essential - when I say "us", I mean the Official Opposition - that in an eventual Québec constitution, rights for Native nations would be recognized, I understand your answer in the following sense: Yes, it must be included in a constitution. And you refer to the second part of your brief about Native rights. However, what I want to know is, based on this constitution, in which your rights will be enshrined, would it be possible to sign agreements such as those, for example, with the Band Council of Sept-Îles-Malloténam or, again with the Montagnais nation, to sign concrete agreements, using negotiation, and then signing agreements afterward.

**Mr. Pilot:** From the common declaration which binds us to mutual recognition and respect, and thus to the right to existence, with all that it entails, normally we would have to - I don't know any other way to say it - result in a constitutional pact which, each constitution would guarantee this recognition of the other and, from there, we would perhaps be able to reach one of the most beautiful agreements ever seen in this part of the world.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Harel.

**Mrs. Harel:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I can say, on behalf of all the commissioners that we very much appreciated your presentation, especially that of Mr. André in Inuktitut. Was it in Montagnais or in Inuktitut?

**Mr. Pilot:** In Innu.

**Mrs. Harel:** In Innu. Yes. First, you're seeking, and in your brief you specify, on page 19, that one of the principles that must be recognized is that of full participation in the

legal system... You are therefore going to have the right, and you claimed this right elsewhere, to participate in the decision on Québec's future. Are you going to exercise this right? Do you intend to exercise your right to participate in the choice about Québec's future?

**Mr. Pilot:** I'm glad to hear you talking about your future. I think that we, too, have our future. And, in this sense, we can conclude that we have a common future at one point because we're living in the same house, except that we're out on the back porch freezing.

**Mrs. Harel:** Yes.

**Mr. Pilot:** We're sick of asking permission when we want to use the stove, and then there's the times when the electricity's cut off or... I mean, sometimes, you have to share. And in terms of sharing, we have, logically, a constitutional pact already sets out certain shared powers or jurisdictions. For example, I'll give you one and I won't expand on it so that other people don't ask questions, for example the environment. I think that our report card for the millennium makes us responsible for that. I think we're more concerned about what's going to happen each time a mechanical shovel is turned on. That means that's one of the jurisdictions which could... and surely we are going to take it, use it, but there are other jurisdictions that could be shared.

**Mrs. Harel:** Are we to understand, from reading your brief...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Harel...

**Mrs. Harel:** Quickly, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Go ahead.

**Mrs. Harel:** Are we to understand that the interpretation is the following? On page 8 you tell us: The principle is the "imprescriptible and inalienable right to self-determination," and thus the right of all peoples to determine their "political status in all freedom". That's the principle. And on page 17 you say that: "We have to face the fact that we are a people living within a State", and you go on to say, "Given the current situation... you - you said we - we say you, feel that for the Native people it is not realistic to take the road to secession to rebuild a new State". Are you proposing a different concept of the role of the Québec State? And you conclude, on page 19 by expressing the hope, I believe, for co-existence of nations within a single State. Can we understand from this that that's the option you're proposing in

your brief?

**Mr. Pilot:** You read very well, you understand very well. And, as far as we're concerned, we don't want to see Québec, or Canada, split up into a dozen States. That would be hard, that would be hard to work with, I'm telling you. That would mean that we, in our view, the State, for us, is a system, it's a whole bunch of hooks, all joined together and, at a certain point, it makes a whole and everyone's stuck in it and mixed up in it. That means that us, what we're proposing, is to take it all back to the beginning and include everyone in this State.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I will now call on the members to ask their questions. Since quite a few of you have registered, I would ask that you be as brief as possible. Mr. Larose, you will be first, followed by Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is the first group representing Native nations to present a brief before the Commission. I would like to begin by thanking you for presenting such a substantial brief and by saying that you are not the only group to come before the Commission and make an appeal for a blueprint for society that, before the Commission, is based on fundamental values shared by the Innu and shared by those who inhabit this territory. I think that the challenge we face as a society is precisely to take advantage of this redefining process so that this country can rebuild itself based on full respect for all those who make it up.

I would especially like to stress two paragraphs on page 7 which outline extremely well a problem that has been debated before the Commission in the past few days: the relation between individual and collective rights while remembering that no individual rights oppose ignoring or negating collective rights.

As a country, we will need to give ourselves a constitution. If I read your proposal correctly, this constitution will have to include a treaty that recognizes Native rights according to a fairly clear breakdown. Two questions: There are 11 Native nations in Québec. Does this mean we will have to consider 11 constitutional treaties or, to your knowledge, which is certainly much more extensive than ours, is there a convergence of opinion among the Native nations over the proposal you are tabling before us?

Second, there must be more than a mere recognition of principles within a constitution. We must find a solution to concrete problems. It seems to me that the only mechanism you propose is the peoples tribunal. Should we not - must it be inserted or not, I don't

know - try and think of a permanent mechanism for settling disputes, such that, every day, we can make advances in settling litigations between the Native nations and the Québec nation, as well as the English-speaking community.

**Mr. Pilot:** In answer to the first question, I feel that we are currently, as you are doing... It seems as though everyone is searching for what he or she wants to be and for us, looking in from the outside, when we look at Québec or Canada, for example, it's like a table with two or three of its legs missing that everyone is trying to stabilize. However simple or modest it may be, our contribution is at least trying to provide you with a leg, as for the rest, we'll have to work together.

With regard to the 11 nations - this is where I come back to the question - we have different concepts. A very basic truth is that we have different values. Would 11 Native constitutions and another Québec constitution bound by a constitutional treaty... I don't think we've come that far yet, but I think your mind is already made up about what the ideal solution would be, and my mind is already made up about what the ideal solution would be. We just have to work it out, whether we unite under one Native constitution formed by a circle and yours, that would have to be brought together.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet.

**Mr. Pilot:** A second question...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Sorry. I thought you had finished.  
(11:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Pilot:** A second answer, sorry Mr. Ouellet. With regard to the peoples tribunal, as far as we're concerned, at some point it's almost as if we had no choice or, because we have almost total confidence in you. It's not only a challenge as you say, it's a bloody wager. Based on our experience to date, based on everything we've been through, what kind of mechanism are we going to implement to see that both... without the other knowing, in secret. For us, the peoples tribunal could be a mechanism that will settle, not settle but identify the guilty party at some point. Or another mechanism that could be determined by the various peoples, parties, that remains to be seen.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** O.K. We will now go on to Mr. Ouellet, followed by Mr. Daoust.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's not every day that I have the occasion to do so, but I fully agree with the preliminary remarks made by Mr. Larose. I don't think I have to

repeat what he said, but what he told you is very important and your presence here today is significant.

I read your brief and what I understood from it is that you are asking for us to respect your identity, you are asking for the right to self-determination, you are asking for exclusive control over your wealth and natural resources, but I would like you to clarify something Mr. Pilot: Are you also asking for your own laws governing your territory or, in the event of renewed federalism for Canada, would you accept Canadian laws or, in the event of Québec sovereignty, Québec laws? That is my first question.

**Mr. Pilot:** I think we've had those rights for a long time. However, at some point, as it goes, if you let guests into the house and it turns into a party, then it moves out onto the porch, well then... I would like to come back to something that is very important to us, which is that, at the moment, this is where we're headed. We're leading ourselves. We know where we're going. We're not supposed to be on your road; we're heading somewhere and you're on our road. What we're telling you is that we're taking advantage of the occasion. This means we're talking more about exercising rights. But we need to "play fair" as they say; we're telling you, we're warning you, which has not always been the case on your part when you have been conducting business. Which means that, based on the principles of equality and the right to exist, we have, I think, the responsibility of telling you where we're headed since we've been here for a long time. And I think we have, as far as the laws you mentioned, surely, surely, it will be an exercise for us.

**Mr. Ouellet:** I think what Mr. Pilot has to say is very important and, in my opinion, sheds new light on the work of the commissioners. Like everyone else, I read page 17 of your brief on which you say, and I think it's a sentence full of wisdom, very realistic, and totally in line with what your elder, Mr. André, was saying at the beginning of your presentation. When you say, and I quote since I feel it is very important: "We feel that for the Native people, it is not realistic to take the road of secession in order to rebuild a new state," I think I see what you are trying to say, I understand what you are saying. I would like my friend Larose and perhaps Mrs. Harel to understand as well that if this wisdom is true for you, it could be true for other Quebecers too. I think this is a very important message you are sending us. The question... really, my final question, since you say yourself, you ask the question of those who might want a sovereign Québec and you say to them: Is this how it would be in a Québec State, if we opted for sovereignty? Would we again

have the same thing you correctly denounce in Canada as it exists today?

I think it is very important that we think about this question since Mr. Landry, in speaking on behalf of the Parti québécois, was reminding us that this past summer, during the Native conflict, the Parti québécois held the same position as that held by former premier Lévesque in 1985, that is, Québec also recognizes, but within the scope of Québec laws, the right of Native nations to own and control the lands attributed to them, but that these rights - I would just like to finish the quotation since it seems to me to be important - but that these rights must be exercised within Québec society and, consequently, shall not involve the rights of sovereignty that might affect the territorial integrity of Québec. In other words, if I understand correctly, you are asking us today, asking a sovereign Québec for the same thing that Québec, that the Parti québécois would ask of the rest of Canada?

**Mr. Pilot:** Maybe not. It's not over yet, they're in the midst of consulting everyone involved, so wait. I don't know when you're going to produce your report but, as far as we're concerned, we know what we want, with the documents. And I think that...

**Mr. Ouellet:** And your request is the same, whether we have a Canada or a sovereign Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet, you're really at the end of your time.

**Mr. Pilot:** What we're saying here, we're addressing... There's already, at the outset, a recognition, a bond between the Québec people. There's a Canadian people, and I don't know where you're situated, but I'm in the party of the Innu society, I know it and I'm in the midst of confirming it and confirming it to myself. But, as I told you, I don't know where your work will end up, once your report has been completed. Except that when you speak of a state, as well... Mr. Perron seems to be saying: it's more than likely. Let's say that in a sovereign Québec, our vision is more if Quebecers want to be sovereign and if we want to be sovereign, a pluralistic state, I won't say "federal" because you will applaud, but a pluralistic state in which there are constitutional treaties, 1 or 11, as Mr. Larose said, to confirm all this and that guarantee a lot of things. In this respect, I think it's feasible.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** All right. Mr. Daoust, followed by Mr. Holden.

**Mr. Daoust:** I would like to begin by welcoming this delegation and paying tribute to

your people, which are particularly well known in this region, and with whom we work in the workplace, on construction sites and in a number of regions on the Côte nord. I read your document and its appendices and I saw that during the Native conflict you were able to make your views known.

There is no doubt that the Native conflict of this past summer awakened all Quebecers to the experiences we all share, to the incredible complexity and scope of the problems that, one of these days, we must solve certainly through peaceful negotiation.

In the wake of the questions Mrs. Harel was asking you, I would like you to expand somewhat, without repeating what others have said, on the section of your brief in which, on page 19, you say that these rights must be exercised based on respect for the legitimate interests of the community as a whole - I would like you to tell us what this community as a whole is - and should not affect the territorial integrity or political unity of the state. What state are you talking about? I think it's obvious but I would like to hear you say it. In my, in our opinion, it is the Québec State. Everyone has their own state. As you mentioned earlier, there are Canadians here. There are individuals who more and more wish to be Quebecers. But "the territorial integrity or political unity of the state." And just above this, we have been reminded, it has been repeated, but it is perhaps worth rereading. "Given the current situation, in which international relations are evolving, we feel that for the Native people, it is not realistic to take the road of secession in order to rebuild a new state."

Should we understand that you endorse the principle of indivisibility of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Québec the day all Quebecers decide, through the most democratic process possible, to assert their hopes and desire to become sovereign to all peoples and the rest of the country?

**Mr. Pilot:** If we put this bit of text in simpler terms maybe... we talk in images a lot. You'll have to try and picture the map of Canada, of Québec. It will most likely be the same map, except there will be areas, I don't know for you Quebecers, it may change colour at some point. And if you get to these points, there are other areas that will change colour. There will be Innu colours, there will be Cree colours, there will be Inuit colours. So at some point, it's really starting over. Maintaining national unity, political unity, means the constitutional treaty that we could, if we were at a point, which Mr. Sirros is not, of accepting certain things, that would allow us to create a state - I don't know whom I'm speaking to here, what side - the Québec State let's say. We'll maintain this state, except that within this state, we have our

national sovereignty, but are directly associated, with Quebecers say, in their sovereignty through constitutional treaties that, at the same time, guarantee our peoples that we can take charge while being associates, partners with those whom with we are forced to coexist.

(11:45 a.m.)

That's what territorial integrity means. Except that for us, based on our concepts, we have to keep repeating this, we are not people who own 30 x 70-ft. lots; rather, we have what is called... We belong to the earth. We walk until we are tired. We don't have fences. I don't think, don't imagine there were any fences when you arrived. Moreover, when you landed here, we had no debts. So these types of concepts... What we want is to participate by giving, by sharing what we have. But it must be made clear that we are thinking of you. Mr. André expressed it well. Our future is a better standard of living, not only for us, but for you, for future generations.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Holden, followed by Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Holden:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, am very impressed by your presence, particularly since, for some time now, we have had a tendency to speak of Anglophones, Francophones and minorities here and there, and here you come and give us a bit of a feeling of people who, as you say, are human beings with a resume dating back a thousand years. It's much more interesting than when we talk of more recent minorities.

But what you are saying, we analysed your brief and I would like to ask you a question based on this analysis. The analysis says: "The Innu accept the plurality of nations within a state provided the state reflects this plurality in its internal organization and in its international relations." That's the analysis we made of your brief. Is this a correct interpretation of your general approach?

**Mr. Pilot:** We speak of peoples and I think, first off, we must seek this concept out and either make a graft if it isn't strong enough or assert it if it has been around for thousands of years. It's as simple as that. The people... there are several peoples, and plurality is acceptable insofar as the Native people, the Québec people and the Canadian people can... What we are proposing is that it is possible, possible, if we look to the future, to live in this way.

**Mr. Holden:** And, say for someone who sees himself as part of the Canadian and the Québec people, you don't see... Or is your concept of a state to protect the rights of the peoples, a plurality of peoples, rather than a special or distinct people?

**Mr. Pilot:** That's what I said earlier. I don't know, some people here aren't tuned in. When you know what you are, where you are, I think it will be easier to accept the other who is proposing things. As it is, we're only going to turn around in circles...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Excuse me but this will be the last question. Unfortunately, I still have a long list of people who gave their names this morning, but this will have to be the last question as we're already running very late. I would remind you, however, that Mr. Sirros had one and a half minutes left, which we will use after Mr. Bouchard's questions. Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. I had many occasions over a period of nearly two years to work alongside Native people on environmental issues, I'd say throughout the whole of North America. And I can tell you that if there is anyone - perhaps the only ones - who has the environment engraved in their culture, in their deepest concerns, it's the Native people. There's that wonderful quote from Chief Seattle that you've reprinted on the first page of your brief, and which is quoted the world over. Everywhere you go, someone always quotes this quote: "The Earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the Earth." I know that this is something, a basic principle that you have always practised.

I was not surprised when I read section 5 of the declaration you submitted to the Commission, which includes three provisions dealing specifically with the environment and commitments on environmental matters that a sovereign Québec State must make toward your nation in particular.

I wonder, in concrete terms, how this would work. In my opinion, this declaration contains one very important paragraph, paragraph 35, which I would like to quote since I feel it is really important, and which should be read in conjunction with the text mentioned by Mrs. Marois and Mr. Daoust, which is on page 19 of your brief. Section 35 reads, quote "The Native people cannot..." We speak of sovereignty, Québec becomes sovereign. All right, what happens? "...on the one hand, the Native people will be able to express themselves only through the Québec nation-state and, on the other, the rights which, in principle, are recognized them will be exercised only through the new Québec State," unquote. Do I understand correctly? I know these are complex notions, but it is nevertheless important that we clarify them here today. Do I understand correctly that, in your mind, if Québec becomes independent, sovereign, there will be a nation-state, the Québec State, which would have sovereign power over the entire territory, but that certain parts of this territory would be subject to separate or

collective constitutional treaties with the Native nations, and that these nations would be given rights to determine - this would have to be discussed - rights over these parts of the territory? And all this would be part of a unique territory, subject to the sovereignty of a state, the Québec State, if I understand correctly, if this is the general spirit behind what you are saying, which is what I understand from the texts I have just referred to.

**Mr. Pilot:** Yes, that's how you would like it to be.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Well that's how I think I read it. At least, if I read the texts that...

**Mr. Pilot:** Yes, you speak very well.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Yes.

**Mr. Pilot:** But you add an "s" everywhere or... What I mean is that in an independent Québec, Québec has full sovereignty over a given territory. Because we're going to go back to our manner of thinking, to our values on sharing. There are a lot of you, and you have the right to exist; the economy is important. Except that for us, the environment is of the utmost importance. But I think that in a Québec State, there are what we call zones, and good zones in which we will exercise our sovereignty in areas considered essential to the survival of a people, to its culture, its language, its way of life. Because we have no guarantees that, with your debt of \$300 billion, that something isn't going to snap somewhere along the line. Nothing guarantees us that if you carry on this way, you won't end up ruining everything for everyone, yourselves included. Going back to my metaphor of a house, we'll take the living room and if, at some point, they hurt themselves, I'll eat my hare, my beaver, that's all. And I think that for us, the human aspect involves more than just economic relations, more than just political or other relations. It involves people, human lives. So the text you are talking about, the part about a Québec State, what it means for us is that 50 of us don't need to go before the United Nations...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** For one last...

**Mr. Pilot:** In a constitutional agreement, you can talk about a territory and defend the interests included therein, which are part of a common statement.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** All right, for one last comment, Mr. Sirros, about a minute.

**Mr. Sirros:** I think it will be more of a conclusion, Mr. Chairman, than a question as such. And I too would like, I think on behalf of everyone, to thank the group before us for their presentation today. If I had one thing to say it would be that I have grasped and will keep in mind the optimistic vision of things as concerns our possibility of achieving better mutual understanding, and from there putting this understanding to practice through action, in reality and in the constitutional arrangements we'll be making, regardless of our choice. And, I can only wish, because there will be other commissions, other groups to come, that we all be motivated by this need for better understanding and a better grasp, to be able to "operationalize" as I said, and that this is much more important than trying to enlist Native people as our allies for one cause or another, and it is in this sense that I thank you for your presentation. I will keep in mind the fact that, in the end, I am convinced that as concerns fundamental values - and you just finished repeating this - there are many people who share the viewpoint that, ultimately, everything we do, whether it be in politics or in other sectors of activity, we do for human beings. Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** My warmest thanks to the Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam for having appeared before us this morning and given us the pleasure of welcoming them on their home territory. They are the first Native group to appear before the Commission. It is an appropriate symbol that we should welcome you in your homeland. We will keep in mind, among other things, the words of Mr. Mathieu André concerning mutual respect among men, nations and the need to work together. And you will forgive us for having kept you longer than scheduled, but this was something everyone found very interesting. I thank you and would I ask you, if possible, to vacate the table for the following group. Goodbye.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:57 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:02 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now continue with the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord. We have made you wait, ladies, but the subject and the group preceding you were a first for us. This does not mean, however, that we won't be happy to hear you, even after this delay. If you would, Mrs. Jean, who, I believe, is the spokesperson for the group.

**Mrs. Saint-Jean (Lise):** Mrs. Saint-Jean.



**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Saint-Jean, excuse me. You did mention this to me already, but I had an error on my page. So, Mrs. Saint-Jean, if you would introduce the table, those accompanying you, and then you have 10 minutes, no 5 minutes, 10 minutes, excuse me, to present your document which has been read by Commission members. The floor is yours, madam.

#### **Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord**

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** Thank you, I will begin by introducing, to my right, Lorraine Leduc, a founding member of the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord, from Baie-Comeau and a member of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Beside her is Guylaine Lévesque, who is also from Baie-Comeau. Guylaine is coordinator of the L'Étincelle de Baie-Comeau women's centre. To my left is Denise Chiasson, who is the president of the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord and director-general of the Centre de femmes de Forestville. Beside her is Yolande Dubé, director-general of the Maison des femmes de Baie-Comeau and resource person for the status of women in the Baie-Comeau diocese for Côte-Nord. Beside her is Thérèse Beaudin, who is the permanent representative of the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord, from Ragueneau. I am a member of the board of directors of the Regroupement, and also coordinator of the Le Coin des femmes de Sept-Îles shelter.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we are proud to have the opportunity to present to you our position for a sovereign Québec. However, we would like to draw your attention to the low number of women on the Commission. As well, we do not at all understand the lack of Native representation on this Commission, especially after the events which Québec experienced last summer.

The Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord is a community organization, born of women's desire and need to meet, to share their experiences. It has been in existence since 1984. It is a regional organization, covering ground between Tadoussac and Blanc-Sablon, including the northern towns and Île d'Anticosti. It is the only large-scale regional women's organization on the Côte-Nord. Its primary goal is to bring together women from women's groups and representatives of towns and villages where there are no formal groups. Its objectives are: to defend and promote the rights and freedoms of women of the Côte-Nord; to make women aware of their rights, obligations and responsibilities; to compensate for the remoteness of large centres by means of regional ties; to promote entrepreneurship among women; to make support and training resources more accessible to all groups; and to pull together in order to break

through isolation. The Regroupement speaks on behalf of ordinary women from the Côte-Nord, whose primary characteristic is an extraordinary determination. Believe us, we need it to develop and maintain meeting places over such a vast territory with so little financial support. Members include women's associations, women's centres, women's shelters and individuals. The region's Native women are active amongst us.

The Regroupement's position on Québec's future: "Yes" to sovereignty. The Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord encourages the independence of women. It sees a certain parallel between women and the political, economic and cultural evolution of the Québec nation. As much as women, like individuals, need independence to develop their potential fully and take their rightful place in society, so too does a nation need independence to develop and take its place among other nations.

To us, it is clear that Quebecers are a people, a nation with its own culture, real potential and legitimate aspirations. Women represent just over half of this people, and even more than half of senior citizens. Québec's future cannot and must not be considered without taking into account their individual and collective hopes and desires.

Like men, the women of Québec have developed skills in all fields, particularly in management. They have their role to play in Québec's future, and the obstacles to their full and equal participation must be removed. The declining birth rate presents a social problem in Québec. It concerns everyone, especially women. The Côte-Nord is among the regions with the highest birth rates. However, women of the Côte-Nord are among those Quebec women most seriously affected by poverty and spouse abuse.

In such a context, how can the women of Quebec have confidence in the future? To give birth to children, they must have a minimum of certainty regarding the quality of society which will be their legacy. The Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord therefore believes it important for the parliamentary commission on Québec's constitutional future to study the needs and aspirations of women. Currently, the programs which attempt to respond to these needs are contradictory or overlap the two levels of government. This is felt in the costs and the services too.

In its brief, the Regroupement raises women's concerns which the Commission must study, namely, the entrenchment of women's rights to equality, immigration and population decline, abortion, equal pay, tax reform, child care services, spouse abuse and family violence, and the representation of women. The Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord believes that it is urgent for Québec to provide

itself with a blueprint for society, leading to fully assumed independence.

In short, our position: A sovereign Québec. We are for Québec's national sovereignty as long as women have an equal place, because we are aware that sovereignty is necessary for us to build a society that is more democratic, French, pluralist in values, open to the world, respectful of our environment, egalitarian between men and women, equitable and respectful of the rights and needs of workers of both sexes; a society in which the common language will be French, but which will respect the legitimate and specific needs and rights of the other nations, so that their members will be included, integrated into the "us" without having to be assimilated. We are therefore for Québec sovereignty, because this would enable us to exercise powers and responsibilities with which we would be able to build a more democratic society, and therefore one which is more just and more equitable towards all its components. We don't have any illusions about all that: it isn't going to be like reaching the Promised Land. We will have to be vigilant and fight against racism and sexism, and fight for the recognition and expansion of democratic rights. Quebecers of both sexes will have to use these democratic rights to gain sovereignty. We believe a referendum would be the means to use in this regard.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, madam. We will begin with the party forming the Official Opposition. Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hello, Mrs. Saint-Jean, Ladies. You have a very interesting and also a very pertinent brief. You pointed out what may seem to us, to you and to me, as proof that only through independence can women, can individuals, as people, develop fully.

You told us that it is urgent for Québec to provide itself with a blueprint for society, which would lead to fully assumed independence. You suggested a certain number of constituent elements of what should be a blueprint for society in order to ensure, for example, the full participation of women in the country of Québec or in a sovereign Québec. You spoke of urgency. In your opinion, what would be the means of consulting the population regarding Québec's blueprint for society? Do you envisage holding a referendum? If so, when?

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** In our opinion, the best means would be a referendum. It's the one which, I think, truly gives the right, the opportunity to the majority to... that is, to all citizens who want to avail themselves of their right to give their opinion. At this time, I think that, and we all believe it here, the referendum is the most appropriate tool in the current context in Québec.

As regards the time, a consultation is taking place; we are attending it today. As commissioners, you travel throughout Québec to listen to people. I believe that, shortly after this democratic process, we could proceed with a referendum. I think that to leave such important questions to drag on would only perhaps make matters worse and would really not serve anyone's cause.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** What should be the question? Because there are those who suggest that we should proceed using hypotheses, and others who say: A simple question, that everyone understands, to which we can say "yes" or "no".

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** I think that all ordinary women on the Côte-Nord would say to you: Ask us a simple, clear question.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Such as?

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** I believe that there are perhaps people who are more competent than we ordinary women. We would like to participate - that's what we said - in the drafting of the question, but I think that to give you one like that, just off the top of my head, would be a bit much.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Should Québec become sovereign, and should it have ties, establish economic ties with Canada? Do you think that that would be appropriate?

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** I think that these are very simple and very clear questions which could be appropriate.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Fine. One last question, because my colleague would like to speak. Several speakers have associated the blueprint for society with Québec's independence, the sovereignty blueprint. And many claimed that we must first provide ourselves with a blueprint for society before seeking power. Do you think that it is realistic to believe that we can do both at the same time? Would it be preferable to seek power first, and then design our blueprint for society? What is your opinion on this?

**Mrs. Dubé (Yolande):** I think that, as a blueprint for society, women have long made proposals regarding a blueprint for sovereignty, namely, their needs. And I think, not only women, but men too. So, based on these facts, I think that we already have what we need, the bases we need to see what our society should be, what we want as a society.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** So, power first; then, in light of information obtained, we will be able to design the blueprint for society. I must tell you

that I am one of those Commission members who appreciate, who desire and who even encourage the presentation of opinions on the elements which should be contained in the blueprint for tomorrow's society, and I am happy to see that there are many briefs which contain this and which present this to us. For that, I thank you.

(12:15 p.m.)

**Mrs. Marois:** So, thank you for your presentation. In fact, like my colleague, it is interesting to remember that the taboos are finally disappearing, because in 1980, this parallel between the independence of women and the independence of peoples couldn't have been established; the curse had to fall upon us. Having said this, you mentioned that there are urgent problems to solve concerning the life of women in the regions. You also mentioned in your brief that there are costly duplications between the different powers of Québec and Ottawa. Could you identify some of these duplications which have an impact on the lives of women and on the difficulties in solving the problems which women in the regions are experiencing?

**Mrs. Leduc (Lorraine):** Yes. There are in fact several areas in which we see problems. For example, there is the entire question of women's access to services... and family access to child care services. I think that, at the present time, that's what's happening between the federal Government and the provincial Government, an impact which we, as residents of remote regions, feel is very strong and not very positive on this issue and on the needs of families. It is time that we had organized and structured child care services, supported, yes, by the State, but accessible to the largest number of individuals or families possible.

As regards other fields in which we see problems, I will mention only that we often observe that, here too, women workers at the federal level, even if they are in Québec, and particularly on the Côte-Nord, cannot take advantage of the infamous issue of preventive withdrawal from work. This is another area in which we see problems. To name just a few others, the question of access to the workplace, and to tell you that, in our area, the question of occupational training must be dealt with immediately so that we have training that will truly be adjusted to the needs of women, and especially will give them more rapid access to the labour market. I would expand this point by adding that the question of non-traditional jobs is very important, and we must truly make progress in this area.

However, I would like to point out that our colleagues of the Centre d'immersion de Baie-Comeau have been pioneers for 10 years and they have now arrived at an agreement negotiated with one of the largest North

American companies, the Reynolds metal company, for the short-term integration of 50 women in a variety of non-traditional jobs which do not require a university education. We know quite well that women who have had the opportunity to benefit from a university education – and that's another problem, we don't have a university on the Côte-Nord – they can, as architects, engineers, etc., obtain jobs more easily and quickly in all non-traditional fields and sectors. But for women who live in remote regions and who need education in addition to Secondary V, this is their first opportunity. But I would like to tell you that this is only the beginning of what must be looked into.

My God, I hope that we will perhaps bring up the question of abortion again a little later in other questions. We must not make it a crime. I think that Québec has already taken certain steps in another direction which is much more desirable for the women of our region. I would also add, equal pay – I will cite you an example which will illustrate what I'm talking about – equal pay for equal work. I can tell you that, not long ago, this took place not more than five years ago, women of the Baie-Trinité region told us that, in a fish processing plant, there were jobs held by an equal number of women and men for which women were paid \$1 an hour less. Five years isn't all that long ago. And we still have a lot of catching up to do.

**Mrs. Marois:** One last question. In all the debates concerning constitutional issues, we have seen a cleavage between Canadian women and Québec women. And I would like to know if, in this regard, you also stand in the wake of what Québec women saw as being better for their future and their progress. Canadian women often turned to Ottawa to say: We have the impression that our rights are better protected. I would say most of them. Whereas Québec women – and the Conseil du statut de la femme also stated this message before the Commission – turned to Québec to say: We have the Québec Charter, and we have the impression that recognition of the equality between men and women is more effectively ensured by means of very concrete measures which were implemented. Do you also share this point of view?

**Mrs. Leduc:** Absolutely. I think that everyone here around the table is unanimous, and we have also had the opportunity to speak many times about it with all the members of the group who are – I'll say it again – women from Tadoussac to the Basse-Côte-Nord and, definitely, everything that we want to advocate is in regard to the entrenchment of everything that is in the Canadian Charter, within...

**Mrs. Marois:** Québec.

**Mrs. Leduc:** Québec, I'm sorry.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now turn to the questions of the other members. Mrs. Campbell Steer.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Thank you very much. In my opinion, poverty is at the root of the status of women, as you said. And if we could tackle this problem effectively, we could perhaps improve the status of another evil in our society, that of world poverty. But it is in regard to this fight against poverty that I will ask you the following short questions. Could you give me some details regarding the tax reform that you are advocating?

**Mrs. Dubé:** The tax reform that we are advocating is to remove the inequality between men and women. In our opinion, value must definitely be given to the work that is done in the home, housework. In our opinion, that would truly help bring about a better concern...

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Could that go as far as being covered by the Régime de rentes de Québec?

**Mrs. Dubé:** That's what I was going to tell you.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** O.K.

**Mrs. Dubé:** It's that, basically, it will assure our women not to be concerned about their poverty, which is currently the status of those who reach...

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** And especially when they are old.

**Mrs. Dubé:** ...retirement. That's right. So, we are also talking about integration into the Régime de rentes du Québec.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** I also wanted to approach the other question from another angle. You said that we need a sovereign Québec, in your opinion, to tackle all problems concerning the status of women. With the repatriation of the powers which affect the family and occupational training, do you think that this repatriation could be a step in the right direction - without being completely sovereign - a step in the right direction to meeting our needs?

**Mrs. Lévesque (Guyline):** We know that if we have at least the elements to decide ourselves, together, what we want to do - we were talking about a social contract - and with the society that we want to build. I think that then we will have the elements to do so, and

only time will tell whether we will be able to agree on that, and to truly elevate the status of women.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Does that mean that, at the very least, the powers or the jurisdiction in the field of occupational training and all the policies which affect the family should be, at the very least, repatriated to Québec in any case? Or does such a thing definitely require a sovereign Québec?

**Mrs. Leduc:** For us, the position is clear. It's a sovereign Québec upon which we will build all programs, and we will repatriate everything that must be repatriated to subsequently make and truly design this blueprint together. Perhaps just... Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer, is that right?

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** That's too long, Cheryl will do.

**Mrs. Leduc:** I would just like to point out that the poverty of women of the Côte-Nord is especially striking. For women from Québec in general, we're talking about an average income that is 64% of that of men. For the Côte-Nord, it's 54.9%. Do you see, there is already a disparity for us. We are always, always trying to catch up, to compensate.

In our opinion, it is clear that, at this time, we must again bring up this blueprint for society, to build it together and ensure that the women of the regions can also contribute, through job creation. I would like to mention the Pignon sur rue project, which was... Our Member, Mr. Perron, and other people here are very familiar with the project which was advocated by the Regroupement des femmes during the socio-economic summit conference, and which looked in real estate purchases. This represents for us a new economic strength, and currently enables us, already, to create jobs and foresee the creation of companies, which will also contribute, in terms of creating jobs or cooperating at the occupational training level, to projects for the Côte-Nord, by women and for women.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** That means that for you, you must begin again with a "clean slate", that means, renewing the social contract.

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** I think that we must renew... You said earlier, fine, repatriation would be the absolute minimum, but should issues overlap even if we had... First, we know that it isn't easy, the proof is that for years the two levels of government have worked for that and have not really arrived at an understanding. So, I think that since the absolute minimum has not been reached with the current form of

government it would be better to simply try a new method. I don't think that it could be worse. It will surely not be easy, but I don't think that it could be more difficult.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mrs. Côté.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...who will be followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mrs. Côté:** I'm sorry that time does not permit me to speak about the rights of Native people because I think that there are similarities: the recognition of aspirations and especially the embodiment of rights. When you answered that the women's movement has demanded a large number of major principles and concrete statements, I think that Québec, in redefining itself, must not forget that poverty is the lot of women. And that there are rights which must be embodied.  
(12:30 p.m.)

I have two questions. In your conclusion, you spoke about ensuring that women are equally represented in political power structures. Have you studied the entire election reform issue and the fact that the voice of women in Parliament, if it had equal weight, could provide women with greater opportunities? First question. And the second, I know that because you have someone on the Canadian Advisory Council, I know that the movement of women, of Francophones outside Québec, respects the step that women have taken in Québec, but they say very clearly that they would like to maintain ties. Have you thought about that? Or perhaps madam has heard about it in the movement in which she militates.

**Mrs. Leduc:** Perhaps if I could answer the second part of your question first, I think that it is in fact essential for Francophone women outside Québec to continue to have ties with Québec women. All our expertise, the enrichment that we could provide up until now, and also to the advances in Québec society, in our opinion, they are our sisters, regardless of where they're from. Just like we also have Native women who actively participate in our work within the group. There are some differences, but, basically, the main thing, the major problems which they experience are the same as ours. So why not?

**Mrs. Lévesque:** I would like to continue in the same vein as Mrs. Leduc. It is obvious that we will maintain ties with Anglophone women as we now maintain and support them with Native women. We have proven that. When there were cuts in the Equal Opportunities for Women program at the Secretary of State that were truly beyond the level of cultures and

languages, women prepared themselves together and fought together so that there wouldn't be any cuts in this program. As regards voting procedures, whatever they are, I don't think that there is one which would be better or would help women more to participate in politics. I think that, for example, effective and flexible child care services would help women to go into politics more. It must not be forgotten that, despite the social changes which have taken place, women still remain responsible for the family and responsible for children, and they always have this concern in their minds, which means that a woman often will refuse to go into politics because she has family obligations holding her back.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Dubé:** Just to add that, once women have acquired this financial independence, of course they will be able to become more involved. Currently, we know that in their current state of poverty, it's difficult for them to obtain these jobs.

**Mrs. Leduc:** If I may also add something, it is my opinion also that women, once they have taken their rightful place everywhere, in all job sectors in Québec society, will be in a better position to participate also in politics. You know as well as I do that often - and this is a model that we wouldn't necessarily want to repeat in future - let's say, women who have up until now been able to obtain a job in politics are people who have already had some latitude in their jobs, some leeway, a profession, a professional body behind them to push them on. When you are a secretary, your boss is not always prepared to give you the days off you need to go to meetings to become involved with a political party and become involved in the political arena.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, Mr. Hogue, who will be followed by Mr. Allard.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you. I read the brief; I found it interesting. I would like to ask you just one preliminary question. When, in your opening, you spoke about subsidies that you receive from the Secretary of State, you refer or you mention Mr. Weiner's department. Fine. And I got the impression of quite a positive association, but I think it would be useful for me to point out that you have taken a position for a sovereign Québec and that this is being done - and I'm saying it, you know, with great simplicity and respect for the institutions - by means of financing which comes from Mr. Weiner's department. I tell you this: Bravo, because the Conservative government is open enough in its approach to listen to Québec.

Based on that, I would like to ask you a question which, in my opinion, is fundamental, and I know that my colleague, Mr. Larose, is expecting it, because he knows that I'll ask it as often as possible. It seems to me that independence is connected to and is found by means of not only an external approach, but also an internal approach - I'm sure that we agree on that - and that independence, at the same time, is achieved in the recognition of the presence of associations; therefore, we can only be independent insofar as we recognize our dependence on the other and on others. You agree to that too. To be sovereign, we must be sovereign with respect to others. So, therefore, to be independent, we must accept the presence of others. I would like to understand how, as women - I could ask men this question, but they are so macho that they are always right - how, as women, you place your women's approach in the historical past as the dominated, the dependents, people who had to stay in their place, etc.? The entire vocabulary of men, you know it as well as I do. So, in your relationships with the men in your lives, to assume your independence, your presence, your equality, your embodiment of rights - as Mrs. Côté mentioned - you didn't have to separate. I ask you the question openly, while accepting your answer in advance.

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** First, I would like to specify, Mr. Hogue, that when you speak of independence, that independence is the result of an internal and external approach to the individual, to the human being, and that this is carried out perforce within a dependent relationship, therefore, in relation to the outside, there is someone. I cannot set myself up as independent. Others must recognize this independence. I'm in agreement with that. But on the personal level, in man-woman relationships, I think that we can no longer speak of being dependent, as you have. It is not necessarily a question of separation in a couple for the woman to have the same degree of independence as the man. Rather, I would speak of interdependence. And that goes for both men and women, for adults and children, and I think that that goes for peoples.

It is obvious that a Québec will not truly be sovereign unless the entire international community, its immediate neighbours and others recognize its sovereignty. In that case, I think that we cannot talk about dependence. Recognition is one thing, but to be dependent, that's something else. There are countries which were colonized, our history has shown that to us. I think that we can speak about interdependence. We can be independent and, as an equal partner, negotiate or sign agreements with all the other nations who want to associate with us on different levels.

**Mr. Hogue:** Fine. I accept that answer, that concept of interdependence. It's in this regard that when my daughter listens to, watches television... She's at home, she's 27 years old, she is doing her doctorate in psychology. And she is totally independent. You know, she eats when she wants to, then she goes to the university when she wants to. She doesn't need her mother or her father to know what she has to do. But she lives inside an environment, without having to leave what is called the family unit, to do her doctorate. And I've come to my second question, and it's the last.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** But your time is up, Mr. Hogue. Perhaps if you had gone a little more quickly, you would have had a fast answer!

**Mr. Hogue:** ...regarding fully assumed independence. That's what you said. Cannot that be done within the federal framework?

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** I will try to answer your question. I think that that could be done if the spouse hadn't already, from the beginning, completely denied the identity of the culture of the other. And that's an answer - I must admit - which is totally personal. I believe that I did not consult my colleagues on this.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Allard, who will be followed by Mr. Beaumier.

**Mr. Allard:** Ladies, I have gone through the list of your concerns in your brief and there are several, in my opinion, of these concerns that have not been dealt with or resolved which have nothing to do with the issue of whether Québec should be independent or part of the Canadian federation. If they haven't been resolved - some of them come under provincial jurisdiction - it's not because Québec is part of the Canadian federation. They could have been resolved by the gouvernement du Québec. Maybe if they haven't been resolved, it's a question of financial resources, probably. There's something causing you to believe that if Québec were sovereign, the resources available to it would lead to the resolution of some of these concerns or maybe it's also a question of attitude or mentality. I think that this is your main concern, and that you demand the entrenchment of the right to equality for all women. To my knowledge, there is nothing in the Canadian Constitution or in the charters of rights and freedoms which denies women equality. It occurs in practice, I suppose. Therefore, it's not a constitutional question when you demand that it be entrenched. What is the use of expressing it differently in the charter if

attitudes and mentalities haven't changed? We're not much further ahead. So my question is: Couldn't some or most of these concerns already have been responded to by the governments within the federation? Do you agree that there are concerns which depend more on attitudes than on Québec's laws or constitutional status?

**Mrs. Leduc:** I think we in the Regroupement have considered this question a great deal and it appears obvious to us that it is not just a question of repatriating the budget that would make the difference, but perhaps also because currently, this situation we are experiencing in Québec, in terms of timing, if you will excuse the expression, is occurring at the same time, I think, as the entire process...initiated by women, and both are coming to a head at the same time.

In other words, I believe that there will be a greater chance of success if women become truly involved in all that is to be organized in Québec society, in an independent Québec society. I think that this criterion of women's participation at all levels is essential and it appears to me that it will also be a guarantee, if you will, of success. It's not just a question of budget.

**Mr. Allard:** But there's nothing stopping you at the moment.

**Mrs. Leduc:** I think this is something that has to be resolved among Quebecers.

**Mr. Allard:** Perhaps, but there's nothing stopping you at the moment. Is this not true?

**Mrs. Leduc:** The process is much longer, in the words of my colleague.

**Mrs. Dubé:** Exactly. The process is much longer and at the moment, we can say that the governments, each of them, are determining what they, too, can contribute. But, as concerns our current needs, it is only recently that we have been able to express what has always been confined to the kitchen, being careful and all that. So give us a chance. I believe that we want to speak out and that we too want to decide how we will contribute to this enrichment. Yes, we want to enrich our Québec and, through the presence of women, I think there is a way to accomplish this. Of course I tell myself: Perhaps, but changing the mentality, as you mentioned, I wouldn't want us to be the only ones responsible for changing the mentality. I would also like everyone, men and women both, all of us to help change the mentality.

**Mr. Allard:** I didn't say that it should be you who should make these changes, if you recall.

**Mrs. Dubé:** I hope not, because we have placed much of our hope in you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** All right, it was to be Mr. Beaumier's turn, I believe. I think we registered you, perhaps, in the wrong place - at any rate, we'll sort it out later - and we go now to Mr. Daoust.

**Mr. Daoust:** Without going into the decision-making process, I'd like you to explain to us how this consensus on Québec's independence was reached within your association. This is an extremely interesting association, which - as you mentioned, from Tadoussac to Blanc-Sablon, including Natashquan, birthplace of Gilles Vigneault, an association of 17 women's groups - reached this consensus. There is, obviously, while you reflect on my first question, the problem of duplication that you pointed out. You have dealt with part of it. I'd like to hear your comments, if possible, on duplication in the area of occupational training. You mentioned the very obvious one concerning day-care centres. We all recall that in December 1987, the Canadian Government, the federal government, your government, Mr. Hogue, announced, with a great deal of fanfare, a federal public policy on the country's child care services. We objected to this. We had a great many reservations with respect to the federal government's intervention in sectors traditionally under provincial jurisdiction, for the many reason which you cited, Mrs. Leduc and others here. We did not think that the priorities, aims, planning and we do not think - I am looking at you, because you were the one who brought it up - that it can be decided nationally, as was the case with this day-care policy announced in December 1987, which, by the way, was never implemented. But I would like to hear your comments on occupational training, this costly duplication which has been pointed out by many groups and which affects you specifically, as women.

**Mrs. Leduc:** All right, first on the question of duplication, here, we have concluded that, for several years, women have been faced with problems where this duplication is concerned. An issue which is a bit, I would use as an image, a bit of fancy footwork. A need for occupational training is determined, a year or two before the fact. Then, when the time comes to offer it, we are obliged to go to the federal level for funding. Then we return to the regions, and whoops! something has happened at the regional level or in recruiting or at other levels which means that we can no longer have the funding. They say that all things come to those who wait, but eventually we get tired of waiting, because we are in desperate need of vocational

education based on needs which are not merely periodic but which can be analyzed in the long term, but for which there is more flexibility in the repatriation either of budgets or training specialists because here, we need this as well, specialized resources. They are not always available in remote regions.

This means that we are always behind in this area, and women... When you spoke of inappropriate use or loss of resources, I think it's a loss of resources and also a considerable economic loss, if we do not receive the occupational training necessary to enable us to enter the labour market as rapidly as possible. And this is often the case. This is just an example I wanted to give you.

If I wanted to go into more detail, I would have to write to you, Mr. Daoust, because these are the elements I wanted to present to you here today. But if you wish more information we could add more, through a subsequent document, if possible.

(12:45 p.m.)

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** Now, to respond to your first question concerning the process which led the Regroupement to adopt the viewpoint it is defending today, the Regroupement, O.K., for this vast territory – and we saw this earlier, financial resources are rather limited – our method of operation includes bringing together all of our members, those at any rate who are able to travel twice a year. Every spring and fall we hold a meeting in various Côte-Nord locations so that women from all over can attend and, during our discussions, we touch on all kinds of topics, Québec's future as well as the future of women, the problems of remote regions, the issue of fishing on the Basse-Côte-Nord, being the wife of a fisherman, the shutdown of fish plants, all this, these are topics which are dealt with at our twice-yearly meetings.

It is as part of this process, at recent meetings, that the viewpoint was expressed. We on the board of directors observed that there was a parallel between women's need for independence to grow as individuals, and a people's need for independence. These are points which have already been raised. They have not been the subject of official polls or any form of scientific inquiry.

We said earlier: We are ordinary women and it is with our ordinary resources and extraordinary determination to meet twice a year... it's difficult. We wanted to go, last spring, to Tête-à-la-Baleine. We still lack the means to do so. We're working at it. The women from this community are willing to host us and are also working to obtain – in their environment, it is perhaps even more difficult than in Baie-Comeau or Sept-Îles – the funds to do so. The decision-making process and the position adopted by the Regroupement are based on meetings of our members.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now continue with the questions from the group forming the Government. Mrs. Bégin.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Mr. Chairman. Good day, Ladies. It is with great interest that I read your brief. You have submitted to us a blueprint for society for the Québec of tomorrow. You deal with the declining birth rate, abortion, wage equity, tax reform, child care services and spouse abuse. These, naturally, are priority concerns for any government.

May I remind you that, all the same, the governments, whether it be mine or those preceding us, have adopted laws which are favourable to women. I am thinking, among others, of the right to vote, granted 50 years ago. It is then that we began to assert ourselves. There is also the family residence which was adopted under the Parti québécois and which is a positive thing for women, enabling us to prevent the husband, for one reason or another, from mortgaging or selling the family residence, provided, naturally, that it has been declared the "family residence."

Under our Government, you will recall that we established the bonus to encourage families to have children because you point out in your brief that a serious problem currently exists in Québec: the declining birth rate. This policy has resulted in, as observed recently, a 1.4% increase in the birth rate, up from 1.6%. Not enormous, but encouraging.

We also adopted Bill 146 because, in your brief, you refer to the impoverishment of divorced women. Therefore, we recently passed, approximately a year ago, Bill 146, which allows women, following a divorce or decease, to receive certain assets, determined by law, acquired during the marriage.

Currently, we are in the process of amending the Labour Standards Act to include parental leave. And this, despite what you may think, was all accomplished within the constitutional framework with which we are all familiar. And I think it is important, all the same, to point it out at this stage. However, I agree with you that there are things which could be improved within the current federation, such as overlapping jurisdiction. You mentioned it and I am, I agree with you, whether it be with respect to occupational training, immigration or other areas, child care services for example. I think the Constitution must be improved but, all the same, I wanted to point out to you that what was accomplished before was accomplished within the current constitutional framework.

You know, right now, we are in the regions and we are meeting with women from the regions. And several of these women have emphasized the importance, in the future constitution, whether it be Canadian or québécois, that the regions must assume. Some of



them have said that we must consider, in the next constitution, attributing powers directly to the regions.

My question is the following: Do you think that the claims you have made within your brief itself would be better honoured if these powers were attributed to regional authorities? I would like to hear your comments on this.

**Mrs. Saint-Jean:** I personally believe that the regions could, indeed, have a more important role to play on a decision-making level, whether with regard to the economy, politics or policies affecting everyday life. Earlier, a question was asked about Canadian women who call more upon federal power and Québec women who appeal more to provincial power. If we apply this strictly within Québec territory, it is obvious that what affects the everyday life of men and women is the closest level of government which, often, is the best situated. Thus, at the local and regional levels, there are many things to be done. Moreover, it is in municipal politics that women are often the most active because this level is more accessible to them.

I think that the regions must be allowed to express their opinion and their specific needs must be more widely acknowledged. We often speak of "outlying regions", but outlying as compared to what? From the Côte-Nord, it is Québec and Ottawa that are remote. So, it's easy to say, but the fact remains that the people living in these regions do not necessarily feel that they are isolated from what is happening or from the nation's major issues. Therefore, the regions have the right to be heard and this could encourage more active participation by women, definitely, than if everything was negotiated at the central level. I do agree, however, that there are themes where... how can I explain, legislative changes, all that, which must be made, and which affect all of Québec and Canada, in the current situation. At that time, they will also have to be made at that level. But I think we must always consult the regional and local levels, to get anywhere. In any case, we in the Regroupement, as I explained to Mr. Daoust earlier, we always try to consider everyone's opinion, even if, in our meetings, we do not always have a large number of women from each region, since transportation is expensive and distances are considerable. For a two-day meeting, some women must travel for two or three days from the Basse-Côte to... or to the centre of the Côte or from northern towns, not to mention Anticosti, the distances are even greater from there.

So, if women could participate at the regional level, it would give us some leverage, indeed, and even if it was in a sovereign Québec, I think it would be important. Even in the current federation, there are things that could be improved.

**Mrs. Bégin:** Thank you, madam. I will now turn over the microphone, if I may, Mr. Chairman, to my colleague from Matane.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you. Now, Ladies, it gives me great pleasure to speak with you because, you know, I myself am from the Côte-Nord. I see that a group from Sacré-Coeur or a group of women is among the 17 groups you are representing today. I am very pleased to speak with you.

You know, I too am a woman from the regions and I fully understand the concerns you have brought before the commissioners today, with respect to regional development, occupational training, all the problems women are usually faced with in urban centres and more specifically, to a greater degree, in peripheral regions, like the Côte-Nord, Abitibi and the Bas-Saint-Laurent. But I harbour a specific concern, when we think of, speak of, sovereignty. You officially declared yourselves in favour of Québec's sovereignty and I have a concern, which is: How could a sovereign Québec improve the situation of women in outlying regions? For example, you mention manpower training. How... What would be the structures, for example, that a sovereign government could implement to help... to protect the investments, for example, for women, as concerns adjustment and occupational training? Because becoming sovereign does not automatically mean that the investments, if you will, in occupational training are better protected for women, especially in the regions. Have you considered this issue?

**Mrs. Leduc:** Not to any great extent, to be frank with you. I think that our authenticity is the first thing we want to respect today, here, and convey to you. However, I would like to go over with you certain aspects of what you have said. First, as concerns occupational training, it appears to us that, if we were in a sovereign Québec, this would more likely be an issue between the regions and the government level which would become national and Québécois, there would thus be this possibility of agreement to increase both the amounts and the training diversity available to women in the regions, as well, we think, not just in urban centres.

On the other hand, there is a theme which we looked at today, to which we would like to draw your attention, which is that of immigration. Immigrant women, as far as we are concerned, are welcome. I would like to mention that the Regroupement has thought long and hard on this issue of opening up internationally, to the world. We said earlier that if we become a sovereign Québec, we will have to earn this recognition, but recognition also means accepting these people. They urgently require guaranteed training opportunities at the occupational

training level, not just at a language level, in my opinion. Because a part of the success of these female immigrants' integration depends on the opportunities granted them to gain access to the working world.

I am deeply concerned right now over what is happening in various areas of our country, Canada, concerning placement bureaus for women immigrants who arrive here only to be sent to work as maids in families and be exploited, not only financially, but physically as well. They suffer a great deal of sexual abuse, and I think that these are issues we have looked at and which concern us greatly and we would like to see, in a sovereign Québec, legislation creating reception services, but also structures monitoring these women, in the areas of language and occupational training and also encouraging them to come to the regions, to settle in our homeland and increase our population, we are also speaking of demography, in this respect. And we are thinking of these aspects.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):**

Unfortunately, the time is up for this group. We return to the preceding group, because an error in the lists caused us to forget Mr. Poissant, to whom I now turn over the microphone.

**Mr. Poissant:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Saint-Jean, in your introduction, you spoke of skills, especially in management. Needless to say, I was very happy to hear this. This skill reminds me that, not only for women but for men as well, this is one of the major human resources we have here in Québec. We often speak of natural resources, and when we think of this vast potential we have and that belongs to us and will always belong to us and how we grow, have grown and are still growing in this area, the more it will be positive for Québec. I must say, however, that female chartered accountants, for example, represent an ever-growing proportion. I think they are now 60% upon graduation: this is highly commendable. May I say, as an aside, that this is occurring within the current constitutional framework.

However, you also spoke of the declining birth rate, and it's true, it's a serious problem in Québec, because we're trying to resolve it through immigration, but we don't always succeed as we would like. I must say that, for a company, ours included, we have been thinking seriously for some time now of giving a birth bonus to employees or their spouses. Another message I would like to convey is that business people are human, too! We think of these things, and so the child care services replaced by something similar... should help a bit, it will never fill all the empty economic space you have.

You spoke of two things, the exodus... Yesterday, Mr. Gendron referred to this very

exodus out of the regions into the urban centres, and asked the question that I want to put to you: What action can be taken, in the current or future context, against the exodus from the country, if you will, toward the urban centres?

Another question, which will be the last, because I think the time is already up, you answered Mrs. Blackburn earlier that recourse to a referendum was required, but that the question was very simple.

This requires, obviously, given Quebecers' current skill level, that we ask a simple question, as long as they are well informed. And this is essential. But at the Commission, we have this problem. There is an agreement called the Vienna Convention which says: This is the procedure to follow when new states are formed. I'm taking things a bit far, obviously, but it's just to show you that as concerns state succession, in two things, there are two chapters, if you will, to this act or agreement. The first part refers to our treaties with other countries. It is therefore assumed that we should normally respect our treaties with other countries. However, the convention stipulates that economic affairs are optional, namely, will the State, for example the United States with respect to us, accept it.

The other, which is just as important for us Commission members, is what are we going to do to evaluate our property, debts and archives which belong in part to Ottawa? As much as I agree with you, madam, that the question should be simple, but will there still be... We have the obligation, I believe, to say to Québec citizens: Here are the problems with which we are faced, the means to resolve them. And God knows that, yes, there are trends which tell us: Well, let's separate, and then negotiating will be easier. So I asked myself the question, and I am asking you.

So, two things I asked you, the problem of reversing the exodus in the current context, regardless of the future Constitution, and secondly how much time are you giving us to explain to Quebecers the final question we'll be asking them?

**Mrs. Leduc:** Well, perhaps on the question of the exodus, in any case, we estimate that currently there is little - and there could be much more in a sovereign Québec - support for job creation projects for young people and women. We have currently, within the Regroupement, projects in this area, but we believe that there could be forms of financial support for the development of projects which would maintain the population in outlying regions. I am thinking of young people in particular, when I say this. Because it is indeed a problem, but not one which appears unsolvable. There again, the participation of the Regroupement, or other authorities representing

women, in the area of what could be termed resources in remote regions to resolve this exodus problem, is another means; support for participation. It is obvious that we need financial support. We have no choice but to obtain funding.

**Mrs. Dubé:** So the mere fact of preparing ourselves, when we had such a short presentation time and no money or equipment to be able to table various briefs, which means that we were forced to moderate our presentation. And, if you will, this is our reality. And it's deplorable, but if we had more time, if we had people too whom we could pay and depend on to do so, we would be capable of going much further. That is our reality. It is deplorable, but it exists nonetheless. This is why we want to change it.

And as concerns the simple question, I say that, of course, when the time comes to decide on something, one must be informed. But I think that a question was already asked several years ago and since then, progress has been made. We've gone through a lot since then. I think we are already well-informed. As responsible citizens, if we are lacking information, we'll ask questions and make sure we find out what we need to know to answer them.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The time for this presentation is now up. I would like to heartily thank the Regroupement des femmes de la Côte-Nord for having taken the time to present us with their views.

**Mrs. Chiasson (Denise):** May I add something please?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Of course, rapidly, go ahead.

**Mrs. Chiasson:** Thirty seconds. Earlier, Mr. Daoust asked us how we went about obtaining the support of our members. As we explained, we were indeed limited in the time allotted for presenting our brief. This is partly why it is less detailed than other briefs you have read to date. But we nevertheless sent a letter to each and every member of the Regroupement, asking them to support the brief we presented today before this Commission, and we received a dozen or so letters. I would like them to be tabled in the file, please.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** With pleasure. The secretariat will receive them, madam. I would like to thank you for having taken the time to submit your views to us, despite the time constraints and other aspects you just mentioned, and for having answered all the questions asked by the members of our group. So, thank you, Mrs. Beaudin, Mrs.

Lévesque, Mrs. Dubé, Mrs. Chiasson, Mrs. Leduc and Mrs. Saint-Jean. Proceedings are now adjourned. I would like to remind members of the Commission that the door on my left marked "Exit" leads to the cafeteria where there is a buffet, which should allow everyone to be back by 2:00 p.m., when we will resume. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 1:05 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:08 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** The Commission begins its sittings this afternoon with the Corporation de protection de l'environnement de Sept-Îles.

Mrs. Villeneuve and Mr. Vigneault, you know that this is a one-hour presentation. You therefore have 10 minutes to present your brief in its entirety. There will then be a 10-minute question period for both the Government party and the Opposition party, and 25 minutes for the members. The remaining time, if there is any, is for the Chair.

Mrs. Villeneuve, if you would please introduce the table and then present your brief.

#### **Corporation de protection de l'environnement de Sept-Îles**

**Mrs. Villeneuve (Claudette):** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the Corporation de protection de l'environnement de Sept-Îles is here today because it considers its appearance before the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec to be absolutely essential. It believes that you are responsible for our future and that you should therefore be made aware of what we want as Quebecers.

The Corporation de protection de l'environnement de Sept-Îles was founded in 1979. It is an environmental organization, like many others in Québec, that has a volunteer membership and that has reached the point where it can now afford to have people working for it on a permanent basis.

We work at the local, regional and provincial levels, all at the same time. You may have noticed that we belong to several organizations at different levels. We even attended Globe 90 in Vancouver, precisely because we are part of the Canadian network of ecological groups.

We have serious environmental problems in Québec. I don't think that I need to go into a detailed list right now - we mention them in the brief you have before you - but we feel that with what the future has in store for us, we're really going to have to take the environment into consideration.

Like all Quebecers, we at the Corporation de protection de l'environnement à Sept-Îles want as much autonomy as possible for Québec and if the majority speaks out in favour of sovereignty, then by all means, yes, but not at any price, not at the price of a government that believes that because it was elected it can do whatever it likes. The choice of the blueprint for society that we need absolutely must be a democratic one and we have to ask ourselves some important questions: What will greater political autonomy mean to the environment? What impact will independence have on the future quality of our environment? Our fear is that our economy will take priority over the environment when it comes down to making decisions, and there's a lot of evidence to support this.

At this point, I would like to ask the commissioners to exclude the three lines concerning the federal Government from our brief. I will not read them out to you, just eliminate them. So, once our environment is destroyed, our ability to meet our own needs is destroyed and we become the prisoners of an industrial system that claims that it can only ensure employment or the quality of the environment, not both. It has been proven, however, that reducing or recycling waste often saves a business money.

If Québec is to become a rich country, guarantee its inhabitants a quality of life and leave its children an inheritance within the context of political independence, it will have to take its environment into account, in other words, the quality of the air that we breathe, the purity of the water we drink, the productivity of the soils we cultivate and the sustainability of the resources we exploit.

The Brundtland Commission report, "Our Common Future", recommends that today's governments take immediate steps to alter the economic structures that are destroying our planet. The responsibility is enormous, for it requires that we restructure decision-making and development priorities. Historically, the economic development accomplished by simplifying the system allowed industry to function and profit. Now, our priorities should focus on environmentally sustainable economic growth.

Our recommendations are based on the measures advocated by Québec's environmentalists at the various meetings, consultations and conferences they have held over the past few months. The Corporation de protection de l'environnement à Sept-Îles therefore asks the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec to take the following recommendations into consideration when it makes its final report: that a declaration of environmental rights be adopted that will guarantee Quebecers the right of recourse to the courts in order to ensure that laws governing

protection of the environment are upheld and enforced and the right to participate fully in government decisions dealing with the environment; second, that legislation on the environmental assessment process be passed stipulating that programs and projects be subjected to rigorous environmental impact assessment; that citizens have the right to participate in all stages of the government environmental assessment process; that an "auditor general" of the environment be appointed to see that government activities comply with laws and regulations concerning the environment; that steps be taken to assert the leading role of the Government by clarifying its responsibilities with regard to the environment, conservation and pollution; that subsidies that compromise resources be abolished and the use of renewable resources and more cautious use of non-renewable resources be encouraged; that ecological risks be evaluated before new technology is placed on the market too quickly; that an income tax system be established that encourages environmentally benign practices and discourages consumerism that produces excessive waste and increases pollution; and that the sustainable development of Native groups be supported.

In an independent Québec, the Côte-Nord region will still have extensive and varied resources - mines, forests, fisheries and energy - but overexploitation has already depleted these resources permanently. Many parts of our northern lands are loaded down with mining residues. The forest we looked on as inexhaustible has receded by over 100 kilometres in the upper Côte-Nord region. Fishermen are already witnessing a decrease in their catches and we are in the process of sacrificing rivers to the god of energy, not to mention the fact that our lakes have become acidified and our sea contaminated by activities upstream.

We recommend that virgin lands be preserved and protected from all forms of development, in order to safeguard the diversity of plant and animal life; that the environment and Native traditions be taken into account in developing the North; that air-borne pollution in the region be eliminated; that water pollution attributable to large urban centres and even to the region itself be eliminated; that forest conservation methods be used that allow diversified and ecologically healthy forests to grow, forest soils to be protected, and mature and irreplaceable forests to be preserved; that a process for global impact assessment be applied to all economic development projects and the full participation of citizens in all stages of the environmental assessment process be promoted; and that public hearings for all projects affecting the environment without exception be ensured and the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur

l'environnement given the tools needed to facilitate consultation.  
(2:15 p.m.)

In a new blueprint for Québec society, the environment, of which we are an integral part, in which our feet are firmly planted, must be stressed in a context of sustainable development – in other words, it must carry as much weight as the economy. With these new values, our quality of life is based on the environment and the economy. During the transition period and also in the future, Quebecers will have to participate in choosing economic projects that involve the quality of their environment. As we approach the year 2000, we should be more concerned with developing a healthy environment than with building huge monuments. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thank you, Mrs. Villeneuve. We will begin with the members' questions. Mr. Jacques Proulx?

**Mr. Proulx:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will say, quickly, that I agree with 98%, 99% of your brief. I think that what you say is very true, and we are aware that the environment, protection of the environment, has been the key priority of all Quebecers and even Canadians for quite some time. Except that I always regret – even though I understand your reaction – I always regret the lack of distinction or qualification of certain facts when these things are presented. Although I agree that things got out of hand, that for a very long time we didn't make much of an effort, if not to say no effort at all, to protect what we had, I would like to add certain distinctions that deal with, you will understand, agriculture and forests, particularly private, untouched forests, so to speak.

Personally, I would say that agriculture, even if for some time there was... You talk about chemical agricultural practices that burned the earth. Well this is not all that true in the case of Québec. There was a time when things were overdone a bit, but for a number of years now enormous efforts have been made, for two reasons: first for reasons of conviction in the case of some people and, second, for reasons of economics. The important thing is that there have been results in terms of protecting and practising agriculture that is sustainable, or economic agriculture. This is the point that I want to make, that if we really want to promote the ecological cause, the cause of protecting the planet, we will have to talk more in these kinds of terms: sustainable agriculture, sustainable development. I think that this is a good approach. The same goes for forests. This wasn't invented yesterday; the ecological groups haven't just invented – not that I want to put them down or anything – this kind of protection.

Our parents, our grandparents knew how to cultivate the forest. We changed some of our ways for a while there, but the fact remains that today, with the means we have given ourselves, the groups and so on, there is excellent rationalization. In fact, we're working on being able to renew this resource and replant on a grand scale.

My question is about my having this problem with... I get the impression that you are confusing a blueprint for Québec society with defining the constitution – I mean Québec's constitution, and so forth. Personally, as a member, I really wouldn't want to disappoint you by giving you the impression that we're going to settle all these problems, although I am in favour of groups, especially regional ones, coming to tell us: Look, the constitution is all very fine and good... It's wonderful to be developing a new project, a new political status, but, at the same time, you mustn't forget that it will have to have this in it, otherwise it will be meaningless. I agree with this. But I want to be very clear with you people. Our mandate... We only have one mandate here, and that is to propose a new political status, or political status anyway, on the basis of the events of the past few years. Try as we might to combine this with other things, you mustn't be too disappointed if it doesn't contain all of your recommendations. My question is: Don't you feel that you are making a mistake by associating, or at any rate by not making the necessary distinctions between political status and a blueprint for a society or a nation?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** A few years back, I became somewhat involved in politics. It wasn't easy for me because I was... I was beginning, I didn't really know anything about it. But a guy, one of my friends, told me: You know, living is political. Everything you do in life, all those things that make for a society, they're all political. So, what we're telling you today... of course we didn't stamp the word "political" on it. We didn't use the word "constitution". Besides, we hinted at it a bit and, if I were to answer you along these lines, I would tell you that if we look at the Côte-Nord region, I think that you are already familiar with how the people of this region feel about sovereignty for Québec.

Let's get back to your question. Everything that we do every day is actually political. I couldn't really see how one could plan a new blueprint for society without talking about the environment. And this is why we made this presentation.

**Mr. Proulx:** Of course, I agree with you completely that the environment belongs in a blueprint for a society. It's probably the first thing we should talk about in planning out a new society. I absolutely agree with you there.

Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now move on to Mr. Beaumier, who will be followed by Mr. Roy.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I must say, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I rather feel like going over and sitting with them so that then I could come back and tell you just how important it is for the environment to be a key component of our blueprint for society.

Having been involved in a study on the survival of, or how to revitalize, the St. Lawrence River, I was in a position to realize just how much we have harmed our environment and that, in all of our political endeavours, we should write in huge letters the words "environment and protection of our quality of life".

I don't want to make a long speech, however, it isn't a habit of mine, but I would like to ask these people who wrote this brief, which is short but nevertheless quite demanding... You have, for example, on page 2... you said that we have to go beyond the municipal stage. You said, on page 3, that ecocatastrophes were recently prevented thanks to the federal government. Then, a little bit further on, you ask us to eliminate airborne pollution in your region. And at the very end, you say "more concerned with developing a healthy environment than with building huge monuments".

I would like you to tell me in a few words what your priority is. On the basis of your research and the work you have done, what should be given immediate priority within the context of a new constitution or a federal agreement or simply a sovereign Québec?

Secondly, tell us which level of government might be in the best position to protect the environment, giving us a few details, because, at the municipal level, we claim that we can do a lot, but we don't have the tools. The provincial government also does a lot, but there's a lack of resources. And the federal government does a lot too, but its efforts don't seem to be coordinated enough to yield results. Can you give me any indications here?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** In a government, if we look at the province of Québec, there are different levels of government. There's the municipal level and there's a degree of regional government, or we could speak in terms of regional county municipalities, and then there's the provincial government. Each level has its responsibilities. But, since there are interactions with the environment throughout Québec, it must be the provincial government, or the national government in a sovereign Québec, that decides

on the environment.

If you read my brief, you will see that I talk about consulting the people to find out what they really want. The people must be informed. And this isn't the first time this has been said. It is of the utmost importance that the citizens be kept informed. Citizens, the public, worry about what they don't know, so they must be informed clearly. Since they are not used to being informed, though, this will take more than a few months. It'll take a few years before they truly realize that the information they are given is reliable.

In answer to your question, I believe it is important, because of the interactions in a given area, that the government for the area concerned manage the environment. But it must work closely with the municipal government, or the regional county municipality government.

**Mr. Beaumier:** There was also the question of what should be given priority. What should be done immediately to improve the situation that you outlined in your brief? I wouldn't want to over-summarize, but at one point you say that we have to start with a charter or adopt a declaration of rights, things... But which is the most important for you?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** It's difficult to say, because I think that they're all important in the present context. Together, all of these recommendations will help improve the quality of our environment. We often talk about the environment as if it were something abstract, when actually it's not. Our feet are firmly planted in our environment, we breathe and drink, we cultivate the land, but when we talk to people about the environment, it's like it was something otherworldly. That's why it's difficult to say right now that we should go ahead with a charter of the environment, that we should do this or that. It's a combination of things that we need to do to ensure the quality of life of Quebecers, of Québec as a whole.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Roy, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to make a general comment. This morning, among other things, concrete advantages for the fulfillment of certain individuals have been attributed to the Canadian political structure. Let me give you an example.

This morning it was said, among other things, that sometimes women had easier access to higher education thanks to the federal system or with the federal system. I have nothing against this being the case but it seems to me that this reasoning and change in meaning is very dangerous. Let's use an analogy. Mr. Hogue was talking about his daughter this morning, so

let's use the analogy of the family. Take this analogy: Would a child that was happy in his or her home be refused access to his or her own independence as an individual because he or she was happy in the home, with his or her parents, in the past? There's something about this that just doesn't stand up, and I think the important thing is that the situation - the analogy of Québec with Canada - I really don't think it stands up when we talk about Québec being happy within Canada, but, anyway! This is the best-case scenario, of course. Enough of this.

I would like to ask a question now. You say this... you make two assertions that I would like you to clarify. You say: "We... want as much autonomy as possible for Québec." I'm a little sceptical about the word "possible". It's a bit like your saying "yes, but" or "yes, if", and I even think you use the expression. And a little bit further on, you say: "In an independent Québec". The feeling I get when I read this is that, obviously, it appears to me to be ambiguous. Either we're sovereign or we're not. Sovereignty is not conditional on something. We are sovereign under the best conditions possible, obviously, but either we are sovereign or we're not. It seems to me that it's not a question of: Sovereign, yes but... I would like to hear how you conceive of sovereignty. What do you mean by "sovereignty", since it's a word that you use in your brief?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** First of all, I would like to say that I'd like you to remove the three lines on page 5 of the brief that read: "Regarding recent events, if the federal government had not intervened, certain projects that would have been costly for future generations would now be under way." Take that out because we realized just a little while ago that this wasn't the case. First, the other question that you ask me...

**Mr. Roy:** Could I make a correction here? I have removed those lines in my head, because the question was linked to these lines too, but I'm not taking them into consideration.

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** All right.

**Mr. Roy:** But I do take other remarks into account, when you say: Yes, but.

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** O.K. I should point out to you that I am speaking in the name of an environmental corporation that is made up of 100 people and, when I said those things, I can't have been saying them on their behalf. If you want me to tell you what I think, personally, I can do so. For my part, I see Québec as being sovereign. I see all of these recommendations within the context of a sovereign Québec, a Québec that is completely independent.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Beaudry:** As Mr. Jacques Proulx was saying a little while back, obviously everyone is concerned about the environment, as you are, and I think that the Commission members certainly agree with a large majority of the recommendations that you make.  
(2:30 p.m.)

The manufacturers' association came to talk to us during these proceedings, and they told us that sometimes Québec's laws were too restrictive - federal laws too for that matter - and that this could lead to their own products' no longer being competitive, because these laws were too demanding, too restrictive, especially the ones concerning the environment. In your brief, in one of your conclusions, you place the environment and the economy on an equal footing. And in one of the recommendations you make, item 7 on page 5, for the Côte-Nord region - I am assuming that it can be taken to cover all of Québec as well - you recommend: "that public hearings for all projects affecting the environment without exception be ensured". I take it that you mean all projects, like 500 feet of road for instance, all projects, when you say "without exception".

And, in your general recommendations for the province as a whole, you say, your first recommendation is that: "a declaration of environmental rights be adopted that will guarantee Quebecers the right of recourse to the courts in order to ensure that laws governing protection of the environment are upheld and enforced". So, when you say "Quebecers", I gather you mean all Quebecers.

Don't you think that these two recommendations make projects so restrictive that we might end up ruining the economy as well? Anybody could just go to court to contest the fact that a company wanted to build an industry along a river or some other place, and with the kind of powers you feel they should have, they could hold up the case for two, three, four or five years, dragging it through the courts, keeping the industry or factory from being built. Don't you find this a bit too extreme, too restrictive, in the present context?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** No, I don't. I am speaking to you in my capacity as an environmentalist, and I'm telling you that we no longer have any choice, we can no longer choose a business that pollutes over the environment, because the planet as a whole is already too polluted and if we don't do something about it right away - this is not just one of my ideas, it's what the experts and scientists say - we've gone too far and we cannot afford to continue polluting. And

I feel that it's only logical for a citizen to decide to go to court because a business that wants to establish itself would pollute a river, because our rivers and watercourses are already too polluted now.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Mrs. Villeneuve, don't you think that we should limit this power to recognized agencies, to the gouvernement du Québec or the municipality involved, instead of giving it to individuals? We could end up with people who, just for the sake of contesting a project or for all sorts of reasons that have nothing to do with the environment, see this as an opportunity to use the provisions of this kind of charter to say: I want to take advantage of these rights and take this case to court. And this would automatically block a project that might otherwise have provided work for countless people and helped the economy of the municipality, the region or even of the province.

Don't you think that giving individuals this much power is going a bit too far and that, instead, we should limit it to public bodies, municipalities or regions?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** I believe that we talked about lobbying in our brief, about how the big business lobby has so much influence over our governments and about how, in fact, we need to have other means at our disposal so that we can counterbalance this force. And from this angle, for citizens to have recourse to laws to protect their environment, I don't think that this is... Even if it meant that a business was blocked... When we weigh this against the harm this business could do over time, how much it could pollute, I think that... I don't see any contradiction here.

The economy is important, that's true, but not at the expense of the environment. Because the environment is where we live, it's what enables our children to grow up and become adults, and it's what enables them to be healthy. If Québec is polluted, we may well end up with an entire generation of people who are sick.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I understand this, but the municipalities...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Beaudry, today the short questions have unfortunately been long. This afternoon, I am going to be strict. Your time is up, Mr. Beaudry. We will now move on to Mr. Béland, who will be followed by Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Beaudry has, in fact, just paved the way for my question. The thing is that, first of all, I think that your environmental concerns are very laudable and I thank you for drawing them to our attention. On the other hand, you will recall,

I think, that when this Commission was set up, the Prime Minister himself reminded us to place a lot of stress on the economic aspects of a future Québec. I think that the big problem, and perhaps you can help us with this, is how to reconcile the economy with the environment. Many people who have appeared before us have talked to us about market globalization. Actually, they didn't have to tell us about it, everyone in business encounters this every day. So, we are in competition with the whole world. We are competing with technology that is found worldwide. When decompartmentalization was occurring elsewhere, we applied it here. We have to adjust if we are to remain competitive in a sovereign Québec. In fact, you refer to the Brundtland Commission report which clearly says... it recommends that today's governments - governments in the plural - alter their structures. The world is the relevant stage today. And I think that the environment is a world issue. So, how do you see a sovereign Québec? What kind of role would it play or should it play to alter world economic structures? Secondly, should it progress in keeping with the evolution of world economies or should it go faster than world economies?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** In March, I attended the Globe 90 conference in Vancouver. I think that everyone is more or less aware of what it was about, and maybe some of you were there too. In addition to the conference, there was an exhibit displaying new environmental technology. It was really interesting. There were some environmentalists who said: Businessmen are using the environment to make money. But I said: Well, it's a good way of giving the environment its due, of bringing it to the fore. If they can make money out of it, then so much the better. It's a good thing if we can remedy problems because we have new technology and because we sell new technology.

From this angle, I think that a sovereign Québec could... I might not go so far as to say that we could lead the world, because there are already a number of countries that are pretty advanced as far as new environmental technology is concerned, but we should perhaps make sure that we keep up with them. Look at Québec, with its energy development - our huge hydroelectric dam projects - but there are other technologies such as solar energy, which will become very important in the world in the next 20 years and which don't pollute. At least solar energy hasn't been associated with any pollution problems up to now. If we did more studies, more work on areas like this one... From what I know, it looks that we've taken a bit of money away from this kind of study on solar energy. If Québec becomes a sovereign nation, the world will see it as special. Because Canada... well everyone in the world is familiar with Canada.



But if the Province of Québec decides to become independent, that's when we should bring all this new technology, these new studies, to the forefront and become, if not the leader, at least catch up with the other countries that are already ahead of us in the field of the environment. If we take a look, we see that there are several European countries that have made great strides.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mrs. Villeneuve.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** With the brief that you have presented and the opportunity that it gives us for thinking about — unfortunately only briefly — the imperatives of the environment, what strikes me the most is that you, like many others before you, are very well aware that our mandate is to concern ourselves pretty well exclusively with our constitutional future and therefore with our political framework, the legal framework of an eventual nation of Québec to be. Knowing this, you nevertheless come here with a blueprint for society. Almost everyone has been talking to us in terms of a blueprint for society. I take it that there must be some kind of a void in Québec, something like a void, a kind of need that is making itself felt everywhere, to define a blueprint for society that is now undefined, the whole process having apparently come to a standstill somewhere in the 1980s or around the end of the 1970s.

Québec stopped thinking about its future, not solely in constitutional terms but also in terms of actual substance: the real problems, the things that have to be resolved for the country's future, the future of our children, the future of women, the integration of all our social collective values. The environment is one of these, and unfortunately we might delude ourselves, telling ourselves that we are among the first or in there with the top dogs, but the fact remains that Québec lags behind the others where the environment is concerned. The environmental mentality in Québec, concern for the environment, falls far short of what we see elsewhere. And I think, and you are right to mention this, that there's no point in our becoming sovereign if the country we create is devastated and has no development potential. For those people who have done a great deal of thinking about the environment, there is no longer any question today of setting the environment against the economy. They are not opposed, they can be integrated. We can no longer make any economic decisions without considering the environmental aspects and vice versa. If we destroy our forests, if the chain of forest species is broken, I hate to say it but there just won't be any more forests. This

would reduce employment and compromise Québec's economy in a field where we have a lot of expertise. This is also true for mining and it is true for agriculture. If we exhaust our land through the excessive use of chemical fertilizers, obviously we won't be able to compete with others afterwards. We therefore need to be much more vigilant and bring pressure to bear on our governments.

What you want, I know, is constitutional restrictions on the governments of a future Québec so that they will take an interest in the environment and consistently integrate environmental aspects into any economic decisions that they make. A few minutes ago, Mr. Beaudry hinted at complaints we sometimes hear in the business community in Québec and in Canada about the excessive harshness of our environmental restrictions. It should be pointed out that our main competitors — Japan, Germany, Holland and Sweden — are far stricter than we are with respect to the environment and yet they are much more successful on foreign markets. Not only are there ways of integrating the economy and the environment, it is a must.

This brings me to your question, concerning a sovereign Québec of course, and personally I think that one of the reasons why we have to become sovereign quickly — I am only speaking for myself here — is precisely so that we can stop talking about a constitution, stop talking politics, with all the antagonism and so on that this entails, and get down to the real problems — social issues and environmental issues. We have to clarify things. We don't know where we stand any more on the environment in Québec. Who has jurisdiction over the James Bay Great Whale? We don't really know. I challenge anyone who has been reading the newspapers and following this story to explain what the status of this project is right now. It's beyond comprehension, absolute nonsense. We need to clarify things, and sovereignty will enable us to clarify them by giving Québec full powers over the environment, but this will of course mean that it will have to exercise its powers with the others.

We'll have to talk to other countries, because it takes global solutions to deal with global problems. You, on the other hand, would like us to solve them by means of constitutional restrictions. You talk about a declaration of environmental rights... Do you mean that these rights must be enshrined in the constitution or in a charter of rights and freedoms? And is that where you also want to include the citizens' right of recourse in the event that they wish to complain about a breach of environmental laws? Well, there are different ways of alleviating the worry expressed by Mr. Beaudry, that citizens would use delaying tactics to block legitimate projects. If governments have constitutional obligations, they are going to have to fulfill

them. And if they don't fulfill them, citizens will be able to intervene in order to force them to. This is what we're seeing right now with a lot of cases, in Canada particularly. Personally, what I would like you to tell me is what kind of constitutional vehicle you want us to have for enshrining the environmental rights you desire?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** I'm having a bit of trouble understanding you...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Do you want a declaration of environmental rights itself or provisions that would be included in Québec's constitution? Or would you have them introduced into the charter of rights? There are different ways of going about this.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Without limiting your right, because we want to hear your answer, Mrs. Villeneuve, could you perhaps keep it quite short, since we have already used up the time allotted for this part of the question period. Thank you.

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** I think that might be difficult. When I talk about rights, an environment charter, what I mean is a very specific charter that concerns... I didn't visualize it as being part of the constitution per se. Mind you, other environmentalists may suggest other things, but personally what I was thinking of was a charter that would enable citizens to intervene via the courts.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now move on to the Official Opposition party. Mr. Gendron.

**Mr. Gendron:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like, very quickly, to thank you for coming to talk to us about your desire for more sustainable development, in a future Québec at any rate. I find your recommendations forceful, precise and articulate. I also think that we should continue looking at this from the angle introduced by Mr. Bouchard; it's the best approach in my opinion. Personally, I would just like to say that as far as we in the Parti québécois are concerned, we have no objection whatsoever. We agree with the idea of creating a Québec charter of the environment and we are not at all opposed to each and every one of Québec's citizens seeing themselves as guardians of the environment. And this is why I was a bit surprised by Mr. Beaudry's comments a little while back. I think there is no longer any question of objecting to sustainable development. We can't have it both ways.  
(2:45 p.m.)

If we want sustainable development, we absolutely must stress quality of life... then, concern with the environment becomes a priority.

And I think that the more citizens there are who are guardians of the environment, the more we will be able to safeguard our future and the one that we want our children to inherit.

I have two quick questions, because our time is running out. My first question is: Although your brief quite clearly states that we need a charter of the environment, do you believe that it is absolutely necessary for Québec to become sovereign in order for the recommendations you make to be implemented through environmental policy? From another angle, perhaps, do you believe that your fine recommendations could be carried out within the present constitutional framework?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** I didn't really look at things from that angle. I admit that when I presented this brief, I saw it in the context of an independent government. Can Québec at this point in time have charters that are not headed or sponsored, so to speak, by Ottawa?

**Mr. Gendron:** Mrs. Villeneuve, I don't want to contradict you but, in my opinion, you did in fact consider the framework referred to in my question, since you said: "As far as we're concerned, we want as much autonomy as possible for Québec" and you add "and for it to attain sovereignty", and after that you say "this is the price that we feel that Québec should pay for its sovereignty - carrying out the following recommendations, a charter of the environment" and various other recommendations. So, it seems to me that you did give this some thought. The question again was: Do you believe that your recommendations could be applied within the federal framework we have now?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** I believe that it would be a bit difficult.

**Mr. Gendron:** That is what I understood. Thank you. My second question. You talk about creating an income tax system that would encourage environmentally benign practices and discourage harmful practices. I personally think that we should discourage all harmful practices that could alter or gradually destroy the environment or that are not compatible with the concept of sustainable development. But, as far as creating an income tax system to encourage sounder practices is concerned, what we could call a positive, promotional approach to taking better care of the environment, I would like you to clarify this. How would this work?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** Well...

**Mr. Gendron:** In terms of income tax provisions.

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** Let's take the example of

a business that decides to use the best technology to solve its pollution problems. The income tax system could allow it to reduce some of its taxes because it decided to protect a territory, sector or region. On the other hand, the business next door that doesn't do anything should have to pay extra taxes, precisely because it destroys the region, or a territory that belongs to all of Québec's citizens.

**Mr. Gendron:** You can take over, Mr. Brassard.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Go ahead, Mr. Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, we obviously hear more and more — you used it too — but more and more frequently, in the course of these proceedings, we hear the expression "blueprint for society", and obviously it is often a pretty vague, almost hackneyed, phrase. And we often wonder what this blueprint for society will contain. I think that the more of these public hearings that we have, the more we realize that a blueprint for society might be involved.

There has been talk of decentralization of powers towards the regions. We have also talked about respect for Native rights, respect for minority rights. With these things, we already have quite a few aspects and elements that will eventually, once they have been put together, constitute what we've been referring to as a "blueprint for society". Then, obviously, there's the environmental aspect, the concern for protecting the environment that you have just talked to us about this afternoon. It appears to me to be a major element of such a blueprint. You also talk about a declaration of the environment.

We in the Parti québécois, my colleague pointed this out, we've talked about a charter, a Québec charter of the environment that would be included in the constitution of a sovereign Québec... My only reservation here, not only with respect to a charter but also the whole blueprint for society, when this is linked to a sovereign Québec — I'll tell you what it is — I think that everyone hopes that Québec could become sovereign as quickly as possible, rapidly, urgently. But, this being the case, it would be extremely difficult to establish a complete blueprint for society at the same time. I don't know if I've made myself clear enough. It would be very hard to provide for a charter of the environment, for example, or an environmental declaration, in the constitution of a sovereign Québec.

Because to do this, we're all going to have to put our heads together, since you also say that the choice... that we should be unremittingly democratic in Québec. This means that we have to decide on its substance

together, which would take a great deal of time. We have to consult people, give it a lot of thought and conduct a real social debate, so I would personally say to everyone, including you, who wants a blueprint for society and wants it to be as well defined as possible, that there is a good possibility that we won't be able to do this in such a way that it coincides with Québec declaring its sovereignty. I want to make myself clear here. This doesn't mean that I don't personally agree with Québec creating a blueprint for society which involves environmental concerns, the question of rights, but I'm convinced that we won't be able to do it quickly enough for it to coincide with Québec's becoming sovereign. And I am only pointing out this reservation so that groups such as yours who are hoping that we will create a blueprint for society won't be too disappointed or frustrated — a little like what Mr. Proulx was saying — because a global, comprehensive blueprint for society that covers everything that we want it to is not established at the same time that Québec becomes sovereign.

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** Maybe you haven't really asked me a question, but if I could...

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes, by all means.

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** ...make a few comments. The thing is that it's difficult... You tell me that a blueprint for society is feasible but that it'll take time. You are presently engaged in a consultation process. Countless Quebecers have come here to tell you about their aspirations for a blueprint for society. Over the months — I'm not talking about years, here, but the past few months — there have been many consultations throughout Québec and if we combined all the information gathered, we would realize that we already have everything we need to draft a blueprint for our society. Maybe we can't have a finalized version to present when Québec becomes sovereign, but the fact remains that it shouldn't take much longer, we're not far off. Because we have all that we need to be able to present a blueprint for society and I am certain that if we got right down to it once and for all and gathered all the information available, we could almost do both at the same time. We could tell Quebecers: We are offering you this blueprint at the same time we offer you the chance of becoming sovereign.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We will now move on to the questions from the party forming the Government. Mrs. Pelchat?

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Villeneuve, Mr. Vigneault, I would like to thank you for drawing our attention to this blueprint for society in which a great deal of emphasis

would be placed on the environment. This is possibly the advantage of the Commission's conducting hearings in the regions: it allows it to listen to the special concerns of regions like the Côte-Nord - special concerns that necessarily involve the environment, since this is a region with vast natural resources, where the environment has a daily impact. I'm sure that you are well aware, Mrs. Villeneuve, that your coming here to tell this Parliamentary Commission about this blueprint for society amounts basically to your killing two birds with one stone, because there are eight of us here at this table of wonderful commissioners who are participating in the Québec round table on environment and ecology at the same time. And I think that some of them - Mr. Proulx, Mr. Béland and Mr. Desrosiers, for instance, but I won't name them all for you - will find themselves once more with the interests of the environment at heart, since they will be receiving your message more than once. I think that it is important to point this out.

I would like to go back to certain comments and questions you have received regarding a Québec charter of the environment that would specifically include, and I am quoting you here: "...that will guarantee Quebecers the right of recourse to the courts in order to ensure that laws governing protection of the environment are upheld and enforced..." I would like to set the record straight here. To answer Mr. Beaudry and Mr. Bouchard, who seem to think that Québec is lagging behind as far as the environment is concerned, I would like to point out to this assembly that section 19.1 of the Environment Quality Act specifies... I will read this section out to you because it refers to a right that we already have and I don't think that it should be included in a charter, unless it was to constitutionalize it perhaps, but it does exist now. So, it reads: "Every person has a right to a healthy environment and to its protection, and to the protection of the living species inhabiting it, to the extent provided for by this Act and the regulations, orders, approvals and authorizations issued under any section of this Act."

In section 19.2, the kinds of recourse are specified: "A judge of the Superior Court may grant an injunction to prohibit any act or operation which interferes or might interfere with the exercise of a right conferred by section 19.1." So, I repeat: "Every person has a right to a healthy environment", and everyone has a right of recourse to assert this right, which is included in the Environment Quality Act. I think that it's important to specify this, since we're apparently so far behind... right Mr. Bouchard?

As for your recommendation where you say clearly, near the beginning of your talk, that we are to disregard your remarks about the federal

government, personally I would like to go back over this a bit because it involves the Great Whale project specifically. Anyway, as far as I'm concerned, even the Great Whale project, in answer to certain allegations that have been made here, is a project that concerns the management of natural resources and, ever since 1867, management of natural resources has fallen exclusively under provincial jurisdiction. This should also be made quite clear. But when you say... you insinuate that if Québec were to become more independent, it would be more dangerous for its environment, since you say that federal protection would definitely be greater or would at least compensate for the protection provided by the gouvernement du Québec.

Even if Mr. Bouchard - excuse me, what a slip! - even if Mr. de Cotret has gone back on his decision not to hold public hearings, don't you think that in spite of everything, since this is exclusively under provincial jurisdiction, we would be capable here, together, of protecting our environment properly with our laws, with the Environment Quality Act, with subsections (n) and (g) that will soon be implemented by virtue of an order-in-council by the Cabinet? And I must also tell you, and this needs to be emphasized, that a Parliamentary Commission is going to be held at the National Assembly in January to deal specifically with the fact that hearings need to be held on major projects, which are not at the present time subject to public hearings. Perhaps you could even come and testify before this Parliamentary Commission. I would like to hear what you have to say about the question of protection being greater with the federal system, even if the federal government has backtracked, which is a good thing in my opinion. I would like you to tell me how you feel about this.

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** I think that this little phrase was the only part of the brief that I found it hard to write, because really we can't just wait for the federal government to protect our environment here in Québec. But anyway, we got the impression that, well, that this might give us... that we might be able to oppose certain projects. I should say that when we were writing up this brief, we talked a lot about democracy, we talked a lot about consulting the people. We felt that it must be the citizens who decide. We watch the evening news here too, even if we live on the Côte-Nord. We watch what's going on in Québec City, and we saw the games that were being played - what looked like games to us, at any rate, I don't know if this is the way it really was - with the public hearings and, well, the impact on the environment, public hearings and all that. Well this was all very fine and good but the only thing that counted was that the project absolutely had to go ahead. It

didn't matter what had to be done to manage this, as long as it went ahead. This was not democracy in action, there was no longer any question of consulting the citizens, of finding out what the people thought, it was a matter of finding ways of going counter to or getting around the law. You will tell me that nobody disobeyed any laws, but you know as well as I do that at a certain point in time there are ways of getting around them a bit.

When we talk about a charter, it is exactly because it would be stricter, making it more difficult for either government — it doesn't matter which one — or for a government corporation to go ahead with a project when the people do not agree. We really need to have dependable tools, because when...

(3:00 p.m.)

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Mrs. Villeneuve, you now know that, in keeping with sections 19.1 and 19.2 of the Environment Quality Act, you personally, Mrs. Villeneuve, as a citizen of the Côte-Nord region are entitled to appeal against a business, against a municipality, against anyone who alters the environment. I think that this is important. Do you think this section would be even more effective if it were in a charter enshrined in a constitution? I understand that this is what you are saying in...

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** At any rate, it would be better. Take human rights, for example: a charter of human rights is much stronger than the law as such, as you know. From this point of view, the same rule applies.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I just have one short question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** You have two minutes left.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** You make some comments, some recommendations, and here I believe I touch on the question asked by my colleague from Abitibi, and I take this opportunity to pay my respects to him.

Does Québec need to be sovereign for us to implement the recommendations you list on pages 4 and 5? Some of them are already in force and others will be soon. I would like to hear what you have to say about this, my first question. Now for my second question. Environmental issues are very much in the limelight. We talk about the environment every day, except that we attribute a lot of responsibility to the government and a lot of responsibility to business, and I think that this is only right. But what about the individual? I don't see anywhere in your brief any recommendations involving the individual, because at the foundation of our society, which is first and foremost a society of consumers, I'm the one who decides whether I'll

buy a plastic container that can be recycled or one that can't. I'm the one who agrees to act on an everyday basis. What it comes down to is that businesses won't really change their practices until consumers decide that they should perhaps boycott them. When we buy boxes of detergent that include about two square inches of packaging, when I decide that this particular detergent is not for me because it has too much packaging, I will try to choose a box that has less. Don't you agree with me that the citizen has a degree of responsibility too?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** Of course the citizen has responsibilities, too. We're not denying that but, regarding advertising, it's the governments that supervise laws dealing with advertising. The government has a huge responsibility for what the ordinary citizen does — for what consumers do.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Regarding my first question, Mrs. Villeneuve, do we absolutely have to become sovereign to do everything you want us to?

**Mrs. Villeneuve:** I'm going to speak for myself only. I think that we're going to have to change the way we govern, change our government, if we want to pass such a charter.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Personally, I think that what we need is a change in attitude and a clearly political desire to put your recommendations into effect. I don't think that we have to go as far as declaring sovereignty. Anyway, what I can tell you is that Québec already has full autonomy as far as managing its natural resources is concerned, and that this is a power that we will retain at all costs. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** This ends this particular presentation. Thank you, Mrs. Villeneuve and Mr. Vigneault for coming here to present this extremely interesting brief by the Corporation de protection de l'environnement de Sept-Îles. Now, if you would be so kind as to give your seats to the representatives from the Conseil central de Sept-Îles for the CSN, we will now proceed with them.

We will continue for half an hour with the Conseil central de Sept-Îles for the CSN, represented by Mr. Forbes and Maître Lemieux. With half-hour hearings, you have 5 minutes to present your brief. We give the parliamentary group forming the Government 5 minutes for questions, the parliamentary group forming the Opposition 5 minutes, and other members registered 10 minutes, with each member in this last group having a maximum of 5 minutes. Mr. Forbes, I believe that it is you who are going to introduce the two of you and then present

the brief?

### Conseil central de Sept-Îles (CSN)

**Mr. Forbes (Jean-Baptiste):** Jean-Baptiste Forbes, Conseil central de Sept-Îles, wage labourer. Robert Lemieux, lawyer. We asked him to help us on some points because, as workers, that's not really our strength.

The Conseil central de Sept-Îles numbers about 2000 workers between Baie-Trinité and Blanc-Sablon, belonging to about thirty unions, one of which reflects us pretty accurately. The Blanc-Sablon union covers a region 400 kilometres long and includes about 20 villages.

We didn't come here to peddle pipe dreams. And we didn't come here figuring we knew everything, but we hope that what we can bring you will perhaps make a modest contribution.

Exactly three days ago, at a union conference in Sept-Îles, the following question was asked: Do union members support pure, hard-line independence? We took a vote, and of 45 people, 40 voted "yes" and 5 refused to vote. That gives you some idea of where we are in the region. Now, if you have any questions...

I'll turn the microphone over to Mr. Lemieux.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Lemieux.

**Mr. Lemieux (Robert):** Mr. Chairman, we have three short documents we would like to distribute to members of the Commission, two extracts from UN General Assembly resolution 2621 and an extract from the founding declaration of the Fils de la liberté de Montréal. Do we have your permission to distribute copies of these documents around the table?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, you have the Chair's permission but, if you'll allow, we'll still proceed with the questions, while the copies are being distributed, so we don't lose time.

**Mr. Lemieux:** If you wish. I'd like to add something...

**Mr. Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Of course.

**Mr. Lemieux:** ...to what Mr. Forbes said. The Conseil central's short brief raises three points: the issue of the fishery, the issue of road transportation and the issue of the Native peoples. As far as road transportation is concerned, I've always been astonished, after the investments made for the Trans-Canada Highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, that nobody has taken into account that from Québec City on, the country is divided into two. In other words,

the St. Lawrence makes it impossible to leave the Trans-Canada, from Rivière-du-Loup, to reach the other side. I think that had the St. Lawrence been located anywhere else in Canada, we would have been smart enough to duplicate the Trans-Canada starting at Québec City so that it reaches and serves the entire province. And I think it could have included a bridge over the Saguenay.

Québec is a society that has been colonized to the bone, constitutionally and legally. What is Québec, if we abstract federalism from it for a moment? Québec is a constitutional monarchy. It's not just any monarch that presides over the destiny of Québec, it's not the Emperor of Japan, it's a British constitutional monarchy. The people of Québec has never, throughout its entire existence, promulgated a single law. Until the conquest, it was the French monarchy and, afterward, the British monarchy. So, by what mechanism, if Québec wants to eventually cease being a constitutional monarchy, by what mechanism can that be achieved? Since the monarch obviously won't withdraw on his own, he will have to be invited to leave. So, I think resolutions 15-14 and 26-21 provide the basis in terms of international law on which Québec, as a people, can declare its independence and, in that way, stop being a constitutional monarchy.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Perhaps, from there, we could move on to the questions? We will begin with questions from the other registered members. Mr. Holden, followed by Mr. Hogue and Mr. Beaudry.

**Mr. Holden:** My former colleague from Montréal, Mr. Lemieux, hasn't changed his views much in the 20 years since I last saw him, since he still talks about colonization and monarchy - things we talked about 20 years ago.

**Mr. Lemieux:** That's why my views haven't changed.

**Mr. Holden:** But I was interested to read in your brief and what still strikes me in situations like... You speak of very specific things, one of which I'm pretty familiar with, having practised maritime law for 30 years. And navigation on the St. Lawrence is a whole, from Newfoundland to Lake Michigan. What is your complaint against the federal government, specifically, in how navigation on the St. Lawrence is organized and managed? Do you want to take part of it away to have it in Québec?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Mr. Holden, I didn't go into any detail on navigation on the St. Lawrence. I simply said that in Alberta, you can leave the Trans-Canada and reach the northern and southern extremes of the province by road. But when you leave the Trans-Canada at Rivière-du-

Loup, you can't reach Québec's northern reaches. I simply said that because of geography, the famous Trans-Canada, this gigantic investment, should have taken Québec's geography into account...

**Mr. Holden:** But the government...

**Mr. Lemieux:** ...and starting in Québec City, you can't travel by road from one shore to the other. So the Trans-Canada should have been duplicated from that point on so that we could have some development in Blanc-Sablon. We're in the 19th century, we don't even have a road to reach the limit of Québec.

**Mr. Holden:** Even if I agree with you on roads, that could be done by the gouvernement du Québec or by way of agreement with the federal government. But since you're for independence, you want to assume authority for navigation on the St. Lawrence, if I understand the position of those in favour of independence. Do you have anything to complain about how the federal government manages that, now?

**Mr. Lemieux:** I think the waters of the St. Lawrence are similar to international waters. I don't agree with closing navigation on the St. Lawrence - it's part of a whole, I accept that. It's an inland sea, so everyone can navigate there.

**Mr. Holden:** It would have to be negotiated with Canada.

**Mr. Lemieux:** There wouldn't be many negotiations. I think it's an inland sea where everyone can... where everyone can navigate.

**Mr. Holden:** Yes, but there's a navigation system with radar and traffic control, that has to be done by somebody.

**Mr. Lemieux:** In the event Québec becomes independent, it would be done by Québec.

**Mr. Holden:** For part of it?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well of course...

**Mr. Holden:** For the Québec part...

**Mr. Lemieux:** For the part within Québec.

**Mr. Holden:** That's not practical. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Forbes:** If you agree, could I add something for Mr. Holden, your name? I'd like to

say that we're not in 1836 anymore, we're in 1990. Ships don't exist anymore, that's over. There are a few ferries, period. Today, when you talk about communication channels, airports make sense, and roads with bridges that cross rivers, and don't talk to us about promises to build a bridge and dig a river in 10 years. You don't have to dig them here, they're here already.

(3:15 p.m.)

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

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions, which I'll ask in a spirit of openness. On page 9, when you talk about transportation, blank, blank, it's like blank, blank, you know, that's it. You say, on page 9, and I'm open about this, Pierre Hogue, federal MP for Outremont, Conservative.

**A voice:** Doctor.

**Mr. Hogue:** At times, depending on whom I'm speaking to, I'm called Doctor. But we can speak to each other as Quebecers and as Canadians, and that's what I want. On page 9, you say that a sovereign Québec could settle Québec transportation problems more quickly, but you say Québec and Ottawa have to share the costs of the road network. And I'm not contrasting statements. On page 11, you say that the federal government jealously guards authority over Native affairs, etc. You also say, on the next page, that Québec will recognize them in a very different way - and it's possible, a sovereign Québec - presence and negotiation with Native peoples. I'm tempted to speak to Mr. Lemieux privately and say that you are fully independent, with full recognition and full citizenship, I think, in spite of what may have happened, and you're in a reality that's called Canada. Couldn't solutions be found just as well within federalism - and I'm not talking about renewed federalism, because I don't know what that means - but within federalism? Let's start with federalism and we'll have less need of qualifiers.

**Mr. Forbes:** I can answer.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, go ahead. In fact, I prefer you.

**Mr. Forbes:** Since we've paid for 25% of the roads in Canada, I imagine we pay 25% of federal taxes. We've paid 25% of the subsidies the federal government provides for roads in Canada. But, when you look at the size of Québec, compared to the other provinces, we've received peanuts again. It's been like that since 1867 and we're sick of it. O.K.? Good.

**Mr. Hogue:** Fine, that suits me. That suits

me because, at some point, you have to speak and get it out of your system, and all the better if it happens like that.

**Mr. Forbes:** Don't worry, it does me good.

**Mr. Hogue:** Me too. I repeat the question for the few remaining seconds. I say that from where I'm sitting, and considering my status here, decentralization and federalism are not mutually incompatible, and I'd just like you to comment on that.

**Mr. Forbes:** A mistake was made at the outset. My grandfather told me that we were screwed in 1867. Grandfather Fradette, I think some of you know him, when he got mad, he turned blue, he turned red and could hardly control himself. He told us we were screwed. I'm 50, and I've seen that that's true. I've come to where my grandfather was 100 years ago. We were screwed. That's how we say it. Does that answer your question?

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes.

**Mr. Forbes:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes, that answers my question.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Mr. Hogue, Québec's status today is a continuation of what came before.

**Mr. Hogue:** Yes.

**Mr. Lemieux:** I mean, Québec was a country conquered after a war. It lived under war measures until 1774, until the Quebec Act. The Quebec Act allowed us to maintain the Civil Law. In 1791, because of American independence, the American people's struggle for independence, seizing independence from England, we were given responsible government, on paper. And when we tried to exercise responsible government, we failed. There was a rebellion, the hanging of the patriotes. What had they done, those people? They weren't bloodthirsty. It was a kind of state terrorism...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I wouldn't want to leave you in 1837, Mr. Lemieux, but time is up for this question. You may be able to continue with the next question. Maître Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's not necessary to call me "maître", Mr. Chairman...

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It's because I'm being very civil there...

**Mr. Beaudry:** I'm not big on titles...

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

**Mr. Beaudry:** It always worries me when people address me like that. With your permission, I'm going to talk about salmon. It's not that I'm an expert, but I was interested by that part of your report, which I found very interesting by the way. You tell us that the rivers of the Côte-Nord and Gaspésie have been stocked with salmon and that it ultimately enriches Russia, Norway and Japan, who come and catch the salmon off the coast of Labrador. You say, at the bottom of page 6, in the last paragraph, that you are convinced, once again, that a sovereign Québec would be in a better position than anyone else, since it is our resource, to negotiate agreements on an equal basis with our neighbours. I assume you're talking about those persons. How would you be able to negotiate... In what way would you negotiate a fishery off the coast of Labrador, which is a part of the future Canada, salmon that reach there by way of the St. Lawrence? Why would Russia, Norway, Japan, why would it be easier for them to negotiate with a sovereign Québec than to negotiate in the current context?

**Mr. Forbes:** Many years ago, the Canadian Government negotiated an agreement with the Pacific rim countries to protect British Columbia salmon. The USSR, Japan, Australia, China, North Korea, South Korea, the USSR, the United States, all those wonderful people signed a Pacific accord to protect salmon. Then they turned around, funded research on Atlantic salmon, tagged salmon, discovered where the Atlantic salmon lived south of Greenland. Instead of negotiating and reaching an international agreement to protect the Atlantic salmon, they let the entire world know where the salmon lived. So, the Russians came to fish, the Norwegians, the Swedes, the Finns, the Danes, the Germans, the Italians, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the French, the British, the Irish, all of Europe came. If you want factory ships, there they are.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I don't dispute that.

**Mr. Forbes:** Just a minute. We went from 1000, 2000, 3000 spawning salmon per river to 100. Then they said, boys, they're taking too many on lines or they're taking too many along the beaches. In Gaspésie, they removed the fishermen's right to take salmon - only anglers can take them. If that's how it is in a sovereign Québec, we'll tell those people that they either sign an agreement and respect the fish in our rivers or we allow them to disappear. In five years, there won't be any more. We have the



river and the fry. They'll have to listen to us.

**Mr. Beaudry:** No, no, but you...

**Mr. Forbes:** The federal government hasn't done its job...

**Mr. Beaudry:** I don't think you've answered my question...

**Mr. Forbes:** At least, for God's sake, let's do ours.

**Mr. Beaudry:** That's not my question.

**Mr. Forbes:** What is it?

**Mr. Beaudry:** My question is as follows: Once the salmon has reached the coast of Labrador, I can perhaps appreciate that Canada hasn't looked after its interests...

**Mr. Forbes:** You mean...

**Mr. Beaudry:** ...and hasn't enforced its laws, if you will, that's what you say, at least. But how do they, how do you intend, in a sovereign Québec, to prevent those salmon from being taken off the coast of Labrador? They'll get there anyway.

**Mr. Forbes:** You may think I'm crazy, but you mine the bank with good size mines of stainless steel that won't rust, ever, and not a single fisherman from a foreign country will go there. That's it...

**Mr. Beaudry:** Your solution...

**Mr. Forbes:** ...It's protected.

**Mr. Beaudry:** ...is to say, if we can't reach an agreement, we kill the salmon?

**Mr. Forbes:** No, we won't kill it, because it explodes on the surface. It's modern today, you know.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Very good, thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Now, for the party forming the Government, Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** I've come to the same... First, hello. Looking at your three points, the fishery, transportation and Native peoples, it seems that sovereignty is a magic solution, a panacea that would immediately solve all the problems. But that's not why I found your report interesting. That aspect seemed the least thorough and the least valid for your region, when you add all the nuances. There's a

much more interesting aspect of your report, the needs of the region. And there, you mention, among other things, your road network, and I think Mr. Lemieux demonstrated that amply a few moments ago, which is inadequate, so that villages are connected with each other. You stated, on page 2, just a minute, I say page 2, in any case you talk about Mr. Côté's refusal concerning that road. So I said I'll go check, which I did, I even have the maps, everything. I was told that highway 138 from Blanc-Sablon to Vieux-Fort, page 9 of the report, yes, currently deserted, before the work began in 1980, the road link between Blanc-Sablon and Vieux-Fort was by development road. Now, the problems with that development road are that, first, it has very sharp curves, which does not comply with current safety standards and, among others, truck traffic, grades in excess of 20°, very poor drainage, very narrow surface so that at many points it's impossible to pass. In short, you have to redo, redesign, rethink, redo that road, and even, at some points, change the path completely.

So if that involved delays, it's really not tied to the federal government - like you, I'd be - it would probably be fun to say it was their fault, but it really isn't their fault. And it isn't the provincial government's fault. It's simply a question of delays, major technical problems there that have to be worked out.

In fact all you have to do is look at the professional fees paid under that project to date, and it's a fair amount, over the entire project, which covers about 106.6 kilometres. Professional fees account for \$21 million and construction \$71.8 million. So, you could say that one quarter, compared to three quarters, is taken up by professional fees alone, which is pretty significant in a project of that size.

So, I wanted to correct that perception. Your region hasn't been given short shrift. It's because of technical matters that the project is behind, but I've got timetables here. I won't read them out, but if you want to look at them later, they're all here. And you'll see that the project will be completed on schedule.

But as for regional development, for instance, in Matane, yesterday, a lot of people talked about the initiative and energy in that region, a desire to take charge and do something with the region. Have you come across that same energy? After all, among the workers, you're the real people there, ordinary people... How do people react in the region? Do they want to take charge of things, are they motivated that way?

**Mr. Forbes:** A region's energy is found at city hall, starting at city hall, the political level that's closest to the people. At city hall, I think the mayor is a coach. Either he gets his players - that is the population - to produce; he brings

them together and gets them to do things, or he doesn't do anything and he loses his job. We don't have a good coach. Does that answer your question?

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good, I don't want to get mixed up in local politics, but what powers would you need locally to do what you want to do for your development? Perhaps Mr. Lemieux could answer.

**Mr. Lemieux:** But suppose we come back to the question of road transportation. The Trans-Canada project, as we know, was supposed to link Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Once in Québec, what did they do? They took the shortest route, in other words, they turned at Rivière-du-Loup and headed for New Brunswick. So that great project – the Trans-Canada – misses all of Gaspésie and the entire northern St. Lawrence.

It's a little like Meech Lake; we were shut out, we weren't considered, we didn't belong to the country then. So that's why we have to build the country to have the vital infrastructure for development.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** But in the Sept-Îles region, what do you need to develop your region as you think it should be?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Independence, Sir.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I remind the audience that, as we explained this morning, since this Commission is an expanded Parliamentary Commission, and in Parliament the rules do not allow applause in the public gallery, I ask you to hold your applause for another forum. Please, go ahead.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** But I think independence can solve a number of things. I respect your point of view, but from there to say that automatically it will settle everything, you have to be a little more serious than that. So, what are the most important needs of the region, to develop its resources and grow in the sense you talk about?  
(3:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Lemieux:** Well it seems to me that in the 20th century, in North America, ground communication from one end of the territory to another is essential, is vital. So that's why the brief alludes to that specifically... How can you develop those regions when you have to spend a fortune to get there by plane? I mean, without the essential ground communication, absolutely nothing is possible. And...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now move to the questions of the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition. Mr.

Perron?

**Mr. Perron:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You'll surely allow me to thank the CSN and Mr. Lemieux for the presentation of the brief. I've heard a few things about Highway 138. I'd really like to get into it. And what I heard about the 138 didn't come from there, it came from my right. I'm in a good position to know that in the case of the 138, when you talk about the section from Havre-Saint-Pierre to Pashashibou, the whole matter had been settled on November 6, 1985 – in other words before December 2, including the choice of the engineers and it was then decided afterwards, because there wasn't agreement on the project any more, to change engineering firm and mess around with it for a year and a half before the engineers were given a mandate. And now, we've got a timetable that was supposed to be from 1986 to 1990, and we're now up to 1995. That's what we've got because decisions weren't taken. When you don't believe in an issue, you don't act quickly to settle it.

On the transportation issue, I completely agree with you people. In the country of Québec, it would be a lot easier. Knowing what the results of Canada-Québec agreements are, the way they're negotiated at present, you don't achieve much with that. When it isn't Québec that says "no" to a project in a region or county of Québec, it's Ottawa. So, agreements aren't signed, and when they are, they always reflect the needs of the large centres.

I especially want to deal with the fishery issue. There again, I'd have liked to talk about the sharing of jurisdiction as it exists at present, because there's practically nothing left. The federal government manages everything. There was an agreement signed in 1922 and the agreement broke down in 1982-1983 when Mr. de Bané was there in charge of fisheries. I'd also like to talk to you about the complicated regulation of commercial fishing in every area of fisheries at present. I'd also like to talk to you about the 200-mile zone where we already had two boats operating in the 200-mile zone in 1985, the Kristina Logos and the Lumaqa, that were sold to replenish this government's coffers. I'd have liked to talk to you about that too. And in terms of fisheries, I'd like to ask you this question: In your brief, you clearly indicate that Québec can only salvage its fishery sector by repatriating full powers in the field.

I'm well aware that the regulations of the two governments overlap. One government looks after things at sea, the other looks after them on land. It's a monumental mess and even the fishermen, the plant workers, even the plant owners can't get their way with the federal government for the 200-mile zone, or for changes to plants or in terms of supplies. So, can you explain why – that's my idea – but can you explain why and give examples of where

Québec's interests and those of the federal government and the other provinces are different? I think Mr. Lemieux could certainly give us a good idea of what's happening at the moment, because he's very familiar with eastern Québec, including Newfoundland, etc.

**Mr. Lemieux:** I think you've expressed it well, Mr. Perron. It's indeed a mess, an overlapping of... a competition of jurisdictions that never ends and to have an organized fishery in Québec, you need a single conductor.

**Mr. Perron:** Mr. Chairman, would you allow me to return to the salmon issue.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Yes, quickly please...

**Mr. Perron:** Yes. On the salmon issue, we know that international agreements have been signed, but they aren't even observed. I can appreciate what Mr. Forbes says when he talks about the salmon issue. Salmon that spawn in our rivers, the spawning salmon come here, then return up the Labrador coast. But what happens is that decisions on the salmon that concern Québec are taken based on the wishes of the Newfoundland Government. That's what's happening at present. When the salmon reach the Strait of Belle-Isle... When the salmon reach Iceland, Norway, Greenland, etc., who catches the salmon? They don't even respect international quotas. In an independent Québec - and I think that's what Mr. Forbes meant - that could be negotiated much more quickly, with both feet on the ground instead of in the air.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** ...With that comment, we have to close the question period. I think we have to thank, on your behalf, the Conseil central de Sept-Îles de la CSN and Mr. Forgues and Mr. Lemieux for having come before us today. If you would now be so good as to make way for your successor, whom I invite to come to the front, Mr. Pierre Ducasse.

**Mr. Forbes:** I'd like you to note one thing. My name isn't Forgues, but Forbes, F-O-R-B-E-S. The "s" because there are a lot of us.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Excuse me, I should have read it, it's written correctly. It's because I didn't want to ask you if your great-grandfather was on the other side, on the Plains of Abraham. I pronounced it like the Forgues at home.

**Mr. Forbes:** He definitely he got off at the Plains of Abraham, Sir, but under another name.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Ah well, there we are. I now ask Mr. Ducasse to take your place.

Order please!

If you will take your place, Mr. Ducasse.

We now welcome, for a period of 30 minutes, Mr. Pierre Ducasse who has submitted a brief presenting the views of a young social-democrat, I believe. Mr. Ducasse, you have five minutes to present the essential points of your brief, and then we will go on to the questions.

**Mr. Pierre L. Ducasse**

**Mr. Ducasse (Pierre):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've written this brief called "Le Québec de demain, une vision sociale-démocrate à 18 ans" to lend a voice to young people, from a perspective of social progress.

I'm currently a student at the Cégep de Sept-Îles and I'm also associate president of the Young New Democrats of Canada. I'm certainly one of the youngest to have come before this Commission to present a brief. I'm very proud of that and I thank you for receiving me today. The quality of a person's political ideas doesn't necessarily depend on how many grey hairs he has. I can't offer you the detailed analysis of a political scientist, but I will give you an ordinary young Quebecer's honest opinion.

Having said that, regardless of the new arrangement with Canada, here are a few of the things I propose. The monarchy and the Senate have to be abolished; Québec has to be introduced to international organizations; Québec should be demilitarized and shouldn't belong to any military alliance; and repatriation of powers like culture, language, immigration and others, of course, is, I think, necessary. However, I'm open to most moderate opinions suggested to us.

I'll now outline my vision of the social-democratic option. Regardless of the new arrangement, we want greater public participation in decision-making. We need an education system that's accessible to all, powerful student movements and greater youth participation at the local level. Cooperatives have to be encouraged, unions strengthened, and measures taken so that workers can participate in decision-making within their company, within the context of a decentralized government, a government, by the way, that is open and honest.

We can't forget about the poor, the handicapped, the elderly and Native peoples. All these people have the right to express themselves. Politics isn't just for lawyers, businessmen and politicians. We also have to opt for full employment as much as possible. While I believe we have to preserve and implement necessary social programs, we shouldn't forget that people don't want welfare or charity. They

want jobs so that they can feel and be significant, productive members of society.

While I believe the constitutional issue is important, I think the problem of the environment is just as urgent. A new constitution will have to contain a very strict charter of environmental rights. An agency composed of environmentalists should also be set up to enforce the law - a kind of environmental police.

Before concluding, I've a few comments to make on this Commission. I feel it was designed with good intentions, but I don't think the general population can participate actively in the debates of this historic Commission because of the demanding process that must be followed to submit a brief. I also think we've forgotten to represent some groups here. The elderly, whose existence we forget about too frequently and who fear reforms because of scare tactics; the environmentalists have been left out because not only must we ensure our cultural survival, but our survival, period. But even more important, I deplore the fact that there are no young commissioners to represent Québec's student movements.

Mr. Chairman, I close my brief with this. Regardless of our new association with Canada, Québec will have much more power, obviously, more than was asked for in the Meech Lake Accord. I have to say clearly that being pro-Québec does not necessarily mean being anti-Canada. Most Quebecers want to have the power to make decisions in areas of interest to Québec and I believe that in the long run, a kind of sovereignty-association for Québec could in fact foster what is left of Canadian unity.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now move to the questions from the Government party. Mr. Claude Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First, obviously, I'd like to wish Mr. Ducasse, for his presentation before our travelling, expanded Parliamentary Commission... In fact, you remind me a little of myself, at 18, to be brave like that, appearing before a commission, without pretence. I think that deserves our congratulations. And I must say the last time I came here, I was with the Member for Duplessis, Mr. Perron, and we sat, as a Commission, in Schefferville. At that time, we had come to try to lessen the impact of the closing of a town, at Schefferville. I don't think that had much of a political impact, because Denis was reelected in 1985 and the man who closed down the town was elected Prime Minister a few months later. In any event, let's move on.

I've three questions for you, Mr. Ducasse, but before I get to them, I have to tell you - and this isn't a secret - that our Commission's steering committee is giving serious

thought to organizing a forum for Québec's young people. If I remember correctly, at least 40 youth groups have registered for our work, with our Commission, and we're seriously thinking, eventually of organizing a forum. It's not up to me to reveal the details, but it's being given serious consideration.

For my first question, last week, we had the opportunity to hear Mr. Edmonston who is, I believe, the federal NDP's only elected MP from Québec, and he proposed the following. I'd like you to comment on this. He proposed, concerning Québec's representation on international bodies, whether Québec becomes a country or remains within Canada, that foreign affairs be retained so that we can continue to be part of the Group of Seven and benefit from open doors in Europe and Asia. What do you think?

**Mr. Ducasse:** I agree.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Do you agree with Mr. Edmonston on that?

**Mr. Ducasse:** In any event, if Québec becomes sovereign, it's absolutely normal that it be represented on international bodies. I don't think you need be any more specific than that.

**Mr. Dauphin:** We agree on that. Would Québec then belong to the Group of Seven, if it became sovereign?

**Mr. Ducasse:** Well, it would then be the Group of Eight.

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

**Mr. Dauphin:** Do you have statistics to support that, Mr. Ducasse?

**Mr. Ducasse:** No, not necessarily. For instance, since I said I was open to moderate options, if there is a Québec-Canada economic community with a central government that manages the economic interests of Québec and Canada, there could be a single representative, though I would prefer Québec and Canada. If there's an economic community of Québec and Canada, I've no problem with there being one representative, provided he is representative of Québec and the rest of Canada.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Agreed. In the last sentence of your brief, on page 2, you say...

**Mr. Ducasse:** It's not complicated, there are only two!

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

**Mr. Dauphin:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Ducas:** It's not complicated, there are only two. I wanted to save paper.

**Mr. Dauphin:** But there could have been five because, had you spaced it out a bit, you would have had five. But that's not serious.

At the end you say: "I believe that in the long run, a kind of sovereignty-association for Québec could in fact foster what is left of "Canadian unity". Could you comment on what you mean there?

**Mr. Ducas:** O.K. First comment is that I'll always be more Canadian than American. When I say it would foster Canadian unity, that means that Québec is sovereign - we take care of our business, you take care of yours. We have a strong economy together, we like each other, everything's fine. Another way to encourage Québec and Canada to maintain friendly links would be to promote much more frequent student exchanges between Québec and Canada. (3:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Dauphin:** So, if I understand you correctly, you say that the best way to promote Canadian unity is sovereignty-association?

**Mr. Ducas:** Yes, but I don't think we should get bogged down in terms: superstructure, asymmetrical federalism, sovereignty-association, but for all practical purposes, yes, I'm for sovereignty-association.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Good, one last question. Is there time, Mr. Chairman?

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Thanks to the Chair's extreme goodwill.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Ah! Thank you very, very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Another 15 seconds.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Fifteen seconds? You also say in your brief that the free trade treaty has to be killed. Don't you think that in the context of globalized trade, you're going against the current by demanding, for instance, protective barriers for Québec?

**Mr. Ducas:** Our primary goal, my primary goal, my vision, is a Québec with full employment. If we can't obtain full employment with free trade, then we have to cut free trade. I'm not saying we have to shut all the doors. But, for instance, in some areas like natural resources, I think it's necessary that our natural resources, for example, not serve foreign interests and I hope we'll be able to implement buy-Québec policies so that the money generated in Québec produces a feedback into our economy

and isn't exported into the economy of another country. That's why I'm against free trade.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you for coming to our Commission.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** And now, for the party of the Official Opposition, Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, you see that with what Mr. Dauphin has just announced, your press release on the youth forum will perhaps be a little shorter.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** I think he said that you were thinking like us.

**Mr. Brassard:** We were seriously thinking of it. That's it, we're giving it serious thought. So, Mr. Ducas... First, I want to tell you that the Parti québécois is a social-democratic party, so if you eventually decide to leave the NDP, you'll be welcome with us.

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

**Mr. Ducas:** Thanks, we'll see. I've many career possibilities in mind.

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

**Mr. Brassard:** At least we'll agree on social democracy. First, thank you for having agreed to appear before the Commission. True, the process is demanding, as you mentioned. Many groups have pointed that out to us as well and I think we're aware of the difficulties that can be involved, especially for one person without resources, in appearing before us. So, bravo to you. You make many demands. First, for instance, the abolition of the Senate and of the monarchy. Do you really think English Canada will agree to that with good grace?

**Mr. Ducas:** If Québec becomes sovereign and we have no signs of monarchy and no Senate, there's no problem. Which would surprise me, but if we maintain a political link with Canada, I don't necessarily advocate removing every sign of the monarchy and the unconditional abolition of the Senate.

**Mr. Brassard:** But then, you're aware of the difficulty of getting English Canada to agree to that, within a federal framework. You're aware that it'll be hard and very difficult to get English Canada to agree to such reforms.

**Mr. Ducas:** Absolutely. It'll be very difficult to negotiate any new demand by Québec with Ottawa. That's why I'm in favour of a declaration of sovereignty by Québec.

**Mr. Brassard:** Good. Now it's getting a little clearer, because it wasn't so clear in your brief.

**Mr. Ducas:** All you have to do is ask the question.

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes indeed, that's why we ask questions. So, that's more interesting because it's clearer now. In other words, when you say you're in favour of "any moderate option", you include sovereignty-association in that category, that is, that Québec would declare its sovereignty and on that basis negotiate an economic association that could be complex, very elaborate, with English Canada, with common institutions. You include that option in the category of moderate options.

**Mr. Ducas:** Yes.

**Mr. Brassard:** Absolutely. So, from there it becomes quite a bit simpler and I think you're consistent with a fair number of witnesses who have come before us, who've said: Let Québec become a country - basically, that's what you're saying - let Québec become a country and establish, with its partners - the main one being English Canada - economic links that are as close as possible and, I'd say, trade exchanges that are as numerous and as extensive as possible.

**Mr. Ducas:** You've understood everything.

**Mr. Brassard:** Very good. You also say that in the constitution of a sovereign Québec, it would be interesting - and there I see your social-democratic, but also environmentalist nature - to integrate a charter of the environment into the constitution of Québec. There again, you agree with the program of the Parti québécois. You are extremely close to the program of the Parti québécois.

**Mr. Ducas:** Don't say it too loudly.

**Mr. Brassard:** It's not a sin. Nor is it a scandal. So, you'd want the constitution of a sovereign Québec to include a part that would consist of a charter of the environment.

**Mr. Ducas:** Yes. Before dealing specifically with your question, I have a few comments to make. Many people say that in a free market system like ours, profit comes way before protection of the environment. I have to say that in the short run, it's less expensive to dump industrial waste into the rivers than to dispose of it reasonably. But what do you want? The destruction of the ozone layer, acid rain and other similar problems are disastrous results of the industrial revolution and capitalism. But what happens when the time comes to clean up

our mess? Now's the time to make the economy and the environment work together and not against each other. Now's the time when there's something very important for everyone to understand. In the long run, in the long run, the environment is cost-effective; wildlife protection is cost-effective; recycling is cost-effective. The environment is cost-effective. Starting from this fundamental principle - and others of course - we must include in the constitution... And I hope it happens as soon as possible, in a new Québec constitution, not in ten years. It may be too late in ten years. Are forests supposed to grow out of our foreheads, or something like that? We have to do everything we can now to reduce, recycle, implement green taxes, carry out impact studies, hold public hearings and every possible measure to leave our children a healthy environment.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ducas, this...

**Mr. Brassard:** ...ask the question, because it was a good answer.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** It was a good answer. It perhaps didn't deal with the question exactly, but it was a good answer. I'd simply like to remind Mr. Ducas - a passing comment - that the places in the world where environmental effects were observed as being the effects of contempt for the environment were observed to be the worst. That wasn't in capitalist countries, but in eastern Europe and Soviet Russia. That doesn't concern the rest of what you've said. But the link with capitalism was a bit strong.

**Mr. Ducas:** I'm talking about a future...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We've heard some good ones in every sense here, but that was a bit much. Please forgive my comment. We'll now move on to Mr. Daoust's questions.

**Mr. Daoust:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ducas, you deal very quickly with the problem of full employment in your brief. You said, verbally, that we have to opt as much as possible for full employment. I'd like to hear what you have to say on that, but I want to clarify what we mean by full employment and how we feel it can be achieved in a country like the one Québec of the future, and why it can't be achieved in a country like today's Canada.

Canada experienced a period of full employment during the last war. We know the reasons and, at the end of the last war, it continued because we absolutely had to produce all the consumer goods that weren't produced during the second world conflict. In the 1950s,

the unemployment rate for all Canada was 4%. Things started to deteriorate in the 1970s - 6.7% for all Canada. In the 1980s, unemployment became endemic in the country, chronic. It was 9.3%. The world markets currently taking shape and that have been for some time now, the globalization of the economy and international competition, will doubtless push us into periods of unemployment - unless we succeed in countering them - into periods and even higher rates of unemployment.

We cannot adopt a full employment policy unless there is a political will within our society or any country that expresses itself, and the two large socioeconomic partners - the labour movement and employers grouped into a multitude of associations, but the employer movement - the three partners, then, the government and the two large partners can work hand in hand, take notice of the broad trends, and adopt full employment strategies. It's not utopian, it's done in the Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Austria and a few other countries. But those countries have to have the tools, the levers. They have to be true countries before they can shift and intervene in the working of the economy. Québec on its own would want it. It would be an obsession - and there is an obsession with employment, which we share, for our part - but on its own, Québec would want to adopt a full employment policy, which it could not achieve. It has no control over the Canadian Government's major monetary policies. It has half control over fiscal policy, and one quarter or one eighth control over major trade policy.

I say that because, recently, and I would like your comments on this, since you speak of full employment, the Economic Council of Canada - and I think this is one of the most perceptive comments to date in favour of Québec's sovereignty. It's very recent, barely a few weeks old, concerning employment, at least, since it's a blueprint for society most people agree with in Québec. The Economic Council of Canada said, and I quote: "One of the preliminary conditions in this regard, a full employment strategy - I won't quote the whole text - is the centralization of political and economic power. National employer and labour organizations must represent the majority of businesses and workers. They must have the power to negotiate and reach agreements that are binding on their members. However, political and economic institutions in Canada are noteworthy for fragmentation rather than centralization of power."

So, a full employment policy is desirable; that's basic for Québec society, regardless of the region. You, a young person, or those not so young, want Québec to adopt a full employment policy, that it pull back from the precipice it is heading for collectively...

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Daoust...

**Mr. Daoust:** ...and which is producing the unacceptable unemployment rate we now have. That's my question.

**Mr. Ducasse:** That's the longest question I've ever heard.

**Mr. Daoust:** You, who speak of full employment in your document, do you think it's possible to have a full employment policy - and are associate president of the young NDP-Canada - do you think it's possible to have a full employment policy in a country called Canada?

**Mr. Ducasse:** Possibly, but I think Québec's sovereignty would be preferable for full employment. What are the means? I'm not an economist, but I can still mention a few: promote regional development, provide excellent retraining for workers, training for the unemployed, perhaps lower the retirement age. Also, all those who will be put to work to operate the new social programs, that will create employment. I've got a comment: if, in our society, there are handicapped persons and elderly persons who would like to work and don't work, that doesn't indicate those people are unable to work. It indicates society's inability to make them work. I agree with you, we have to do everything to move towards full employment. That's fundamental.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** Mr. Ouellet, to be followed by Mr. Larose, who will be the last speaker.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to greet Mr. Ducasse and congratulate him, first, because of his presence before the members of this Commission and for his presentation that demonstrates that, regardless of age, regardless of affiliations, options or ideas, the members of the Commission are open to testimony like yours. And I think your effort today contributes to the work the commissioners have been engaged in for a few weeks. Beyond the major associations, I think it's important that the people of Québec be heard, and the fact that you have come on your own to speak today provides an absolutely convincing example that citizens can use this tribune offered to them to express their point of view. I dare to hope that, during the course of our other visits elsewhere in Québec, people who perhaps have seen you on television will be encouraged to come forward with their testimony.

**Mr. Ducasse:** Thank you for your comments, but I certainly won't be buying a Liberal Party

of Canada card.

**Mr. Ouellet:** No, I won't do like the Parti québécois and try to convince you here. I respect your opinions and think you have strong convictions, and it's up to you to decide what to do with them.

I have one question for you. In your brief, you refer to the need to preserve and maintain the system of free health care. I think you've paid particular attention to the elderly and you do so very simply. You say that in Canada we have one of the best health systems in the world. It's free, it's universal, it's available to everyone. Regardless of Québec's political, constitutional future, this system must be maintained. How can you guarantee or what suggestions do you have to guarantee these gains?

**Mr. Ducas:** First, I don't think we'll lose what we've got. I included that in my brief simply because we often talk, we're currently talking about reforming health insurance. I just thought it was important to include a short sentence like that. But it didn't have any radically new meaning. It's just to say that it's absolutely essential to keep a free health care system.

**Mr. Ouellet:** But you realize that, under the existing structure, 50% of the cost is paid for out of federal budgets. Of course, you can say that a certain amount of taxes is paid by Québec taxpayers, but I don't think they pay 50% of the overall Canadian budget. So, I assume, if you're confident, that regardless of the future formula, governments in Québec will want to maintain these gains and keep a free, universal health service. The difference will necessarily have to be made up from somewhere.

**Mr. Ducas:** I'm not sure I have the figures to answer your question, I can only say that I'm very confident that Québec will be able to work something out. Don't worry.

**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** We now move on to Mr. Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Perhaps to clarify the answer, the 50% provided by the federal Government is 100% paid by our taxes. There is no difference. In that sense, it's a familiar refrain from Mr. Ouellet. Yesterday, the CSN closed a tannery. Tomorrow, it'll close I don't know what. But it still shows that Québec is...

**Mr. Ouellet:** The tannery was reopened.

**Mr. Larose:** No, it wasn't reopened because the entire sector was closed, for all of Canada, the same as the shoe repair shops closed, the

same as the barbers-hair stylists closed. So, in that sense, those remarks cause confusion.

I would like... I find your answers a lot clearer than the text, and the question I wanted to ask is, you're a federalist, but what's the qualifier? But now, if I understand correctly, you're more for sovereignty.

**Mr. Ducas:** I said I was a federalist before the death of Meech Lake.

**Mr. Larose:** So, because it's Mr... a speaker who alluded to the fact that there was a debate with Mr. Edmonston. I have to admit that there's a rather difficult contradiction for the social democratic movement in Canada, namely fighting two battles at once, which collide. The social democratic movement needs a strong Canadian state. Social democrats in Québec also need a strong state, except it's in Québec City and in that sense, I didn't find Mr. Edmonston's presentation very enlightening, in the sense that there were some rather amazing contortions to try to arrive at a constitutional position. But when you say in your last paragraph that it's possible to be pro-Québec or pro-Québec without being anti-Canada. Shouldn't we rather say, when as social democrats, that we should be both pro-Québec and pro-Canada, each with his own state?

**Mr. Ducas:** Well, that sentence I wrote, being pro-Québec doesn't necessarily mean being anti-Canada, it simply means that I'm for sovereignty-association of Québec, but I don't hate Canada and I don't hate the English. That's all it means.

**Mr. Larose:** But can you like them to the point of telling them: Give yourselves a strong state and let us give ourselves our own state?

**Mr. Ducas:** They'll have no choice.

**Mr. Larose:** Which leads you, I'd say, to suggest to us on the first page that... In fact, it's your blueprint for society, the last paragraph of your first page: reinforcement of rights, the issue of full employment, encouraging cooperatives, etc. When it's time to redefine Québec, what can be done to move ahead on that side? In other words, does that blueprint depend on sovereignty or is sovereignty a condition that can lead you to achieve that?

**Mr. Ducas:** It's tied together. I also talk in my brief about a redistribution of power and I think we can move to a social-democratic society without necessarily having a highly centralized government. I'll give you a few examples of what I mean when I talk about decentralization. Certainly, strengthen cooperatives, for instance give more power to young



people within their Cegeps and universities by giving them half or more of the seats on the board of directors, reduce the voting age to 16, vigorously promote consumer protection organizations, strengthen unions, all that isn't necessarily centralizing in a state. It has objectives that are rather social-democratic, but not necessarily centralizing. And everything I say here is from the perspective of a sovereign Québec.

**Mr. Larose:** Last question. Do you have the impression that young people in Québec, right now, are interested in the emerging debate on the national question?

**Mr. Ducasse:** I'd prefer it if they were a little more interested, but I can say that official surveys show that 80% or more of young people in Cegep and university are for sovereignty-association and I'm sure that on the Côte-Nord, the figure is even higher.

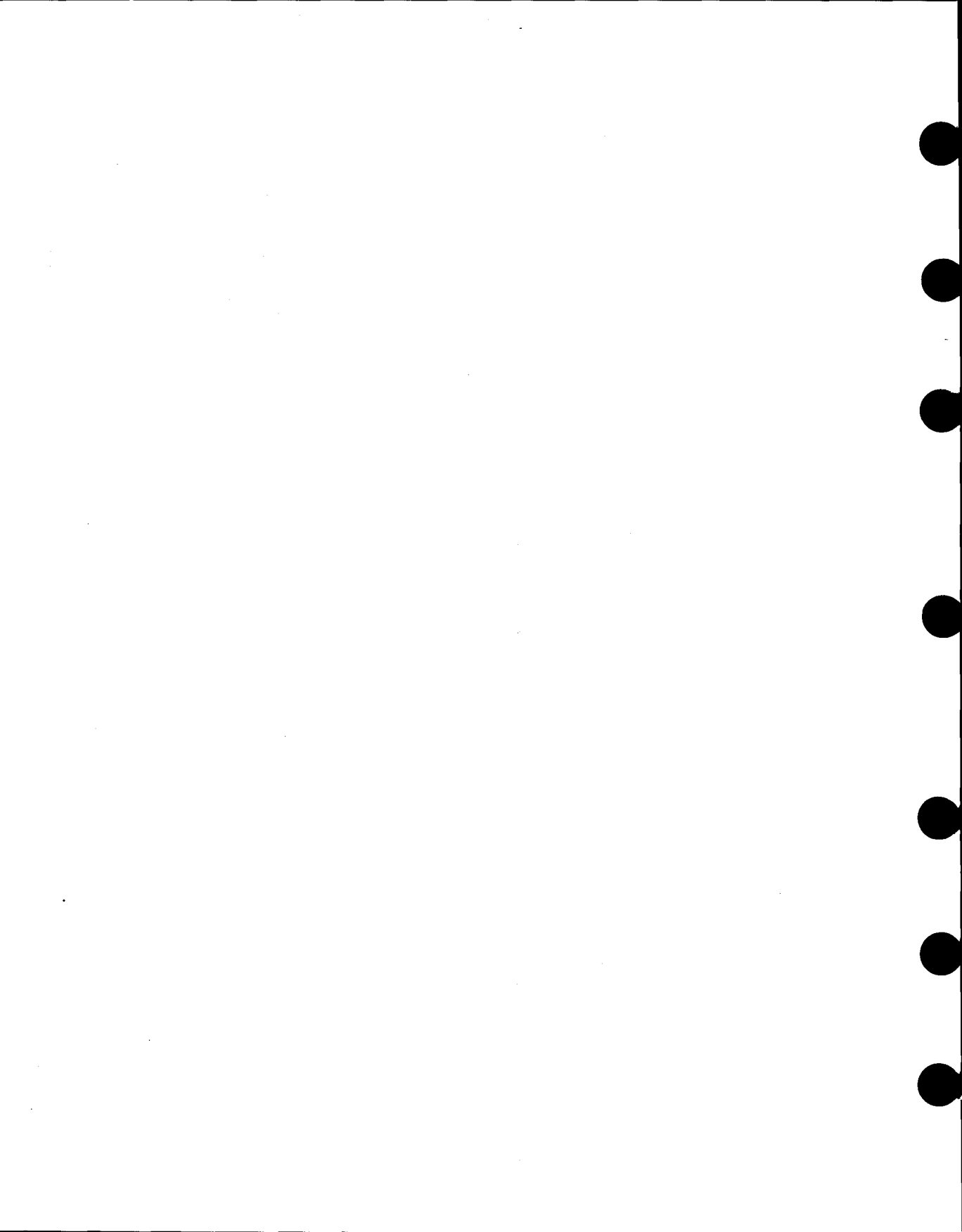
**Mr. Larose:** Thank you.

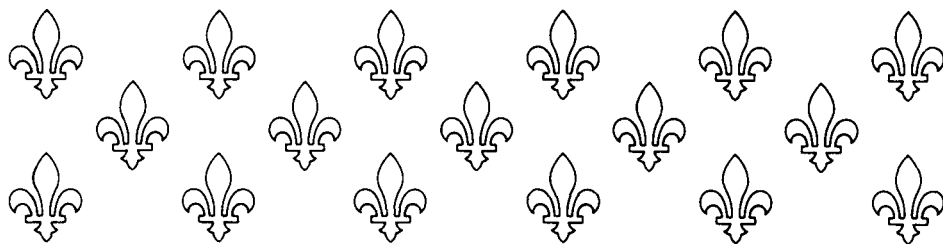
**The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):** So, all that's left for me is to thank you, Mr. Ducasse, for having, as has already been pointed out, undergone this rigorous process and come to present your opinion, that of a young social-democrat. This concludes our work for today.

Before we finish, I want to thank, on behalf of the entire Commission, the city of Sept-Îles for its welcome, the school authorities and the administration of the Manikoutai school who made remarkable facilities available to us today. I remind you that the Commission will resume its work in Jonquière tomorrow, at the Rousillon hotel, at 2:00 p.m. This sitting is adjourned.

(End of sitting, 4:10 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**

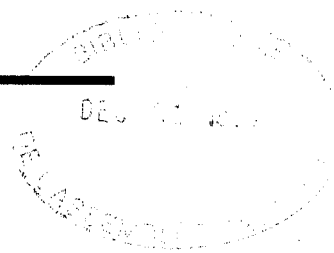
**Jonquière, Thursday, November 29, 1990**

**No 12**

**Published under the authority of the President of the  
National Assembly, Mr. Jean-Pierre Saintonge**

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**QUÉBEC**



**Note de l'éditeur:**

Ce fascicule contient une traduction des débats qui se déroulent à la Commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec. Cette traduction est assurée par la Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation du ministère des Communications.

**Editor's note:**

This fascicle contains a translation of the debates being held by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. The translation is carried out under the supervision of the Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation at the Ministère des Communications.

Abonnement: 250 \$ par année pour les débats des commissions parlementaires  
70 \$ par année pour les débats de la Chambre  
Chaque exemplaire: 1,00 \$ - Index: 10 \$  
(La transcription des débats des commissions parlementaires est aussi disponible sur microfiches au coût annuel de 150 \$)

Chèque rédigé au nom du ministre des Finances et adressé à:  
Assemblée nationale du Québec  
Distribution des documents parlementaires  
1060, Conroy, R.-C. Édifice "G", C.P. 28  
Québec, (Québec)  
G1R 5E6 tél. 418-643-2754

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Dépôt légal  
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec  
ISSN 0823-0102

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Jonquière, Thursday, November 29, 1990

## Hearing of organizations and individuals

(2:19 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** If the members will take their seats... I declare this session of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. The Commission's mandate is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and make the appropriate recommendations.

Today, the session will be devoted to hearing organizations and individuals who have submitted a brief to the Commission. Here is the list of briefs: first, the Conseil régional de concertation et de développement du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean; at 3:00 p.m., the City of Chicoutimi; at 3:30 p.m., Mr. Martin Bouchard; at 4:00 p.m., the Société nationale des Québécois du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean; at 4:30 p.m., the Conseil des Montagnais du Lac-Saint-Jean. This evening, at 7:30 p.m., the Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean; at 8:00 p.m., the Fédération des syndicats du secteur aluminium inc.; at 8:30 p.m., the Conseil des commissions scolaires de la région 02 inc.; at 9:00 p.m., Mr. André Bédard; and, at 9:30 p.m., the Conseil régional de l'environnement and others.

Before we begin with the Conseil régional de concertation et de développement du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, I'd like to give the floor to Mr. Jacques Brassard for a few words of welcome.

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my colleagues and on behalf of the entire population of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, I'd like to welcome the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec to our region. If you'll recall, 10 years ago, the rest of Québec missed its appointment with the region. We hope that the presence among us of the Commission is an indication that, next time, the appointment will be kept. Welcome to the region.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We are happy that the opportunity presented itself. I would like to ask you to refrain from applauding. This Commission is a creation of the National Assembly where, for better or for worse, it is customary to refuse applause. Is that it, Mr. Brassard?

**Mr. Brassard:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I now give the floor to Mr. Blackburn.

**Mr. Blackburn (Roberval):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dear members of the Commission, it is

with a great deal of pleasure and pride that, on behalf of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, I join my colleague, member of the National Assembly, in wishing you a warm welcome to our region; I am convinced that these Parliamentary Commission debates will be closely followed by the entire Province of Québec, given our history and, of course, our reputation beyond the borders of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region. Once again, a warm welcome and may these debates bear fruit.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Blackburn. Let's proceed with our first group, the Conseil régional de concertation et de développement du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, for a hearing of half an hour. Here is the way each hour of the hearing is apportioned: 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief, 10 minutes for the Government Parliamentary Group, 10 minutes for the Official Opposition, and 25 minutes for the members registered with the Chair, with a maximum of 5 minutes per member. Let me remind you also that, in the question and answer period, the time taken up by answers is counted in the total time allocated.

Mr. Wauthier, welcome to the Commission. Please introduce your colleagues.

**Conseil régional de concertation  
et de développement du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean**

**Mr. Wauthier (Jean):** With pleasure, Mr. Chairman. First, to my far left, Mr. Bernard Pilote, who is president of the Conseil régional de la culture du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and represents the sectorial regional councils at the CRCD executive committee; to my immediate left, Mr. Serge Lemelin, regional president of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, CSN, who represents the unions on the same executive; to my far right, Mr. Serge Chiasson, director general of the organization; Mr. Nicol Tremblay, Mayor of Alma and Deputy Prefect of the Lac-Saint-Jean Est RCM, representing the municipality with the CRCD and the executive; and, Mr. Jean-Eudes Bergeron, senior vice-president and director general of the Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, who represents the private and public financial institution sector on the executive committee and who is also vice-president of the CRCD.

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

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Co-chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parliamentary Commission, first, like Mr. Brassard and Mr. Blackburn, I'd



like to wish you all a sincere welcome to the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

Before proceeding with our presentation, we would like to express our gratitude for this opportunity to relate our experience as a peripheral region within the greater Canadian and Québec context. We would like to take this privileged opportunity to express what we, of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, want to be, and particularly what we want to become at the conclusion of these proceedings. To comply with the requirements of the Commission, I will stick to a condensed version of the brief which we recently submitted. I invite you to refer to the main document for a full grasp of our message to this Commission.

First of all, allow us to point out that, in practice, regional development and what we have learned from it have forced us to conclude that political power as it exists in Québec and in Canada, and particularly as it has been exercised, has never been conducive to integrated development for the resource regions.

We denounce this development model, because it has always favoured a Québec economic structure based on its central regions, and has contributed to a system that despoils our riches and reduces our development opportunities. This is why we decry this privative system and, above all, denounce governments that have continually viewed our region as nothing more than a vast reservoir of resources that the large centres could use to their heart's content to satisfy their insatiable appetite. As a result, we are seeing a systematic impoverishment of the regions and the accompanying socioeconomic dismemberment. These are telling signs that regional development has always been a minor political concern in Canada and in Québec.

To this day, the major regional policies of our governments are decided and dictated on the basis of central models. It pains us to realize that the major financial efforts made by our governments have had little impact because they were poorly planned and poorly channelled.

A better vision of regional issues would have made it possible to avoid such costly, unproductive improvisation and favour instead a truly constructive course of action. If we take a quick look at government action in the regions, we can see examples of dismal failures, which can be attributed to the lack of efficient concerted efforts between the various levels of government, and particularly to the lack of an appropriate mechanism to understand and master the dynamics specific to resource regions. This lack of necessary coordination between federal and provincial action, sometimes even within the same government, has often led to a duplication of structures, organizations, components and, basically, of all development programs.

It is this duplication of structures, coupled

with tools that are inappropriate because they are modelled on central regions, that has more often than not led to nullifying the efforts made by all, in addition to fuelling organizational conflicts. It has become obvious to us that these government structures, set up at great cost in the region, rarely have any real power. Worse, they often serve only as channels for development policies decided upon at the central level and dictated by the political necessity to, above all, satisfy the centralizing model which has always prevailed in Québec when it comes to regional development.

Furthermore, the expectations of the region and its real needs rarely go the other way. We are on the verge of concluding that the term "regional" - much bandied about by governments but rarely expressed in deeds - is intended merely to assuage the conscience of political leaders who are very little concerned with our problems, if at all. It is time they became aware of the place of regional development in the political, social, cultural and economic future of Québec.

Today, we want the concept of regional development to be recognized by legislation. We want legislation on regional development, a legislative act to affirm the existence of the regions as significant partners in the development of today's Québec, and to recognize the need of these regions for tools with which they can take charge of their responsibilities, and to obtain recognition of real, well-defined powers and adequate financial latitude.

Such legislation presupposes total repatriation by the Québec government of authority and powers in matters of regional development. Duplication of structures, a source of political conflict generated by an unjustifiable proliferation of agents and actions, must be eliminated or, failing that, we and our federal partners must define a new division of responsibilities and powers which will be complementary to the current overlapping. It goes without saying, however, that the Québec government must rein in its natural propensity for keeping in its own hands any repatriated powers and, instead, must agree to a fair division of powers and authority with the regions of Québec.

By adopting this legislation on regional development, the Québec National Assembly will be able to define a spatial frame of reference binding on all government authorities in their actions, programs and policies. Legislation on regional development would impose a systematic adaptation of government action, taking into account the body of information specific to each region, and the economic and structural problems encountered there.

This legislation must also recognize and institute a political structure in the regions, accountable to the regional authorities only,

which will necessarily link all socioeconomic partners in the region and become, by force of law, a privileged partner of the Québec government in defining and negotiating government action in the regions.

For decentralization to become a reality, the Québec state must also grant the regions real decision-making and financial powers that will enable them, based on their own concerted development aims, to set up the mechanisms and means deemed most appropriate to attaining specific development objectives.

We could elaborate on the impact and scope of this legislation on regional development in Québec, but we believe that such an exercise will be truly useful and necessary only when Québec has clearly asserted its national choices and defined, once and for all, the type of relations that will be maintained, broken off or redefined with Canada. Consequently, we insist that this first step in a political reorganization for Québec must be taken rapidly, so that the regions may, in turn, voice their views and expectations.

It is time for Québec to regain its unique character under a new type of partnership with its regions. This is how the distinct character of our society will find its true expression. As Quebecers, each of us has an obligation to reflect on the Québec of tomorrow. This reflection must also take into account the place that we are willing to give the regions in the political structure of this new Québec.

You are no doubt aware that what we, in the so-called remote regions, reproach the centralizing structure of Québec in matters of regional development, can be compared to what Québec criticizes in Canadian federalism. The regions can have no more powers in Québec than what Ottawa is willing to grant this province. So do not deny the regions the very thing that has led Québec to set up this Commission.

We would like to conclude this brief presentation, Mr. Chairman, by making a very concrete request to the Québec government, namely to hold a touring parliamentary commission on the future of the regions, which is to say of Québec, once it has clarified its constitutional position; such an exercise will enable the regions to voice their demands and expectations in a more serene, if not sovereign, Québec. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Wauthier. Today, we will start the question period with the Official Opposition Group. Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like to thank the CRCQ for their presentation to the Commission. We have visited several regions already, and I think what you told us is oddly similar with what we heard in

Matane, Sept-Îles and Joliette; I am convinced that we will hear basically the same thing in Val-d'Or, Hull, Sherbrooke, and Trois-Rivières. What we are hearing is the voice of the regions and, if the Commission had not moved from Québec City, I am not sure that we would have heard this voice. Before I ask a few questions, I'd like to say that, when the Commission prepares its report and makes its recommendations, you can be sure it will not forget, dismiss or postpone the issues we heard discussed in the regions. As you have said, and we are in full agreement with this message, a new Québec must make room, plenty of room for the regions, and give them the tools, and the means they need to take charge of their development and ensure their growth. There are enough commissioners here from the regions to ensure that this message will not be forgotten when the time comes for the Commission to prepare its report and make its recommendations.

That said, you make no mention of the status Québec should have in the future, but you demand total return of powers to Québec in matters of regional development. I know you are fully aware of what this means. But deciding to return jurisdiction to Québec in regional development does not mean it will happen overnight because the list is long. The list involves many things. As I have said many times in these proceedings, there is a long list of powers and authorities in matters of technological development, research, tourism, transport, professional training, corporate development, development of natural resources, etc. The list goes on. This is a long list of legislative areas which are currently shared, with the result that the regions are left with a real chaotic mess, a grab bag of policies that is inefficient and, in many ways, detrimental to the regions.

What do you think is the best way to obtain these powers?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Brassard, I think that this Commission, in its wisdom, will be able to find an answer to your question. We are all aware, as a regional coordination and development organization, that our list of claims is indeed a long one. The CRCQ brief demands full repatriation of powers in regional development. You and I and the members of the Commission could sit down and enumerate all these powers. We are all aware that the list is a long one.

You also mentioned that the CRCQ did not express its desire, or take a firm stand, with regard to Québec's sovereignty. I think that the organization I represent, which is made up of many people from the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, has made a decision, namely to defend the place of the regions in a new Québec. As for the regional position, with regard to Québec's future

I think I can safely say, to you and to the members of the Commission, that the region answered this question 10 years ago. As a coordination organization, we cannot possibly go against the wishes of the region. You will certainly have to do it again, and I think it will also be the role of the Québec government to ask the people this question, the people of Québec as a whole, and it would be naïve – or you'd have to be blind – not to understand the message of the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region on Québec sovereignty.

But beyond all this, we, as a regional coordination organization... Of course, the region has already made its position known, but today we insist on pointing out that this regional position is accompanied by a wish, or rather by a strong desire, and we are asking the Québec government to sit down with the regions to define clearly how this will be done.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Blackburn?

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, I have read your brief attentively; it makes a worthy, important contribution to the work of this commission. As Mr. Brassard pointed out, we hear the same things repeated from one region to the next. But we have a few former teachers at this table, and as you know, there is a certain pedagogical value in repetition. I hope this effect will be felt, not only by all the members of this commission, but also by Québec, which is also listening to the debates taking place in the regions. Two questions. The first one, on page... On several pages, but more particularly on pages 9 and 10, you suggest that the powers you want decentralized, along with the financial means, the decision-making powers you mention, along with the financial means which, based on your own choices, could further development in the region, you say that these powers could be entrusted to a structure, by which I understand it could be the structure adopted in the region on the occasion of socioeconomic or CRCQ conferences. What, specifically, is this structure you mention, which could hold these powers?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Before answering that question, Mrs. Blackburn, Mr. Brassard also mentioned this, as you have, that the same things are being heard everywhere in the regions. I am glad to hear this reaction, since it can only lead the Commission to recognize, as it listens to the regions, that the problem exists, since all regions agree when it comes to regional development, and I think that this is important, and that the members of the Commission will have to take this into account. As for regional power, power with regard to regional development, I think we mentioned that Québec

should hold a future parliamentary commission with the regions in order to determine how this regional power can be defined. The regions already have a certain authority and it must be used properly. What matters is a proper definition. We don't want duplicate structures, we talked about this in the brief; duplication is costly and it is the regions that are shouldering the cost. What is important is to use the various regional authorities: municipal, the RCMs, which have regional jurisdiction in socioeconomic matters. There is also a national jurisdiction. What must be defined is the responsibility of each to avoid duplication of structures and, also, to avoid this bickering that we see at economic summits because responsibilities are poorly defined or because the choice asked of each participant is poorly defined. What we need is a proper definition of the responsibilities and powers of all those involved. What we are asking is that the regions become participants in Québec's development, with regional powers.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Do you have another question, Mrs. Blackburn?

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Yes. You talk of duplication, and particularly the high cost of this duplication on regional economic development. There are some people who are sceptical at this table. Could you give us some examples of overlapping or obstructions to the development of certain projects due to the fact that we have two levels of federal or provincial government?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Well, I have no precise statistics or figures to give the Commission, but there are...

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Examples.

**Mr. Wauthier:** ...striking examples. All of us in the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region can recall, it was in March 1987 if I remember correctly, when we were promised \$120 million to develop this region. \$120 million, which was for... We were told at the time that it had been specially earmarked, that it was truly new money for the regions, like having a suit made to measure. We in the regions could think about the kind of development we wanted, the choices we wanted to make. This was \$120 million that the federal government had announced in March 1987. As things stand today...

(2:45 p.m.)  
**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Quickly, Mr. Wauthier, please.

**Mr. Wauthier:** All right, Mr. Chairman. Today, in 1990, we have a federal-provincial agreement on regional development, still with \$120 million, \$60 million from Québec and \$60 million from the federal government, and

we still have programs which, most of the time, not all of them, but quite often, are recycled programs. The region believed in this \$ 120 million development program and, today, we're paying for it. We're not talking about \$ 120 million in grants, but in loans to the region and, most of the time, these are recycled programs that already existed in the government system, either at the federal or at the provincial level.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Wauthier. Mr. Claude Béland is next, followed by Mr. Bruno Roy.

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understand your brief correctly, ultimately, you're saying that regional development depends on increased powers for the regions and the only way the regions can have more power is by repatriating all powers to Québec. All this seems clear enough to me. You even say that, if the question were asked, the same question as in 1980, and the answer was yes, you would be willing to go with the decision of the majority.

We have had economists tell us that it is difficult to gauge the risks involved in sovereignty because of unpredictable elements such as the reaction of our current partners, the reaction of our Canadian friends. In your case, as people who are actively involved in the community and eager to develop your region, do you see this possible upheaval in the years ahead as an impediment? Are you among those who are in favour of sovereignty, but not at just any price? Basically, is it yes to sovereignty, provided it comes with a guarantee that the quality of life will not be affected?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Béland, I'd like to answer your question by saying that we of the CRCD are dedicated to sovereignty, we say yes to a new Québec, but not at any price. When we say not at any price, this does not mean... Of course, we are all aware, here, as people from the regions, that any change in the current structures may trigger certain things, there is a risk of major changes and, often a risk of having to, how would you say, not necessarily having to pay the cost, on the contrary, there would be certain benefits, that's obvious. But when we say not just at any price we mean: A new Québec, yes, but a Québec that takes into account its regions, and Québec must realize that the regions represent an incredible wealth. From the moment Québec considers the regions, in its future orientation, as an important tool in its development and future, then we will succeed, about this we're very positive; we'll be able to make it through any changes we decide are for the best.

**Mr. Béland:** But I hope you don't want this

to be part of the question. Would the question be: Are you for sovereignty provided the regions are given powers?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Ha, ha, ha! I think the people of Québec will be able to give you an answer on that, Mr. Béland.

**Mr. Béland:** Well, I don't know. It depends on the question.

**Mr. Wauthier:** Well... the question. I put my trust in the members of the Commission. In recent weeks, you have heard, and you will continue to hear, people from the regions who will point out, as we have done and as those before us have done, that Québec must take into account its regions once we have defined what Québec's future will be. Afterwards, what we're saying, is that we'd like you to come back and see us to define how this will be done.

**Mr. Béland:** Very well. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** The floor now goes to Mr. Bruno Roy, who is substituting for Mr. Serge Turgeon.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very often, in the various briefs and particularly in the regions, there is a great deal of emphasis on figures and policies and very little on culture. I am surprised. For example, your brief says that the time has come for our governments to become aware of the need to make regional development part of the political, social, cultural and economic future. I often hear this phrase and, sometimes, it makes me shudder because I get the impression that using the word "cultural" is a way to ensure a clear conscience.

My question to you is... Of course, there is a premise. Culture cannot be dissociated from its environment because without culture our social interactions would have little meaning. How will you defend the place of culture, first of all, of course, in your region, and in a Québec that would have better political representation?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Chairman, if you'll allow me, we have with us a member of the executive who represents the cultural environment, Bernard Pilote, whom I introduced earlier and who is chairman of the regional culture council. He is of course well versed in the cultural problems encountered in the regions. So, if I may, I'd like to ask him to answer that question.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** By all means.

**Mr. Pilote (Bernard):** Well, to begin with, our region has always had a specific cultural identity. Québec has a specific identity in

relation to Canada as a whole. I don't know whether I can truly answer your question. I don't see any risk of being unable to define a culture and a cultural development which is truly our own in an independent Québec.

Could you repeat the question so that I can elaborate?

**Mr. Roy:** I was asking about the place of culture in the regions, and in a possible sovereign Québec. What direction would culture take? You do not mention it in your brief. I don't know what the word "culture" means in your brief. I am merely trying to understand what you mean by the word.

**Mr. Wauthier:** I'll come back to that, if you'll allow me. I think that, in the regions, we have shown without any doubt the importance we place on culture. If you look anywhere in Québec, when it comes to cultural development, the contribution of the regions is very important, even if — and this is something I'd like to stress — even if, when it comes to the government, the cultural policies are not necessarily favourable to the regions. I think the regions have proven capable of holding their own, culturally; if we look around us, what we see in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, whether it be in theatre productions, folklore, dance, any cultural sector... I think that we have representatives in every sector and at every level and, if you look at the cultural scene throughout the province, I think that the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region has taken its place, that it has made an important contribution to cultural life in Québec.

**Mr. Roy:** I am happy to hear it; that's what I would have liked to see in your brief.

**Mr. Wauthier:** I am telling you now.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you.

**Mr. Wauthier:** And I think the members of the Commission have duly noted it.

**Mr. Roy:** It's all quite clear to us.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Serge Deschamps, substituting for Mr. Jacques Proulx.

**Mr. Deschamps:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Many of the questions on the regional aspect of the briefs we have seen to date are well known to us at the UPA, since many of our constituents often tell us about their regional concerns. I don't want to overemphasize this aspect of the question but, in your presentation, I didn't quite see what place you give agriculture in your discussions, in your debates with the

Council. I'd like to know what this place is, not only in terms of agriculture, but also in terms of the agri-food industry. Could you tell us more about this aspect and perhaps present some development projects that you may be contemplating?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Deschamps, I think that we limited ourselves to general statements in our brief, without placing the emphasis on one sector or another. I could be facetious and tell you that if you look at the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean flag you'll see what place agriculture has. I think it has always had a very important place, you only need to... Look at the organization I represent; the sectorial roundtable on agriculture occupies a prominent place and plays an important role in the economic summit; this is also true in the regional consultation and coordination efforts that have been taking place since the creation of the Conseil régional de concertation et de développement. We didn't want to stress any particular sector, in the same way we didn't stress culture, as mentioned earlier by Mr. Roy, but it certainly does play an important role in regional development and holds an important place with regard to the power this sector will have to be given, in regional development and, above all, in Québec's development.

**Mr. Deschamps:** If I may, Mr. Chairman, in industry, is decentralization to the region as important a concern as the other sectors you mention indirectly, namely the more industrial sectors, or do you consider them similar?

**Mr. Wauthier:** They are similar and just as significant. In agriculture particularly, since it is an important industry in a region such as the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean if we compare ourselves with the central regions, the government must take this aspect into account when dealing with the regions, because this is an integral part of life in the regions. This is why it should be as important as any other sector. I think this was implicit in the brief we presented. I think that Mr. Bergeron had... since Mr. Bergeron, who is vice-president of the CRCD, and who represents the Fédération des caisses... Perhaps, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, he might like to address this issue.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** By all means.

**Mr. Bergeron (Jean-Eudes):** Yes, Mr. Chairman. There is no doubt that agriculture is one of our basic industries; the sales figures may not be all that high, but they are substantial. We have built a past for ourselves and I think the fact that our region is a remote one causes specific problems. There is also the fact that our

season is shorter. That too is a problem. But the one thing farmers all agree on is that they don't want to starve and they need the support of governments, particularly that of Québec.

Our challenge, in the short and medium term, is to try and do as much processing in the region as possible in terms of the agri-food business. The forest is also a... It is one of our natural riches but there is as yet little processing going on. In a way, this is the difficulty we are currently encountering at the CRCD; we didn't want to act as spokesperson for all of the economic sectors that make up the CRCD. What we were most eager to point out is that there is a concerted effort being made in the region, and that together the sectors are capable of talking, capable of defining priorities, capable of making commitments, capable of being responsible people and even of helping higher authorities settle problems in the region. This is something that happens too rarely, calling upon the regions to help solve problems. We are just as smart as people anywhere else. It's a good thing that the Almighty has seen fit to distribute intelligence all around.

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

**Mr. Bergeron (Jean-Eudes):** But we don't use it enough and I could give you examples.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Sir. Let's proceed with Mr. Éric Jacques, substituting for Mr. Roger Nicolet, who will be followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Jacques:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had the good fortune of being able to see your brief a few days beforehand and so I was able to read it a little more thoroughly. Knowing you, and knowing myself, I simply wanted to clarify a few things. You speak of Québec's social, economic and cultural development, but the region itself, would you say that it resembles an RCM territory, that it can be defined in terms of boundaries? There is also mention of powers, but in some ways it's rather vague. The regional entity, could it not also be made up of elected officials who, in conjunction with all the organizations concerned, could become leaders in economic and cultural development and in all other aspects of social development?  
(3:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Jacques, on this question, if I refer to what I mentioned earlier on the subject of regional development, I didn't want to identify specific actors at the outset. As I mentioned, I think it will be up to a future commission to identify these actors within the region. What I would like to point out, however, is that within the regions, as Mr. Bergeron mentioned earlier, there are people who have the intelligence and the authority. The RCMs, the

municipalities and the socioeconomic environment of a region are all part of it.

When we speak of a regional power, it involves trying to use these various authorities, these various regional actors and, above all - this is where the importance of this course of action lies - it involves having a clear definition of the responsibilities of each.

**Mr. Jacques:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is that it, Mr. Jacques? Let's go on to Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. Before asking my question, let me express a personal reaction. Your region is not belligerent, it is open and hospitable, it is human, dynamic, and here I go back to our colleague, Mr. Roy. Our four children spent about ten years in Saint-Jérôme, ten summers, in Saint-Jérôme, Saint-Gédéon, Saint-Félicien, Petite Décharge and La Pipe, especially La Pipe; their experience of this very beautiful and hospitable region has enabled them to become what they are today.

But to go back to your brief, specifically, I find that in certain passages you use expressions that are a little strong. I won't say exaggerated, but a little strong. On page 3, words like "catastrophic" and "alarmist" seem a little strong; on page 5, second paragraph, this too seems a little strong; on page 7, I see no cause and effect relation here; on page 6 - this is a superb page with terrific suggestions. On page 8, I get the impression that the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean would like to have its own kingdom within a sovereign Québec. I was already under that impression and perhaps this would make everybody happy. I think you deserve... but boundaries ought to be re-discussed.

That said, you know that there is a federal government and that there is a provincial one, and be that as it may, I think you have answered well and you have answered better. Unlike in some other regions, even if our colleague Mr. Brassard disagrees, you have a more balanced vision, you don't, if I may put it that way, and I will, accuse one level of government, you don't rail against this or that, and I congratulate you. I congratulate you - Larose and I were commenting on that - for asking us to get back to you with our... I think we should do that. That said, since you know that decentralization and federalism are not mutually incompatible, would it not be possible to have a sound Québec-Canada partnership and a sound Québec-regions partnership, keeping in mind that the major decisions must be made in the regions. I think everybody is becoming well aware of this.

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Hogue, we're very happy to learn that your children spent several summers in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region. We would be happier still if they had decided to contribute to regional development by remaining here, in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. Maybe one day.

**Mr. Hogue:** Maybe.

**Mr. Wauthier:** Who knows...

**Mr. Hogue:** My sister lived there for 25 years, maybe some of my children will come here.

**Mr. Wauthier:** You never know. When you speak of a kingdom... People in the region will often say jokingly: We already have a kingdom, all that's missing is a king or queen. But if we go further and look at federal power, or provincial power, earlier I gave you an example of the difficulties we've experienced, and still do, on account of the federal-provincial agreement on regional development. This is a flagrant example of incompatibility and duplication of structures. It is worth noting that the regions are paying the cost and I think that over the past three years, as I mentioned earlier, we were told with much fanfare to expect \$ 120 million for the region, \$ 120 million for development, where we would have a say in the kind of development being carried out. In all honesty, I must say that I have great difficulty living with this duplication of structures and the bickering between two levels of government, which ultimately ends up in the regions having no say, having to endure this bickering and these contradictions between the two levels of government, even after we were told that we would get the cloth for a tailor-made suit, that the measurements would be taken, the colours would be chosen; in short, the levels of government involved would give us money to get these new clothes and go ahead with development.

**Mr. Hogue:** As you know, you have representatives with good strong voices in your regions - whether the name is Blackburn or Harvey - people capable of conveying a message loudly and clearly, and you should not be afraid of insisting, as I'm sure you do, that this tailor-made suit must be given to the region.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Hogue. Let's go on to Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**A voice:** I'll get back to that.

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

**Mr. Beaudry:** In your brief, as has already been said elsewhere, you repeat and you insist that this development of the regions must be carried out, and that the central regions must take better care of each of them. In particular, you mention on page 7 that you want legislation on regional development. Here is my question: Don't you think that any legislation on regional development could eventually be modified, abrogated or substantially reduced when it comes to powers? Would it not be more in keeping with your intentions to ask that the powers of the regions be entrenched in a Québec constitution or in a Québec charter to make sure that it can't be altered when it comes to the concept of region and that this chart or constitution should also include the powers you seek?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Beaudry, when we ask for a specific legislation on regional development, including the various development powers that the regions should have, we don't think that these different concepts should be found in a Québec constitution. I think it is extremely important that the government create legislation on regional development, that it clearly define the various partners that come under this legislation on regional development, stating the responsibility of each, and the power of each. I think it is within this framework, within this framework of decentralization that we will be able to find what we need in legislation on regional development. It is with this in mind that we propose adopting legislation on regional development.

**Mr. Hogue:** I asked the question because, in certain regions that we visited, this suggestion was made to ensure the recognition of regions. My second question has to do with the level of financing of your regions. For example, would you want powers given directly to the regional entity recognized by law or by a possible constitution, so as to allow for direct taxation of individuals to finance the projects you decide to put forward?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Before we talk about taxation powers, I'd like to mention that when it comes to the importance of the region within Québec, it would seem to me that this is implicit. What I mean is, if we speak about a new Québec, I think everybody must start from the principle that the regions are an integral part of Québec, whether it be today's Québec or a new Québec. So I think it is important - and this is why we stressed the importance of legislation - to have a regional power included in this legislation. As for taxation powers, we never mentioned at any time, in our brief... we never asked for regional taxation powers. We were talking about regional power, something to be defined at a future date, as part of another process, a parliamentary

commission. I don't think this is part of the nuts and bolts of the matter.

As far as we're concerned, there is no question of duplication or of having a third level of taxation, with two or three income tax returns, whatever. What is important is a proper redistribution of the Québec tax base, not because the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean or the regions in general are asking for any favours. It is far from our intention to ask for favours, all we want is to be included in the development of Québec and to be full partners, like the others, as we have always been, but we want the tools and means to become even stronger partners.

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** At this point, the Government parliamentary group has the floor. Mr. Rémillard.

**Mr. Rémillard:** Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen, thank you for coming to testify before us, and particularly for doing it so eloquently and with such a high-quality brief. Yours is an excellent brief, well put together, with a clear focus on a particular concern of yours, namely regional economic development. You have raised issues that are particularly important for the economic development of Québec, and made it clear that this economic development cannot take place without the regions. While reading *Le Quotidien* this morning, I saw that Mr. Carol Miron echoes your brief when he writes that the political future of Québec must include the economic, social and cultural development of the regions. And I know that Mr. Bertrand Tremblay mentioned the same thing very recently. Unanimity comes through loud and clear in this eloquent testimony that the regions want the recognition of their economic development to be based not only on deconcentration, but also on decentralization; the two are unfortunately often confused. It is a mistake to think that creating a regional office means decentralizing when, ultimately, the decisions are made in Québec City.

Despite all the efforts made by the government, it is very difficult to develop a system that would really enable us to decentralize decision-making and at the same time retain adequate coordination throughout Québec. That's normal. In this context, you have made a truly original suggestion, and a very good one too. You suggest legislation on regional economic development. I would go even further, and I think this is what you were proposing earlier in your reply to Mr. Beaudry: regardless of the constitutional status that Québec may acquire, the Québec constitution should include the principle of regional economic development among its main components. This would be a solid basis to build on.

But, Mr. Wauthier, we already have municipalities, school boards, RCMs, economic summits, and so on; as a matter of fact, you yourself, I think on February 15 and 16, will have your regional economic summit. I'm told that the process is well under way. When you refer to regional political structures, I know you have been asked the question many times, but I'd like to know more about it. Should another structure be added, could the summits, for example, serve as a starting point for this structure? What do you really have in mind?

**Mr. Wauthier:** Mr. Minister, since you've brought up the subject of economic summits, let me say that the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region is in the middle of preparing for the economic summit that will take place next February. You have spoken of deconcentration, as opposed to decentralization, and I think you will have noticed that the Québec government, some of your colleagues who attended the AQORCD convention on the week-end, that when the topic of repatriating certain powers come up at the economic summits, it was primarily a question of decentralization rather than deconcentration. In my opinion, the economic summits that have taken place since 1984 have been of tremendous help to the regions of Québec. They have forced the regions to consult one another, to sit down together and decide on their future and the development they want.  
(3:15 p.m.)

In that sense, this have been very beneficial for regional development, except that these concerted efforts, without decentralization, or without a certain regional power, may have the opposite effect in the medium-term. When regions are asked to consult one another and coordinate their efforts, to sit down together and decide what kind of development they'd like to have, when they're given a process and when the regional authorities agree to play the game, to go through with the process, and when at the same time in another process certain government departments require developers to go through an economic summit even when projects are not deemed constructive, I think that at a summit everyone is aware that we are asked to come up with constructive projects within our economic development.

So people are asked to sit down together and consult, and at the same time they're told: If you want the project to be prioritized by the region, to be prioritized by the government, go and sit down with the people and the region, and present your project and, if it happens that this project is not considered constructive for the region, when you come to sit down, the regional authorities themselves, since they decided to play the game with the cards that have been put on the table have to reject these projects. At the same time, after having told



people: Sit down and let's hold a consultation, they're told their project cannot be accepted because it's outside the main axes and development that the region has adopted as part of a consultation process - this is where I come back to deconcentration - the region is therefore obliged to say no to these people because their projects don't fit in with what was defined as a constructive project in regional economic development.

And this, because the power was not there, the regional power, threatens the dynamism that was created in 1984 and which still exists, I'm still confident in this... this regional potential still exists, but it should not be rejected outright by regional developers, who either for their part of the country or for their municipality present a major project and are rejected not by the government but first by the regions because the project is deemed non-constructive within this process. This is the reason we want a decentralization of powers. I could give you an example, Mr. Rémillard, this is a regional action fund, and I could let Mr. Tremblay or Mr. Bergeron, who were part of this regional fund, tell you about it; the region had a paltry \$ 200 000 to make choices in the projects it was allowed to present or develop. This \$ 200 000 - I'm going back quite a bit - generated over \$ 3 000 000 in riches and projects in the region within twelve months. This is because the regions were able to make choices and guide the projects they themselves had decided upon. It was they who decided to go with these projects, with a budget package they had been given, \$ 200 000, that generated \$ 3 000 000. I may have exaggerated a bit when I said that I'm not certain that \$ 120 000 000 in recycled programs will have as much impact.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Blackburn, you're next.

**Mr. Blackburn (Roberval):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had the opportunity to read the CRCQ brief and I can confirm that this regional organization has been doing excellent work for several years. I'd like to stress the work and representation of these people who are at the table here; they are excellent people with an excellent reputation, dedicated to concerted efforts and development in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region. Throughout the brief that has been presented, Mr. President, you spoke of this specific situation in the regions where many difficulties are encountered and where there is still a lot of work to be done. But on page 12 of the brief, you also made a recommendation which, for me, is extremely interesting. Just before the end of your brief, you speak of creating a travelling Parliamentary Commission on the future of these Québec regions.

Allow me to say that I find this idea

extremely interesting and I hereby undertake to bring your suggestion to the attention of the Québec government as soon as the work of the Parliamentary Commission is over. I make this commitment in the firm belief that the Québec government will be attentive to your suggestion and that it will take note of your recommendations. But at the same time I would like to ask you how you see this Parliamentary Commission, not only in terms of make-up, but also as to what subjects it will be dealing with and discussing.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You have very little time left to answer, Mr. Wauthier.

**Mr. Wauthier:** I'll be brief, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Blackburn, we haven't thought about the makeup of this Parliamentary Commission. As for the subject, I think we made that clear in our brief, it is the place of the regions within a new Québec and the importance of regional development and the power the regions will have in the development of this new Québec. I think that, overall, this is how we see this Parliamentary Commission, without having looked at the details of its makeup. I think that after Québec has decided on its political future, we'll be able to sit down together and define the procedures to be used to create this commission and the various partners that should be taking part.

**Mr. Blackburn:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We've run out of time. Messrs. Chiasson, Tremblay, Bergeron, Wauthier, Lemelin, Pilote, thank you for your participation in the work of our Commission on the future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:21 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:24 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Please come to order.

We are now receiving the City of Chicoutimi. The hearing will last 30 minutes. Mr. Mayor, kindly introduce your colleagues.

#### **The City of Chicoutimi**

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. Before starting, I would like to introduce my colleagues. On my left, Mr. Denis Dahl, assistant to senior management of the City of Chicoutimi; Mr. René Girard, who is a municipal councillor; on my right, Mr. Guy Bergeron, who is the assistant to the mayor. We also have... Well I've already introduced him. So, that's it. And myself, Ulric Blackburn, the Mayor

of Chicoutimi.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Blackburn, you have five minutes for the presentation of your brief.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Of course; it's very short, Mr. Chairman, because I would have liked to have read all of it. Anyway, I'll try to summarize it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** To be quite sure that you present the main points, perhaps you could begin with your conclusions.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Ha, ha, ha! We'll get to them, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parliamentary Commission, the City of Chicoutimi is proud to come before your Commission to submit its vision of the political and constitutional future of Québec. First, let's say right now that as mayor of the City of Chicoutimi, I have no mandate from my fellow citizens to take a stand on whether the federal tie should remain or not, just as I have no mandate to determine if my fellow citizens wish renewed federalism, the independence of Québec, or even sovereignty-association. What I am sure of, however, is that no matter what the result of this process is, things will never be as they were before.

I would like to remind you that in 1980, our region was the only one to have a majority "yes" vote in the referendum, which was only asking for a mandate to negotiate a new association with Canada. From the moment the answer of Quebecers is clear, the collective future will have to be defined in a framework of a blueprint for society in which all the democratically elected governments will have to participate. The balance of power between the central authority and the regions is what concerns us in the eventual negotiations at the national level, negotiations that will be basic on every issue.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, as mayor of the largest city in the region, I will astonish some of you when I confess that the advent of a sovereign Québec would leave me at a loss, especially if the centralist philosophy, which too often characterizes power in Québec, continued to see the outlying regions of the province as resource pools for the large, urban areas.

In 1969, we made a giant stride towards our development with the establishment of a Université du Québec and its branches, but we have to doubt that this advantage of university training and research in the regions would ever have become a reality when we consider the way the urban intelligentsia think.

In 1969-1970, the provincial government had put our region, weakened by the first results of

Industrial change, under the microscope of the specialists. Two major objectives came out of this economic study of 1969-1970: creation of a centre for growth, and an intraregion expressway between Alma and La Bale. These two objectives are still very much in the news, and, unfortunately, have not as yet been completed.

Political will is absent in Québec City or is seen as worming its way in. We have to admit that the federal government is more sensitive to the aspirations of the outlying regions than the Québec government, whose creatures are the municipalities. The centralist mentality of the State apparatus in Québec must be changed in any new regime, be it sovereign or integrated into a true federation.

In the hypothesis of a sovereign Québec with all the powers secured, the regime must definitely fashion a better role for the outlying regions, must regard them as partners, as part and parcel of the whole as vital as the large urban areas. When it acts alone, Ottawa, I must acknowledge, has, for several years, shown itself to be more effective, at least, in our region. For example, it didn't wait for Québec to complete the Alma-La Bale expressway before investing tens of millions of dollars in improvements to the port of Grand Anse, which has become a major development tool; and there are other initiatives I could talk about.

I imagine that in repatriating taxing powers, a sovereign or associated Québec, purified of its centralist reflex, could do even more by acting like the understanding father of the family and no longer like a competing foreign power.

(3:30 p.m.)

So, from the viewpoint of profound changes in the Canadian political system, we hope for a Québec whose eyes are not always focused on the urban centres. Our region wants to put the brakes on the exodus of its young people, after obtaining from the State the proper tools for its development in a new economic framework centred on technology. If Québec proclaims its sovereignty or gives itself a new status, we want it to revitalize the outlying regions through generous and energetic action.

Because Québec has become the arbitrator of development ever since the nationalization of electricity and the forests, a renewed Québec will also have to include the outlying regions in its search for large investors.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up, Mr. Blackburn.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** In recent years, our region has been completely isolated from this operation. We insist that the government favour the creation of a focal point for growth in Haut-Saguenay, as advocated by the economic mission.

I only need another minute, Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me. About a minute.

In a renewed Québec, the regions should enjoy more independence vis-à-vis the central authority. The last regional forum didn't show any such independence, and the regions must have a new mechanism, free of political strings. This role could be passed down to the RCMs.

We understand the growing appeal that sovereignty has for the people after the frustrations of Meech, but this propensity for greater emancipation could spread irreversibly throughout the regional population, if certain political leaders continue to treat us merely as a resource pool.

If the Principality of Monaco - I wouldn't want to pull my punches - Mr. Chairman...

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

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** If the Principality of Monaco and the Duchy of Liechtenstein can develop within the European community, why couldn't the Kingdom of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean do the same in a new America? Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, thank you for being so attentive to my message. I especially congratulate you for having gotten out of the large urban areas so that you can hear what the whole population has to say, even those of us here in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, who sometimes have to pay more for the short flight to Montréal than for a holiday in Florida or even Europe.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Blackburn. We begin with Mr. Eric Jacques, followed by Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier and Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

**Mr. Jacques:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Blackburn, I had the pleasure of reading your outline only relatively briefly, and, once again, you will understand my tendency to talk about the RCMs. Your speech is quite short. On page 13, you talk about this role of a clearly regional government or more regional without being a government, of a more regional power to be given mainly to the RCMs. Do you think the natural territories that are usually grouped together in the RCMs could become large amalgamations or, with a somewhat more regional and greater power that is more decentralized - wouldn't this be a logical formula that we could call a membership formula, such as we observe here in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean?

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Mr. Jacques, I'm pleased to answer this question. I have been in public service for 32 years: 22 years on school boards and nine years with the City of Chicoutimi. And I must tell you that for at least nine years, I have been advocating that within

their sectors, their regions, the municipalities of Québec should have the power to deal with their own economic development. The municipalities should take themselves in hand to determine what they need in their sectors, the levers we need, what we need in the way of government aid, what we need in the way of resource people to determine here at home the direction our economic development is going to take.

If I talk about the RCMs, it's because today they are already a meeting place for the municipalities that clearly could become a meeting place for the municipalities where the people could carry out the development of their sector together. Then, there will surely be, because this is a suggestion I'm making quickly, because I know there are places where the RCMs are not always organized in the same way and there are places where, perhaps even in our own region, we will be able to change the powers of the RCMs. I'm making a suggestion, it doesn't mean to say it's going to be like that. There is one thing I firmly insist on, that we here in our municipality insist on, and that is that the municipalities have the power, the ability to see to their own development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you Mr. Blackburn. Next, Mr. Beaumier.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Please allow me to greet my colleague, the Mayor of Chicoutimi, who is an active member of the board of directors of the Union des municipalités, and we should tell the people of the region they have a very dynamic mayor, one who is very helpful in advancing the cause of municipalities in Québec. Mr. Mayor, unfortunately, I myself didn't receive your brief until 2 o'clock this afternoon, so I skimmed it, trying to find the highlights. What I derived from it is this: you favour municipal autonomy, greater autonomy for local authority. I drew two conclusions from your text: first, that the provincial government had, unfortunately, on several occasions, seemed to be multiplying the difficulties and discouraging your legitimate development aspirations. The other, on page 9, was to the effect that the centralist mentality of Québec's apparatus of state control has to be changed in any future sovereign system or system of integration in a true federation. I would like, to try to advance our cause, to see a proposal for a political change in Québec. What role do you want for the municipalities to try and give them a slightly larger place that would be clearly drawn, to avoid having to play the part, as one of my colleagues, the former mayor of Québec City once said, of some incompetent released under supervision?

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Mr. Beaumier, I'll answer you as a colleague at the UMQ. For me,

it's clear that the municipalities must have many more powers. This is the consequence of what I told Mr. Jacques a while ago: the municipalities are going to develop the sector. But to do it, they need the responsibilities, they need a charter. Right now, I strongly support the brief from the Union des municipalités, which calls for a charter for the municipalities in which the municipalities would be recognized as a local government with powers and the financial ability to develop their sector.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Fine.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Mr. Mayor, I am very happy to bid you welcome and I'm also very honoured to recall the good memories I have of the more than 20 years of my adult life that I lived in the beautiful city of Chicoutimi, where you were mayor for most of that time, since you've been mayor for a long time, and also to recall that I was honoured to represent Chicoutimi as lawyer, back then. That being said, I would like to come directly to the point with reference to your brief.

It seems to me there are two main themes in your brief. First, you have confirmed the extremely strong tendency we see in all the regions of Québec: the current structures in Québec don't permit the municipalities and regions to develop as they should, there is a lack of autonomy, etc. On this subject, you plead a very strong case, one which I believe is going to inspire some basic thinking, not only here on the Commission, but certainly also in government and among the staff who are thinking about such things for the future, in the design of the blueprint for Québec society.

Second, there's something else, and it becomes rather ambiguous sometimes. This discontent you express appears to me to be a lot of discontentment with some policies, some government actions. For example, in some ways you defend the positive role played by the federal government in development when it acted on its own. You come right out and say so. But, at the same time, I don't get the feeling that this is an indictment of the State of Québec per se, because you refer to a time when the Québec government really played its role in regional development. And I think that Mr. Duplessis would be happy to hear you today, since much of what you mention happened during his time. But not exclusively, because there were the 1960s, a time when many things were done, notably the creation of the Université du Québec, which was a large program for the region. That happened, I believe, in Mr. Bertrand's regime. We could also salute the late Mr. Roch Boivin, who was the minister of the day, along with Mr. Jean-Noël

Tremblay, who was also a minister.

Having said that, you finish by saying there are two governments involved, then that there is one too many. When regional development is involved, providing a framework for the municipalities, there are two, then there is one too many. Which one?

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

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** I think I answer that in my brief when I say that at a given time, when the Québec government becomes sovereign – if it becomes sovereign – the people of Québec will decide that... It's clear to me that the municipalities... We'll do business with the Québec government, I say, in spite of your remarks – I said it and I'll say it again – that for us, anyway, in our sector, the federal government is currently more active in development and investment in our area than is Québec. I want to say that in the development sense, I'm not saying that Québec... Look, I think we have to state that Québec does a lot too, that's not what I'm saying. Hospitals, all these things exist, all the basic necessities are in place, Québec is there. But I would also like to add something, since I'm saying that, I think I'll go a little further. But up here, we always have to struggle. I brought up the hospitals and now I'll give you an example, then I'll talk about the University.

I'll give you an example that will show you the problems we have in the regions. At the hospital in Chicoutimi and all the hospitals in the region, actually, we were forced to have a foundation to buy equipment, the machines used by the doctors, so the people of the region are paying out of their own pockets for some specialists, while the services we need in the region – we are more than one region, there are a lot of people here, over 300 000 – we should have all the services just like in any other region. We have to pay for them. I'm going to take the University. It's the same thing for university research. Research is given to the University, and the governments put money into research. But the region has put more money from its pockets to have a research foundation. I know that this happens elsewhere too, but it's still true that we are making tremendous efforts, and we always have to fight to keep...

Coming back to the hospitals; we are constantly having to fight to retain the specialists we have up here. You could say that, periodically, they want to get rid of the specialties we have up here in our hospitals. As for the University, we know that today there is even a movement to have our foundation taken over by the network of Québec universities and made part of their network. They won't get it, that's for sure. They put the money in up here,

and now we have to raise lots of money from our fellow citizens to be able to have the same services that exist elsewhere.

**Mr. Bouchard:** One 30-second question, please?

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Now, yes, look...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** You only have 15 seconds for a comment or an answer that ends with yes or no.

**Mr. Bouchard:** You'll decide, you'll decide whether it's a comment or a question, Mr. Chairman. Do you not think it a little unfair, do you not think there's a chance of being seen as a little unfair to the Québec government, when we know all that it has to support up here by way of a university, Cégeps, school boards, and hospitals, not to speak of special things like expressways, while the federal government can come on the scene in a pretty spectacular way and wave the goodies under the government's nose, then the region's nose, thereby dividing them? Do you not think that this must stop? Because many things have been done, I also salute Marc-André Bédard and what he did during his years here. The Québec government did a lot for the region back then.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'd say that's a comment, Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Maybe.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now proceed to Mr. Guy Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor. I'm pleased...

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Mr. Bouchard, you'll find the answer on page 10 of our brief.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Quick answer. Mr. Guy Bélanger.  
(3:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Mr. Mayor, allow me to congratulate you, as one who knows, for the quality of your brief. I think it contains many extremely interesting points, but I would like to make some small corrections or a few remarks just the same. Some areas give me trouble. For example, on page 10, where you say that we should note another federal initiative, namely, the creation of a marine park; you're familiar with the fact that the marine park was a joint provincial-federal project and it's probably one that was carried out most successfully, which had no duplication, and thus, none of the problems we find elsewhere, where the money was really well spent and Québec was

in charge of the project. I felt I had to clarify this point.

On another page, you also tell us that you're a little angry about the region being treated as a resource pool. Personally, I would have read instead that the region's great influence has spread right across Québec. In the various government departments, we often talk about "blueberry power", of the people from the region who have taken over all the management positions everywhere, and who are much valued. We shouldn't keep this expertise to ourselves. And besides, you're good enough at the game to know that your region is the best represented one on this Commission. Six members are natives of this region. I don't see how you managed that feat, when there are other areas of the province that would have loved to have worked their way onto the Commission. I'm thinking about the Outaouais, among others, but maybe that's more proof of the region's dynamism and influence. So, in this sense, I find that, on the contrary, very positive, because I'm one of the six. So, up to a certain point, I even encourage you to keep going.

My question is about another aspect. You talk about regional powers and regional needs, but you want the municipalities to have these powers. In the other regions, I think in Gaspésie, where we held sittings, on the Côte-Nord, in the Joliette region, the Saint-Hyacinthe region, they are talking more of powers in the RCMs rather than in the municipalities. From the standpoint of powers, what distinction would you make between these two levels, between the RCM, which is the grouping of municipalities within a county, and the municipality as such?

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** That's to say, my suggestion, near the end, that it's the RCMs.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** Yes.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** On page 13 we say the RCMs. But, obviously, what I said in reply to Mr. Beaumier a minute ago, that we also need a charter for the municipalities that would give them the powers. Now I'm suggesting that it be the RCMs. That doesn't mean necessarily that there couldn't be a change. There will surely have to be changes within the existing RCMs. On that I agree. We will look at what we have to do. But the powers, there's no question but that there will be greater powers, along with the financial means to be able to take charge of our development. That's what I'm saying.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** These powers, can you briefly enumerate them for us?

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Look, today, we can't make decisions about development often

enough because we don't have the means to do so. I think there are, there could be the means right now to enable the municipalities to decide without having to pass a new law. There has been, I must confess, an ongoing effort for several years, to correct the constraints on the municipalities. But you know, we can do nothing without review by the municipal commission. This is beginning to eliminate that sort of thing.

We're starting to have powers in the area of taxation or things like that, for example, to induce industry to locate here. But when all's said and done, we won't have the means to do it all. So, we'll have to have taxing powers over and above those we have now. The government is going to have to stop thinking that the municipalities can finance everything out of property taxes. Soon this will no longer be possible. A while ago, they really hit us, with all the business about the school boards and we know that right now, there are as many bright ideas about public transportation, roads, and the like. It's very clear we're going to have to fight very hard for these things. We're ready to take on our responsibilities in these matters. We know, for example, on the question of senior citizens, we're starting to have problems. With powers such as these, we could help the elderly.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fifteen seconds, Mr. Blackburn.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** OK. But we want to have these powers, but we want to have the means to pay for them.

**Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides):** On the subject of hospitals, there's the foundations. You know that foundations exist all over Québec, and that in the Laval region, for example, there are 315 000 residents, and only 215 hospital beds. The scanner was bought thanks to a foundation; this is true in many places, and is happening all over Québec. It strikes me as being an extremely interesting way of doing things.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** You're talking of the peripheral regions, not the outlying ones.

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

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** The City of Laval is in Montréal, beside Montréal. There are many choices, many more than in the outlying regions...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now continue...

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** ...the peripheral regions and the outlying regions aren't the same

thing.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now continue with Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon and welcome to our Commission. I'm going to pick up where you left Mr. Bouchard a moment ago. We found you quite loquacious on the subject of centralization in Québec and quite laconic, on the other hand, on the problems of duplication that arise because there are two governments involved in the same territory. To date, this theme has been repeated systematically in all of our meetings in the regions. So, I would like to hear your ideas on this subject. Have there been snags as a result of the presence, not only due to centralization in Québec, but due to the presence of two governments in the territory, and I mean, of course, the federal and provincial governments? Because if we look at the action taken by Québec, no doubt there are actions that you would have wished they'd taken, but that they didn't. No doubt they can be criticized with respect to the centralization of its decision-making, but the fact remains that we remember the investments in the region, and we can also remember... I remember the debates we had over Laterrière and the annexation that solved, I think, some of the fiscal problems in the region. So, I would like you to talk to me about this other component that we don't see much about in your brief.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Fine. Look, maybe an example would answer this?

**Mrs. Marois:** It might be interesting.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Really, it's very clear if we talk about, for example, the Alma-La Baie expressway. The federal government put in money, and the provincial government put in money. At the moment, as you're aware, there is a kind of dispute. Mr. Bouchard speaks about it often, Mr. Benoit Bouchard.

**Mrs. Marois:** Uh-huh.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** There's still money left. It hasn't been spent. What do you do with it? The Alma-La Baie expressway isn't built. That's an example for you. Of course, here, it's clear to me and I think we said so - I don't only think, I say it - in our brief. There's no question but that the municipalities definitely should do business with one government. But this government must make it possible for the municipalities to have the means to do what they want to do. If I talked about federal government investments without saying that we're going to have...

**Mrs. Marois:** Without doing the grand tour, if you will, also of the investments made by Québec.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** ...it's sure that at some point, if we end up with a level of government that has the taxing power of the existing two levels of government, that government will have to go into the regions more, bringing the sums it "collects" from the other level.

**Mrs. Marois:** You've given us the example of an expressway. Obviously, we can ask the question: is the political will there or not. But the municipalities have told us a lot about problems, whether related to public transportation or tourism, or to other topics making up agreements usually between Canada and Québec or Québec and Canada, depending on your point of view and where you want the emphasis. Haven't you experienced such things, where there is this overlapping that appeared costly for your region's development and progress?

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** Well I have no particular example of it.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** If, at some point, I spoke of the development that was being done by the federal government, of course, there are here... Where the federal government truly had the authority, but if I think, for example, about an example that came to mind just now, I'm thinking about the Vieux-Port in Chicoutimi. That took quite a while - I'm happy, Mr. Rémillard, I'm going to thank him because I think he signed the final accord - and that required an enormous amount of time before being finalized. We're at the point where we wonder at our end when we're going to get it because there's \$ 6.5 million at stake here and if we'd had it two months earlier, there were extraordinary amounts of interest... \$ 6.5 million for development of the municipality. Now there's an overlap that's causing difficulty. It takes time. Whenever we're in Québec's domain and the federal government gets into Québec's domain, it takes a lot of time...

**Mrs. Marois:** I think in that sense, yes.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** ...I think that this must be looked at and eliminated in most cases.

**Mrs. Marois:** In this same vein, you said a short time ago that between the two, if there is one government it should be that of Québec, which is the closest to the regions. I would like to go back... One last question...

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** It's very clear to us, Madam. It's clear that the municipalities do most of their business with the Québec government.

**Mrs. Marois:** We spent some time on the RCMs, on the powers we should grant them, on the responsibilities they would like to take on. In the various discussions we've already had to date with the other regions, in the other regions, they spoke about a possible mechanism for concerted action and coordination at a more regional level that would bring together all the RCMs and other partners. Do you have an idea of what this should be or do you see it as a structure or tier, or would you prefer that we keep the RCMs as the base?

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** ...I think I made it perfectly clear in my brief that I see the RCMs here...

**Mrs. Marois:** Exactly.

**Mr. Blackburn (Ulric):** ...actually, with changes in the functions of the RCM, of course. I don't say it in those words, but I think it's going to be necessary to overhaul the functions of the RCMs. What I did say, was that when I want the municipalities and the RCMs to take the power, I actually want to eliminate the existing policy for operation of the regions. And here, I'm going to be perhaps somewhat hard, I'm thinking of the OPDQ, the CRCDS, which are also highly dependent on the government. And I think they don't actually produce much - and, without wanting to hurt anyone - I think they have no real function in regional development, unlike a group of municipalities, which could do it.

**Mrs. Marois:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's fine. All right? So, thank you Messrs. Bergeron, Girard, Dahl, and you, Mr. Blackburn, thank you for sharing your experience with us.

I would ask you to please leave quickly by the side exit to permit the next group to take their places.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:57 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:59 p.m.)

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

We will continue our work.

Our next presenter is Mr. Martin Bouchard. The hearing lasts 30 minutes, and you have five minutes to present your brief, Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Martin Bouchard**

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** First of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this brief. I am perhaps the only one who doesn't have to reduce his brief, because it contains only two pages. I would have liked to demonstrate that economically and politically, Québec's independence is the best available path for the future of our institutions, but I'm sure that dozens of other briefs will have dealt with these two aspects of my political choice.

I'm for Québec independence with full sovereignty. I'm confident that our current and future leaders will find the best terms for some kind of association with the rest of Canada. I would like to speak to you briefly about my reasons for believing in this new government structure for my fellow citizens and for my eastern and western neighbours as well. A wall built out of a lack of understanding, hatred, and resentment has been erected between Québec and English Canada in the other provinces. The problems of federalism over the past 30 years, Québec's demands, and those of the Francophones outside of Québec have contributed to the building of these psychological barriers.

Paradoxically, some borders disappear as peoples become more sovereign. I want independence in order to break down the poisoned borders of our hearts and minds. Acid rain knows no boundaries, polluting everything in its path. As long as the two peoples are tangled up in the same political structure they will prevent each other from being better neighbours, which certainly doesn't help inner growth.

I say that the psychological and cultural things that most divide the two peoples within their political union are the very things that will most unite them once they are independent. Having to rub shoulders in a system that one of the partners wants to leave has created tensions for too long and requires too much energy. From meeting to commission, report to formula, election to referendum, the disappointment and distress are destroying all the cultural pleasanties the two communities have exchanged in the past.

I want independence because I have a dream. I dream of the day when I learn the English language better and I use it throughout Québec, without fearing for the survival of my mother tongue in my new country. I dream of the day when I can hear that language spoken in the streets of Montréal, without fearing for French in Québec. I dream of the day when the irritants in Bill 101 are gone, without fearing for French in Québec. I dream of the day when I can discover, in mutual respect, the Anglophone community of Québec and Canada. I dream of the day when the Francophones outside of Québec who want to live in French come and settle in

Québec. I dream of the day when I can visit my Canadian neighbours, to discuss our cultural differences without talking politics or the Constitution. I dream of the day when we can be more responsive to English-Canadian performers. I dream of the day when we stop blaming the English for our past, to instead discover all the positive things they did. I dream of the day when I no longer feel somewhat detested in English Canada. I dream of the independence of Québec so that everyone in the homeland may more easily find his sense of self. When our community is established and recognized as equal, our relations will be more honest in respecting each person's culture. And I would like to add that making dreams come true will, I believe, require one generation from the moment we are sovereign. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We begin our questions with Mr. Claude Dauphin.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. Bouchard, for participating in our work. Your presence here today demonstrates that we are fulfilling our mandate as commissioners, which is to consult and listen to the people, groups, individuals, and a little later on, experts.

I'm taking special note of the first two paragraphs of your brief, to the effect that the economic and political proofs of independence will be made by others and that a form of sovereignty-association... You indicate your confidence in current and future governments to create economic association with the rest of Canada.

During our work, we have obviously had the opportunity to listen to many groups, among them, the Association des économistes du Québec, who told us that in the event sovereignty is declared, there would be a transition period that could be economically very difficult for Quebecers. Moreover, you said yourself this afternoon that it would require perhaps a generation to make sovereignty a reality.

Second, and here I'm relying on memory, we heard from a group in Matane at the end of the day this week; they told us that from an economic standpoint, that although it could take 5, 10 or 15 difficult years, we could still be independent. And I emphasize that the person who said that was a tenured university professor, which isn't the case for all Quebecers.

So, to use one of your expressions - you speak often about dreams - I wonder if you dreamed about that, about what I just said, about the difficulties we could experience for a number of years in order to make Québec independent.

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** I think the



economic question is a basis for changing our option, because I don't think... Anyway, in my case and my neighbourhood we're not born sovereignist. We're federalist because we're born in Canada and become sovereignist just by seeing some of the economic injustices that can occur at different levels. When I speak of a generation to make my dreams a reality, I'm mainly talking about language, and making Québec French. I think we should take a generation to establish one message for the whole generation of Quebecers, and thereby enable English Canada to also receive a single message for its people.

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

**Mr. Dauphin:** In your brief you say that acid rain knows no boundaries, and Heaven knows that we in Québec have heard a lot about it and we're going to hear even more. From a standpoint of jurisdiction, many people are wondering who should be responsible for environmental protection. In the current system we mean federal or provincial responsibility. Other people are considering different responsibilities which, from the standpoint of their effectiveness in protecting the environment, would be greater. Continental responsibility, for example. Have you ever dreamed about that?

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** Obviously my brief doesn't touch on the environment, but I don't suppose that the environment affects just one country and the people, once they are sovereign, can establish contacts with the other countries, because the environment is a worldwide issue, a planetary issue and it's easier to reach agreements to settle such problems once we feel ourselves sovereign over these matters.

**Mr. Dauphin:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. One last question. In your brief you also say that you dream of the time when you can learn English or meet Anglophones and then... without feeling detested by them, and feeling yourself more at ease. In what way would the Anglophone community feel better in an independent Québec?

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** Because there would only be one message. I believe that the existence of two messages in Canada has been harmful to Canadian society for many years. There have been messages, which we can... Those I call the nationalists in Ottawa, their messages were in favour of bilingualism, to defend French-Canadian society. While the message in Québec was above all for a French Québec. And it's on an ambiguity, this creates ambiguity, and from the start, bilingualism is a false premise upon which to build a policy - bilingualism because

of the two nations option, of two founding nations. I believe this is a fundamental ambiguity; we must each gather together in our respective territories and establish our respective messages. In this context, the Anglophone community will have to follow the message coming out of French Québec.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Dauphin. We continue with Mr. Gérard Morin, substituting for Mrs. Louise Harel.

**Mr. Morin:** Mr. Bouchard, I welcome you. It's a pleasure to hear your words because you know that although there is a place for more statistically comprehensive briefs, there are other briefs whose presentation may be more austere. It's a pleasure to hear from you. I think that your use of the word "dream" several times should not be viewed pejoratively; I would even say that it counterbalances those who have nightmares.

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

**Mr. Morin:** So, having said that, your brief is an expression of feelings; you speak from the heart. And we ought to have more of these kinds of expressions and briefs. Your brief aims more at being a statement that you yourself qualify as a paradox, when you say that the barriers will only come down when the peoples become sovereign.

But in this vein, I would like to ask you a question about one of your dreams. You dream of a day when we remove the irritants in Bill 101, without fearing for French in Québec. My question starts from the following two considerations: That even Québec, in a Québec become a country, in spite of everything, we will have to have the legislative means to ensure the safety and promotion of the French language. The other consideration is that with respect to the irritants of Bill 101, it's mostly those who have trouble submitting to Bill 101 who feel these irritants. So, my question is the following: Could you elaborate more on these irritants, since, in the final analysis, we must not envisage elimination of those that would run counter to the intent of Bill 101, which is, of course, the safety and protection of the French language in Québec? Tell me about these irritants, please.

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** Before speaking about the irritants, in my realistic crystal ball, I see that in 20 years we should be in a position to balance collective and individual freedoms. If we are capable and brave enough to act as a people within the territory of Québec, where the majority speak French, we should go in this direction and increase the role of French in the workplace and the teaching institutions, and even in the hospitals. And to counterbalance this, we

should aim for more individual freedom, thus the irritants of Bill 101, if we talk about the language of signs.

**Mr. Morin:** Do I have some time left?

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

**Mr. Morin:** I'll come back to the paradox. According to your theory, if Québec becomes sovereign, the barriers between us and the rest of Canada will come down. I would like to hear more about this. Is this just a dream, a wish, or are you confident and convinced that once Québec becomes a country it will be easier to communicate with the neighbouring country, so that the barriers would indeed disappear? Are you making pious wishes or hopes, or do you have confidence in the future?

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** I think that if you dream hard enough you have to have equally strong convictions. Once we have our territorial boundaries, we can establish things on our borders, and between neighbours, we can better respect one another, and establish better economic, cultural and other ties. So, when we come to terms with ourselves as a people it means that we can go in the direction of Québec's majority. Then, when we are certain that we've succeeded as a people, for example on the question of the French language, we can at least let individual liberties come into play. That's what I was getting at.

**Mr. Morin:** A comment to finish up with...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Five seconds.

**Mr. Morin:** Just to salute your serenity, which is becoming contagious.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Morin. We now continue with Mr. André Ouellet, followed by Messrs. Libman and Larose. (4:15 p.m.)

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to congratulate Mr. Bouchard for his brief. I think it is very useful that more than just groups, organizations and municipalities come to testify before the Commission, and I think that individuals not only may, but should do what you have done here today. I read your brief very carefully and one of the things that struck me, is on the last page of your brief, where on three occasions you repeat the words "fearing for the survival of my mother tongue", "fearful for French in Québec", "fearful for the continuation and development of the French language and culture". I'm a little surprised that you have these fears because the reality is that over the years, French has not only survived, it

has become more and more entrenched, more and more solid in Québec, which I call the homeland of the French language and culture in North America.

Not only has this force, this liveliness enabled artists, creative people, poets and others to express themselves in French, it even goes beyond the boundaries of Québec. In addition to the Francophones in Québec, there are a million French-speakers outside of Québec. There are also English-speaking Canadians, there are a million of them – another million – speaking French and communicating in French, who write in French and have relations with federal and Québec institutions. And I wonder why you're so afraid. What are you really afraid of? What are your fears based on?

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** When we speak about the Francophones outside of Québec, I believe we in Québec always stop ourselves from coming to terms with ourselves because of this problem. We also talked to the people; this summer I went to Acadia, I met the people, Francophones from Ontario who told me that Québec should do what it had to do, that it shouldn't slow down its own development because of them. Once Québec became sovereign, they could... I don't want to impose anything on English Canada, how they should direct their policies on their minorities. So when we speak about fears for French, I think it's an everyday thing. Even if we take on the means to make French secure, it's an everyday thing, perhaps less in a region such as ours, but I lived in Montréal for four years, and we made phone calls in Montréal, and we had to ask for someone who could speak French to us. And when I go back to Montréal... I'm never sure whether the city is French-speaking, whether it's the second-largest French-speaking city in the world. It goes on all the time.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Of course, I think that you could get this impression from the outside, I guess. But the reality, the statistics were given to us by Mr. Rousseau, the Secretary to the Commission...

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...to the effect that...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Listen, Ladies and Gentlemen...

**Mr. Ouellet:** ...the statistics on language are very eloquent in this respect. They were provided for us at the Commission, and show very great progress at every level – in trade, culture and the social domains – of more and more positions held. Eighty-three percent of the management positions are held by Francophones,

even in a city like Montréal. So I think we must recognize that French in Québec is alive and well, and that there were, of course, laws passed by various Québec governments to protect and consolidate these linguistic gains, which exist, which are in place, and which provide protection for the French language and culture.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Ouellet. We continue with Mr. Libman.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I found your brief very sensible; even though I obviously don't share your conclusions, I certainly do share your dreams, but for slightly different reasons, of course. You were saying, Mr. Bouchard, that independence will knock down the barriers of incomprehension that have been built up between Québec and the rest of Canada. In the light of current attitudes, if Québec were to become sovereign and provoke the breaking up of the country, which would stir up many emotions, it seems to me that the walls of intolerance or incomprehension may become much higher in this scenario.

So, first - actually, my question has two sections - first, could you elaborate on this thesis of yours, which I find somewhat weak. And second, how can Québec protect the Francophones outside Québec in the event that it separates from the rest of Canada?

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** The walls of incomprehension have been raised because of federal policies in the whole of Canada. Because we have a double message in Canada. English Canada cannot take on its responsibilities as a majority because it must have services in French. And, there may be a resurgence of hatred because of that. In Québec, we are prevented from taking on the responsibilities of a French society because of this policy, because of the Constitution. Once two majority countries, two majority societies, each in its own country, can take responsibility for themselves, with the courage to direct their policies towards the majority, each one will be able to communicate better. Without hatred, without believing that the other wants to take something away or force something on it.

**Mr. Libman:** But do you not think that if the federal government doesn't impose some of its rules outside Québec... What will happen to the Francophones outside Québec? Will they inevitably be assimilated?

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** It's not up to me to determine, to worry about the Francophones outside Québec, because I'm speaking for Québec as a territory. If English Canada wishes to continue its policy of bilingualism in its country, it may. But I say that the Francophones,

especially those west of Québec, who really want to keep on speaking French, to live in French, they will be able to come to Québec, but they can't continue to live in French in English Canada. The double message must stop.

**Mr. Libman:** OK. Mr. Chairman, can Mr. Holden take the rest of my time period, he asked me for 30 seconds...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is allocated to you. You have another question. I can't always allow this passing along of time. On occasion, I permitted it, even though there is a lot of unity between the two of you.

**Mr. Libman:** Touché, Mr. Chairman. Then, I thank Mr. Bouchard.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Libman. We now continue with Mr. Larose. You have two minutes, Mr. Larose, no more.

**Mr. Larose:** Two minutes. Look, this won't be a question, it will be a comment. I'm always surprised that the people who say that for several years in Québec we've been making incredible efforts to protect ourselves at the level of language - Bill 22, Bill 63, and Bill 101 - and that this defence is made to us by the same people who repatriated the Constitution in 1982 in order to fight against Bill 101.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen, excuse me, Mr. Larose, I'll make up your time. Ladies and Gentlemen, it's quite clear that you may not applaud. You will help us a great deal by not interrupting in any way. Thank you, Mr. Larose, back to you.

**Mr. Larose:** And because I only have two minutes, I wish the commissioners had already read Mr. Robert Doyle's brief, which we'll hear tomorrow, and which is the scientific version of what Mr. Bouchard has just been defending. In my opinion, it contains the essence of the whole Commission debate for the months and weeks to come.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Larose. Mr. Michel Bélanger.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** It's come at the right time, Mr. Chairman, I had a question that I thought very small and innocent about one of Mr. Bouchard's paragraphs. I must say to Mr. Bouchard that I find the way you are dreaming particularly generous and I congratulate you. Because there are people who have the same convictions as you, and who often express them in a very convincing way, and because, no doubt, they are convinced, they raise more problems

than they solve; but let's move on. I too share your dream of the day when we remove the irritants in Bill 101 without fearing for the French language in Québec. But one of your sentences intrigues me. You say that you dream of the day when you can "hear this French language spoken in the streets of Montréal" or did you mean to say "this English language spoken in the streets of Montréal without fearing for French in Québec"?

**Mr. Bouchard (Martin):** English.

**Mr. Bélanger (Michel):** Fine. I confess that in reading that sentence I thought you were speaking of French and I didn't understand. So that's why I wanted you to clarify it. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's fine Mr. Bouchard. We're finished. Thank you for your candour. Thank you for your contribution to the work of this Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:26 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:29 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We'll resume. If everyone is listening, I'll restate a request for the nth time: we would appreciate it very much if there was no applause, no signs of approval or disapproval. I think it's a privilege for you, the audience to be in attendance. They tell us it's interesting, and that makes us happy. So help us maintain a certain decorum.

Our next presenter is the Société nationale des Québécois du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. Please welcome Mr. Hubert Desbiens. Could you please introduce your colleagues to us?

#### **Société nationale des Québécois du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean**

**Mr. Desbiens (Hubert):** Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Yes: on my immediate right, Mr. Gilles Bergeron, economist and head writer of our brief; also on the right, Mr. Claude Bergeron, secretary of the Société; on my left, Mrs. Gisèle Verrault, treasurer, and, on my far left, Mr. Magella Archibald, executive director.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well then, you have five minutes to present your brief, Mr. Desbiens.

**Mr. Desbiens:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, as early as 1969, the Société nationale des Québécois du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, which was then known as the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste of the Chicoutimi diocese, realized that the people of Québec were inclined toward sovereignty. The Société nationale then

concluded that our society, like any other society in the world, had the basic right to give itself a country. Since then, and after having promoted this with others since that time, we are faced today, some twenty years later, with the very obvious conclusion on the part of the public that Québec sovereignty is now something which must be decided as quickly as possible. This is why, and you'll understand, the first proposal our organization would like to make to this Commission is that Québec attain full sovereignty, which means that all powers and financial resources should be patriated to Québec and the negotiation of agreements on economic cooperation with neighbouring countries should be concluded by means of treaties between sovereign states.

In this context, we know that it's now absolutely impossible – and I believe that this was universally recognized after the Meech Lake Accord or discord – that there's no going back, as we say, that it's no longer possible to think about being able to negotiate any form whatsoever of federalism within the current Federation, within the rules imposed by the Canadian Constitution. It's even more impossible, obviously, to go and negotiate or discuss sovereignty as such under the current rules. And we feel, as in any case of negotiation, that it's absolutely essential that we have the bargaining power to enable and oblige both parties to meet and discuss. With this in mind, we think that as soon as the work of this Commission is done, we recommend and we hope that there will be a referendum in Québec to ask the following clear and simple question: Are you in favour of Québec sovereignty, so that the Québec government may decide on this sovereignty and thereby compel the rest of Canada to negotiate? Once this principle was established, we wondered what sort of country a sovereign Québec should give its citizens. We came to the conclusion that this sovereignty must be accompanied by a major decentralization of powers. As far as this subject is concerned, I'd like to ask Mr. Bergeron to continue the presentation.

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** On the question of the relationship between Québec sovereignty and the development of our regions, our brief basically attempts to emphasize two ideas. The first is that Québec sovereignty will bring an end to a power structure which is harmful to the development of several regions in Québec. The second idea is that sovereignty will encourage the development of regions to the extent that it brings a greater development of power on a local level and the creation of veritable regional governments elected democratically.

We hope that the process by which Québec achieves sovereignty is accompanied by the formation of a decentralized power structure and we'd like the Commission to make a

recommendation to this effect.

It seems to us that Canadian federalism is an organizational framework which harms the development of several regions because it slows down any real decentralization of powers towards the regions and also because the war of legitimacy between the federal government and the provincial government makes it increasingly difficult to implement joint projects which are nonetheless essential for regional development.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...immediately, Mr. Bergeron.

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** We'd simply like to say that, for us, a sovereign Québec will be a Québec with room for the creativity of regions, room for the emergence of a collective mind to direct our energies, room for, as it were, the creation of a genuine regional government.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Gentlemen. We'll begin with Mr. Guy Chevette.

**Mr. Chevette:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You'll allow me, first of all, Mr. Chairman, to thank the members of the Société nationale des Québécois who, like the national societies across Québec, we owe them a big thank you for having carried the flame of political sovereignty for over 20 years.

At the same time, I'd like to greet my ex-colleague, Mr. Desbiens, who would have been entitled to a peaceful retirement from active political life but who... I'd also like to congratulate him on his continuing involvement in the cause he has believed in for so many long years. I'd like to greet him and thank him.

That said, I'd like to ask you about your regional government. You heard the first group this afternoon talk about structure, but for all that, they didn't talk about a regional government, and the first group said that there was no question of creating another level of government. Moreover, when questioned, the group said that they had enough government. Perhaps the addition of another level is not what is needed. And then you come along, with a formal proposal to create a regional level of government. I'd like to ask, because you didn't get much of a chance to elaborate on it in your presentation, how do you see this government? Does it have the power to levy taxes or not? Is it a regional government which will be granted comprehensive budgets to be redistributed in the community after consultation? How do you see it?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** We paid close attention to the briefs presented by various regional organizations, all of whom demanded

that power be more decentralized. But as most of these organizations refuse to entertain any vision of the country, it's natural that they be unable to think very clearly about regional power. And our brief enables us to demand a regional government insofar as the federal level disappears. This regional government, of course, for decentralization to really make sense, for it to truly be a level of power with responsibilities and financial means, I think that it has to be elected democratically. We can't decentralize power without creating a true level of government. And such a level naturally involves areas of responsibility, it involves financial means, it also involves competent human resources to, in fact, prepare, manage and generate projects.

**Mr. Chevette:** You also assert, on page 5 of your brief, that full Québec sovereignty is essential primarily for social and cultural reasons. You say that it is an instrument in the service of a collective blueprint for living, communicating and developing one's full potential in French in Québec. My question is, by creating a regional government in relation to a central government - because the national government will hold the central power... How are you going to avoid duplications when we know that all aspects of life - the environment, agriculture, tourism, economics, culture, etc. - are affected on a regional level?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** Mr. Chairman, we believe that, in the same way municipalities hold the power they exercise and have these responsibilities due to a decision, a desire of the current Québec government, of the sovereign Québec government in the future, a regional government would have and would be an entity similar in nature to a municipality, but on a different level and with areas of competence wherein this government could exercise, among the citizens of an entire region, actions which, particularly on an economic level, would be part of consultation and development. And, therefore, these governments, these entities, would be seen as creations of the central government, created by a law, rather, at the beginning in any event, and would, like municipalities, be subject to potential modification, according to the conditions and evolution of society, under the terms of the law.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Marcel Beaudry, who will be followed by Mr. Ouellet and Mr. Bruno Roy.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 5 you mention - I've gone back to page 5 and to the question asked by Mr. Chevette - that full Québec sovereignty is essential primarily for social and cultural reasons. And

later you go even further, on the last line of the page, when you say that full Québec sovereignty is also essential in the name of healthy economic management. Am I to understand from these two sentences that you give priority to social and cultural reasons, rather than those of an economic nature, in a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Desbiens:** First of all, I'd say that the economy is not an end in itself. The economy, in our opinion, is a way of enabling a population, citizens, to be able to realize their potential both individually and as a group. Therefore, in our opinion, the economy helps a community fulfil itself, realize its potential, as we say here in Québec. And second of all, from a more technical standpoint, Gilles...

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** I think it's clear that if Québec, if Québec society were a society like all the rest, if Québec were a province like all the rest, the problem could present itself differently. We maintain that Québec society is a distinct society, that it wishes to remain so and that it cannot develop under the current constitutional framework. And the failure of Meech Lake leads us to believe that it's impossible to modify this constitutional framework.

**Mr. Beaudry:** That wasn't the point of my question. My question was simply a matter of priorities. As far as you're concerned, are social reasons, reasons of a social or cultural nature more of a priority than those of an economic nature?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** But it's natural that economics be at the service of the blueprint for a society. Economics is a way of making it easier to accomplish the major objectives of a society.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I'd like to ask you another question. First of all, we know that all movements such as yours, across the entire province, and all those we've heard and those that we'll hear, are of course going to advocate sovereignty. From a practical standpoint, because this was raised in certain regions, and by the Conseil des économistes as well, that there could be a price to pay for sovereignty and I really think that people are ready to pay the full price, those who want sovereignty. From a practical standpoint, if you were put in a position where you were asked to decide between advocating sovereignty, regardless of the economic consequences for Québec, and advocating sovereignty in stages, to make people feel more secure about their assets and from an economic point of view, which would you choose?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** I think that, from an economic standpoint, the problem isn't presented properly. I paid very close attention to the brief presented by my colleagues of the Association des économistes and they said that sovereignty was possible from an economic standpoint. It must be done so that costs are minimized. And I agree wholeheartedly with this wisdom. But it doesn't mean that the status quo should be maintained.

**Mr. Beaudry:** No, no, no. I'm not talking about the status quo. I don't think there's anyone sitting at this table who wants the status quo.

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** And no one, I'm sorry, no one is going to say that there'll be very high costs involved, as you assume in your question.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I didn't assume that they were very high. I don't assume anything. I invite people to come here and they do. Like at Matane, for example, two nights ago, we were told that it could involve economic costs over a period of five or 10 years, or perhaps more. My question is the following: in the context of the sovereignty you advocate, would you look favourably on, to minimize costs from an economic standpoint and to make people feel safer about their assets, would you look favourably on this sovereignty taking place over a longer period of time rather than declaring sovereignty today, regardless of the cost from an economic point of view, and taking the ensuing consequences? That's what my question is about. (4:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** No, it seems clear to us that we can, as of now, hold a referendum on the question of sovereignty, declare the sovereignty of Québec and naturally, afterwards, take the time to negotiate changes at an appropriate rate and under suitable conditions. But, in fact, the rate of change must have this flexibility to minimize the consequences.

**Mr. Beaudry:** On your part and on the part of those who'll also undergo separation, of course. Because there's another part to this.

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** Of course.

**Mr. Beaudry:** So, what you're saying is that regardless of the possible consequences, you advocate sovereignty today to possibly negotiate with your other partners later.

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** We're saying that we don't foresee any consequences that would actually be that difficult for Québec.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** Ladies and Gentlemen, on page 4 of your brief, you talk about the desired political framework which is that of sovereignty and you say that the definition of the desired political framework must, quite obviously, take into account the requirements of the economic development of the interdependence of markets. You add that maintaining a common economic space with Canada does not necessarily involve, however, a common political space. Does this mean that you favour sovereignty over association?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** We do, of course, favour sovereignty, which is the first step, and afterwards, economic interdependence will not necessarily be accompanied by the preservation of the Canadian political framework. This can be done with other mechanisms, GATT being one such mechanism at the international level. The Free Trade Agreement with the United States is another mechanism. And there is a series of mechanisms which enable ties of economic interdependence to be established or maintained, without necessarily involving ties of political interdependence.

**Mr. Ouellet:** In a later paragraph, on the same page of your brief, you refer to what's going on in Europe. And as you know, in Europe, to improve their economic ties and, in fact, to consolidate the economic ties they've woven among themselves, European countries are currently in the process of encouraging increasingly important political ties. There is truly a trend among European countries to try and give up part of their sovereignty on account of the economic ties they're in the process of weaving. What you're suggesting, in fact, is the opposite of what's going on in Europe.

**Mr. Desbiens:** First of all, these countries are sovereign countries. Before they considered opening themselves up to their neighbours and the rest of the world, they began by asserting themselves and effectively taking in hand their destiny, not only economically, but also culturally, etc. Therefore, our first requirement is that we too go through this procedure, this process which requires that we know ourselves and assert ourselves, before being able to open up to others. Then, once we've asserted ourselves and taken possession of all our powers, there's nothing to stop Québec from making alliances and, in certain cases, associations and, in certain cases, that will become... And I think that as far as this is concerned, the Québec population, the question is no longer even being asked, the population is open to alliances which are mutually advantageous, with Canada as well

as with the United States or even the countries of the EEC. Gilles, if you have anything to add...

**Mr. Ouellet:** But for you, the political relation is more important than the economic relation.

**Mr. Desbiens:** The economic relation is more important at the beginning as a foundation, a basis, for developing our economic ties.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Alright? Mr. Roy.

**Mr. Roy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps a general remark. Though there may be a price to pay for sovereignty, we mustn't leave the impression and conclude that there's no price to pay if we stay in Canada. I'd like to come back to your brief. You assert that Québec is part of the trend to globalization of markets. You add that full Québec sovereignty is essential primarily for social and cultural reasons. I won't contradict that. That's fine, I don't disagree with that. Culture is also part of a market economy. On the other hand, I'm looking for the how of a sovereign culture in the Québec you've described, in other words, based on a regional government. And I put the following question to you: what is the relation between the cultural development of the regions and this current trend towards globalization of markets, in view of the market economy which is one of the premises of your brief?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** Clearly, the creation of a regional government must include the establishment of an organization whose primary concern is, in fact, culture on a regional level. It's clear that, as far as the economic development of regions is concerned, cultural dynamism and the emergence of greater creativity are fundamental factors in current economic development. I think that you're right to say that it's often the poor relation of the development of our societies, it's the poor relation of the development of our regions, and this is a problem because it slows down our economic development at the same time, because culture, along with the creativity it allows, can be an extremely important lever of economic development.

**Mr. Roy:** Do you believe that a sovereign Québec would encourage a policy which was, above all, cultural? And how, within a region, an intervention more similar to, shall we say, in terms of organization, the ministère des Affaires Culturelles as we know it today, and a regional organization, concerning culture, wouldn't there be a duplication of jobs, or would it be necessary, once again, to prefer a type of centralization? That is my somewhat nasty

question.

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** No, I think we're always talking about the duplication of jobs. We're forgetting that somewhere, on a regional level, there's room to set up an independent regional vitality. If, in fact, we want a lively, dynamic culture to develop on a regional level, we have to set up a structure which will in fact enable such vitality to emerge. Already, despite the small amount of power they wield, our regional, cultural, for example, councils are already extremely important organizations for promoting, in fact, this culture on a regional level. We're merely saying that, in the framework of a sovereign Québec, the existing dynamics should be given more power, and be organized so that tasks are naturally in harmony and are coordinated with the central level.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Bergeron. We now give the floor to Mr. Robert Benoit.

**Mr. Benoit:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. Upon our arrival in the region, we received a document entitled "L'avenir" (The Future), which clearly illustrates the essence of the Saguenay and Lac-Saint-Jean region, and I think that the discussion we're having here, that we've been having for the last three weeks throughout Québec, could also be entitled "The Future." And I congratulate the people from this region, not for looking behind and bringing us clichés, but for truly looking forward, and very positive, and I appreciate this type of document. I also want to cite a sentence, and my questions will follow the line of thinking of the editorial, *Le Quotidien*, which you have here. Carol Nérón finishes her editorial today by saying that here and elsewhere in the province, it is thought that the true challenges linked to the future of Québec are those of an economic nature. If you don't mind, I'd like to ask you some questions of an economic nature, like your editorial, I always listen when they talk, so once again I'm going to listen to it and I'm going to ask questions of an economic nature. You say in your brief that the negotiation of agreements on economic cooperation with neighbouring countries will be concluded by means of treaties between sovereign States. A great number of agreements have already been signed between Canada and various other countries. What do you think of these agreements? Must we sign them again, or must we transfer them here? Did you consider this, when you wrote your brief?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** I think that this is a constitutional problem which doesn't fall within our competence. However, it seems to me that, from an economic point of view, these treaties could be renewed, simply because, in that

respect, our ties with foreign countries must be maintained, and there aren't any economic considerations which prevent us from believing that they could be.

**Mr. Benoit:** So, if I understand you correctly, there's no automatic renewal? We'll have to renegotiate with all those party to these agreements? Is that what I'm to understand?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** Constitutionalists more experienced than I in such matters could explain the negotiation of international treaties to you. Economically speaking, there doesn't appear to be anything prohibiting the continuation of such agreements.

**Mr. Benoit:** On pages 6, 10 and 11 of your brief, you mention a decentralization. This is a cry from the heart which we've heard in several regions, in Sept-Îles yesterday, in Matane the day before, surely in Abitibi next week. It's a cry from the heart which reaches us from across Québec, to decentralize. And you say that if we put the federal and the provincial into one sovereign State, all those bureaucrats together, that would make for a lot of people. I think that I'm relatively in agreement with this, and the people of Québec probably agree with you. Now, this puts a question to the people of the Outaouais region, and we're going there next week: what do we do with the bureaucrats who are currently in Ottawa, who live in Québec or who work for things we'd like to patriate to Québec?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** I think that there are already people who've become involved in seeing that the positions held by such civil servants are maintained as is. I also think that at that point, we'll nonetheless have to see how we can better distribute them over the territory and how we can also, with regional civil servants, who're from the federal and provincial governments, how we can harmonize the entire public sector. However, the problem you're raising is very complex and must be settled over the shorter or longer term, by taking into account and respecting the individuals involved.

**Mr. Benoit:** When you mention that we should bring decision-making powers closer to the regions, am I to understand that we should take these civil servants, be they from Ottawa or Québec City, from the Grande-Allée, and bring them into your regions? Would this be part of a decentralization, or are we talking about a new structure which would recreate an entire bureaucracy?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** When you talk about simply bringing civil servants into the regions, you're naturally talking about a process of



administrative decentralization. It's conceivable that one part, ultimately the administrative reorganization, would give rise to a process of administrative decentralization on a regional level. When we talk about decentralization, we're naturally talking about creating true competence on a regional level.

**Mr. Benoit:** So, you realize that if this were the case, if we had to move towards the regions, it would be a process, I imagine, that would take a very long time, and I'll finish with this thought. It's complicated to take people from a region, and move them with their wives and children, now that both spouses work in big cities. It's a process that would take a long time, I think. Do you realize that?

**Mr. Bergeron (Gilles):** It's a complex process, and it's all the more important to establish guidelines in advance, guidelines which are valid over a long period.

**Mr. Benoit:** Fine, thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Gentlemen. Is that alright? Mr. Claude Bergeron, Mr. Gilles Bergeron, Mr. Desbiens, Mrs. Arsenault, and Mr. Archibald, thank you for appearing before the Commission, thank you for your contribution.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:57 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:01 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen, please take your seats. We'll now welcome the Mashteuiatsh group, also known under the name of the Montagnais community of Pointe-Bleue in Lac-Saint-Jean. Mr. Rémy Kurtness, would you like to introduce your two colleagues?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** With pleasure, Mr. Chairman. On my left, the President of the Elders Council of the community, Mr. Harry Kurtness, and on my right, the President of the Youth Committee, also from the community, Mr. Gilbert Dominique.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well then, go ahead with your brief, Mr. Kurtness.

#### **Mashteuiatsh (Conseil des montagnais du Lac-Saint-Jean)**

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, Commission members, distinguished guests and observers. First, I would like to thank the Commission for listening to the opinion that I am going to put forward and I am sure that it will be sensitive

and receptive to these thoughts. Before I begin, I would like to point out that I am speaking on behalf of the community of Mashteuiatsh. Our brief first stresses the similarities in the aspirations and efforts of our two peoples and then traces the background of efforts to define and bring into existence the Indian government we desire. So, the brief stresses the mission of Mashteuiatsh, the principles guiding us, and the aspirations sustaining us. We point out that the rights which derive from them must receive constitutional protection. Our concept of sovereignty is expressed and demystified. After this framework is defined, the roles that members of our community wish to play in a future Québec, whatever its status, are developed.

Over the many years that we have been watching you, we could not help observing that there is a surprisingly close similarity between the aboriginal peoples and Québec in their lengthy efforts. Like you, we have also immigrated, except that it happened many millennia before you. Nearer in time, we, like you, have also experienced a time of great solitude. We too have had our Meech Lake, if we think of the First Minister's Constitutional Conference on Native Issues. Many analogies may be found with respect to language, distinct cultural values, and our specific aspirations as a people to autonomy, to freedom, to a form of sovereignty. We are also aware that we have many differences. Our known position as first occupants is one. Our unemployment, our situation as social assistance recipients, our suicide rates are unfortunately others. In brief, although at very different levels of development, we are peoples in constant search of our pride, working ceaselessly to ensure our dignity. It is in this spirit that you must be sensitive and attentive to the place that we are to occupy in a future Québec, whatever its status.

To begin with, the mission of Mashteuiatsh has a double dimension. First, to defend rights and interests in order to attain and maintain complete autonomy of government on the reserve and in our territory. Second, to offer services on the reserve and in our territory which meet our needs in order to improve and maintain the welfare and development of the population at all levels.

The cornerstone of this orientation is our sacred spiritual link with the earth. Its impetus is our profound conviction and our determination to keep our own cultural identity and exercise our specific jurisdictions over these territories. This mission is the basis of all the positions that we have taken in the past and will continue to take for many more years. We have governed, managed, controlled, developed and defended this ancestral territory since time immemorial. We continue and will continue to occupy it and to use it with respect for our

traditional values. We have never relinquished our sovereignty, either by agreement or in any other way.

The declaration of principles of Mashteuiatsh: We then codified these aspirations into a declaration of principles that we presented in March 1986 to the then Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. David Crombie, who was very receptive. I would remind you here of the main principles. We, the Montagnais of the Lac-Saint-Jean forming the Mashteuiatsh-Pointe-Bleue band, declare:

First, that we have the right to recognition, to self-determination, and to the pursuit of our development as a people and a distinct nation with our own identity, exercising our fundamental rights and freedoms;

Second, that we, as a First Nation, have the right to retain ownership of our traditional territories, including the waters and mineral rights, under appropriate conditions to ensure our independence and our economic and social self-sufficiency in accordance with our traditional and contemporary values;

Third, that we wish to totally assume political autonomy on a territorial base determined through our own institutions developed in accordance with our values, aspirations and needs;

Fourth, that, as a First Nation, we have the right to determine who will be our members, to exercise exclusive powers, to legislate and to adopt policies on our concerns;

Fifth, that we have the right to practise and to retain our own language, traditions, customs, and cultural values;

Sixth, that we are able to exercise exclusive control over all activities in our territory, whether social, cultural or economic, and able to enjoy and control the use and the management of its resources;

Seventh, that our ancestral and traditional rights continue to exist, are inalienable and non-negotiable, and must be respected;

Eighth, that governments must provide us with compensation for the use of our territory and exploitation of its resources in the past;

Ninth, that we recognize the need to maintain harmonious relationships with Québec and Canadian society, based on equality, respect for rights and mutual trust;

Tenth, that we require the entrenchment in the Constitution of the maintenance of our right to self-determination and sovereignty.

For decades, we have struggled for the recognition of these principles, and we are still negotiating with the two levels of government.

Responses from governments: In the past, we have seen the different governments make substantial, although still insufficient, efforts to respond to our claims. We need only recall the James Bay Agreement, the declaration of principle of May 20, 1985, in the National

Assembly again recently, in March 1986, during the constitutional conference, when Minister Gil Rémillard stated in his speech that recognition of the rights of aboriginal peoples is now part of the collective consciousness of Québec. This fundamental right to governmental autonomy must be recognized immediately and without reservation. In these diverse responses we have seen some intention on the part of government to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of my people. We can appreciate this. We must, however, recognize that the road will still be long before we arrive at a mutually satisfactory stage. There are still many obstacles, but we remain confident.

Protection of rights by the Constitution. We believe that the definition and confirmation of the rights of the Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais to governmental autonomy must receive constitutional protection. Then the details will have to be determined according to agreements negotiated with each nation. Whatever formula Québec opts for in the future, we seek this entrenchment in the Constitution, whether in Québec City or in Ottawa. On the one hand, we are the first founding people and, as such, we must be a vital and distinct part of the Constitution; on the other hand, it appears to us so easy to change a law that our rights would not be really protected.

This is why, whatever the situation, we seek this protection in the first law of the country: our concept of sovereignty. We are aware that the term "sovereignty" may frighten many people. Here I would like to help demystify a term which has perhaps been debased through overuse. We want sovereignty with specific areas of jurisdiction allowing us to develop in accordance with our aspirations. Some areas of jurisdiction must be shared and others purely delegated. There is no question here of placing the people of Mashteuiatsh above or for that matter below others. Neither is there any question of having a state within a state with its own Department of External Affairs, army, post office, etc. This is not our idea. It is rather a matter of having our own jurisdiction over a territory which belongs to us specifically and which will express our sovereignty. That is, we want to exercise our right to complete autonomy.

We believe that the survival, respect and development of our people are realities that can be attained in only one way, recognition of our inherent right to govern ourselves and recognition of our ownership rights and our jurisdiction over our territories and their resources, with programs and services adapted to Amerindians.

We propose here an official mechanism at the highest level, by which the parties will have to sit down at the table to sort out subjects affecting the jurisdiction of this new level of

government. It is obvious that arrangements or agreements must be made to coordinate our coexistence with the groups surrounding us. A crime will remain a crime. It is this type of sovereignty that we seek and that appears to us feasible and viable for the respect and dignity of our people.

A proactive future role. Within this new framework, once the constitutional question protecting the type of sovereignty we seek has been settled, we no longer want to play the role of caboose. We want to be one of the locomotives. We want to have our rights recognized. We want our territories. We want our specific areas of jurisdiction. We want to participate jointly in the development of resources, as well as enjoy their benefits and contribute to the general development of Québec. We also want to be a full part of the redistribution of national riches. We also want, as a people, to participate in an increasing democratization of Québec in the future, which should, among other things, be expressed by a representative delegation in the National Assembly, through the shared or delegated jurisdiction that we agree to. This delegation should have powers which may go as far as a veto when Parliament is dealing with aboriginal questions. We also want to participate in decisions Québec may make regarding immigration, foreign policy, in short, to be a full party to decision-making.

With these preliminary considerations, the political and constitutional form that a future Québec may take does not frighten us. However, we consider that Québec should retain certain links to be defined with the rest of Canada. As far as we are concerned, one of these links should surely be the aboriginal question. Not because we would like to keep the sacrosanct umbilical link with Ottawa, but rather with a view to possible mutual contribution and enrichment of Indianness, which would go far beyond a more sovereign Québec in this respect.

In conclusion, I would say that what we seek here is somewhat like the spirit that you were seeking in Meech Lake. We believe in our fundamental and inalienable right to govern ourselves. We believe in a concept of sovereignty, with our own territories, our own resources and our own areas of jurisdiction. We believe in shared or simply delegated jurisdiction, according to arrangements which would be negotiated first.

In conclusion, and I will be very brief, I am going to give the floor to the chairman of the elders' council and then to the chairman of the youth committee.

(5:15 p.m.)

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

**Mr. Kurtness (Harry):** Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been a member of the Mashteuiatsh

Community Band Council for about thirty years. I have always defended our territories, our way of life and our Indian values. I have always fought for our Indian government, and this is why, in the name of the elders, I support without hesitation the contents of the brief that the chief has just presented. I hope that I will see it become reality before I die, and I hope finally to see the light at the end of the tunnel, for myself or for my children in the future. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We shall begin... Excuse me, Sir, go ahead.

**Mr. Dominique (Gilbert):** Ladies and Gentlemen, our fathers fought and lived with hope. The present adult generation continues to pursue this long struggle for our sovereignty. We, the young people, before entering the arena of adult life, we are watching you. We are beginning to participate gradually. And you may be assured that we are determined to completely maintain our Indian values.

Among us, young people of 25 years and under represent about 70 % of our population. We want to stop hoping and we want to see the attainment of the Indian government for which we have been struggling for generations. With the many problems that we foresee in the future, as we all reach adulthood, we could not longer allow ourselves to do no more than hope. We would like to live and develop in a sovereignty pact concluded in advance.

In this new contemporary world, we will continue to develop, but without ever, ever, ever losing our traditional values. Thank you.

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** To conclude, Mr. Chairman, if you would allow me, I would like to remind the Commission members that beyond government structures and political concepts, we are defending a particular way of life and a culture that constitute our Indianness, that is, our distinctiveness from other peoples that we have always respected and that we will continue to respect. We try to retain, and have retained, a sacred link, a respect for our mother: the earth. Although we are not against development, lumbering and hydroelectric development constitute wounds in the breast of our mother. We do not commit matricide. We do not injure the one who feeds us. And believe me: nature and the Great Spirit are the witnesses of your thoughts and of your actions. We say that the maturity of a people is shown when it can exercise its sovereignty in complete freedom, whatever the framework. This maturity is also shown when we can respect the aspirations of other peoples to this same sovereignty.

There are over 6,000,000 of you trying to preserve your cultural and linguistic values in the face of an Anglophone North America of

over 200 000 000. There are about 40 000 of us pursuing the same aspirations as you, but have been doing so for nearly 400 years. May we succeed together in defining a constitutional pact, as equals, for the improved well-being of our respective characters. Finally, we believe that within this framework a harmonious, mutually complementary and globally enriching coexistence will become possible.

I thank you for your attention to the message of a people profoundly linked to its land and to its culture. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** If you will allow me, we will go on now to questions. The list looks long. I am assuming that the members will have short questions, and we'll begin with Mrs. Rosette Côté.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must first congratulate you for the brief you have presented, and especially for the definition you have given of the sovereignty of your people. For the fun of it, I tried applying it to Québec sovereignty, and I quote: we believe that the survival, respect and development of our people is a reality that we can attain only by a single means, recognition of our inherent right to govern ourselves. I think that this is what the people of Québec give as a definition of sovereignty.

Now, you have not spoken much of the right of aboriginal peoples to education. Somewhere, you say: we want our own institutions. On page 15, on the other hand, you say: we want shared areas of jurisdiction, simply delegated according to arrangements. What are your main demands with respect to education? Education taken in the sense of, yes, transmission of values, transmission of culture, transmission of a way of life, but also transmission of knowledge and access to knowledge. It is not discussed at any length and I would like you to develop it further.

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Indeed, education is part of the legitimate aspiration to sovereignty. There are many others; we are going to speak, among other things, of the social domain. And what is important for us is that, whatever the sector, including education, that we make the decisions for our people. Because we know our needs, our values, our aspirations. And it is not, in our opinion, up to a civil servant behind a desk in Ottawa to decide for a community which he has possibly never visited. And this is what our right to govern ourselves means.

**Mrs. Côté:** And that - excuse me, Mr. Chairman - that means... at the present time, can this be a formula for living together under which aspirations are taken into consideration, in which your voice has weight and that then, the

decision is made? Or is it truly distinct, that is, you manage your own institutions in the way you decide, without necessarily having any link with the rest of the education system serving all the other communities in Québec?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Since you bring up education, Mrs. Côté, it is very clear that we are going to probably, even certainly attain the pedagogical objectives for secondary school, in both the non-aboriginal school and the Indian school. However, the history courses are probably going to be different and we are going to include, as we do already, language courses and culture courses appropriate to what we are as a people.

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Now, Mr. Gérald Larose and then Mr. Claude Béland.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Without flattery, I would like to tell our friends that the subject that they are presenting before us is impressive after the one which we debated in Sept-Îles. We have recently seen troubled or troubling events which have meant that, in the opinion of the public, the Indian question was extraordinarily complex. To read your text and that of the Innu at Sept-Îles, it remains a complex but accessible reality for a people who want their problems settled and who want to settle them in definitive fashion as part of a fundamental law, the Constitution.

In the midst of these events, there were not very many of us who said that, if there is anywhere in America where we can deal with this reality and set it on the road towards settlement, it is in Québec. I did not think that you would say it yourselves, on page 5, for you identify very clearly that there are a great many similarities.

Yes, I think that we are colonized. Yes, we know what it is to be dominated or to have been dominated, but at the same time, to be on a path where we can liberate ourselves further. As the moment is very well chosen - there is a momentum towards redefining the overall situation in Québec - I think that we are called on to redefine Québec, first by recognizing that there are diverse components in this society. I stress this because I think that this is the key to settling our problems and that this recognition includes the recognition of collective rights, which you identify very well, balanced with individual rights applicable to all citizens. And I insist that, if there is a failure in Canada, it is precisely because we have never wished to fully recognize each other's collective rights, those of the aboriginal peoples and Francophones, in particular.

On page 13 and page 14, you speak to us,

or rather you perhaps go quickly over the question of the justice system and the mechanisms. In your vision, in which we recognize collective rights with self-government etc., will the justice system... Take the example of the charter of individual rights and freedoms, is it applicable to your members, if we had aboriginal courts? Could the aboriginal courts apply a charter of individual rights and freedoms?

The second question relates to representation in the National Assembly. You seem to want sovereignty, part of this sovereignty to be shared, in the sense in which you could have delegates to the National Assembly. Is it the same way as all MNAs, or specifically, and it is on this that I would like details, on very precise subjects, those which concern the aboriginal nations?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** I greatly appreciated your first comment and before answering your two specific questions I would like to just fill in your comment, if you will allow me. Indeed, there are diverse components in society. There are collective rights, there are individual rights. I think that, as a union leader, you would never agree to negotiate on the basis of the loss of your rights. Federal national policy requires that Indians negotiate on the basis of the loss of rights. I do not know any union which would accept that. They require it of us. This is the comment that I wanted to pursue.

As for the question on the justice system, recognizing specific areas of jurisdiction, whatever the sector - take justice since that was the question - definitely there are models which will have to belong to Québec, there are models which will have to be Canadian, and there are models which will have to be Amerindian.

Justice is the same for all people, I have said this. A crime, among us, will remain a crime, except that there is a way of administering justice in an aboriginal community which should be, in my opinion, somewhat different from non-aboriginal people because we do not have the same values. Traditionally, when someone erred, we prevented him from carrying on his traditional activities. It was twice as bad as sentencing him to five or six months in prison. Twice as bad. And he came back to society cured. When he comes back from prison, he is not cured. And it is this type of justice that we would like to see Indianized. But of course, a crime will remain a crime.

As for your second question on the delegation, on the mechanics, I think that everything is negotiable. What we are proposing to you, and what we are proposing to the Commission, is aboriginal representation in the National Assembly, on aboriginal questions. Because we think that, aspiring legitimately to

the same rights, to the same freedom, to a form of sovereignty, we think that indeed, on the question of aboriginal rights, the aboriginal delegation should decide. And it is in this spirit that we are proposing a delegation.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. So, we will go on to Mr. Sébastien Allard, who will be followed by Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Allard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also found your brief very interesting, particularly the reference to which Mr. Larose has also alluded. And this is the first time, it seems to me, that I have read it or heard it. You say that you, like us, are immigrants to Québec. We came from elsewhere. Your ancestors came from elsewhere, ours came from elsewhere, except that yours arrived a great deal farther back in time than ours. I find this remark interesting. And, let me repeat, this is the first time that I have heard or read it.

The question I would like to ask you is in order to better understand what you wish as a community organization. Because you say in one place, and I am going on to page 8, that it is part of the declaration of principles which was prepared in 1986 that you would like to totally assume your political autonomy. I do not know what this presupposes, but I imagine that it means that you will have your own government. (5:30 p.m.)

You say that you want the ownership of your traditional territories. Here again, I imagine - and you will be able to tell me - that it would be a certain geographical space, which would be your territory, and you want to exploit the resources of this territory, if I understand clearly what it is, as I just said. This means that perhaps there are people already there, in this territory. If we accepted what you ask for, it means that these people would have to be removed, or if they remain there to exploit I'm not sure what, because I don't know the territory, you want some economic compensation or you want to work jointly with the businesses which may be there to exploit the resources. After saying that, you say that if this were accomplished, you would have delegates to the National Assembly.

Well, I put all this together, and I say to myself: if you want your complete political autonomy and you then want delegates to the National Assembly, are you speaking of a federal system? The State consisting of your community and the State of Québec together have a kind of federal system. Is that it? I'm not saying that this is what you say. I told you in the beginning that I'm just trying to understand. Could you clarify these questions that I have raised: the territory, the autonomous government, the delegates to the National Assembly, the resource development?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** With pleasure, Mr. Allard. The first part of your interpretation is correct. However, I am going to make some corrections, if you will allow me, to the second part. Political autonomy is expressed by governmental autonomy. And what is a government, according to our vision? A government requires a territorial base and natural resources. Indeed, we will be obliged to crowd people in the territories, except that it will not be the Indians that we are going to crowd, because they are there. It is probably to demand better management of natural resources from lumbering companies, hydroelectric developers, and recreation and tourism operators – although we have very great respect for them – and mining developers. What we want is part of the territory, with management of natural resources, and you know very well, since there are many economists here, that this is what forms the basis of a government, and this is political autonomy based on an Indian government. This is my comment on the first part.

As for the second part, on the question of a delegation, if, indeed, Québec recognizes a sovereign Indian government, this means that we should negotiate certain areas of jurisdiction. I pointed out just now that we do not want armed forces. We do not want a post office department. On the other hand, there are jurisdictions that we are certainly going to have as exclusive, and I would take the liberty of mentioning to you, among other things, the environment. There are other jurisdictions that we would like to see shared, and this is where the delegation comes in; when we deal with questions of aboriginal jurisdiction, the aboriginal delegation should decide.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Sir. I am very sorry, Mr. Allard...

**Mr. Allard:** ...of which you are going to speak are the same as those that the federal government exercises, because Québec does not have its own army, does not have its own Department of External Affairs, and does not have its own post office. This is a federal system. Excuse me.

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** ...because natural resource, natural resources, that is, a part of the territories, there are jurisdictions, in fact, which are federal, but there are also other jurisdictions which belong to Québec. There should be Indian jurisdictions. This is what we mean.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mr. Hogue.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. Perhaps we could

make a slight correction, rather, a clarification of what Mr. Allard mentioned, just now, as for this common character of being immigrants, the Amerindians and ourselves, since when you arrived, there was no one here. For us, you were here when we arrived. I think that there are extraordinarily optimistic reasons to look with a great deal of interest at what you are doing, because it goes together with what we saw yesterday at Sept-Îles, another effort of reflection which was proposed yesterday at Sept-Îles by the Montagnais, and which partly confirms what you are doing today, which is a calm, rational attempt to think about arrangements which could work. Arrangements which would make it possible to find where your rights start, where your rights end, where the rights of the Whites begin within the same territory. And from this point of view, I think that this is an effort that must be acclaimed and that must be pursued.

Of course, we cannot do that here, because these are extremely complex concepts, which will find their definitive character only after major discussions that will have to include the Québec government, your nation and other nations.

There is one sentence which struck me in your text. Mr. Allard alluded to it just now; it is on page 12. Neither is there any question of having a state within a state, with its own Department of External Affairs, army, and post office. It is rather a question of having our own jurisdiction over a territory which specifically belongs to us, and which will manifest our sovereignty. There are... These are certainly extremely difficult concepts to resolve and to define, because there are many people in Québec now who speak of Québec's sovereignty and who like to speak of it in terms of an indivisible territory, without taking away the possibility that there be, within this territory, specific rights allocated to aboriginal nations, for example, who could even exercise them through a government.

Could there, without giving a definitive response of course, but could there be a term which could, roughly but fairly faithfully, represent what you have in mind – if we said that basically what you have in mind is the concept of internal sovereignty, in relation to a general sovereignty that the State of Québec, the Québec State would exercise?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Part of the answer is in the question. But I am going to definitely provide certain other details, because this is not an internal sovereignty within an overarching sovereignty. First, I must say that there is a lot of truth in what you say when you state that, in fact, fundamentally, the brief that we are presenting, is pretty well... meets pretty well the same bases, the same concepts – except for perhaps the court of the peoples, which we

didn't contribute - as the Innu or Montagnais of Uashat Mani-Utenam.

When we say that there is no question of having a state within a state, I think that we are rational and consistent with the brief. When we say that in fact we do not want the armed forces, we do not want the post office and other departments, I think, in which we don't have much expertise and which we don't want, either. However, this should be negotiated as equals, and be a matter for agreements. And this shows that this is not an internal sovereignty within an overarching sovereignty.

However, and I must make some fine distinctions, however it can be partial, gradual, but its objective should be sovereignty as equals, as peoples, as nations, as governments.

**Mr. Bouchard:** And the agreements - I'm almost finished - and the agreements, you want to enshrine them in the constitution, crystallize them in the constitution of Québec.

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** You have spoken, I think that it was Mr. Larose who spoke of individual rights and collective rights. It is clear, for the Montagnais of the Lac-Saint-Jean region, that all these rights must be protected by the first law of the country, that is, by the constitution.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

**Mr. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I congratulate you with all that I may possess as an individual, and I do not have to give you advice, but will never agree to be reduced to silence. And never agree that money attempt to buy what is priceless. And you come here under difficult conditions. The federal government, through the Department of Indian Affairs, gives you money, to which you are entitled, and I do not wish to raise that issue. But I want to further support my statement. And I congratulate you, for what it is worth, but anyway I congratulate you. And being what you are, you are going to assist all other minorities to be more what they are.

My question perhaps goes to the heart of the matter, on page 11. And in your preliminary version, which you amended, you know... I would not like to use it to put you on the spot but rather to see the progression. In the preliminary version, you said, this status could approach, etc... by analogy with the powers of an eleventh province. Do you remember that? That was removed and we find in the final text, the paragraph... on page 11 or wherever, this paragraph. What I read, I read that you are telling us, that whatever... and whatever signing

with whomever, you would not sign any document which did not allow you to be distinct. This is what I would read. That is, that with any level of government, when you sign a document, you will sign it as an distinct entity. Have I interpreted this paragraph correctly?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** That's right, it is as governments, as equals. I must also tell you that... What you said first, when you said, do not accept money. It is not the intention of the Montagnais of Lac-Saint-Jean to sell the territories. And you say that it is a question of heart and this is true. And it is there that we have our territories. This spiritual, sacred link with the earth cannot be exchanged for money. And you are right when you say that we have come to take the "beau risque" here, again, except that I think that if, indeed, we want to make Quebecers more conscious and aware of the real cause and the real needs of the Amerindians, I think that it is worthwhile to take that beau risque, even if we have butterflies in our stomachs. But we have taken the beau risque.

**Mr. Hogue:** ...a lesson. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right? Then, Mr. Serge Deschamps, who will be followed by Mr. Robert Libman.

**Mr. Deschamps:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question that I prepared has already been asked by Mr. Bouchard. I would like to refer to page 10 of your brief and particularly to the quotation from Mr. Rémillard which appears in your brief. You say that the recognition of the rights of aboriginal peoples is now a part of the collective consciousness of Quebecers. I would like to know your opinion today. Mr. Larose has alluded just now to the events which occurred during the past summer. Do you believe that the people of Québec have reached this, shall we say, maturity, this openmindedness towards the question of aboriginal rights, your claims?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Definitely. We have been watching you for years and I do not say this of my generation only; I say this since my father and my grandfather and all the others who have gone before us have said it. We have a - I do not have the term - but our transmission of culture is verbal, except that it cannot be lost. Because, when we say that the meat is hidden at such and such a place in the woods, it takes a fair memory to remember where it is hidden and to go and get it. And this is our transmission of culture. In this spirit, I think that the efforts that Quebecers are making in their aspiration to sovereignty, for the protection of their language, for the protection of their cultural values, for their distinctiveness

compared with the other provinces of Canada, I am very certain that Quebecers have the maturity to grant this same right to the aboriginal peoples.

**A voice:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Libman.  
(5:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree when you mention in your brief that it is unfortunate that there is no aboriginal member of our Commission but the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs has sent a request to the Commission steering committee suggesting the creation of a specific two-day forum on aboriginal questions only, and I hope that this idea will see fulfillment.

My question is the following, Mr. Kurtness: you say in your brief that the sovereignty of Québec does not frighten you. In the light of the links and the agreements, the historical relationships existing between the aboriginal peoples and the Government of Canada – and you mention it in your brief – could you be a little more specific, a little more explicit for me: how do you foresee keeping links with Canada within a sovereign Québec?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Well, with respect to links, what we say is that we are not obliged to keep the sacrosanct umbilical link, except that the courts have recognized that the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility towards the aboriginal peoples. And, in our opinion, there must be negotiations on the transfer of this responsibility, with aboriginal people taking part in these negotiations.

The hypothesis that Québec would be sovereign, we aboriginals, or at least the Montagnais of Lac-Saint-Jean, we think that Québec should sit down, yes, with the federal government to negotiate how this fiduciary responsibility will be respected in relation to the aboriginal peoples, since this is a judgment of the highest court in the country. And this is what we mean when we say that there is an obligation to negotiate with the federal side.

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Libman. We will now go on to Mr. Sirros.

**Mr. Sirros:** Mr. Chairman, I would also like to thank and congratulate those who have appeared here today and I once again recognize the frankness and the clarity which have always characterized the contacts that we have had with each other, and I do also find that your brief, like many others, is clear and direct. It is

good that this is so, because it is good that we begin to approach the type of questions that you put on the table, because it is absolutely clear in my mind that the process of constitutional review that we are beginning with the holding of this Commission forces us also to speak again of the aboriginal question in the context of the Constitution or of any eventual form of link that there might or might not be between Québec and Canada.

It is obvious that you will be on your way, at some point. Whether through a forum or not, I think that the steering committee could discuss this, but again it is clear to me that it will be necessary – and I made the commitment right at the beginning – that when the recommendations of this Commission come out, we sit down together to examine the meaning of all the policies which could be set out by either party for the aboriginal peoples. I am certain, at any rate, that you are going to demand this kind of opportunity to sit down with us so that together we may define a certain number of things.

Many of my questions have also been asked, but perhaps I still have one or two left. I would like to return to your declaration of principles because it seems to me that, until now, both from the government side, whether this one, or the other which preceded us, and from the aboriginal peoples' side, we have only been putting forward declarations of principles. I believe that it will be necessary that we go on from these declarations of principles to the elaboration of clear and concrete policies.

Tell me if I understand correctly and if I have a good grasp. So, declaration of principles, second declaration, when you say – and Mr. Allard, I think, has alluded to it – we declare that we, as a First Nation, have the right to retain ownership of our traditional territories, including the waters and mineral rights, under appropriate conditions to ensure our independence and our economic and social self-sufficiency in accordance with our traditional and contemporary values.

Do I understand correctly that here there is the intention to reduce, through participation in an index of wealth which would be linked to the wealth created by the use of the lands, reduce the rather dramatic gaps to which you alluded, with respect to living conditions too? Is it a demand for participation in an index of wealth of a given territory which could be a territory negotiated with different boundaries, depending on the type of use we would like to make of it?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** You are right, Mr. Sirros. It is indeed participation in wealth, and I think that I have had an opportunity to express it as well. Any government must have a territorial base and must be in a position to exploit natural resources, to develop them in



accordance with and respect for traditional values. When we speak of traditional values, for us, this means respecting ecosystems, respecting the environment. I think that it is Mr. Pilot who told you that we have a c.v. that is a thousand years long with respect to the environment. This is indeed the case.

In fact, if we want to get out of the social paralysis, the economic, cultural and community paralysis in which our communities are plunged... our communities... our community, since in a period of economic slowdown, as is the case while we speak, unemployment reaches almost 50 %, it is definitely by solid economic development that we are going to be able, as a result, to subsequently develop socially, culturally and as a community.

With respect to the beginning of your statement, I appreciate that you told us that in fact, it is very clear. I must tell you - and I think that you are going to discover... I think that you have already begun to discover it. I hope that the Commission is not thus when we speak to each other, because we have been here for 400 years, but the Montagnais, in general, are very emotional. And if it is so clear, it is because we speak from the heart. We have nothing to hide. These are our aspirations, these are our needs, and this is what we want. Perhaps we express it grossly, but this is what it means.

**Mr. Sirros:** I think that I am indeed beginning to understand, and to grasp, that you speak a great deal with your hearts. And I think that there are many people around the table who are prepared to speak with their hearts when we speak of this whole question. The challenge is for us to be able to add to these words from the heart words which will endure afterwards. I have two or three other questions, and I'm aware that we will not succeed today, in the space of an hour or an hour and a half, in settling a whole load of things which have been dragging on for too long.

You spoke of aboriginal government or of government autonomy. Do you see this aboriginal government as on an ethnic basis or also related to territory, that is, a government which would govern all those who live, or who reside on a territory for jurisdictions which could be determined at a given moment? Or is it a combination of the two?

**Mr. Kurtress (Rémy):** When we speak of shared jurisdiction or of exclusive jurisdiction, in my opinion, there must be, for the users of these territories, where the territories will be recognized as Amerindian governments, they should be subject to the laws which that government has instituted. This does not mean that we are going to govern individuals. What we wish to govern is our own members. But other

members of other nations or other peoples must, as is the case for us in relation to Québec, obey the laws. That's what this means.

And in regard to your first presentation, I honestly think that Québec has a unique chance to recognize - once and for all throughout the world - the aboriginal nations, the first occupants of a territory. You know, and I do not want to draw a parallel, but, in Africa, white power is a minority in terms of numbers, but it has the power in relation to a majority consisting of Africans. Obviously, we are a minority. But I think, drawing these parallels, that Québec has a unique chance, through this Bélanger-Campeau Commission, to recognize once and for all the aboriginal peoples of Québec. And I am convinced that this will become jurisprudence and that it will give an impetus to all the other provinces in the country.

**Mr. Sirros:** I agree with you that Québec has some unique chances. You also said, right at the beginning, that the road is long - the road ahead - but I am convinced - and this will be my conclusion before giving the floor to my colleague, Mr. Blackburn - that the road will be greatly shortened if we manage to maintain frank, direct, clear dialogue around consultation tables like this one. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Blackburn:** My dear colleagues, there is a factor that I consider important, which has not been brought out sufficiently in the brief, and that is very simply, I think, the fact that it is very important to mention how much the Montagnais community of Mashteuiatsh has been able, over the years, to be consistently very concerned with maintaining very harmonious but also very respectful relations with the neighbouring communities. I also think that in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, we feel this same dimension of respect and harmony. And you stress, on page 13 of your brief, that it is obvious that arrangements or agreements must be made, so as to coordinate coexistence with the groups around us.

Mr. Kurtress, I would simply like you to elaborate a little on this dimension which makes you in fact maintain these respectful and harmonious relations with neighbouring communities, of course, so that it may serve as a model throughout Québec.

**Mr. Kurtress (Rémy):** Mr. Blackburn, you know that we were the first ones here. So we are the ones who welcomed you, I think, with all due respect. You have, as a minister from the region, followed events during the whole crisis this summer. The Montagnais of Lac-Saint-Jean have in fact always recommended an approach based on mutual respect and trust and an approach based on harmonious and peaceful coexistence, interrelation, and living side by side.

We also have been torn by the events of this summer, but I must recognize that there is a basis for this crisis. We are fed up with struggling for recognition of territories over which we have always exercised total jurisdiction and yet, we must still continue to struggle. And we become, I would not say frustrated, I'd say exasperated. And you are right when you say that the Montagnais of the Lac-Saint-Jean have the wisdom, the pacifism, if you will let me use the expression, to show respect for the members of the region. But I must also say, because we have participated in consultation, we have spoken before that brief, of the socioeconomic summit, I must also say, however, that there is respect shown by the regional population for the Montagnais community. And for this, we must be thankful. If that respect were not there, there would not be any mutual respect. And you are right when you say that in fact our community is respectful in its ties and in its relations.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will now go on to Mr. Guy Chevrete.

**Mr. Chevrete:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would also like to thank Mr. Kurtness and his representatives. I find it encouraging to read a brief like the one that you are presenting to us with solutions, possibilities and possible options. I think that this shows your openmindedness. And I would like to declare myself in agreement with Mr. Hogue, who said that collective freedom is priceless and that it cannot be bargained away. All that I hope is that he will say the same thing to Quebecers.

Having said that, I would like to ask you one question. You recognize the maturity of the people of Québec. You say that we have a historic chance, possibly, to arrive at agreements and a recognition of things which have not existed in the whole world, which could be a first. You have been living under the constitutional system you know so well for 123 years. I would like to ask you which of the two systems do you think will give you the greater chance of realizing your aspirations?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Mr. Chevrete, I cannot speak in the name of Quebecers, because it is up to Quebecers to give themselves the type of sovereignty that they wish. Except that, in the brief, we express the type of sovereignty that we and the Innu of Pickouagami Innu want to see achieved. It is difficult for me to reply to your question, except that we remain optimistic, we remain confident that indeed Quebecers are going to grant aboriginal peoples what they claim for themselves, what we claim. This is why I say that there are so many similarities, so many analogies that in my opinion, once again, we are going to put our faith in the people of Québec.

**Mr. Chevrete:** I am convinced that you put your faith in the people of Québec. Your statements since the beginning of the presentation of your brief show this, but we cannot give what we do not have. To be able to conclude specific agreements, to have, for example, shared or delegated participation, we must have it, to be able to do it, whereas you know that under the present system there are a lot of tools, levers, and powers which we do not have. I'll ask my question again. Your aspirations, your own, what you reveal in your brief, what you want most, in which of the two systems, in a sovereign Québec or in a federal system, do you have a better chance of their coming true?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Mr. Chevrete, there are areas of jurisdiction which the Québec government possesses and which it must negotiate with the Indians, for example, territories and natural resources. There are other areas of jurisdiction which are federal, but I must sound redundant. I cannot reply on behalf of Quebecers about the type of sovereignty they seek. What we have expressed to you in our brief is the type of sovereignty that we seek. And we put our faith in Quebecers' and Canadians' receptiveness to our brief.

**Mr. Chevrete:** In other words, you are telling us, Mr. Kurtness: Do as we do, keep at it, do not give up, then the day when we can reciprocally... Meanwhile, in the framework of your powers, give us what we are asking from you, what you are capable of giving us, and if you obtain all the other powers, we will negotiate on them.

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Except that what is paradoxical in our case, Mr. Chevrete, is that we are negotiating for our territories, although these territories belonged to us.

**Mr. Chevrete:** Yes, I understand that it is paradoxical. You are also negotiating the use of the resources. I signed agreements with several nations when I was Minister of Recreation, Mr. Blackburn's current ministry. But I must thank you, and I am going to give my colleague from Jonquière a chance to continue the questioning.

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

**Mr. Dufour:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is true that we have lived together side by side for many years, and not, and with difficulty together. Because, in the sense that for more than 100 years, almost 150 years, we have lived in the same community, but we can say beyond any doubt that we are ill-informed about you or we are misinformed about you. I think that I am

obliged to state this, because about 46 years or maybe 45 years ago, I lived for some time in Roberval, and, in that time, when we went to the Indian reserve, it was truly... it was a federal territory where we did not feel - we felt accepted by you, but we really thought at the time that it was a bit like being in a foreign country. We can't avoid noting this, and it is perhaps the fact of double jurisdiction which has caused this ignorance. On another side, like Quebecers, you have succeeded, in recent years, while preserving your identity, in asserting yourselves more and more. I think that we can rejoice in this. This is not pejorative. I think that it is valid. I have a chance, as part of my work as municipal affairs critic, to work on legislation regarding the Inuit, who are governed by the James Bay Agreement, and who are dependents of the Québec government, to whom we provide services, etc., etc. Under the form of autonomy or sovereignty that you recommend, how do you regard the fact that not only are there agreements which will govern you in relation to certain decision-making or other powers, in what way do you foresee that these governments, or this form of sovereignty is going to be applied? And how are you going to finance this? How are you going to integrate in relation to this?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** Thank you, Mr. Dufour. It is unfortunate that we are ill-informed or misinformed about each other. But you are right when you say that you feel that you are in a foreign country, because in fact we were the first occupants, and you came second.

**Mr. Dufour:** This is true.

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** To be ill-informed or misinformed about each other... We have responsibilities towards our community. I think that it is up to the Québec government, especially with the crisis we have been through this summer, to take certain initiatives to make known the good qualities - because we do not have only faults - the good qualities of the aboriginal peoples. We do not have the financial resources to actually go and say to all Quebecers - and then you know the territory, it is large, there are so many people - we are not capable, we do not have the financial resources to go and say to them: this is what we are. We have so many needs among us, and you know the social environment, the cultural environment, the economic environment, we have so many needs among us that we are obliged to prioritize our budgets on the basis of these needs.

To your question, the financing of our sovereignty will take place through the recognition of an Indian government, an Indian government with a territorial base, able to exploit natural resources. And when they say to

Quebecers and Canadians, Oh! those Indians, they don't pay taxes. What do they have to complain about? What those people do not know is that we do not have the power to mortgage our land; we do not have the power of seizure on our land. Therefore, there is very little potential for economic development. And it is through the use and exploitation of natural resources, with respect for the environment, that we are going to be able to finance our sovereignty and our government. Because, as you know, billions of dollars come from the exploitation of natural resources. Out of that, they give us a few million. Now you see it, now you don't, and they use our territories. And if we exploit these territories, and these natural resources, we are going to demonstrate that we really are capable of financing ourselves. Not only of financing ourselves, but of getting out of the social and economic paralysis in which we live.

**Mr. Dufour:** Mr. Chairman, I have said that we are ill-informed and misinformed about each other, but that does not mean that I do not have a great deal of esteem for you, because I know...

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** That is not what I meant, Mr. Dufour. I have too much respect...

**Mr. Dufour:** Fine. I know that, regionally, you have made great efforts to assert yourselves, first, and you have worked in cooperation with the region in many areas. I believe that your community "performs" in important sectors which deserve to be encouraged and that you should continue.

My second question, of course, is whether your proposal for a sovereign government or sovereignty leads you to recommend institutions other than those which you have named - the post office and the army - institutions which are your own, for example education or hospitals? Do you want to have all that, as a system? You have the power to do so. And, at the same time, is what you propose endorsed by other aboriginal communities similar to yours?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** I am going to begin with the second. I pointed out at the beginning that I was speaking on behalf of the Montagnais of Mashteuiatsh. I cannot speak for the other communities, but I think - and I think that it is to Mr. Bouchard that I have had an opportunity to give this reply - that there is a convergence. There is still a common denominator among Amerindian communities which would allow us to have the same point of view. With respect to jurisdictions, it is very clear that our children's futures will depend on education and this is one area of jurisdiction in which we would really like to have exclusive powers. Since you mentioned hospitals, we do not have the

expertise in our communities to operate them. We do not have the doctors, we do not have all the specialties that it takes. And it is this type of agreement that we would sign as equals or as governments. Obviously, we do not have all the technological expertise in other areas, except that technology can be learned, just as we can eventually develop doctors. We have one in our community who is doing an extraordinary job, but this is not enough to be able to build a hospital. So, this type of arrangement should be the subject of negotiated agreements, but always on the basis of government autonomy based on the financing that I proposed to you just now, that is, as equals and as governments.

**Mr. Dufour:** Do you think, Mr. Kurtness, that the Québec government's declaration of principle in 1985 compared with your own declaration, do you think that it can be a good basis for discussion?

**Mr. Kurtness (Rémy):** To be very honest with you, Mr. Dufour, what remains to be done is to put this into operation. We must go beyond the stage of government wishes to the stage of putting these principles into operation, of developing policies. This is the stage we have reached.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, Mr. Harry Kurtness, Mr. Rémy Kurtness, Mr. Gilbert Dominique, thank you for coming and meeting with us, for meeting with the members of the Commission and having such a frank discussion with them, but thank you too, in particular, for speaking from your heart.

We shall resume at 7:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:10 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:38 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We welcome the representatives of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec. I understand, Mr. Dany... Now listen, we will repeat. The Commission was created by the Québec National Assembly. In the Québec National Assembly, we do not applaud. We really like the young people who have come before us. If you have fans supporting you, or partisans, would you ask them to applaud you in the corridor? All right? So, we will begin. Mr. Dany Deschênes, if you would please introduce your colleagues.

#### **Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean**

**Mr. Deschênes (Dany):** Mr. Chairman, good evening. Allow me to introduce Mr. Éric Sainte-Croix, Mr. Laval Dionne, Mr. Michel Légaré, Mr.

Sylvain Gaudreault and Mrs. Isabelle Bouchard.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, you have five minutes to present your brief.

**Mr. Deschênes:** Thank you. The non-ratification of the Meech Lake Accord on June 23, 1990 has led to a new debate on the political and constitutional status of Québec and its place in Canadian federalism. In the context of the Meech failure and the institution of this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, a group of four young students, assisted by a youth leader, took the initiative of organizing a meeting of young people in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. After over a month of publicity, on October 14 some 50 young people between the ages of 16 and 30 met in Lac Pouce, setting aside any political partisanship, to discuss a subject vital to their future, the future of Québec.

Isabelle and Eric will present you with the brief wrapped in the symbol of Québec. It represents our expectations and our hopes for a country in the making. In addition, the old age pension cheque submitted to this Commission is a reminder of our responsibility in the Québec of tomorrow. But while we're on the subject, what is our place going to be in a future Québec?

The purpose of our brief is to express before the Commission the ideas that have been agreed upon and the resolutions adopted at the Forum. The brief is divided into four main themes: culture, the economy and employment, education, and the environment. The conclusion proposes the constitutional and political status of Québec, as the young people of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean would like it to be. This is our "Meech Lake Accord", henceforth to be known as the "Lac Pouce Accord".

The Forum considers that democracy is the very essence of growth for Québec society. The will to build a strong Québec may rightly be perceived as imbued with the aspirations of this particular society moving towards an autonomous Québec. The Forum recognizes and invokes the Québec people's inalienable right to be master of its destiny for the following reasons: the Québec people constitutes a nation in the sociological sense of the term. This nation constitutes a people within the meaning of the charter of the United Nations Organization.

This people already has, in international law, the right to determine its own fate, which means to rule itself and choose its own political system, both externally and internally. This people is 100 % concentrated on the Québec territory. Québec already has all the components needed to create a viable state, as defined in international law. The Forum also takes the view that Québec must take itself in hand and assume its own cultural, social, economic and political development. The Forum earnestly hopes that the

Bélanger-Campeau Commission will come to a powerful consensus, without any biases, like the one young people have come to, even though their allegiances are diverse. For this reason, and in order to succeed in attaining the objectives proposed in this brief by young people aged 16 to 30, the Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec is unanimously asking the Parliamentary Commission to adopt sovereignty as the political and constitutional status for Québec. By this we mean that Québec should have exclusive legislative powers, be able to make its own taxation laws, levy any and all taxes and establish external relations with other states through agreements, treaties, conventions, and so on.

Now we come to the resolutions. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that, since they form a part of the founding peoples of Québec, the aboriginal peoples should be represented on the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. We deplore the fact that they are not. Consequently, we are asking this Commission to rectify the situation as soon as possible.

Resolution No. 2. It was discussed and unanimously agreed upon that, since we are the first region to give young people, through a forum, the opportunity to express their opinions, their concerns and their challenges with regard to the political and constitutional future of Québec, we are of the opinion that there should be a national, Québec-wide forum held in the near future and, moreover, that this forum should be held in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region.

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

**Mr. Deschênes:** Challenges may come, governments may change, the young may be forgotten, but it is up to all of us to see to the future of Québec. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Deschênes. Let's begin with Mr. Blackburn.

**Mr. Blackburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I must confess that I am very happy and also very proud to be the representative of a riding in this region and, at the same time, minister of a region that has such excellent people as the young men and women who are presenting this brief to the Commission. Throughout this brief, which I have had the opportunity to read, I have seen the quality of the arguments you have put forward. I would also like to point out to a particularly interesting characteristic of your brief, the use of the feminine throughout the text. This non-conformism is most refreshing and I'm sure that, where the feminist cause is concerned, it will be

interesting to see how this affects women's reaction when it comes to this important issue. You present demands and suggest solutions that are quite innovative.

In the various regions, we have seen extremely interesting presentations through briefs which revealed a great deal of concern and push towards Québec's sovereignty. This is where my question is leading... and my thoughts... If the regions of Québec had far more autonomy, would this desire for sovereignty in the regions be as strong? And I'd like to ask you, as young people: If you had to choose between two situations, two priorities, greater autonomy for the region within a more sovereign Québec, no... excuse me, less autonomy for the region within a more sovereign Québec, or less sovereignty for the region or for Québec but much more regional autonomy, which would you choose? Which of these would be your first priority?

**Mr. Légaré (Michel):** Mr. Blackburn, thank you for your question. However, it introduces an error in the sense that we don't have to choose between the two. We can have both.

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

**Mr. Légaré:** Let me give you an example, take the case of Spain where regional autonomy is recognized within the Spanish constitution. What we are asking, in fact, is to have a regional government which would be recognized within the Québec constitution, within a sovereign State. This can be done. There are many examples, look at other European or Central American or South American countries. All it takes is a little imagination.

**Mr. Blackburn:** Your brief makes no mention of a concern about the need for economic ties with the rest of Canada, a concern many people have expressed. How much do you think this situation puts young people at risk and how concerned are you about it? Is it absolutely necessary for a sovereign Québec to have economic ties with the rest of Canada? Is this of paramount importance to you?

**Mr. Sainte-Croix (Éric):** On the subject of economic ties with the rest of Canada, the young participants in the Forum said they thought it was important to keep monetary union open as a possibility. After that, they discussed a customs union, a type of free trade between Canada and Québec, and they agreed almost unanimously that it too should be considered. These were more or less the two important "unions" that the young people set as priorities for relations between Québec and Canada.

**Mr. Blackburn:** So you acknowledge that a sovereign Québec would need to maintain

economic ties with the rest of Canada. If the possibility of negotiating those economic ties did not exist, how far should we go to achieve this sovereignty? How prepared would we be to make certain concessions?

**Mr. Sainte-Croix:** In terms of sovereignty, I think economic ties with the rest of Canada would not present a problem. I think it is to the advantage of both Québec and English Canada to come to some sort of agreement. Or, if worst comes to worst, the young people also realized that it was important to have some sort of arrangement with the Americans. I think it is possible to have ties with countries in North America other than Canada, if any problems arise.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Let's go on to Mrs. Blackburn.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I also appreciated the use of the feminine form in the text; I told myself that women were perhaps starting to get the upper hand. In any case, 52 % of the population are women, but people often say jokingly that it doesn't really matter anyway because one woman is worth two men.

On a more serious note, on page 14 of your brief, you say the Forum sincerely hopes that the Commission will arrive at a solid consensus, without allowing partisanship to interfere, just as the young people managed to reach a consensus even though their allegiances were different. Personally, I think these young people taught their elders a lesson. The Forum drew young Conservative Party, Liberal Party and Parti Québécois members, young workers, young students, and you were able to reach a consensus. I am thrilled, and I notice that more and more, the idea of turning Québec into a sovereign nation is no longer the prerogative of the Parti Québécois. And I am thrilled that achieving sovereignty has become a blueprint for society for the business community and young people alike. And, as we have heard over the past several weeks - increasingly, women are making it their blueprint for society as well.

Women's groups came to us saying that anything would be better than the present situation. We are ready to commit ourselves to a sovereignty project for Québec, they said. I am delighted. And I hope that you liberals will also make it your project. Who knows? I hope we can keep up this momentum.

I have a few brief questions. On page 9 of your brief, you speak of regional government. You say: Young people think that regional government could help make regional development policies more effective. Like many other organizations, you advocate decentralization, with regional powers and financing. What form might

such a government take?

**Mr. Légaré:** OK. Essentially, we are not asking you to move mountains. We should model such a government after regional institutions that already exist. In 1979, when the government decided to create regional county municipalities, the project was associated with the sovereignty-association plan at that time. Certain powers were drafted for the regional county municipalities, which never became a reality because the referendum result was negative. We are not saying that exactly the same formula that was used then should be used again, but it is important to consider expanding regional powers, all the same. I think that people are quite receptive to the idea of creating municipalities.

The problem has to do with financing the institutions. We do not want it to be a roundabout way of shifting the federal or provincial debt to a regional institution or fobbing it off on the municipalities; on the contrary. Independent sources of revenue and fiscal measures would therefore be required for the institutions, so that they could function with a certain degree of autonomy. Another possibility would be to introduce an equalization formula by which additional funds could be transferred to outlying regions that have smaller populations and are not as well equipped to find additional sources of revenue. However, equalization formulas should be introduced with moderation, because, as we know, the federal government has always used them to transfer its debt to the provinces. Therefore, perhaps the emphasis should be more on independent sources of revenue; naturally, this would mean negotiating with municipal officials, for example, or representatives of the community, in order to determine what areas of authority should be stressed.

**Mrs. Blackburn:** Fine. In a completely different vein, you advance a certain number of ideas about education and you call for more demanding school curricula that are more adapted to the needs of industry, but are just as worthwhile from the standpoint of training. I have two questions to ask you on that subject. Because, at the same time, you say that immigrants should be better integrated. Could you enlarge a little on how curricula could be created that would demand more of the students without causing an excessively high dropout rate? Also, do you believe that the regions have a role to play in the integration of immigrants, and if so, how could they play it?

**Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain):** Thank you very much for asking me about education, because we feel that education is such an important field that we had no choice but to talk about it.

Obviously, we will be able to go deeper into that subject. For those of us living in outlying regions, it is clear that education should be adapted to the realities of each region. In other words, from the standpoint of someone living in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, education for that region would mean courses on local history, practicums with companies in the region, the involvement of large local companies in both the academic and financial aspects of education. That is how we see regional education, above all. As for the role of education in integrating immigrants, I will let Isabelle elaborate on the subject.

**Mrs. Bouchard (Isabelle):** We believe it is clear that when immigrants arrive here, they require services to become properly integrated, and we thought of creating an outreach centre and a regional service for immigrants. We consider universities to be a way for immigrants to enter the country. Lately, there has been talk of a setting up a multiethnic chair at the university, which we find would be a good way of integrating immigrants. Also, Québec could have a comprehensive immigration policy, not just to deal with immigrants outside Québec, but also to encourage young Quebecers to move back to outlying regions, since there has been an exodus of young people from rural areas, and we think it is important to win them back.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We now turn the floor over to Mrs. Campbell Steer, who will be followed by Mrs. Rosette Côté.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Thank you. I am the third woman to speak, and as you can tell from my accent, my mother tongue is English. I hadn't noticed that you had done it in the feminine.

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

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Your proposals cover many topics. I will limit myself to questions related to my field of expertise and the business world. You note a very high unemployment rate in the region and you also offered very valid suggestions for increasing employment opportunities, including changes in the infrastructure, transportation, manpower training, and tax incentives. But I have a question. Do you think — on page 8 — that measures like raising taxes on companies would lead to better employment opportunities? Because you suggest the creation of a regional investment fund sustained by taxation of the exploitation of natural resources. Would it not be better to encourage companies and individuals to invest in an economic renewal fund, or something to that effect? By encourage, I mean that if you invest \$ 2.00, \$ 3.00 will be deducted for income tax purposes.

**Mr. Légaré:** That might be one way, possibly. Many other measures might be considered, as well. We do not claim to have exhausted all the possibilities.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** I meant it more in the sense that if we increase the tax burden for anyone, I don't think that can harm the...

**Mr. Légaré:** I will give you an example of a problem we had in our region with the exploitation of hydroelectric resources. While Hydro-Québec generates about 85 % of the hydroelectric power in Québec, a multinational in this region controls almost 95 % of the hydroelectric production, for aluminum processing. Now, the power surplus is sold to Hydro-Québec, which sells it back to the population. It is certain that somewhere along the way, someone will make a profit on all that production, and it's the people who pay. Ever since the region lost its comparative advantage in terms of hydroelectric costs, industry has stayed away from this region. Moreover, in other regions in Québec, Hydro-Québec, there are... That company also pays the government a certain share of its profits from the generation of hydroelectric power. We would like the profits to be returned to each of the regions — the same goes for the exploitation of forests or any other natural resource — and put in a regional development fund that would be administered by whatever form of regional government is decided on. Thus, elected officials would decide where to invest in such projects. When you consider that 62 % of the 63 municipalities in the region, especially the rural municipalities, are losing their inhabitants, that would be a way of funding job creation programs.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Or at least be certain that the money stays in the region. I have another question. Do you think your concept of regional government would lead to the creation of a "federation", within Québec, with the same problems we are having with the status quo? Why do you think Québec City would listen more than Ottawa? Is it because it is closer, or because the population is more homogeneous or...

**Mr. Légaré:** The homogeneity of the population certainly doesn't hurt. On the other hand, under the present system we have with the Federation, with several nations held together by a constitutional pact, the federal government is encroaching on the provincial government's jurisdiction in regional development.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** But what I meant was... by correcting.

**Mr. Légaré:** Let me finish, please. For example, the way this results in framework

agreements on regional funding. Now, large disparities arise precisely because the federal and provincial governments are incapable of reaching an agreement.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** But that wasn't my question. My question is, if we do the same thing here in Québec, setting up a regional government with a certain autonomy under a central government in Québec City, don't you think that will lead to the same sort of problem?

**Mr. Légaré:** To answer your question, we think that it will be much easier to influence the politicians or representatives who will be in power at that time, because they will be much closer to the people.

**Mrs. Campbell Steer:** Thank you very much.

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

**Mrs. Côté:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I want to commend you for the quality of your brief. I find that it is well argued and treats a variety of subjects. I think such a brief is something that teachers and the educational community can be proud of, and I think it's important to say it.

What also makes it interesting is that you discuss different ways of solving certain problems of 1990. First, you talk about the dropout rate, which I think is important; 38 % of secondary students never obtain their diploma. Then you talk about immigration, employment, relations between school and industry, and I think these are also important. And you talk about the situation of young people in this region. People sometimes lose sight of the situation of young people in Québec when they look at the overall picture.

I have two questions for you. First, did you consider the particularities of the region when you thought about all the relations between schools and industry? When you talk about mechanisms for exchanges between the educational and industrial communities, on page 7, and conditions of accessibility to post-secondary studies, did you consider that post-secondary studies should be the responsibility of the central government, and elementary and secondary studies were more a regional concern? Did you look at that, or have you read anything about that?

**Mr. Sainte-Croix:** I cannot speak for myself, obviously. But that alternative was not discussed at the Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec. What they talked about, roughly, was how the schools could prepare students for the job market. The major problem they called attention

to was the obvious disparity between the job market and school. And they also mentioned the rather conspicuous absence of practicums. This is roughly what came out of the young people's meeting at Lac Poudre that day.

**Mrs. Côté:** And accessibility to secondary studies? What do you mean when you talk about facilitating conditions of accessibility to post-secondary studies? I'm talking about tuition fees; please talk about them.

**Mr. Sainte-Croix:** The matter of tuition fees is one thing, obviously, but there is also the question of accessibility to learning institutions. For example, if various bachelor's programs are offered at universities in different regions, such as here at UQAC, or the University in Rimouski, students will not have to leave the regions in large numbers. Because the major problem of the regions is the exodus of young people, and the best way to get them to leave is to force them to study elsewhere. They often don't return to the regions. Therefore, one good way to get them to stay would be to give them the opportunity to study in the discipline of their choice. This was a very major point that was examined.

**Mrs. Côté:** Last question. I can't! No? Around noon at the Cegep, we were told that there were many young native people studying there, and that certain ways had to be found to make them feel integrated and interact with the rest of the students. Can you think of any measures that might help them feel at home?... You did not raise that issue at the Forum.

**Mr. Sainte-Croix:** No, but I don't think...

**Mrs. Côté:** Anyway, the question has been asked, and you can look at it later.

**Mr. Sainte-Croix:** That's it. The day only lasted 24 hours.

**Mrs. Côté:** Of course.

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

**Mr. Holden:** In your brief you state that the federal political and constitutional system of government is a serious threat to the French language and culture in Québec. The past 25 years have seen an incredible blossoming of the French language and culture in Québec, even among Anglophones and allophones. And I ask you in all seriousness: Did you think of the marked progress of your culture in the past 25 years, when you spoke of this serious threat?

**Mrs. Bouchard:** There has definitely been



progress, but we think it was too little, too late. There have been subtle attempts at assimilation and dilution and I can cite some of them for you. There was the Durham Report, the Act of Union, and its attempts to achieve unitary states at the time Confederation was being discussed. More recently there was the unilateral repatriation of the Constitution, which excluded Québec. Francophones living outside Québec have experienced a loss of identity. Apart from that, the language of the public service was English for a long time. Has the legal text of the Canadian Constitution finally been translated? These are all questions we are asking ourselves and we say, yes, there has been progress, but's it far too late, I think.

**Mr. Holden:** Yes.

**Mr. Gaudreault:** Your question makes me laugh a little.

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

**Mr. Holden:** It makes the Parti Québécois laugh, too.

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

**Mr. Gaudreault:** Yes, it makes certain young people laugh, too, you see. Because if we were to put what you advocate into practice, I think it would limit us, and we would not look any further; we've made some progress, that's good enough for us...

But we want to go beyond that. It's true, I think that all of us sitting at this table here are concrete proof that we have made progress in French; we are proof, because we put the text in the feminine form. We haven't stopped listening to French music. We write texts in French. We write in French-language newspapers. We do many, many things in French. We watch French-language television. We were born with television, and we've always wanted to develop it more in French. We have every means of communication in French.

But we want to go further. It's not enough. And we think that a sovereign Québec will be better able to accomplish this. We must never stop. We are engulfed in a sea of 300 million Anglophones. But by your logic, we have gone far enough, and need go no further. On the contrary, we must keep on going further, even as a sovereign state? No, no, we must keep on pushing further, continue to enact laws to protect the French language, because we are surrounded. But that does not prevent us from maintaining relations with English Canada...

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

**Mr. Gaudreault:** ...cultural exchanges, all kinds of things...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your time is up, Mr. Gaudreault...

**Mr. Gaudreault:** I'm sorry.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** On the Chair's time, Mr. Roy, two minutes.

**Mr. Roy:** In Montréal, we have a saying, "A city: call it proud". Here we could say, "Youth: call it intelligent".

I would like to hear you talk about culture. In passing, this afternoon, a speaker said, "I dream of the day when we can welcome English-Canadian artists and productions with open arms". In your brief, you propose raising the quota for Francophone music on radio stations. You did not mention movie houses or television. I would like to hear what you have to say about this cultural imperialism on the airwaves. Where do you stand with respect to this situation? Earlier, the defence of culture was talked about, especially since, in the early 1980s, we accused you young people - and I think it's less true today - the Conseil de la langue, I believe had come out with a report that said that 80 % of the young people were consumers of English-language culture. How do you feel about such a percentage, which, presumably, has decreased - I don't know - because there are no other statistics on this?

**Mrs. Bouchard:** More and more people do read, speak, and even dance in French, and listen to French music, and we suggested raising the broadcast quotas for French music, because we realized that even though the CRTC sets quotas, French songs are played late at night, not during prime time. That is why we suggested the quotas, but obviously, if the same could be done for movie houses and discotheques, then this wonderful dream could come true.

#### **Announcement of a Forum on Young People and the Future of Québec**

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Is that it? All right. The time is up, but I have an announcement to make and it would perhaps be appropriate to make it now, because it's about young people who will talk about the future of Québec. I conferred with my colleague, Michel Bélanger, and with the secretary's approval - because we rely on him a great deal - at the last meeting the steering committee decided to hold a forum on young people and the future of Québec. This forum will be held in Québec City, in the Red Room, and in a few days, the secretary of the Commission will

announce the program. I would like to thank you, then... My colleagues made the remark that the place should be cleared of MNAs...

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mrs. Bouchard, Messrs. Gaudreault, Deschênes, Légaré, Dionne and Sainte-Croix, thank you for your contribution. Good evening.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:15 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:30 p.m.)

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

Ladies and Gentlemen, we resume our hearings. We now welcome the Fédération des syndicats du secteur aluminium. Mr. Laforest, would you please introduce your colleagues.

**Fédération des syndicats  
du secteur aluminium inc.**

**Mr. Laforest (Réjean):** With pleasure. On my left, my colleague, Arthur Bonneau; on my right, my colleague, Mr. Lévis Desgagnés, and on my far right, my colleague Mishell Potvin.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Your hearing lasts 30 minutes, and you have five minutes to present your report.

**Mr. Laforest (Réjean):** Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. La Fédération des syndicats du secteur aluminium is happy to speak before this commission which, we are sure, is doing its best to assemble a diverse range of contributors, including our organization, to allow them to present their thoughts and opinions on the constitutional future of Québec.

We will not hide from this commission the fact that our union organization and our affiliated syndicates are among the thousands of Quebecers that asked to give their opinions about the future of Québec before the Commission. We do not claim that this report covers every issue surrounding the future of Québec. Nevertheless, this report, which is intended to be objective, was prepared in a constructive spirit, with the best interests of Quebecers and the union members we represent in mind, with consideration for strict time limits to be respected vis-à-vis the preparation for the renewal of all our collective agreements, which fall due on March 4.

What is important for the organization we represent is to help this commission carry out its work, to present clearly and accurately the position of the officers of the various affiliated unions and the Fédération.

The aluminum workers, located for the most

part in the heart of a nationalist region, region 02, are no different from the majority of people in Québec. How should this nationalism find expression on a province-wide basis? We believe simply that the people of Québec, now more than ever, are mature enough to assume complete autonomy with respect to their neighbors, by negotiating as equal partners.

We believe that because of political instability, investors do not have Québec on their list of priorities. We can also think of various companies, such as Sun Life, that have moved their head offices to English-speaking provinces. We are sure that the cumbersome Canadian system of government is unfavorable to political, social and economic stability. The two levels of government are at loggerheads, not to mention the emergence of a new power, the Senate, which to our minds is not useful and must disappear.

In a sovereign Québec, the government must be elected to the National Assembly as the only body representing its people; it alone must have the power to make decisions for them. On the economic level, we notice that opinions have been divided for some time, depending on the political parties for transfer payments between the provincial and federal governments. We are also happy to see that the business community has become mature enough to stop being afraid of assuming its own destiny and to start aspiring to economic independence. The Mouvement Desjardins is a good example of this.

We ask the members of the Commission not only to consider the economic question in their recommendations, but also to pay attention to the will of the people. In a sovereign Québec, decision-makers would not be influenced by large companies lobbying a federal government about industry and the use of natural resources. We're talking about the exchange of friendly services, the example of free trade, Alcan's campaign, led by its then president Mr. Culver, to promote free trade, and so on.

Concerning the future direction Québec should take regarding the exploitation of our natural resources, if they are not of direct benefit to the regions, they should at least benefit Québec, and profits generated in Québec should not be exported to other countries. At the federal level, decision-makers are not willing to share decisions about regional autonomy with union representatives.

In a sovereign government, people would not need to speak as loud to make themselves heard. The regions, closer to the seat of government, would make themselves heard much more easily. Thus, we could be considered as partners in economic and social development.

To recognize trade-unionism in the area of labour relations as an element and instrument essential to our economic, political and social vitality and development, favorable to its

expansion through increased liberty in a democratic society.

As for the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, no one should be discriminated against because of convictions. We hope that a sovereign Québec will favour partnership with trade unions; this would better protect the rights we have acquired. There would also be only one labour code to enforce.

We believe that in dealing with the fall in the birthrate, immigration is one of the solutions that should be considered. In a sovereign Québec, we could lay down the rules of the game. For example, we could encourage Francophones outside Québec to immigrate here. We would be killing two birds with one stone, satisfying English Canada, which would see a drop in the number of Francophones outside Québec, and make it easier for Québec to integrate immigrants in the language spoken by the majority.

The Native peoples' crisis: In a sovereign Québec, the Mohawk crisis would have been less serious. Québec was the target chosen, because it is the most open to their demands in terms of nationhood. But the rules of the game should be the same for everyone living in a sovereign Québec; their voices should be heard in the same way as ours, and they should be among the new partners of a sovereign Québec.

We have worked hard to make French the language of work in Québec. The multinational Alcan has adapted itself to this demand, and if Alcan can accomplish this, we are sure all the other companies in Québec can do the same. In a sovereign Québec, companies' francization programs must be reinforced and followed through in a very real way.

In conclusion, we do not claim to have covered all the subjects associated with the redefinition of a country. We represent the working class, and we believe we have dealt with the essentials in this matter. A major question we should ask ourselves is the following: Should there be a referendum, a referendum-based election or simply a declaration of sovereignty? We hope for a declaration of sovereignty, but the overall picture suggests that a referendum may be the most realistic solution.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We begin the presentations with Mr. Francis Dufour.

**Mr. Dufour (Francis):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, allow me to welcome my colleagues and former colleagues, people I've worked with. I wish to pay tribute to them since they really are true to the image that the Alcan union has always had, a dynamic union, people who are not afraid of asserting themselves, people who have something to say and to prove. With this in mind, I want to thank you for your contribution to the Commission.

My first question is: In what way would a sovereign Québec promote greater industrial investment in our regions?

**Mr. Laforest:** OK. Just a point of information, Mr. Dufour. Our union is not the Alcan union but that of Alcan employees. This is an important point.

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

**Mr. Dufour:** For me, this is...

**Mr. Laforest:** Yes, I quite understand, but for the benefit of those who don't know...

**Mr. Dufour:** OK. Maybe it's a good point. Go on.

**Mr. Laforest:** When we look at that, we tell ourselves that in the area of regional investments... In our brief we point out that all the economies or profits generated by the exploitation of our natural resources in our regions here are exported outside of Québec and, therefore, outside of the regions.

For example, 60 % of the profits generated here in Québec are exported outside the country. We are saying that in a sovereign Québec, we would need to speak less loudly to obtain results in our region.

**Mr. Dufour:** You also state in the summary of your brief that achieving regional autonomy through decentralization must be a major objective of a sovereign government. How could this decentralization be achieved?

**Mr. Laforest:** I think that as far as the regions are concerned, everybody is arguing that in a sovereign Québec, it would definitely be easier to repatriate the autonomy of our regions whose natural resources are tapped. In a sovereign Québec, the regions would certainly be listened to and heard more easily than in Ottawa, since we already find it difficult to make ourselves heard as Quebecers in Ottawa. So you can imagine what's it like for the regions! We are certain that regional interests would be much better defended in a sovereign Québec.

**Mr. Dufour:** I know that our time is limited. I understand that you have problems of jurisdiction in running your work methods or in the application of your collective agreement, etc. You spoke of consultation. Would you have a time frame in mind for such consultation if Québec were to become independent?

**Mr. Laforest:** I will answer quickly; I want my colleagues to have their say. We hope that the proclamation of sovereignty will come about

quickly, so that our future actions in that area can be carried out quickly. If my colleagues...

**Mr. Potvin (Mishell):** In the sense that we also want to help make it happen, because right after the Commission makes its report... We know that people are ready to take action. If people wish to redefine the Québec situation, we even think that a referendum on Québec sovereignty should be held in the spring or early in the summer, because the more we wait, the more outside interference will disrupt the process. As the saying goes, strike the iron while it's hot, I think it must be done soon, in the spring or even the summer. What must be done must be done.

It is also important to say that we do not want any one particular political party to make the choice. We think that if Québec sovereignty ever comes about, it should be realized by a national government, i.e. a coalition of parties. This would be much more interesting, because it is the project of an entire people. We therefore think that representatives of all the different groups should participate, including the communities that do not consist of French-speaking Quebecers - Anglophones, indigenous peoples, in short, everyone who makes up the Québec population.

**Mr. Dufour:** Do you believe that the people of Québec are sufficiently well informed at present, after the task of the Commission is completed, for there to be one, two or three questions? Which is the simplest, in your opinion?

**Mr. Potvin:** In our opinion, I think there should be a simple question, because many people did not understand the question in the last referendum...

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

**Mr. Potvin:** Therefore, we imagine that the question should be simple enough for everyone to understand it, except that maybe not everyone has been following the Commission, either. So it's obvious that those who have followed it will be better informed. Except that those who will not have followed it will perhaps have to do some thinking, or allow themselves to be influenced by people who have been very involved in the political life of Québec in the past few years, especially recently.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** I'm sorry, Mr. Dufour, I was mistaken, your time is over, unfortunately. So the next ten minutes will be a question period, and there are six speakers who insist on asking questions. I will therefore try to let all six have their turns, but you could help them perhaps by answering their

questions quickly.

**Mr. Laforest:** Perhaps we could also help by stretching the period another ten minutes.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Other people would like a turn after that. So, let's begin with Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I found your brief very interesting; it takes a very specific position on sovereignty. Like many other speakers, you have noticed that various briefs have been presented, some advocating sovereignty, others advocating renewed federalism, others not choosing an option as such. And you know that the Commission members sitting at this table have opted against the status quo. But I asked myself a question when I read a paragraph on page 7 of your brief. We do not challenge the credibility of the Commission members, but we do recognize that certain people have aligned themselves with an option.

We therefore rely on the other Commission members to act as a counterbalance in order to appreciate objectively the positions taken and defended in the various briefs by acting frankly and loyally. Must I interpret that... Given that only the Parti Québécois came here and said: Whatever the Commission ultimately recommends, we will not change our position, which will remain sovereignist. Am I to understand that you are asking all other Commission members to ask the representatives of the Parti Québécois to be objective when they review the briefs that are presented here before you? Or have I misunderstood?

(8:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Desgagnés (Lévis):** I can answer that question. I think it was Mr. Dufour who made a small blunder just before the Commission began its sitting. It was not directed at the members of... nor to rely on the Parti Québécois more than anyone else, it was really the Conseil du patronat du Québec which unfortunately, it was considered, committed a rather serious blunder which could have influenced the Commission before the hearings even got under way.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Are you saying that because Mr. Dufour declared himself in favour of renewed federalism, he is not objective, and all those who declared themselves in favour of unconditional sovereignty are objective?

**Mr. Desgagnés:** That is correct.

**Mr. Beaudry:** That is correct, thank you. The answer came from over there, telling me what I wanted to know.

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

**Mr. Béland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to join Mr. Dufour in saying that you are a dynamic union, because that reminds me of a time several years ago when the union was responsible for the creation of the Caisse d'économie for Alcan employees. Moreover, I think that you, Mr. Laforest, have been its president for the last six or seven years. I must congratulate you; I liked your brief very much. You address many issues. Even immigration. What struck me most is your concern for Francophones outside Québec. We have had Francophones from outside Québec here talking about their situation. You, in your generosity, are ready to invite them for their protection. You tell them: Why not come to Québec, you'll be better off here. However, those who came here told us: We don't want to be looked upon as Quebecers in exile. We are not Quebecers. The Acadians consider themselves Acadians. They have their own history and their own culture. The people from Ontario tell us the same thing. It's the same for the people from Manitoba. So, when you say: Francophones outside Québec will probably lose an important ally with sovereignty, do you imagine that sovereignty is like putting up barricades and that Francophones outside Québec would simply be forgotten? I'd like you to explain this fear you have with regard to Francophones outside Québec, in the context of Québec sovereignty.

**Mr. Potvin:** It wasn't really meant to express a fear for Francophones outside Québec. But we do feel that in the current system, it is obvious that Francophones outside Québec tend to rally to the cause of Quebecers because, by extension, they too are perhaps a little better protected in their community. But what we were saying, ultimately, is that, with sovereignty we think that they might lose this ally, but it is still possible that, with a strong Francophone Québec they might be motivated to adopt a stronger stance and decide to do more to defend their rights as Francophones outside Québec. Of course, we also think that with a strong Francophone Québec, we will be able to help them in other ways.

**Mr. Béland:** So they would not be losing a considerable ally.

**Mr. Potvin:** No, as a people, no, they would not be losing a strong ally; in the end, they might perhaps be even stronger than they are now.

**Mr. Béland:** That's the part I hadn't quite understood. Thank you.

**Mr. Laforest:** Mr. Béland, if I may, and by the way, good evening, I'd like to say a few words on that subject. You know as well as I do that the Mouvement Desjardins gained strength

by affirming its position and also by recruiting powerful allies outside Québec in terms of federations.

**Mr. Béland:** This is true.

**Mr. Laforest:** So, with a sovereign Québec, these people would feel much better accepted here, when they come to Québec.

**Mr. Béland:** Yes, thank you.

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

**Mr. Allard:** Here I'd like to refer to something that was mentioned earlier and which can be found at the beginning of your brief regarding what the Conseil du patronat has done and what you think it shouldn't have done. Personally, I imagine that there are many Quebecers who opt for sovereignty because they believe that with sovereignty their economic condition will improve. I don't think it's simply for the pleasure of saying: We are sovereign. They imagine, they would like and they hope that their standard of living will improve. At least that's the way I see it. We have had economists who told this Commission recently that it is possible, if not probable, that if Québec become sovereign, there would be a period of adaptation during which the standard of living, and economic conditions might suffer in Québec, and I imagine this could also happen throughout Canada if Québec declares sovereignty. There are people who told us, a few days ago, that we might be in a situation less favourable than it is now, for 5 years, maybe 10 years, maybe more, and that we would simply have to accept it.

Do you feel that it is more reasonable to gloss over the possibility, of the economic consequences of sovereignty, than to hide from Quebecers what these consequences might be, so as to incite them to opt for sovereignty?

Here's my second question; you'll be able to answer it briefly. I don't want you to name the people at this table who have not aligned themselves clearly with a particular option because it would be embarrassing and it might take a long time. Just give me the number of those who have not aligned themselves with an option.

**Mr. Desgagnés:** First, let me try to answer the first question. There's no doubt that in our case, as a union, I think this is based in fact... What I mean is, when we speak of natural resources in our brief, when we touch on the economy, we speak of stability, and investments, so this is based on many years of experience. When you're so close to the action, you're bound to know what goes on around you. So we looked

at the facts but we didn't stop to say... there are wars, sometimes, figures... Often, when two economists work together you get three opinions. We looked at all the conclusions, one of them being that Québec will find itself impoverished. Personally, speaking for the organization we represent, we still believe in a sovereign Québec, with repatriation of all its powers...

We know that nowadays there are many players on the field, so that no matter what the game plan is, I think that you will find it difficult to have the rules observed. You have many players, people coming up with new rules all the time... So, there are many decisions, today, with all this lumbering administration involved, the decisions that are made on a socioeconomic level are not always very rational.

Often these decisions have an important political dimension, even if some people are irritated at seeing peripheral regions such as this one grappling with major socioeconomic problems, for all the reasons that you know. We at any rate think that a sovereign Québec, with total repatriation of its powers, would fare much better than it does now with all its duplication of jurisdictions. Working with various commissions for many years has shown us that it creates confusion, that the ball goes from one court to the other. This, at any rate, is our conclusion.

When it comes to identifying individuals, I think that in that part of the brief, when there was a person identified as such, I don't think... In any case, for all of us, the people at this table have a great deal of credibility. The remark was not intended to undermine any of the credibility...

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

**Mr. Desgagnés:** ...of the people at this table.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Let's go on to Mr. Bouchard.

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like to join my colleagues in welcoming the FSSA. In your brief, on page 27, you touch on the process of accession to sovereignty. How do you see this process?

You speak of a referendum. Assuming that this referendum comes out in favour of sovereignty, you propose that this sovereignty be achieved through a "national union" government. For the benefit of everyone here, could you explain exactly what you mean? I don't think that you meant to bring the National Union Party back to power. What you would like to see is a sort of round table, a sort of union of parties, is that it?

**Mr. Potvin:** Yes...

**Mr. Bouchard:** Can you see a government made up of Mrs. Blackburn, Mr. Libman, Mr. Rémillard, etc.?

**Mr. Potvin:** Yes, in fact that's more or less what we meant to say, to have a national unity government rather than the National Union, as you mentioned. We don't want to use any labels when it comes to parties, we just want it to be a group that would be truly representative of all Quebecers, those who were against sovereignty as well as those who were for sovereignty. This is what we have been repeating, that if we want to build a new Québec everybody, even minorities, must be included in the decision when it comes to the sovereignty process.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** On the Chair's time, two minutes left for Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue. Two minutes.

**M. Hogue:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**A voice:** Not six or eight.

**Mr. Hogue:** Two minutes, like the song says. You, I was asking my friend Larose a moment ago - I'll be brief... You were a large union, and I was deep in the region at the time... You were a large union. You decided to separate and it doesn't seem to have hurt you. But you were large and important. But maybe... And you ended up with all kinds of tailor-made services, which could be a model for autonomy, independence and all the rest. However, if you had stayed at the CSN you might have been able to influence politics and ideology through your strengthened presence, but that will be something for you to decide later.

But in your brief, this aspect seems negligible, here, when you speak of economy, and my question was not malicious. I was just after some clarifications. Your brief has 27 pages; the first 27 pages deal with the brief. There are 28 pages of economic statistics, and 12 pages of economic achievements. There seems to be an imbalance when you compare this with the statement you made in which you didn't want to stress the economic aspect. You treated it as negligible.

Here's my second question. I seem to detect a kind of economic interventionism. You have in fact... I detected the same thing again when you spoke of businesses in your oral presentation. Two questions.

**Mr. Larose:** It was two minutes, not two questions.

**Mr. Laforest:** OK. To answer the first, it is true that we - I don't want to bring the CSN

into it at all — but in a sovereign Québec, maybe we'd have our place, not in proportion to the number of people we represent, but according to the entity we represent. We are the federation with the highest level of representativity in the aluminum industry in Canada. And I think that we must also be recognized. In a sovereign Québec, we couldn't be in a better position to make ourselves heard. In terms of the economy, you mentioned... You also have in our brief the 28 pages that deal with our position in a sovereign Québec. The other pages of the brief are merely support documents. But that doesn't mean to say that we feel that the Commission shouldn't look at many other things besides the economic aspect. But you have all the figures at your fingertips in our brief if you want to verify our statements.

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

**Mr. Maciocia:** Mr. Chairman... thank you, Mr. Laforest, and thank you on behalf of the government for your brief. Allow me to go straight to the subject that I'd like to discuss with you, because as you know, our time is limited. In the regions, for some time now, the Commission has been hearing numerous testimonies on regional autonomy, and we have even been asked for a regional board or regional governments. This is the context in which I'd like to place your position. In natural resources, on page 13, you say that you'd like to issue a proviso to the effect that a sovereign Québec should recover and take charge of the management of natural resources, and exercise complete control. On page 16 of your brief you say that, subject to certain measures, a sovereign government should allow the regions much less autonomy and control when it comes to their industrial, commercial, cultural, tourist, and other types of development.

You can understand, Mr. Laforest, why I'm puzzled about how such a sovereign Québec would work. You propose that Québec have complete control, and at the same time you propose that the regions be given autonomy and control. At a certain point, I begin to wonder how this can work. At the same time, as you must recall, you had the opportunity last week and this week, Tuesday, of seeing the Conseil central de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine tell us on page 4 of their brief that Québec Independence should enable people in the Gaspé region and in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine to develop their region with full control over their natural resources. What I'd like to ask you is: Who should have complete control over natural resources and how does the relationship between Québec and the regions work?

**Mr. Desgagnés:** I will answer your first

question. When you refer to page 13 of the document, which says that we issue a proviso to the effect that a sovereign Québec should recover and take charge of the management of natural resources and exercise complete control, it is obvious, I mean if you look at the use being made of water, whether it be Lac Saint-Jean or... The agreement on the use of waters was made with the government; the last agreement made with Alcan goes back to 1984. But what is happening in actual fact? It's part of the current system. Control is slipping away... There are so many players, let's say, who have to decide, who come into the picture, who interfere in all this, that control is not being exercised. We believe that with a repatriation of... If we look at the various kinds of energy currently available and when we talk about... This is also true in Kitimat, in British Columbia, where Alcan sells all its energy surpluses. We believe that if we had better control over our decision-making powers, with complete repatriation... In terms of natural resources... Once all our contracts, even if they are signed... Let's face it, we could have them respected much better than when everybody keeps interfering.  
(8:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Maciocia:** Of course, I understand very well, but my question was specific. Who should have complete control? On page 13 you say that it should be Québec.

**Mr. Desgagnés:** That's obvious.

**Mr. Maciocia:** On page 16, you say it should be the regions. Who should have control?

**Mr. Desgagnés:** Absolutely, control of our resources, it's obvious that it's at the central level, for all of Québec, for the entire province therefore, but... This will generate much greater benefits and we'll also be able to derive benefits, insofar as benefits are available. So, for us it would not be the regions that control the entire lease, this wouldn't change the lease currently in force with the Québec government. It would really be at the central level, but at a Québec level. We feel that a control, a repatriation of such decision-making powers could certainly result in our having better control in terms of decisions, whether it be on surpluses and what to do, let's say, with all this instead of selling the surplus or exporting it. We know that when you export energy, you also export jobs.

**Mr. Maciocia:** Very well. Mr. Chairman, since we don't have much time, I'd like to ask another question which I consider very important. On page 25, you refer to a certain concession... that the Québec government should make certain concessions if we want to have a

minimum of harmony between the two peoples; I take this to mean Francophones and Anglophones. Can you give us examples of these concessions that you're willing to make to the Anglophone community?

**Mr. Potvin:** As far as example are concerned, let's say that we may not be able to give examples as such, but if we look at the experience throughout the province of Québec, we know that to live in harmony, at one point or another we'll have to sit down together and if there are concessions to make, I think that we may have to make them. Except that the primacy of a French Québec will still have to be affirmed, and afterwards...

**Mr. Maciocia:** This I understand, you have said so. But...

**Mr. Potvin:** This is what we meant.

**Mr. Maciocia:** ...since you speak of concessions, you must be thinking about something. What specific concessions are you willing to make to the Anglophone community?

**Mr. Potvin:** Well... In terms of concessions, I may not be able to give you specific examples but I think that by discussing the issues all together and trying to come up with a blueprint for society we'll see whether concessions have to be made. If so, we'll make them. I think we're very open-minded in that respect. That is the approach we take in our brief.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Well, Gentlemen, we have come to the end. Half an hour goes quickly. Congratulations on your firm stands and the depth of your arguments. And thank you for having contributed to the progress of the work undertaken by this Commission on the Future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:50 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:52 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen, next it is the Conseil des commissions scolaires de la région 02. Mr. Jacques Tremblay, would you introduce your colleagues? Just one moment...

#### **Conseil des commissions scolaires de la région 02 Inc.**

**Mr. Tremblay (Jacques):** Mr. Campeau, Mr. Bélanger, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I would like to introduce my colleagues: on my left, Mr. Jean-Claude Lindsay, Mr. Claude Ouellette, Mr. Jean-Marie Beaulieu; on my right, Mr. Jean-Jacques Hudon and Mr.

Charles Lavoie. 13 of the 14 school boards in the region have a direct interest in the place of education in a new Québec, and would like a clear definition of the role reserved for this local school government within the region to which it belongs. Who better than the elected school board officials, dedicated exclusively to the education of the young people and adults of their community, to guarantee high-quality education and teaching and thereby meet the needs specific to each community and each region? Educational matters are too important to be buried amidst other concerns of various sorts. Recently the school boards were given more responsibility for management of facilities. This is a start, but it is necessary to continue by transferring other responsibilities and eliminating the ceiling on school taxes so as to leave control in the hands of the taxpayers through school board elections. Education is related to many spheres of activity over which Québec and the federal government have joint jurisdiction as a result of bilateral agreements; this considerably complicates the administration of the matters involved.

Since Québec society has undergone a profound transformation, Québec must ensure that it has better control over its development and greater possibility of using its various resources to the maximum. We believe that the most realistic way offered, the way that best corresponds to the requirements of a modern Québec, is to move from the rank of province to that of a sovereign state. A sovereign Québec will be more completely and more directly open to the rest of the world, while maintaining economic interdependence with the rest of Canada, and can make education one of its top priorities.

It will succeed in this not by simply confirming the existence of local school boards but by also giving them the powers and the means related to such recognition. In a Québec that is more master in its own house, we demand school boards that are also masters in their own house.

With that as a starting point, a school board that is master in its own house, through its responsibility for elementary, secondary, and adult education, will be able to effect the changes required in each of these domains so that schools and adult education centres can be the place par excellence for knowledge and understanding to be developed and education and training to take place.

A new Québec must redefine the place and the role of the regions and achieve a new division of responsibilities between the regions and Québec. The partnership should be evident, and should lead to integrated, effective, sustainable development of the regions in the sectors of culture, communications, manpower training, social affairs, and natural resources.



Of our recommendations, let us quote the following in particular: That the place and role of the school boards and the regions be the subject of particular attention in the discussions on the political and constitutional future of Québec. That the Québec government organize a referendum so that the people can give their opinion on the constitutional future of a Québec that has made education its top priority. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will begin the questions with Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier.

**Mr. Beaumier:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief, but please allow me a short preamble. I read your brief and I was brought up short by one of your recommendations, number 4. I'll read it to you: "That the taxation power of the school boards be significant, so that they can constitute the real local governments responsible, so that, among other things, they can meet their constituents' needs for educational services".

From my knowledge of operation 55, after the Parent report, from my knowledge of all the methods of taxation that ensued in the field of education - I worked in that field for 32 years - I can say that every time a reform was instituted, it was to correct an inequity. Operation 55 was to give an equal chance to everyone, and new methods of financing were instituted. Since the 55 report and operation 55, which created the regional schools, there has been a whole process leading up to the government's 1980 decision that, instead of granting budget-balancing subsidies every year to make up the deficits, it would change the financing method and support you by program, namely teachers, floor space, and so forth.

I would like to know, in your recommendation 4, given that you advocate a sovereign Québec, how significant powers of taxation would be entrenched in a constitution? And, since you already have some taxation powers, would you change section 93 from 1867 or simply improve it?

**Mr. Tremblay:** Need I remind you, Mr...

**Mr. Beaumier:** Beaumier.

**Mr. Tremblay:** Mr. Beaumier. Excuse me. It's true that since 1980 the taxation method has been different. But let me tell you that since 1980, with this new method of centralization of grants at the Québec level, education has experienced cuts on the order of nearly \$ 800 million, which we find deplorable.

What we advocate as a new taxation power is a part of the taxation that would be the responsibility of the community. What would that part be? Depending on new tax sharing

provisions, it could go as high as around 50 % to 60 %. May I remind you that in certain parts of Canada, in particular Ontario, the financial contribution of the community represents 53 %, and in other industrialized countries, the contribution of the community is around 50 %, so that what we advocate is one part that is financed by the central government and another part that is financed by the community, accompanied by an equalization method to ensure fairer distribution among all the regions.

**Mr. Beaumier:** But how would you entrench that in a constitution, seeing that you are asking for increased power or significant power? It is still true that the taxpayer's ability to pay, you mention Ontario, and Mr. Béland, in his brief, indicated to us that the personal disposable income per inhabitant in Ontario was about \$ 16 000 and the personal disposable income per inhabitant in Québec was on the order of \$ 13 000. So the individual's capacity to pay is going to be a limiting factor at some point. I hate to tell you, but there is an association called APE, made up of taxpayers who are fed up.

**Mr. Tremblay:** But insofar as there is no additional burden on taxpayers. There is a redistribution of the tax base. It is different for the taxpayer in the community, that is, it will take a major modification of the taxation system so that the part that he pays in the region, obviously, is not also paid as tax at the provincial level. It means we want a new distribution of the method of financing school boards, without putting an additional tax burden on taxpayers.

**Mr. Beaumier:** That's fine, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Good. Next, Mrs. Diane Drouin.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, if you will permit me, I would like to extend a special greeting to my colleagues from the school boards of the beautiful Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region. I am very happy to be here with you today.

Your brief shows your firm determination to decentralize powers and responsibilities toward the local school governments. You were talking about money just now, but you are even saying that there could be responsibilities without necessarily having a financial involvement that could be significant. You were talking about that on pages 6 and 7. Could you elaborate a bit more on this subject, and on what types of responsibilities, and give us some examples?

**Mr. Tremblay:** Yes, there are a number of points at which the school boards could be more

autonomous. I'll give you an example: adapting national programs. It's clear to us that the Québec government has a responsibility for programs, but we would like the possibility, at the school board level, of adapting these programs, either to enrich them or to bring them more into line with the reality of the region. I can give you an example in regard to the teaching of history. Currently there is essentially nothing in the program that gives any information on the history of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean or Chibougamau-Chapais. We would like to be able to make changes so that in each region, while we keep the same goals at the Québec level, we could adapt our programs to our experience as a region.

This is equally true with respect to vocational training. We know that in vocational training, all the lists are made up in terms of, I would say, the major urban centres. What we want is the possibility of having some flexibility in vocational training programs in order to avoid having the vocational training options disappear one by one in distant regions like ours. So we would like to have more flexibility in vocational training, to prevent its disappearance.

There is also the question of material resources. I will just give you an example regarding decentralization of material resources. In regard to grievances, there is currently a grievance bureau, which is found exclusively in Québec City and Montreal, in the major centres. This means that when you have a grievance to settle in one of the regions, you are required and obliged to go through Québec City, because apparently, that's the only place with the competence. We say, No, Sir, the competence also exists elsewhere, we have it in the regions. This is an example of decentralization that costs nothing but gives a boost to the regions. There are many others. I could tell you about many others, madam.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you, Mr. Tremblay. If you will permit me, Mr. Chairman, I would also like, on page 5 of your brief, you have Chapter II, which you title "The School Board: an Essential Local Government". I would like you to tell us why it is important for the future of Québec to maintain local school governments with elected representatives. And why would it be necessary to give them more responsibility?

**Mr. Tremblay:** You know that with the idea of globalization, with free trade, I think that the education of our young people becomes essential, becomes an important factor in our competitiveness, which means that in our opinion, who better than people who are devoted exclusively to education, exclusively to the interests of the young people in their community, exclusively to the equally specific needs of each of our regions, I would say... In

any case, who better than these people, whose major priority is education, to protect the interests of education, the interests of the young people in our community? We think that the issue is too important to take a chance on its getting lost in some kind of regional government or a central government.

**Mrs. Drouin:** Thank you, that's fine, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Libman:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions. The first question: on page 5, should I take it that you favour constitutional guarantees for linguistic school boards?

**Mr. Beaulieu (Jean-Marie):** What we advocate is that in the constitution, the existence of school boards be guaranteed on the constitutional level, which currently, I would have to say, is a sort of echo. Some constitutional guarantee does exist, via a certain part of the law on confessionality, in particular. What we would like in a future Québec is a guarantee, enshrined in the constitution, that the school boards, as they exist at present, will continue to exist.

**Mr. Libman:** But linguistic school boards?

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Yes. Correct.

**Mr. Libman:** My second question. On page 9, you state clearly that you choose Québec sovereignty, but it's all within the framework of unbroken economic interdependence with the rest of Canada. You realize that should Québec separate, this economic interdependence would have to be negotiated with one partner or another, and at present it is impossible even to say who they would be. In light of the attitude in the rest of Canada today, these other provinces would hardly be inclined to seek economic association with Québec immediately after this separation we are conjecturing, and this will probably cause the dismemberment of the country.

So my question is very simple: if such economic interdependence with the rest of Canada is not possible, would you still be in favour of Québec sovereignty?

**Mr. Beaulieu:** You are making a supposition that I would call a major one. I have the impression that on the economic level, all nations, whatever they are, whether we are talking about the United States or Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, have an undoubted interest in trading with each other. And it would be a real shame for countries who have

coexisted for a certain number of years to deprive themselves of this possibility of relation, of interrelation.

Québec is a nation, a country, a land that is very productive, that carries on a great deal of trade with its partners, and I don't have the impression that, from one day to the next, because a people decides to take charge of its own fate, those various partners are going to turn their backs, in effect, and instantly say there is no profit to be made here. What I mean is that trade and peaceful coexistence between peoples is based to a great extent on profitability in the short, medium, and long term.

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

**Mr. Beaulieu:** ...and things could happen.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** We will go on to Mr... Time is up, Mr. Libman, I am sorry, completely up. Mr. Russell Williams.

**Mr. Williams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of my political party, I would like to thank the Conseil des commissions scolaires de la région 02 for your excellent brief. But I would also like to thank everyone involved in education. Because, as you stated, it is one of the most important sectors when we are talking about the future of Québec. To pursue constitutional and educational questions a little, you have, I think, if I understood correctly, answered yes to the question of whether you want to have linguistic boards and constitutional guarantees? You haven't said which constitution, but... Or perhaps you mentioned which constitution. Have I understood you?

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Yes, yes. We would effectively keep the linguistic school boards entrenched in the constitution to guarantee the existence of those boards.

**Mr. Williams:** O.K., thank you. But today, we spoke a great deal about regional power. In addition, the other groups before you discussed it. And you proposed, on page 6, you asked for real responsibility to be granted to local school governments. We spoke of constitutional protection at the same time, but also on page 10, you suggested redefining the place and the role of the regions to create a consultation process on matters of culture, communications, manpower training, social services, natural resources, and education. My question is as follows. We have been talking a great deal about the problem of duplication also. Perhaps with that force that I have been hearing so much about today, perhaps using the work supra-municipal, not supranational, but... Considering

that many groups have asked for the creation of regional structures with real powers, would you agree to the creation of such structures? And if so, would you agree to their taking on the functions that until now have been assumed by the school boards?

**Mr. Tremblay:** In our minds, Sir, it is very clear that at the level of regional responsibilities, for us, there currently exist two levels of local government, the municipalities and the school boards. What we hope, what we suggest, is effectively to keep these two local government structures, namely the municipalities and the school boards, but at the same time to decentralize powers and give them more responsibility in a number of domains. For our purposes, we do not see the necessity of a suparegional government to decide on regional matters. But what we want, what we are hoping for, is to keep the current local governments, namely the municipalities and the school boards.

**Mr. Williams:** Still, if I understand correctly, you do not want to have a regional government here?

**Mr. Tremblay:** That is not our idea.

**Mr. Williams:** O.K. Thank you very much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. We will now go on to Mr. Jacques Brassard.

**Mr. Brassard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know whether this is the result of a strategy of what they started a few days ago to call the federalist coalition within the Commission, but we have been seeing the reappearance, over the past few days, of the same old worn-out themes that we were so familiar with in 1980, about a sovereign Québec that would get poorer and poorer, where we would be paying a very high price for a long time, five years, 10 years. At the same time, we must realize that this relieves them, and us too, of the necessity of recalling that Canada is in technical terms bankrupt, with the International Monetary Fund at its back, not to use a cruder term, with an interest rate policy that has resulted in a situation where, out of 18 sectors of the economy, 13 are no longer competitive. I'm not the one who is saying it, it's the Conseil du patronat, in its latest brief to the government. Mr. Allard probably remembers? Good.

**Mr. Allard:** It's true.

**Mr. Brassard:** I would also like someone to explain why the rate of unemployment in Québec is twice the rate in Ontario. That would be interesting. I would also like someone to explain why, in 1996, Québec will not receive one cent

for post-secondary education or for health and social services.

That is in the budget speech of Mr. Gérard D. Lévesque, the most recent one. I would like someone, at the same time that they are telling us that the standard of living is going to drop in a sovereign Québec, to give us a guarantee at the same time that it won't drop in federal Canada. I'm not sure anyone would be convinced. And the question of economic interdependence between Québec and Canada could be asked differently, in the following way. Is Ontario still interested in selling us fruits and vegetables? Is Ontario still interested in selling us cars? Is the West still interested in selling us wheat? Is the West still interested in selling us beef? And the questions could go on and on. These questions of mutual economic interests can cut two ways. Because people seem to be saying, or claiming - Mr. Libman too, just now - that it is only Québec that would see any advantage in agreeing on and forming a close economic association with Canada.

(9:15 p.m.)

It seems to me that Canada too would have quite a stake in association and in maintaining economic ties. Now listen. I'm starting to get tired of this, and it's starting to bother me. We here, in Québec, we weren't afraid in 1980, in the region, and we won't be any more afraid today. You can go on all you want like that, we still won't be afraid. That stuff no longer has any influence over us. Having said that, I may not be objective, since I'm a sovereignist, but I have the distinct feeling anyway that I truly share and express the aspirations of my regional community.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen, may I remind you of our rules...

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

**Mr. Brassard:** That's true, Mr. Chairman, they tend to forget them in the course of the day.

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

**Mr. Brassard:** Mr. Tremblay, just one example, on the issue of the costly overlapping of the two governments in education matters. For instance, can you tell us a bit about vocational training?

**Mr. Tremblay:** In fact, as you know, there are many joint vocational training programs, that is, operating under an agreement between the federal and provincial governments. The problem we are experiencing with this type of vocational training program is how cumbersome it is administratively, bureaucratically. They calculated - when I say "they", I mean the school

system calculated - several years ago that in bilateral vocational training programs, 60 % of the costs went for administration and 40 % for actual training. I don't think that we have the financial means to invest so much in administration and so little in training.

**Mr. Brassard:** It's not exactly what you might call good management. So on the question of vocational training, it would be a good deal more advantageous to have a single government, a sovereign Québec. From your point of view as local governments, in educational matters, it would simplify things, it would let you devote more resources to vocational training for our young people? Did I understand correctly?

**Mr. Tremblay:** Obviously.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Time is up, Mr. Brassard. So, to the members of the Conseil des commissions scolaires de la région 02, thank you for contributing to the progress of our work.

(Proceedings adjourned at 9:18 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 9:20 p.m.)

**André Bédard**

**Mr. Bédard (André):** Co-chairmen, members of the Commission, our brief deals essentially with the human aspect of the constitutional and political question. I'll try to sum up the brief in five short minutes. It's based on two main themes: sovereignty for Québec and reform of the political system. It also discusses such complementary subjects as relations with Canada, the three peoples, the ethnic groups, and private enterprise.

First, sovereignty. We recount what everyone already knows: our French-Canadian origins, evidence of almost complete assimilation of Francophones outside Québec, and our development here in Québec, to the point where we can say that we've passed through childhood and have reached a stage of collective maturity. Our identity is no longer what it originally was. Now we simply consider ourselves Quebecers.

The large Canadian house, from coast to coast, is an uncomfortable dwelling that has ceased to be a fine example of strength in unity - it is quite the contrary in fact. Canada's dynamic is such that there is no longer any common purpose linking its component parts. There's a revival of Francophone and aboriginal nationalism, as there is everywhere in the world. A fourth force, ethnic groups, is emerging. Canada is now a quadrilateral, where it once was a triangle with Anglo-Saxon economic power dominating at the top. Vertical

authority doesn't work any more.

We advocate sovereignty for Québec for the following reasons. As a people we have achieved collective maturity. We have a territory. Nature has been generous to us from all standpoints. Our ancestors, in their struggle for survival, proved our great vitality. We've shown in all spheres of human activity that we have the required gray matter. And we're on a sound economic footing.

Lastly, we insist on the importance that we, as a people and as individuals, make a gesture both symbolic and concrete to confirm this self-affirmation, by saying yes collectively at the appropriate time.

Second point, reform of the political system. It's said that a tree is judged by its fruit. And when the elderly are asked how they are, they often say things could be better. I'm not attacking politicians. I'm saying that the existing system must be not improved but transformed. Our parliamentary system has played the role it was intended to play during a given period of human evolution, in other words the period between authoritarian regimes and true democracy. I explain in our brief how the existing form of democracy falls far short of its name and especially how the management of a government by elected officials on the basis of the requirements of three masters – the first being the political party, the second being the alliance of political and economic power, and the third being a few active voters – how ultimately those who should be the captain of the ship of state and the sole beneficiary, the people, how they are ultimately the big losers. Government deficits, violence, poverty, drug addiction, disease and disorders of all kinds, and pollution so great it endangers the environment and the people who depend directly on it for their survival.

We are on a dangerous downward slide. The existing political system cannot resolve the current challenging problems because the game is fundamentally defective. It's based on partisanship and royalties that must be paid to the three masters. Partisanship erects walls between groups. It divides and causes suffering. We must eradicate it and declare it illegal, as we have violence.

The other path is to join forces and unite. We therefore propose that the existing system be converted into a true democracy based on participatory management by elected officials, of no particular stripe, overseen by a parliamentary group with a mandate to cast a critical eye on and act as the conscience of the elected officials in power, through a Parliament consisting of equal numbers of men and women; this Parliament would receive enlightenment and food for thought from a true House of the Wise, which would be elected but have no powers, other than to express opinions. The success of

this transformation would be facilitated by unlimited access to information, first for elected officials and then for journalists and citizens, excluding of course personal information, but especially in the beginning by an outright ban on partisanship, a perverse system that is individually a vestige of childhood and collectively a vestige of the tribalism of the earliest ages of humanity.

For a number of years, Quebecers everywhere, from all walks of life, have encountered and experimented with participatory management. To operate in a circle, horizontally, around a centre, in other words to work on a collective project, with a degree of individual detachment, which provides the cement or cohesiveness, and to draw from the group the strengths of the individuals and integrate them, creating a multiplier effect based on individual strengths, this is the horizontal system. To then implement the consensus is the vertical system. The greater the collective awareness developed through education, information and involvement, the less vertical management is needed, and the more the horizontal system becomes the natural way of functioning.

Third point, relations with Canada. Our brief contains only one sentence on this matter: we must keep our hand extended and open, of course, because essentially there's nothing else we can do. To try to determine today what we want to share would be a futile exercise, first because to show our hand right away would be dangerous, and second because the connection would be inversely proportional to the intensity of the emotional reaction in English Canada when we cut the cord.

Need I remind you we've been fighting like cat and dog for centuries? This is the heritage of the wars between France and England. Today it's extremely difficult to act rationally and calmly once an emotional fire is lit. Conceivably it will be lit again, especially collectively. My personal view is that, given that Quebecers have good relations with the east, with Europe, as well as the south, with the United States, we should try to take advantage of these relations just in case. Let us become sovereign with the strength, in other words the firmness, of our left hand, and honestly keep our right hand open, receptive and even generous, by offering to share certain services that could be advantageous to both, as two good neighbours should. And let's never forget that the left and the right are complementary hands but that the right is naturally dominant.

Lastly, the three peoples and the ethnic groups. We discuss the need to build the Québec of tomorrow with respect for these founding peoples and without repudiating them – the aboriginal peoples as first nations, and the builders of our modern society, Anglophones and Francophones, all enriched by the contributions

of the ethnic groups.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Could you shorten your presentation, Mr. Bédard?

**Mr. Bédard:** Just thirty seconds. They are our house guests and, if they can integrate into society consciously and voluntarily, they will become full-fledged citizens.

Lastly, private enterprise. We conclude by discussing the need to create a new alliance between the new democratic government and private enterprise by clarifying the roles of each and cleaning up their relationships without the intermediary of political parties.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** First question, Mrs. Hovington.

**Mrs. Hovington:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of my political background I'd like to thank you for your brief. And if you don't mind, Mr. Bédard, I'd first like to discuss the comparison that is often made about Québec now having reached maturity or adulthood. You say that during the Quiet Revolution, which began in 1960 and ended on June 23, 1990, Québec went through a period of change, in other words it went from childhood to adulthood. You say that on page 2 of your brief.

I must say it bothers me a bit to have Québec compared to a child who became an adolescent and has now become an adult. Because it's a concept, it's the inevitable concept of manhood looming on the horizon, and I find that unfortunate. It always leads to that stage. I prefer to think, Mr. Bédard, that we've simply reached the point of asking ourselves whether we're constrained by the existing framework of Canada or too confined to pursue the explosion and emancipation Québec has experienced, in spite of the federal link. And if we're too confined within the existing federal system to develop Québec even further, you say we must consecrate the advent of our collective maturity with a concrete gesture, in other words, a declaration of sovereignty.

I think, Mr. Bédard, that we express maturity not by making one choice or another but by developing the ability to make a choice and exercising this ability to make a choice. And if we are collectively mature, and I think we are, we should be able to make a clear, reasoned, calm choice. We don't express maturity by opting for sovereignty, we express it through the exercise we're involved in right now, by our ability to develop a new constitutional approach.

Regardless of the results of this process, if it proceeds from an objective study and a current analysis of the situation, we'll have proved our maturity. But, to turn to another subject, I'm interested in the comments on page 10 of your brief, to the effect that we have to

avoid widening the ethnic gap between Montréal and the regions. I'd like to know which measures we could take to achieve this, to prevent this gap from forming between Montréal and the regions. Have you thought about these measures?  
(9:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Bédard:** Thank you. You've asked several questions. First, regarding the destiny of peoples, I'll give you an example. All cultures reach a stage of maturity and, at a certain point after that, they decline. For example, the Egyptians had a golden age 3 000 to 5 000 years ago, and now their golden age is over. All peoples have had civilizations like that, peoples who have had great civilizations. Then, the second aspect...

**Mrs. Hovington:** I was asking you about the measures you would...

**Mr. Bédard:** Regarding maturity, I'm sorry, you said maturity was based on saying yes when faced with a decision. It's not based on that; it's based on the ability to achieve things in all areas. We've had this ability for the past 10, 15 or 20 years in all areas: sports, culture and recently even business. Maturity expresses itself that way. Now we can say yes. Now, about the gap, you're talking about a gap between ethnic groups and the...

**Mrs. Hovington:** You're the one who says, on page 10 of your brief, that a form is... that a gap is forming between Montréal and the regions, in terms of ethnic groups. Have you thought of ways of preventing the gap between Montréal and the regions from continuing to widen with respect to ethnic groups? You say there are three communities in Québec.

**Mr. Bédard:** I don't know whether I said there was really a gap between the regions and the ethnic groups...

**Mrs. Hovington:** A gap that could be created between Montréal and the regions.

**Mr. Bédard:** Well, I...

**Mrs. Hovington:** What do we do to get...

**Mr. Bédard:** Maybe I should reread the sentence, but I don't remember saying it that way. But there is indeed a risk that ethnic groups will be concentrated in one place.

**Mrs. Hovington:** That's it. So what do we do to get them into the regions?

**Mr. Bédard:** I consider ethnic groups a valuable resource. They're different from us, so we must make contact with them. They have a

great deal to teach us, and I'm delighted to see them settle anywhere in Québec. But if they're all in the same place, it means Montrealers will be enriched and other Quebecers won't. So I'd like to see ethnic groups enrich all the citizens of Québec. Thanks to ethnic groups, we have the ability to develop behaviour, what I call borderless behaviour. And I'd like to see ethnic groups participate in the evolution of Québec.

**Mrs. Hovington:** But have you thought of specific ways? We have to get these ethnic groups into the regions, but we also have to keep them there. You know how hard it is to get immigrants to settle in the regions. They may stay there for a few years, but then they go back to Montréal.

**Mr. Bédard:** Well, yes...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That's an excellent point, Mrs. Hovington. Now we'll go to Mrs. Marois.

**Mrs. Marois:** In any case I'll eventually be continuing in the same vein. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the Commission, Mr. Bédard. Since your brief is rather unorthodox and opens up avenues that haven't been explored yet, I hope you won't mind if I make a few comments first.

In the first summary you sent us, you said we had to abandon the partisan system that our democratic institutions are based on, obviously suggesting another formula, which is participatory democracy, if I understand you properly. Good. Well, I think your proposal may be feasible in a homogeneous society, but we don't live in a homogeneous society, and what makes democracy ultimately so valuable is that people who are opposed, people who disagree can express themselves, without resorting to violence or guns. And, in this respect, until we achieve this homogeneous society or come close... Everyone shares the same point of view a little bit, it's sort of difficult to adopt a system, in my opinion of course, like the one you're proposing, and that in that sense having different parties makes it possible to channel different views and have a civilized debate.

But there's something in your proposal that particularly interests me because you say: "This participatory democracy should enable us to choose, in a county, between a man and a woman, and the loser would be part of the opposition." It's somewhat similar to my view that we should give a little more recognition to the contribution women make to our society, so we wouldn't be deprived of 52 % of our brain power, as we are now, because I think we're involved but not in large enough numbers.

You also make an eloquent case for the existence of different peoples and the value of

diversity. For example, on page 11, you talk about Italy, you talk about Haiti, which produces people who are different and make a contribution to the world. Essentially what I conclude from that is that it's also important for the people of Québec to continue to progress and to live in this territory because the world would lose a valuable resource if we disappeared in the years or centuries to come. In that sense, I think your comments are interesting.

Also in your brief - Mrs. Hovington, Claire-Hélène, was talking about this just now - you say we must be open to participation by ethnic groups. She opened the door to the measures we should use or put priority on so we can help them settle here, these groups that, for example, choose Québec, so we can have them settle outside Montréal. So what are the ways...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** If you want an answer.

**Mrs. Marois:** Yes, but I think there are some interesting things to discuss with Mr. Bédard about his views, which, as I said, are anything but ordinary.

**A voice:** A minute and a half.

**Mrs. Marois:** Which methods would you use to achieve that?

**Mr. Bédard:** Community committees could be formed in the regions and cities to assist new arrivals. In Roberval we have orientation committees for new arrivals, independent of their ethnic groups. People in communities outside Montréal should take responsibility for helping ethnic groups settle here.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine.

**Mr. Bédard:** Now, when you made a comment at the beginning about my proposed homogeneous society, it's the exact opposite. The strength of a participatory group lies precisely in its different strengths. For example, here around this table, the strength lies in the differences between the people, which are made cohesive through leadership. I'm not talking about homogeneity at all. On the contrary, strong leadership needs very different people, different dynamics, which need to be integrated and made cohesive quite simply by strong leadership.

**Mrs. Marois:** Fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Very well. Now we'll go to Mr. Libman.

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

point on which I agree with you, Mr. Bédard, is when you say that economic analyses shouldn't be important. You say, I think, on page 1, that life isn't measured in accounting terms.

I believe that the economic advantages of the Canadian Federation are undeniable, even if we need to correct certain components. Instead of justifying sovereignty economically, I think proponents of sovereignty have to be more open by basing the discussion on real analyses and real issues, as you suggest in your brief.

To me, the real question is: Do the majority of Quebecers want to leave Canada? Do the majority of Quebecers want to have an independent country and suffer certain economic consequences in order to have this country?

My question is the following: Once this country exists, once we have this country - you talked about founding peoples. If Québec succeeds in having this country one day, what rights will aboriginal peoples have and what specific rights will the Anglophone minority have?

**Mr. Bédard:** First, about economic relations with English Canada. If we separate, I don't agree about having to suffer the consequences. I think when you buy a tree, an apple tree, you buy the whole thing, with a strong trunk and deep roots and that's that.

Second, your question was...

**Mr. Libman:** Specific guarantees or rights...

**Mr. Bédard:** Yes, for aboriginal peoples and Anglophones. In fact, the guarantees, we'll have to define ourselves as a Québec society consisting of three peoples: Anglophones, Francophones and aboriginal peoples. Once that's been defined, with respect to aboriginal peoples, we'll have to sit down and talk it over. What do they want? How do they want to be integrated? On an equal, respectful basis into the community. As for the Anglophones, we have to recognize them as a historical minority and give them... As I said just now, there are three peoples in our society, but they must accept that they're a historical minority. I think history shows we've been quite fair to the Anglophone community of Québec and I think we'll continue to be.

**Mr. Libman:** So, if this country exists and it has the ultimate cultural security, will we need certain restrictions, certain irritants, which are now in Bill 101?

**Mr. Bédard:** Excuse me?

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

**Mr. Libman:** If we get to the point where Québec has the ultimate cultural security, and the Anglophone community is well integrated, as

you say, will we need some of the irritants that now exist in Bill 101, for example regarding signs?

**Mr. Bédard:** I think when there's an adult discussion between a historical minority and a majority, a Francophone community, if there's respect on both sides, you're capable of acknowledging that we're a community in danger and, out of that respect, giving us ways of living collectively in French.

**Mr. Libman:** But what if the danger no longer existed, if the danger you were referring to no longer existed?

**Mr. Bédard:** There will always be an equilibrium if the two peoples, the two communities are talking to each other. There's always an equilibrium. There's always an appropriate balance between the majority Francophone community and the historical Anglophone minority.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you, Mr. Libman. Unfortunately your time is up. Gérald Larose.

**Mr. Larose:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I always enjoy reading briefs submitted by individuals. They take a lot more liberty. I would even say they're somewhat libertarian in their approach. They draw on all sorts of concepts. I must say I was rather disappointed when I saw you. I thought you'd be an old schnook wanting to show off his knowledge, but instead you're a genuine seeker, using various concepts and images.

Unlike Mrs. Hovington, I think the image of growth, because all images are faulty, but the image of growth corresponds better, I think, to the path Québec has taken than the old image proposed by another doctor, the one who's sitting on my right, who's forever talking about the divorce that comes after a marriage, though we haven't even consummated it, as we were saying the other day.

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

**Voices:** Bravo!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Ladies and Gentlemen! Ladies and Gentlemen!

**A voice:** He's a popularity seeker. It's easy.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Would you mind holding your applause till the end?

**Mr. Larose:** I'd like to go back to page 6, because I think this is a question the Commission is faced with over and over again. A



number of us have talked about it at greater length, people concerned about the education of the people or a broad movement in Québec. You say that the people aren't conversant with economics, medicine or other fields, but they do have common sense. I'd like you to give us your perception of the following phenomenon. Nationalism was very much a force throughout the Quiet Revolution until the referendum. The referendum represented a hiatus in Québec society. Then we had what I'd call eight years of gloom until 1988, a year after Meech was negotiated. How can it be that, in the space of a few months, Quebecers, as best as we can perceive them, feel ready to make important decisions like this one? In other words, is the window of opportunity... When the window of opportunity opens, and things become accessible, in terms of the peoples' historical knowledge, the historical knowledge that imbues communities, does this knowledge accumulate and in the space of a few months become sufficient for them to make this type of decision? Or should we engage in a longer exercise before making this decision, as certain people have proposed?  
(9:45 p.m.)

**Mr. Bédard:** The people were ready 10 years ago, but I think they still felt a certain attachment to the rest of Canada. We've lived together 450 years, and ultimately it took a refusal to prompt a decision that had already been made. Now the die is cast. I think what remains for us to do, especially by means of this discussion, is to work on building a proper house, here in Québec, over the next few years and not to repeat the mistakes made in the past with the Canadian experience.

You know, 12 regions can ultimately become 12 provinces, and we'll be back where we started. Minorities and ethnic groups, we'll have more of them in Québec very soon. If we don't learn from our mistakes and welcome them and work together, we can easily fall back into the same old problems.

**Mr. Larose:** You say on page 1 - Mr. Libman referred to it - that there's more to life than economics; but we need figures to measure a ship's draft or displacement. You say it isn't an exact science. Some say we'd be a little richer, others a little poorer, and in medicine a similar conclusion would lead you to say that it wasn't a major discovery. But do you think, and people in your field, are you one of the people who think that sovereignty would make Québec more prosperous?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** A short answer, Mr. Bédard.

**Mr. Bédard:** No, I don't think so. I think some people expect it to be... don't expect it to

be more prosperous. I think the economy will continue. It will continue in much the same way, except maybe for a period of 5 or 10 years. I think we'll have to experiment during this difficult period with non-partisan participatory management so our economy doesn't decline too much.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Unfortunately, that's all, Mr. Larose. Mr. Ouellet, if you take two good minutes of the Chairman's time, that will be fine.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to congratulate Dr. Bédard on his personal and very interesting and original presentation, which gives a number of suggestions that are quite apolitical and, I think, very much appreciated. You made one suggestion that strikes me as important. You talk about a sort of House of the Wise, to which a man and a woman would be elected in each administrative region of Québec. I think it's a very appropriate suggestion that could be helpful and complementary. Many people who have appeared before us have talked about the importance of the regions. Regardless of the patriation of powers, we mustn't keep... we mustn't exchange the federal bureaucracy for another bureaucracy in Québec, Québec City.

We must give greater importance to the regions, and I think that's a useful solution that could settle the matter. I think you're a doctor. I'm going to ask you a question as a doctor. What you're in fact suggesting is that we do a transplant. I happen to think that Québec is the heart of Canada. But you're clearly talking about taking this heart out and putting it in another body, in another entity. As a doctor, have you analysed that?

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** Would you put your patient to sleep or not?

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

**Mr. Ouellet:** What are the chances of success, the chances of survival both for the patient and for the transplanted heart and for the new functions you want to give the heart?

**Mr. Bédard:** You like using images, and so do I. I would answer that we're not transplanting an organ, we're talking about a community that is complete in and of itself. It's like a baby that comes to term at nine months. It's complete. It's ready to live, so you cut the cord.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine, thank you. Now we'll go...

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

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Mr. Bédard, thank you for your brief, thank you for your excellent presentation. Now if you'll hold your applause, we'll go immediately to the Conseil régional de l'environnement.

(Proceedings adjourned at 9:50 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 9:52 p.m.)

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** ...Conseil régional de l'environnement. I understand that Mr. Jean Désy will read the brief.

**Mr. Désy (Jean):** Well, not exactly. Several of us will read it.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** So perhaps you would introduce the other members of your group.

#### **Conseil régional de l'environnement (CRE-02) and others**

**Mr. Gravel (Pierre):** I'm Pierre Gravel and I'll be the spokesman for the group and introduce the others. On my immediate left is Mr. Pierre Gilbert, who lives in the city of La Baie and on my right, Mr. Jean Désy, Chairman of the Conseil régional de l'environnement. Next is Mr. Denis Gagné, Co-chairman of the Comité d'environnement de Chicoutimi, and Mr. Jules Dufour, President of STOP, Société terrestre pour l'obtention de la paix. And I personally am also Director of the Comité d'environnement de Chicoutimi.

We deal with seven points in our brief, and three of us will present them. I'll begin. We'd like to welcome you to our region. Good evening to you all.

What's happening right now, at least to my mind, is truly historic, because a great many world authorities are saying right now - to cite only the Brundtland Commission - that we're in a decade of transition before the third millennium, when we'll have to make crucial changes. We're just beginning the decade, and we have Québec society sitting down - you're proof of it - thinking about what it's going to do, how it's going to chart its future and what sort of blueprint it wants for its society. So we say that the issue of the hour goes far beyond a confrontation between two cultures or two languages or two structures. It's much more than that. I think right now we're re-examining our values, values such as short-term profit, competition, and consumption as an engine of economic growth. The result has been crises throughout the industrialized world. We have a moral crisis, a political crisis, an economic crisis and an environmental crisis, which is

increasingly apparent. I think everyone is aware of the hole in the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, and contamination of all kinds. Perhaps we even have... Perhaps the first citizen of Québec isn't here tonight... Certain things may be the result of that, and maybe the same type of values got us into the Persian Gulf.

So what we're presenting here tonight is a working document. It's no more and no less than a blueprint for society that is taking root... People have spoken about the broad mass of Quebecers. We believe that the new values that will make the third millennium viable are cooperation, solidarity and, above all, a way of functioning that is integrated into the ecosystems. The concept of the regions is very important because a region can take responsibility for its ecosystem. That's what the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region is trying to do. And I would say perhaps it has already begun moving in that direction because, as you know, our region has already done an environmental assessment. The result is a book called *Pour que demain soit*. We've also held a symposium on sustainable development, where all the components of our society said: Yes, we want sustainable development in our region. Maybe we don't all define things the same way, but we're working hard on it and we do have a consensus that the regions, our region in any case, must have autonomy more rapidly to be able to try it. And in terms of Québec, it's the same thing. The problem isn't unique to Québec; maybe Québec is ahead. So let's take advantage of it. Mr. Jean Désy will continue.

**Mr. Désy:** So our proposal, which is probably utopian, but it's a proposal nonetheless, is a new global blueprint for society. The spirit of our blueprint for society lies in the values and principles that we present in the form of objectives. Here are the main ones. First, to prioritize autonomy, accountability and responsibility for day-to-day management by local and regional people and groups, rather than depending on an ever-present government; to adopt a lifestyle that is simple, autonomous and well integrated into the environment; to prioritize the predominance of the ecological, social and economic rights of all people rather than the financial interests of a minority; to improve the concept of democracy to include our relationships with other governments; and to adopt a charter of freedoms, rights, and individual and collective responsibilities between human beings, which would also include our relationships with animals, plants and minerals, which like us are essential components of Life, with a capital "L", on this planet. With respect to the social aspect of the project, we place great importance on understanding the unity of life, and integrating ourselves into our regional ecosystem, which is a component of the

planetary ecosystem. To prioritize individual responsibility for health through good habits; and to negotiate a form of coexistence that promotes the culture, lifestyle and self-determination of native peoples.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** If you could rapidly conclude...

**Mr. Désy:** That would be quite difficult. If you don't mind, perhaps we could cut short a few question periods, because our text is very important. I'll...

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

**Mr. Désy:** ...cut short my part, but I would like to give the floor to my colleagues.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Perhaps you could make your points when you answer the questions.

**Mr. Désy:** All right. So that concludes the social aspect of the society, and I'll give the floor to my colleague for the economic aspect.

**Mr. Gagné (Denis):** Briefly, we take a look at each aspect, and what we say primarily about the economic aspect is that we should take responsibility for our regional systems in order to solve the problems of poverty and human misery, and also to cope with environmental megaproblems, such as the destruction of the ozone layer, climatic disturbances caused by the greenhouse effect, acid rain, deforestation and so on. We also want to put in place fair trade practices for developing countries, to reject increased consumption as an engine of economic growth and quality of life, to improve the market economy by including in the selling price of goods, all the social and environmental costs related to production, consumption and waste management, and lastly, to make ecologically profitable production choices. Finally, regarding the political aspects, I'll give the floor immediately to Jules, who will discuss aspects related more to security.

**Mr. Dufour (Jules):** Mr. Chairman, to simply talk about the security we're all seeking, overall security for Québec, which hasn't been discussed yet, we propose to promote security based on a system that's viable for the organizations in the regions, the organizations and the regions: to become a member of an ecological council that would have worldwide authority, based on dialogue rather than coercion, and non-violent brigades - this, moreover, is a universal proposal; to put in place a non-violent civil-defence body within each community; to give Québec an international information agency; to create a Québec Institute

for peace; and to give the armed forces, which we already have in our territory, an environmental-intervention mandate. I think that in order to support, perhaps the Commission could take into account the campaign under way in Québec to abolish the army, and I have here two copies of the manifesto that I would be very pleased to give the Co-chairmen.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. You ask... you can perhaps answer the questions anyway, because we've gone way over the allotted time. So the first question, Mr. Gérard Morin.

**Mr. Morin:** Thank you. I'll be referring somewhat to the briefs presented to us, especially since the Commission moved into the regions. I think we've heard the regions' voice, which is asking for, if not demanding, more ways of developing economically, culturally, socially, etc. Perhaps the only difference is that some think decentralization can be achieved within the existing federal system and others think it's feasible only with sovereignty. You, the Conseil régional de l'environnement and the other groups, have added the imperative, the ecological aspect. And I must say I embrace the spirit of your brief completely and without hesitation or reservation. But, this having been said, you discuss a wide range of sectors such as education, health, culture, labour, housing, transportation, the economy, waste management, forestry and agriculture. And I'm not saying that the ecological dimension or ecological values don't have a place, but there's a great deal of risk, when we take a global approach, of a certain inconsistency.

My first question, and if time permits I'll ask a second. On page 9, with respect to labour, you talk about controlling moonlighting, which at the same time means tolerating it, whereas on page 11, you demand that everyone be given the right to work. The National Assembly is now considering the Sexton-Picard report on the construction industry in particular, which strongly recommends that moonlighting be eliminated. So how can you reconcile these two components? On the one hand you're asking that everyone have the right to work but at the same time you want to tolerate moonlighting. But ultimately wealth can't be invented; it can only be shared.

**Mr. Gravel:** OK. The meaning, it's that the word "control" wasn't, you don't understand it the way we meant it. Maybe it wasn't the right term. We mean that, for example, people who already have a full-time job and also moonlight, they're taking the place of other people. That's what we meant. And what we say, is, we go even further, we talk about work sharing, because we can live a much simpler life with

fewer financial resources than many people have right now, people who are overconsuming and using resources that could enable others to live with more dignity. In a blueprint for an ecological society, working to become self-sufficient takes on a great deal of importance. In other words starting at home, we become more self-sufficient at home, in our personal lives. And then we don't need to work outside as much to exchange what we earn for more possessions.

**Mr. Morin:** Mr. Chairman, this having been said, perhaps we should have said "eliminate" instead of "control" or "tolerate". My second question. You say...

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

**Mr. Morin:** Good Lord. You often say your global society blueprint should be shared by all the regions, and that this way it can be feasible throughout Québec within the federal system. And you say: We want more autonomy for Québec essentially so we can give the regions more autonomy. But how can you say this and a few pages later say: We ask that we withdraw from NORAD and NATO, that the Arctic be made a peaceful, cooperative zone, that Québec become a nuclear-free zone, and that this be done within the federal system, because that's fundamentally the philosophy behind your brief. How do you defend those demands?

**Mr. Gravel:** I don't see the contradiction. What I mean is that a non-violent, cooperative society...

**Mr. Morin:** But within the federal system?

**Mr. Gravel:** ...protects itself from itself... Right?

**Mr. Morin:** Within the federal system?

**Mr. Gravel:** Oh! That's the first version. It's not a federal system, we're not proposing a federal system.

**Mr. Morin:** No, no, but you accept it and you think you can demand that Québec withdraw from NORAD and NATO within the federal system. Is that what underlies your report?

**Mr. Gravel:** No, no, that would be within the sovereignist framework.

**Mr. Morin:** Oh really?

**Mr. Gravel:** Of course.

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

**Mr. Morin:** Because I didn't see the word "sovereign" anywhere in your report. The most I saw was terms like "autonomy".

**Mr. Gravel:** That's...

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

**Mr. Gravel:** ...the proof and it's...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That takes care of the question.

**Mr. Gravel:** Excuse me. Mr. Morin? Yes?

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** That takes care of the question. So if you want, we'll... That takes care of the question. So the question is no more? Perfect. Now we'll go to Mr. Eric Jacques.

**Mr. Jacques:** I read your brief with a great deal of interest, if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman, and, of course, in your proposed society I saw a new proposed global society. But the fields you talk about are so broad, so enormous, you touch on every possible, imaginable aspect. And I think you're not talking exclusively about Québec society. I had the impression you were talking about everyone on Earth. Because, if we start somewhere here, obviously we can start somewhere here in Québec to create or get ready for this proposed global society, but other people will also have to be thinking about the same thing. And when we talk about our local society, is this in relation to the Americans, for example, our neighbors to the south, who number 200-odd million? Do you think that over the short term we could inculcate, in any case, all those principles easily, principles that obviously, as you say, over the short term... quickly, we have to solve them. Do you think it's feasible to do so within a period of 10 years, say?

**Mr. Gilbert (Pierre):** Well, the only answer I can give you is the one scientists give when they talk about development conditions for future societies in relation to the dangers that now face us. And that is: when we have to, we can. That's the only possible answer in such situations, and this need will probably become more and more pressing, if we can believe the scientific reports on the matter.

**Mr. Jacques:** Excuse me. Perhaps I'd like to add something to the question. I don't see the framework... We're talking about a new blueprint for society, but I don't really see the management framework for this new society.

**Mr. Gravel:** OK. The framework as such, it's the values we share, because the ecological

movement, the peace movement and the feminist movement aren't movements that originated in Québec or Canada; they're world movements. It's in terms of values that they tie in. It's the planet that's in danger right now. So that's the global level. We want to think globally but act locally. The sustainable-development laboratory means acting regionally and locally, and that includes everything I do, the way I manage waste, for example, or the food I buy or the food I grow. Those are environmental groups I'm talking about, and you'll find them everywhere, you know. In that sense, it's global.

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

**Mr. Jacques:** Thank you.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** Thank you. If I've understood you properly, your recommendations are made first from a sovereignist standpoint. Second, this sovereignty, you conceive of it from the standpoint of the global action proposed in the Bruntland Report. If I've understood you properly, the principles in the Bruntland Report are the basic inspiration for the sovereign Québec you'd like to see. So, a sovereign Québec, on the basis of well-defined regional projects founded specifically on the principles of the Bruntland Report, would, in its activities, in its discussions with Ottawa and then with the rest of Canada and other countries, it would promote the Bruntland doctrine in order to integrate principles of ecology and renewal of individual and collective values into economic development, in particular. So do you think, for example, that the referendum question, because you talk about a referendum, should refer to a blueprint for society or the type of principles you'd like to see this blueprint based on?

**Mr. Gravel:** Yes. I think in our final version we make a very clear recommendation. We recommend that the referendum question specify in very clear terms that we want Québec to be autonomous so the regions can put in place a new way of functioning that is more autonomous, more equitable and better integrated into their ecosystems. Obviously, under all that, you're talking about yourself personally, your values, how you live in your home and, after that, the services your municipality provides you, how your municipal council functions. All those values, they have to be there at the base, because this blueprint for society starts from the bottom up. It's the opposite of centralization. Centralization got us where we are today. We're in a dead end. If we don't change, if we don't start from the bottom up, if we don't make

people autonomous, if we don't allow them to be autonomous and develop their blueprint for living, something stimulating, something creative, then we'll have failed.

**Mr. Gagné:** May I add something? Good. Well, having said this, you think for example that the tragedy of Lake Meech was in a way that two English provinces ultimately sort of abandoned Québec and now we're more or less in this situation.

What we say is true. Lake Meech is a tragedy. But what we're saying, above all, is that the real tragedy of Lake Meech is that acid rain is killing it, like hundreds of thousands of other lakes in Québec. And that, ultimately, regardless of whether we opt for independence, regardless of whether we remain in the federal system, existing or renewed, it doesn't matter. If we don't do anything here, if we don't do anything in Québec, if we don't do anything, for example, in English Canada for example, to solve the problem, which in our opinion is the most important one, well then I think we'll have entirely missed the point.

That's the gist of our message, despite the sort of complexity of it. In other words, yes... If we want to be independent, fine, but on the condition that we finally adopt a plan that takes into account ecological values and that we not recreate exactly the same development plan we have now.

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

**Mr. Bouchard:** That's all. Thank you.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** All right. Fine. Now we'll go to Mr. Hogue and, if time permits, Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

**Mr. Hogue:** Mr. Chairman, I'll give the floor to Mr. Beaudry. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Beaudry:** I'd like to thank the good doctor, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Beaudry:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When Mr. Bouchard says you see things in the context of a sovereign Québec, how do you explain the conclusions you draw? You say on page 16, for example: "Let's not be too hasty. We should distance ourselves from Canada only in the face of a refusal to share this spirit." You say: "Let's not be too hasty." And in your last recommendation you say: "We recommend that the Commission not contemplate the radical

independence of Québec - this is the second conclusion - unless the Canadian structure prevents us from achieving our goals." Do I have the right version or do I have the wrong version?

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

**Mr. Gravel:** You have the wrong version. The version we agreed on is this one.

**Mr. Beaudry:** So I read the wrong document.

**Mr. Gravel:** I think that in our blueprint for society as such, which is in that document, you'll find pretty much the same things, except that the recommendations took a different turn as a result of the last meetings our committee held. But, essentially, the spirit of what you just read is that we don't want to leave or we don't want to separate from Canada out of frustration, but that we want to give ourselves the ability to take charge. And we need autonomy for this, individual and regional autonomy. And if Québec does it, so be it, it's the same sort of thing because Québec can stick together. Québec as a society will be able to redefine itself better because it won't be over after your report. We'll still have to keep on talking about it all...

**Mr. Beaudry:** No.

**Mr. Gravel:** ...and it's an essential thought process going on right now.

**Mr. Beaudry:** I understand, but if we received a preliminary document with, in fact, a lot of things discussed in terms of the environment, about which I think most of the Commission members agree, and you come up with recommendations... In your preliminary report, you seem to be saying: Don't be too hasty, talk to Canada, analyse the regions, let's see what we can do and let's not be too quick to make recommendations. But then, in your last document, you arrive at sovereignty and you say: Let's declare sovereignty and then afterward we'll talk about the environment. You must admit it's a fairly drastic change of position.

**Mr. Gravel:** My response is that if we declare sovereignty in Québec, simply because we're frustrated with English Canada, I don't think that's what's happening right now. We wanted to emphasize that. What we want is autonomy.

**Mr. Beaudry:** Well you've succeeded. Ha, ha, ha!

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Last question of the day, Mrs. Pelchat.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I'd like to thank you, Gentlemen. Mr. Ouellet, if you don't mind? Thank you. I'd like to thank you, Gentlemen. I would have liked to say Ladies and Gentlemen, unfortunately... But I'd like to thank you just the same for the quality of your brief and tell you that there's a lot in it. Especially your blueprint for society. I think it calls for a lot more than a half-hour of discussion, and I think your brief will be my bedtime reading a little later.

I think it comes as no surprise that Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean has produced such an in-depth brief based on the Bruntland Report. As you said just now, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean has already done an assessment, which was called, which is still called... I've forgotten the name...

**Mr. Gravel:** "Pour que demain soit".

**Mrs. Pelchat:** ...you said it just now, "Pour que demain soit". And I think it's important to point this out because, as a result of the assessment, the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, the cooperative sector-based round table won Québec's Grand prix du mérite environnemental, over 11 other regions. I think it's important to point that out, and I'd also like to say it's the second consecutive year that the ministère de l'Environnement has given the Grand prix du mérite environnemental to your region. So I think you're off to a good start, you're setting an example, and it's good to see that.

I agree with a number of points in your brief, especially when you talk about a charter of environmental quality and individual accountability. I must tell you that we're working on this and that not so long ago Pierre Paradis received a notice from the Conseil de la conservation et de l'environnement on how it might be included in a Québec charter of the environment. So I think we're in agreement there. We're also in agreement, of course, on the need to properly coordinate economic development and environmental protection, and I think we can count partially but significantly on the Table ronde québécoise sur l'environnement et l'économie which has 26 members, eight of whom, as I said yesterday, are sitting at this table.

A little further on there's a comment that interests me on page 5, when you point out that there's almost no room for young people on the job market. I must say that I'm counting a great deal on the Forum des jeunes, which was announced by our Chairman, Mr. Campeau, tonight, to talk about this matter a little more with all the labour leaders and the employers' representatives. I think we'll have an opportunity for a discussion that might be interesting.

My first question. I'd like to know how you conceive of the concept of sovereignty, what you mean by "sovereignty", first. And, second, how

could we, independent of sovereignty or the federal system, because the basis of your problem is that we are... we operate with basically erroneous values and we have to completely change the way we function, in other words we have to avoid reproducing the standard consumer society we've known since the post-industrial society. I'd like to hear you talk first about sovereignty, and how you link the sovereignty question with these fundamental values, and these changes in values, which are also fundamental.

**Mr. Gravel:** OK. Personally, if I had to choose a name in two words, it wouldn't be sovereignty-association; it would be integrated autonomy. And it would be integrated both socially and environmentally. To me, it's the principle of autonomy that really represents what we talk about in our document and the principle of integration, because we want an exact balance. Ultimately, life is an exact balance between the autonomy of an entity that stands on its own feet, be it a person, a region, a province or a country, and, at the same time is socially integrated, both into the country and with its neighbours and the planet. Autonomy and integration are to me the two basic principles of ecosystems, of how ecosystems function.

**Mrs. Pelchat:** I'm pleased to hear you say that because the environmental problem is basically a global problem. I think we have to be aware that, regardless of Québec's very specific political status, we're always going to have to be very aware of our environment and geopolitics, in other words our neighbors, and we'll have to work with them to improve the quality of the environment. As for the system...

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

**Mrs. Pelchat:** One short question during the time reserved for the Chairman, who is usually generous. On page 13, you say we have to find an alternative between, on the one hand, a capitalist economy based on manipulation of supply and demand and, on the other hand, centralized government planning based on regulation... Which economic system do you suggest, Mr. Dufour?

**Mr. Dufour (Jules):** I think we have to begin with what we have now. Conclusions have been drawn about economies based on highly centralized planning. The results are in. Obviously there's a certain amount of propaganda to be considered. We can also see that our system has given us a market economy. But the market economy also has serious problems, as we've seen. The environment is the

proof. So, basically, we have to go back to the drawing board. We'll begin with what we have, of course, but what we basically want is to have every possible opportunity to try out other lifestyles, other ways of functioning. And as for that, a project like that, I don't think there's a province in Canada that would react negatively. Instead they would say: All right, go ahead, and if it works, we'll try it too. In any case, it's happening in other places...

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. Is that enough, Madam?

**Mrs. Pelchat:** Yes, you're very kind.

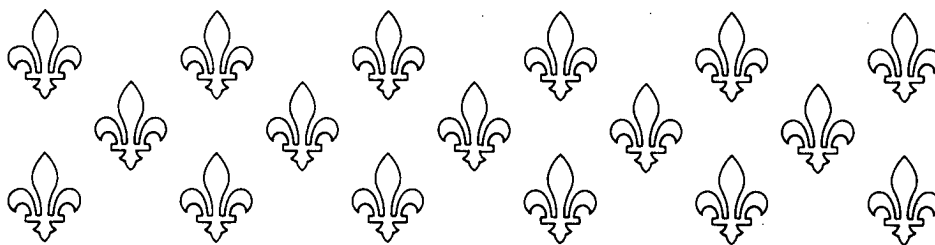
**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Thank you. You had a quick comment. Five seconds.

**Mr. Dufour (Jules):** I think Québec has the opportunity to create a pacifist society, a society that wouldn't manufacture and sell arms like the United States, because at present Canada exports \$ 8 billion worth of arms every year. So, I'd like to see us taking a look at countries that have become pacifist, such as Costa Rica.

**The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau):** Fine. So, Mr. Dufour, Mr. Gagné, Mr. Désy, Mr. Gravel and Mr. Gilbert, I'd like to commend you on your concern for the environment and thank you for appearing before us tonight.

I have two special announcements. The Commission will resume sitting at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow morning and end at 12:30 p.m., and the steering committee will meet at 8:00 a.m.

(End of sitting, 10:22 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**

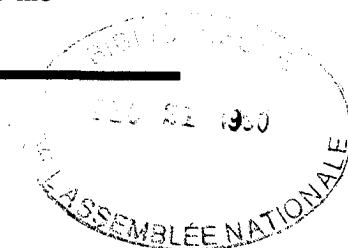
**Jonquière, Friday, November 30, 1990**

**No 13**

**Published under the authority of the President of the  
National Assembly, Mr. Jean-Pierre Saintonge**

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**QUÉBEC**





**Note de l'éditeur:**

Ce fascicule contient une traduction des débats qui se déroulent à la Commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec. Cette traduction est assurée par la Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation du ministère des Communications.

**Editor's note:**

This fascicle contains a translation of the debates being held by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. The translation is carried out under the supervision of the Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation at the Ministère des Communications.

**Abonnement:** 250 \$ par année pour les débats des commissions parlementaires  
70 \$ par année pour les débats de la Chambre  
Chaque exemplaire: 1,00 \$ - Index: 10 \$  
(La transcription des débats des commissions parlementaires est aussi disponible sur microfiches au coût annuel de 150 \$)

**Chèque rédigé au nom du ministre des Finances et adressé à:**  
Assemblée nationale du Québec  
Distribution des documents parlementaires  
1060, Conroy, R.-C. Édifice "G", C.P. 28  
Québec, (Québec)  
G1R 5E8                      tél. 418-643-2754

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Dépôt légal  
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec  
ISSN 0823-0102

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Jonquière, Friday, November 30, 1990

## Hearings: Organizations and Individuals

(9:36 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I declare this session of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. I would like to remind you that the mandate of the Commission is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec, and to make the appropriate recommendations. This morning, we will be hearing organizations and individuals that have submitted briefs to the Commission.

Before proceeding with our first hearing, I would like to remind the members that there will be a working sitting at the end of the hearings this morning, a short working sitting which will last about 15 minutes.

Our first participant this morning is Mr. Hubert Laforge, and the hearing will last 30 minutes. Mr. Laforge, you have 5 minutes to present your brief.

## Mr. Hubert Laforge

Mr. Laforge (Hubert): Gentlemen of the Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I would like to use these few minutes to tell you of my distress at seeing the Québec territory abandoned; this threatens our existence and our very essence as a people. I might add, however, that the situation is not fatal, economically speaking, and I would take the liberty of suggesting a simple, forceful course of corrective action. First, a reminder. The community in these parts has lived through three existence-threatening crises in three centuries. In the 18th century, we were abandoned by France. The word "defeat" would be a euphemism, and "conquest" is a word used by others. We were abandoned. In the 19th century, many of our forebears moved westward, particularly to New England for reasons that were no doubt compelling from an economic standpoint; however, the movement was irreversible.

None of them came back. The magnitude of this disaster is overwhelming. Without it, there would be 10, 12 million of us here. In the 20th century, in our present day, people are becoming fewer in the territory, particularly in the northern part. With a sense of powerlessness, and sometimes indifference, we see people leave in droves, an exodus from the regions to the large centres, from north to south. Today, half of the region's population lives in the Montréal area. Tomorrow it will be three quarters. What will Québec mean when the Inuit live on Nuns' Island, the Cree and the Abitibiens in Outremont, the Jeannois, Montagnais and Saguenéens in Laval? Abandonment of the

territory is the worst threat to the existence of a people. But this movement, with its firm southward direction, is not something that those who are leaving their birth place want, nor something which is excusable on the grounds of the economic circumstances that prevailed in the 19th century. It is instigated. There is cause for indignation, but also hope.

A suggestion: Put the north back on an even footing with the rest. The current economic creed in Québec is a litany of globalization, free trade, market economy, level playing field, etc. Oddly enough, however, we abandon logic, which should give us a clue, when we deal with an economic asset like electricity... There are a couple of economists whose attention I'd really like to have!

Under the pretext of access for all to energy at an affordable price, nobody would refuse to help the people of Îles-de-la-Madeleine. The southern part of Québec removes the level playing field from the northern part when it imposes standard rates that disregard transportation distances. But the fact remains that transport infrastructures and maintenance expenses represent well over one third of the actual costs. The north must be put back on an even footing. The effects will be considerable. Sept-Îles and the North Shore would no longer have to go begging for private and public investment. Industries that consume vast quantities of energy would avoid setting up their operations on agricultural lands along the Québec City-Montréal corridor. Investors would suddenly discover that in a world economy, market proximity, even to the Montréal market, counts for little in decisions, and energy savings more than compensate for the distances involved. For over 60 years, a multinational in this region has found that the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean is the location closest to minerals and markets. Furthermore, the problems associated with an overly large city would be avoided, and defacing of the landscape, say at Île d'Orléans or Grondines, would be reduced and even eliminated. Diversification and a renewal of the population would give the area meaning again. Needless to say, being located at the geographic centre of an energy-producing Québec, the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean will be in the enviable position of having to manage an influx of capital and people. This is why I recommend that Québec express a strong determination to promote occupancy of its territory, adopt policies that ensure a sound distribution of investments among the centres and the regions, correct the current policies, in particular those that ignore the costs of transporting electricity, and return to the northern regions their level playing field.

Lastly, that the regions, including the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, be able to keep or have returned to them a substantial part of their development levers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Laforge. Our first question and answer period will be initiated by Mr. Richard Holden.

Mr. Holden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Laforge, your brief was very interesting. I read it last week and, at the same time, I was asked to write an article in the local newspaper to explain briefly what type of briefs the Commission was receiving. I used your brief, without your consent, to illustrate the type of situation your region has to deal with and how we in the south, as you would put it, have not really thought about these situations. But we can understand the situation of young people who are leaving, because our own young people, our young Anglophones, unfortunately, are also leaving Québec. So I understand your problem with this exodus, as you call it. But you mention something about stopping the exodus. I have a feeling that this movement towards cities, even if you look at decentralization in France... Paris, for instance, is the driving force and the largest centre in France, tremendously large and powerful, it's almost inevitable, and Montréal is the driving force of the province. Do you have any concrete ideas on this? I understand your suggestion on electricity, it's a good suggestion, but what would you suggest doing to attract people to the north, particularly immigrants, how do you see the return or recovery of these people? I'd like you to tell us more about that.

Mr. Laforge: You are alluding to the situation in Mexico, which I spoke about in my brief...

Mr. Holden: Yes.

Mr. Laforge: ...and to the French situation, but let's take the French situation at the turn of the 19th or 20th century; it was a disaster in the regions. Even after World War II, you could still go through one abandoned village after another. But, 30 years later, regionalization policies that were both very clear and very powerful, especially under de Gaulle, have brought us the refreshing sight of a Montpellier, Rennes, and Lille, cities that were in danger of declining or even disappearing. The only thing Montpellier had going for it, was its Roman past, its old university, mainly traditional, and lack of water - so the future did not look very promising. This is a technopolis with a population of just over 100 000.

Things can change a great deal. Paris still has no more than 10 000 000 inhabitants. Not like Mexico City, which is edging up to

25 000 000 inhabitants. I'm not saying that Paris is not too big already. Large cities are necessary and if we didn't have any in Québec, we should probably look into creating one. But when it already contains half the country's population, I say it's time to stop and reflect on the maximum size it should attain.

But on the other hand, a large city is a melting pot, and we have a variety of peoples on the territory, from the Inuit of Salluit, the Naskapi of Schefferville, to the Jeannois, Saguenéens and Abitibiens, and this is a richness we must keep, even through actions which, if I may say so, go counter to natural economic movements or easy solutions. But what we are seeing in the current policies are efforts to drain the north. That's a little more... There is hope because if we stop these disastrous policies things will to some extent correct themselves. But living in a country is a priority if one wants to affirm its existence.

Mr. Holden: But you speak about stopping the exodus. You don't want coercive measures to stop people from...

Mr. Laforge: Of course not. But let's face it, the attraction, the economic index, let's say the money, investments, that's what people go after. I refer to examples from the past, and the future might well resemble the past in that respect. If we let the economic side follow the current Québec creed on our most powerful lever, the northern regions of Québec will have changed beyond recognition in a few years.

Mr. Holden: Thank you, Sir.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rector, I suppose that... I'm over here. All right. I'll place myself...

A voice: No, no, no, no, no.

Mr. Hogue: No?

A voice: No, no.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: I often thought I was the one who was blind.

Mr. Rector, I have a short comment to make and a very short question. I understand this is your brief.

Mr. Laforge: Yes.

Mr. Hogue: And it is your personal position, as Mr. Laforge.

Mr. Laforge: Absolutely.

Mr. Hogue: The only reason you indicated Rector at Université du Québec was to arouse some interest on our part in your status.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Larose: Like doctors do. That's it.

Mr. Hogue: From one university person to another, I don't understand how you can speak of exodus and displacement based on the north-south attraction and, almost in the same breath, say that it is taking place independently of the relationship that might be retained with Canada. Your comments in the introduction, on page 1.

In passing, in the Outremont riding, which I have the honour of representing, more than 50 languages and dialects are spoken, we would be very happy to welcome... Surely, in Outremont there are people from the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean who have contributed to the dynamism of the riding, of Montréal, of Québec and of Canada. The Inuit would be very well received in Outremont, just as Francophones from Alberta would. That's my first question.

My second question is along the same lines: What you are proposing or might theoretically propose, can it be achieved on the Québec territory the same way as on the Canadian territory?

Mr. Laforge: These are existential concerns for all peoples, it's a universal concern.

Mr. Hogue: That's it.

Mr. Laforge: And I'll tell you that as far as the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean is concerned, if we think that it has a certain demographic stability, it belies considerable tragedies, given that a third of young people between 15 and 30 are leaving the region. Even if the population remains stationary at 300 000, it is a collective tragedy for the people here to see these young people who are still at their studies and to see the most productive young people leave, never to come back.

Mr. Hogue: But, Mr. Laforge, this question applies... This problem is found in all milieux, the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean is no different...

Mr. Laforge: The French went through this 30 years ago and the Mexicans can't do anything about it at the moment. I hope that people here will realize the extent of the problem before it's too late, because, generally speaking, there is no return. The people from here who left for New England, unfortunately didn't come back to their native land.

Mr. Hogue: My question has to do with the overall problem. This overall problem is found all over the planet, this attraction to the large centres - and the need for policies that will enable the various zones, the doughnut holes as we were saying at the Parizeau Commission - can be slowed down.

Mr. Laforge: The increasing size of large cities is a phenomenon seen everywhere in the world.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Fernand Daoust.

Mr. Daoust: Mr. Laforge, your brief, and the many presentations seen since the beginning of this Commission have heightened people's awareness of regional problems. In Québec, an awareness is forming, and it is essential for us to develop a regional awareness. I congratulate you.

The Canadian government and the Québec government have, for many years, tried to intervene to bolster regional economies. They have had little success and I would like to hear your comments on this. Such actions by the two levels of government have proven inconclusive. These actions have often been taken for electoral purposes, for reasons we need not go into at length; this is something you have experienced. You speak of a management at arm's length and I'd like to hear more about that as well. But my question is: Do you consider that in a country such as ours, where two levels of government bicker, where you have electoral interventions and clientèles, do you think that the purpose of real regional development, of real regional awareness, is it healthy to pursue this type of political structure and keep it and reinforce it, or would it not be more desirable, ideally, for you and for all of us in Québec, to deal with a single government which would recognize that Québec, although it has its own political entity, would recognize Québec, countries and even kingdoms in some cases? A Québec that would make it possible to avoid this tragedy which you have so well described, of dwindling population, this exodus, with all its consequences, which are many - as you make clear in your brief - these young people who flee and these people who remain and become less and less interested in working for the development of their respective region.

Mr. Laforge: I'll tell you my convictions when it comes to governments, regardless of what they are, in a very general way. For me, a government is an instrument. The more remote it is, the more it should restrict itself to controlling the issues that affect the larger

groups. The closer it is, the better. We have seen this in the regions, particularly in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, this absence of control over our tax dollar. 50% of our tax dollar goes to Ottawa and the other 50% to Québec City, as things stand.

And we are doing our best, as others have said, to regain our share, in fits and starts, sometimes successfully, sometimes in dribs and drabs and sometimes with great difficulty. My credo, if you will, is to re-establish a healthy balance between collective issues at a local level first, then go on to a higher level, but with minimum control when it comes to the government, which, after all, is but an instrument.

I would also like to broach the subject of our responsibilities as citizens of the planet, where we have done little. Half of yours and my income goes to taking care of immediate national environmental responsibilities, but beyond that, what goes towards exercising our planetary responsibilities is an infinitesimal portion of the GNP, and there is something wrong there. There is something wrong both at the local and at the global level.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Laforge, we have to go on to Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Laforge, first I'd like to say that I am extremely pleased to welcome you to this Commission. I'd like to pay my respects to the Rector of Université du Québec, which you have been heading so competently, and which is an institution that does honour to the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, and is a fine achievement, a fine example of this decentralization for which you plead so eloquently, you and the people we heard yesterday. I would also like to pay tribute, if I may, to the philosopher, sociologist, and humanist that you are. Your brief is very interesting, succinct, well put together, and your perspective is clear: regional development, regional power.

Your reference to the French is interesting. Yesterday, the Conseil régional de concertation et de développement du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, in its brief, which was very well done, proposed a political structure for this regional development, this power of the regions. We even suggested including it, as a principle in the Québec constitution we should have, regardless of the constitutional status we may acquire. Yesterday, Mr. Blackburn, the mayor of Chicoutimi, told us: We already have RCMs and we might look into the possibility of these RCMs exercising power without having to add a new political structure. I know that you have looked into this issue, Mr. Laforge. Do you believe that

a new political structure should be created, given the fact that we have school boards, municipalities, RCMs and economic summits? Or would it be preferable to use what we have, with the changes that this entails?  
(10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Laforge: Mr. Minister, this is a very wide-ranging question you're asking. I stated that there is a lack of regional, local government. The form this government could take would require more than a few seconds of reflection, but in my view, too often the fact that, in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean there are so many doors to knock on, so many people involved, is an excuse to postpone commitments. In my opinion, multiplying by 62 the municipalities and various centres involved in looking after the interests of the entire Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region would be a dangerous thing. I would certainly be in favour of increasing the powers of municipalities and school boards; I'm all in favour of more autonomy, but I'm acutely aware that, at least until now, there has been a profound lack of concerted efforts, means of action and levers for a region as vast as the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Rémillard: This is something that will certainly be kept in mind. In your brief, you state in your conclusion, Mr. Laforge, that we must redirect the current policies, in particular those that ignore the economic cost of transporting energy, and of putting the northern regions back on a level playing field. If I understand correctly, in your brief you suggest that people living close to a source of energy should pay less than those who live further from this source. It deals with public services, of course, electricity, energy, public utilities. We know that, in matters of public services, the government must ensure the quality, universality and accessibility of utilities. Isn't there a danger, in principle, if we take your example, that those who are close to a fire station, or a hospital... There are many comparisons, it could be cheaper for them if those further away had to pay more for these services. Do you see a danger in this principle you have stated?

Mr. Laforge: Certainly, there is a danger. It has to do with the philosophy of those who prepare this type of laws and regulations. We already follow the laws of the market in mass transit. A trip to Chicoutimi, or rather Bagotville, from Montréal costs nearly \$ 500. We, in the north, suffer the inconvenience of distance in communications, and in goods and services. I am merely pointing out that there is a great economic advantage in the reorientation we propose, and this would no doubt be a major factor in causing a turnaround in the quasi-irreversible road we're on. As for the cost of transportation, that's obvious: it amounts to

\$ 1 000 000 or more for power lines. Let's talk about the cost of resistance loss and corona effects, and the large number of staff, in the thousands, who maintain the lines. At present, or rather soon, we'll have 12 lines of over 1 000 kilometres to the south, and some even to the United States, and transportation costs across the St. Lawrence are extremely expensive. If, rather than going to the south with 12 lines, we covered one-third or half of the distance, I would not be surprised, Mr. Minister, to see aluminum producers interested in establishing themselves in the James Bay region, even though navigation is open only two or three months per year, if they had to pay something like the real cost of producing electricity in places where they use it.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): A brief 10-second commentary, Mr. Rémillard, to conclude.

Mr. Rémillard: I would simply like to tell you that I am taking due note of what you are telling us. Your suggestion, with your transportation example, is interesting, since your major problem is in the area of transportation. When it costs more to go from Chicoutimi to Montréal than from Montréal to Miami, there's a problem somewhere.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Rector, first I'd like to congratulate you and thank you for your participation and original contribution to the work of this Commission. In your brief, you assume that the greatest threat to Québec is an exodus of its inhabitants. This, you explain by the fact that the northern regions are suffering from abuse and despoiling of their natural resources to the benefit of the south.

You also express concern about, as you put it, often contradictory actions from Ottawa and Québec in matters of higher education, research and development. I'd like to take this opportunity to add a few words of explanation regarding the economic blackmail that some people are engaged in. For example, in research and development in Québec, every year, we lose about \$ 280 000 000 to \$ 300 000 000, which goes to Ontario rather than Québec. We receive 19%. In transfer payment programs, for higher education, over the past 10 years, the loss has surpassed \$ 2 000 000 000. This is why I don't want to hear about a profitable federalism. I thought this information was worth pointing out. The less said about social housing, where we get 17% of the budget, and Ontario gets 43%, the better.

As regards your brief, I have two short questions. The first: You propose entrusting the

regions, including the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, with a substantial part of their development levers, which I agree with. And you suggest that Québec adopt a global policy with regard to settlement of the territory. Can the regions obtain a substantial part of economic development levers and adopt a territory settlement policy in the current federalism, or even in a renewed federalism? Or should Québec be thinking more in terms of assuming all powers?

Mr. Laforge: Mrs. Blackburn, you refer to areas in which Québec exerts a relatively broad jurisdiction, such as education and regional development, but you also mention scientific research and certain federal contributions to what we call post-secondary education. In that area, there is an enormous difference between the support that Ontario gets and the support that Québec gets. And if a language, with regard to its development and protection cannot be entrusted to a government such as the one in Ottawa, there is a little hope. I don't believe we can entrust the development of grey matter, technological advances and other Québec achievements to an entity whose concerns are not totally geared towards the development and survival of our people. For us here in Québec, it is cold comfort to know that Ontarians are doing very well, we can't sit back and console ourselves by looking at how successful people in British Columbia are. We must take charge of our destiny and see to our own fulfilment. On that score, what I said about Québec also goes for the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. We in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean cannot be satisfied with half a mission, the mission of producing paper, extracting wood, producing energy and metal for the entire community. We want to participate, be active, and fulfil ourselves at every level, the way a relatively large and concentrated population ought to be able to.

I think there is an interesting parallel between the demands of Québec vis-à-vis Canada as a whole, and the demands of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and other regions vis-à-vis the Québec government.

Mrs. Blackburn: Well...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Quickly, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes. You make... You say that we could use the advantages of energy, pointing out the fact that these advantages play against us and against the regions when it comes to transportation or, for example, production and processing; that when we could be deriving benefits from energy, these benefits go to the southern regions instead. Do you have other examples of nerve centres that should be

exploited through occupation of the territory, particularly on the basis of other activities? For instance, I'm thinking about fisheries, transportation, forestry...

Mr. Laforge: In recent years, there has been much talk about the respect of the regions' natural vocations, but there is sometimes a slight gap between words and action. Every time I mail my telephone bill to Québec-Téléphone for the small parcel of land I own at Grondines, and I see Rimouski, it gives me pleasure to know that someone in Rimouski is dealing with my telephone bill. On the other hand, each time I send my hydro bill from Chicoutimi and I see Montréal and René-Lévesque Boulevard, I don't understand how Montréal has a mandate to deal with energy from A to Z. Not to mention that the department processing my bill on René-Lévesque Boulevard is probably located in the most expensive premises, per square metre, in Québec...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laforge: ...and that there are natural-resource regions that produce this energy and would be very interested in seeing something concrete done about these natural vocations in the general policies.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Unfortunately, we are out of time, Mrs. Blackburn. Thank you, Mr. Laforge, for being with us this morning. I suppose I don't have to remind you that applause is not allowed. Next time, I suppose that... No, if we could hold back the applause until the end of the hearings, then everybody will be allowed to applaud.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:12 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:14 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Julia Simard will be next. Mrs. Simard, welcome. You have five minutes to present your brief.

Mrs. Julia Simard

Mrs. Simard (Julia): All right. I will start off by saying good morning to the Chairmen and members of the Commission. I would first like to warn you that my brief is not a political, economic or cultural examination of what Québec could or should be in the future. I don't have the skills for that kind of work, and I especially have no illusion of thinking I am familiar enough with those matters. My skills lie much more in the area of elementary-school teaching and in the living conditions of women who are family breadwinners. My presentation will therefore be much more emotional than rational, but I do

believe it will fit in easily with the arguments expressed for the past year, which paint everything as either good or bad, black or white, and in which the words compromise, understanding and respect for others no longer have a place.

I think it's wonderful to be like you, members of the Commission, people to whom words come easily, people who draw crowds and whose messages are immediately picked up by the media. What, in my opinion, is much more difficult is being able to show all sides of a problem or of a solution. I believe, personally, that there are no more good or bad sovereignists than there are good or bad federalists. What we observe, mainly, is a certain frustration among some people, and we hear the words rejection, humiliation and hatred. When I look back at the Meech Lake negotiations, I think of a wild race over the final months and, especially, of a constant pressure on the importance of Québec's five conditions being accepted, or else the whole thing would collapse. It was believe or die.

From my experience of having negotiated locally for a collective agreement, I know that it's important to have negotiators able to make the other side understand the reason for a particular demand, and to advance or retreat if necessary. It is particularly important for those people not to stake an entire collective agreement on one point. The Meech failure was blamed on Manitoba MLA Harper, Clyde Wells, Jean Chrétien, the English Canadians who hate us, and I even believed for a while that the failure was my fault, the way everyone was putting the blame on everyone else. And why shouldn't it be the fault of the conditions which were poorly explained and poorly defined, or else of the negotiators who woke up six months before the deadline?

I believe in Canadian federalism because, in my opinion, separation is not the only way to achieve a strong Québec. That approach, which involves first separating and then negotiating agreements, seems drastic to me. Our links are established. It is not necessary to cut everything and then stick it back together in order to succeed. All is not well in the Canadian federation. No one can deny that. The remedy is not necessarily amputation, or closing our eyes and ignoring the ailment. Doesn't the remedy lie more in a cooperative effort by all members of this federation, in which we will all talk, honestly, about our solutions without destroying the body as a whole? Québec wants more powers in the area of immigration, in order to better protect its distinctive French character. The Western provinces, or the Maritimes, surely have their demands, too.

From the moment when partners in a partnership all have demands and needs, that's a sign that we have to sit down together and talk,



negotiate and continue taking steps leading us towards a healthy, continually evolving federalism.

Since the start of the Commission hearings, I have heard about the noble risk which sovereignty represents. These views have been maintained by company presidents, various government leaders, and heads of banking groups and union organizations. Everyone is speaking out loud and clear, and flattering our pride as a people, as Quebecers. I'm afraid that this noble risk does not greatly trouble those proclaiming it. But for me, as an ordinary citizen, living below the poverty line, I can't afford this noble risk, even if it only means one less litre of milk for my daughter and me. Be honest, Gentlemen, and tell us what it will really cost us.

I'm afraid that the day our politicians really work for the people, other than by giving them a cheque, I'm afraid that that day is still far off. Many of them use the public forum for personal ends, when serious problems go unheard by our political leaders. We need only talk about conjugal violence, the poverty of women breadwinners, the way more and more of our young people are leaving for the big cities, and unemployment, and so on. Please stop showering us with flattery and emotion and do the job you were chosen to do.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Simard, in view of our limited time, I must ask you to...

Mrs. Simard: I still have another... I'm finished.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Okay. Go on.

Mrs. Simard: I would just like to sum up.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine.

Mrs. Simard: To sum up, I will say that I put a lot of hope in this Commission, but I see that a number of Commission members are not trying to listen to possible avenues, but are looking, instead, for a forum from which to state their own views.

The arguments which were submitted to you and which have resulted in my being seated here represent, in my opinion, a minimum for reflection. They are comments that ordinary people, like us, understand and know. For us, the comparison is always made with the events that mark our lives. There is strength in unity; no one wins in a divorce.

You may have a hard time understanding this line of reasoning, which is not based on fear, but on good common sense, as we say in our part of the country. Thank you for hearing

me out.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Simard. We will begin the question period with Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mrs. Simard, for your brief. I should say that your brief was only two pages long, but your introduction today was much more detailed than the one we have in front of us.

Mrs. Simard: Yes, that's natural, since I couldn't send you everything beforehand.

Mr. Maciocia: I understand very well, Mrs. Simard. In your brief, you present nine considerations...

Mrs. Simard: Yes.

Mr. Maciocia: ...in support of continuing and maintaining Canadian federalism in a renewed formula. You'll understand if I say, as I did a moment ago, that you left us hanging a little, precisely because you are now fully developing the considerations you put forward. Could you, then, elaborate a little more on two considerations which I think very important, namely that federalism ensures political and economic strength for small countries and, secondly, federalism offers a guarantee of respect for minorities and regions? Could you elaborate a little more, please, Mrs. Simard?

Mrs. Simard: Anyway, I'll answer to the extent of my own capabilities...

Mr. Maciocia: OK.

Mrs. Simard: ...which are not those of a historian or of people paid to think.

Mr. Maciocia: Fine, Madam.

Mrs. Simard: In my own mind, when I think of a federalism that ensures political and economic strength for small countries, I think of Switzerland in particular, which is a mixture of close to 20 cantons, where there is a population of about six million people, 20 cantons which, historically or, anyway, over the years, have joined together and have formed a federation. If I think of this country called Switzerland, it's a country where we find one of the world's highest standards of living. It's a country where minorities and languages are respected because, in Switzerland, there are three official languages. I think it's a good example of a small country which, with a federation, has ensured for itself fairly significant economic and political strength. Certainly, when we talk about federation, we could also look at large countries like Germany

or the United States, our neighbours, or Australia. Anyway, they exist. There are many federations. That was how I meant it.

If I take it another way, that is, meaning small countries that have not managed, anyway... Let's take Central America, where there are several small countries, in my mind - maybe it's very emotional - I think that if those people formed a federation and joined together, they would be much more stable, politically speaking, and they would surely be much stronger, economically speaking. That was how I meant this consideration.

As for the second one, when we say that federalism is a guarantee of respect for minorities and regions... We just have to look, in fact, at what's going on in English Canada, right now, in the face of the French fact. I mean, they are coming here looking for our French teachers, to set up Immersion classes. French is protected in all the provinces as it never has been before. I don't say that before it was... For sure, if I go to buy a sandwich in a restaurant in Winnipeg, maybe they won't answer me in French, but, anyway, we can see good will and improvement.

If we take, as an example, France, which is a sovereign nation, where there is the Breton language, the Basques, where there was the language of Languedoc, and Provençal, it didn't necessarily protect the languages or minorities of sovereign nations. Breton is now a language of folklore, the Basques are struggling however they can, and the others practically no longer exist.

Mr. Maciocia: Fine, Mrs. Simard. I would have one further question before my time is up...

Mrs. Simard: I'll try.

Mr. Maciocia: ...because my last question is also very important. In the final consideration you put forward, you say: Canadian federalism is an ideal to be attained, assuming there are changes, negotiations and compromises. On this point, could you tell us what the common interests are, today, which we should share with Canada, in your view, as well as which powers we should share with the rest of Canada and which ones should be exercised by the central authority?

Mrs. Simard: It's very hard for me to answer that question because, first of all, I'm not in a position to say that this power should belong to this or that place. I think, and I calculate, that if there are so many things being said, right now, in public by our leaders, they must know what they want and probably if they're capable of sitting down at a table, they'll be capable of negotiating their needs or their rights or the powers they want to acquire.

Mr. Maciocia: I should put the question another way. What, in your opinion, are the powers which Québec should seek to have exclusivity over, for it to develop its full potential?

Mrs. Simard: Well, if we talk about immigration, we know that it's very important now for Québec. For Québec, this remains an area where it wants to run things because it is... I think it has its distinctive French character, which means that if this province managed its own immigration, anyway maybe it would be, how could I say, just a moment... Probably it would be able to mark out the path necessary for the French language to flourish.

Now, for the rights or actual powers, I didn't go that far in my thoughts. I really went with what I myself feel, with what I myself have been seeing for the past year. I think the people we have elected will be able to sit down and see, in fact, for the good of the country, what rights and powers should be shared, renegotiated and redistributed. That's how I see it; I can't go any further in my...

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Madam.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now go to Mr. Guy Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Madam. I respect your opinion, and in order to try to understand it, I am going to ask you four questions, giving you the time to answer.

Mrs. Simard: I'll try to answer them.

Mr. Chevette: My first is: You say that the shrinking of borders reduces economic space accordingly. Do you consider it impossible to negotiate larger economic spaces? That the expansion of markets is not a worldwide trend? Don't you take it for granted that a... For instance, in your text, that consideration, don't you take it for granted that English Canada would be depriving themselves of a market of 6.5 million Quebecers as consumers and buyers?

The second question is: You say that federalism is a guarantee of respect for minorities. Isn't it the opposite that's happening? Don't minorities in English Canada envy the treatment Québec gives its minority, here? Aren't you exaggerating a little?

The third is: You say that federalism is an ideal to be attained. I thought it was a structure. Isn't the ideal to be attained, rather, the development of the full potential of the Québec people, and isn't the structure a means and not an end?

And the fourth: How can you take for granted that English Canada would not want to

negotiate any economic association, and take for granted that it would be ready to negotiate constitutional changes in the framework of a renewed federalism, when for 30 years now we have never had any decision in Québec's favour?

Mrs. Simard: Well, good heavens! Your first question was that federalism brings political strength. No! You said that it reduces economic space accordingly. That was your first question. What I meant, the feeling I have now, is that Canada has economic strength and political strength, and I feel that the fact of separating from Canada and then sitting down again to renegotiate economic links is a pointless endeavour. The links already exist; the links are there. The economic links are made. I don't see why I would separate and then sit back down again. That's what I think about that. Certainly, Québec would deprive itself of economic strength by separating from Canada and starting over, which will also cost us a lot, to re-establish economic links with either the other provinces in Canada or other countries.

Next, you spoke about respect for minorities and regions. I'll say that my answers may not be very, very profound. I'll tell you what I think, OK? Québec is its own master in the area of protection of the French language, OK? I think that federalism, which invests and gives subsidies in the Western provinces precisely for immersion classes aimed at promoting French, in my own mind that's important. I'm not sure that a separate Québec would put as much money into promoting French. The problems we're experiencing, and... Anyway, here, we speak French, here in the region, we have very little fear of being... We have no fear of losing our French here. In Montréal, the problem is no doubt very different from the one here in the region. But if we sent a few more immigrants into our regions, under conditions that would make everything easier, maybe these immigrants would have much less trouble integrating into French culture. You also talk about... The third question referred to...

(10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Chevette: Federalism is an ideal.

Mrs. Simard: Yes.

Mr. Chevette: I said: Shouldn't the development of the full potential of the Québec people be our ideal, instead, and isn't the structure a means and not an end?

Mrs. Simard: In my own mind, federalism, given that there are many provinces and many people within this federation, negotiations are never complete. It's an objective to be reached. It's not something final. The day the Fathers of Confederation sat down, signed and said: It's carved in stone. In my own mind, as the

economy evolves, people should be able, in a federation, to sit down and renegotiate. That's how I mean that it's an ideal to be attained. The Québec people, the way they are valued... I feel highly valued as a Quebecer. If for that it takes... I don't see why we should have to fight and separate from Canada to prove that we Quebecers are worthwhile people. Economically speaking, we've proven that. In large corporations, everywhere, Quebecers hold the senior positions. I don't see how far I should have to go to prove it... or stand in the street saying: I'm a Quebecer and I'm proud of it. Yes, I am, and it's very nice, but from there to separating from the rest of Canada just so that I can feel valued a little more, I'm not sure that's a solution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Chevette, 10 seconds.

Mr. Chevette: It was the last question. How can you believe that English Canada will negotiate a renewed federalism when you admit that it's not certain that English Canada will negotiate an economic agreement?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Can you answer quickly, Madam?

Mrs. Simard: I think that English Canada has a lot to gain in keeping Québec in the federation, so I don't see why those people wouldn't be capable of coming and sitting down at a table.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Madam. In the next set of questions, there are several people who wish to speak. If each one asks his or her questions quickly, as Mr. Maciocia and Mr. Chevette did, it will allow us to hear more speakers. First speaker, Mr. André Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Chairman, I thank you. I would first like to congratulate Mrs. Simard on her presentation this morning. I know that in a region where there is a very strong and very significant nationalist sentiment, it's very healthy for another point of view to be expressed. And I much appreciate the fact that the people in the region have the tolerance and magnanimity to hear all points of view. Mrs. Simard, you speak with your heart, you speak very simply. And you bring out arguments which, in my opinion, are very important in the present context. I think that when you say that Francophones, who are in a minority on this continent, are nevertheless people who are highly respected and that, within federalism, they can be respected more than in a unitary State...

You talked about what happened to minorities in a country like France, with the

virtual disappearance of the Languedoc and Breton languages. You gave us an example which clearly shows that the federal system places a great deal of importance on making it possible for French-speaking minorities to fulfill the role they wish to play within Canada. Could you tell me to what extent you think that French may be threatened here? Because there are people who have come here to tell us that they were afraid for the French language and culture. Are you, do you have that fear? What is your opinion regarding the French language and culture in Québec and in North America?

Mrs. Simard: Anyway, I believe history proves that the French people, or the French language in North America, is well protected and continues, in fact, to increase the number of people who speak French. I believe that the problems of the French language stem mainly from the fact that most of our immigrants or most of the people settle in Montréal, and it's very hard to manage, since there are a great many of them, and they are often pretty much grouped together. But I'm not afraid for the French language, if the government which has this jurisdiction – and that is the Québec government – is able – and it has done so to date – to establish laws that protect us or minimum conditions that mean French will always be protected.

Anyway, in the region here, the problem of fear of losing French is non-existent. I think that if we are able to speak it well, to protect it well, whether someone English lives next to me or I live next to someone English, my language will still be French, and it's up to me to make an effort so that in the exchange, it's not the other person who integrates me necessarily, or me who integrates him, but that I keep my French strength, and he has the strength of his language or different way of speaking.

The French culture is very good, and very strong. We see Québec singers, writers who are recognized; there has never been such a great flourishing, and then... Anyway, as for me, I have no fears, really, I don't see any... Certainly there is a fear if it isn't well protected by the people who speak it, who live it, and by the people who are there and who are appointed to protect it. I think it's up to the Québec government to do that, and that up to now, it has done its job.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you.

Mrs. Simard: That doesn't mean there's no room for improvement.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Campbell Steer, who will be followed by Mr. Larose.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Mrs. Simard, I must tell you that Mr. Maciocia and Mr. Chevette both asked the questions I wanted to put to you. I congratulate you for having the personal courage to present your convictions. The first time I testified in front of all these lights, I found it overwhelming, too.

Mrs. Simard: It was very hard, because I know I don't necessarily have the scientific, economic and political arguments to come and make a speech, to dazzle people. I came to speak with what I myself think, and there are many people, here in the region, who think like me, as well. They may not have the courage to say so now, or the strength, but it exists. I'm not the only one.

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

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Scientists and people who can make fine speeches represent a tiny minority in society. People like you are the ones who will have to make the decision when the people as a whole is called upon. In that sense, the economic aspect you raise in your presentation interests me a great deal. You seem to be saying that sovereignty will prove to be a very expensive economic venture, and you are not prepared to pay even the price of the equivalent of a quart of milk...

Mrs. Simard: No.

Mr. Larose: ...for that venture. I would like you to tell me what you think of the recent changes in the federal system. And perhaps, to better understand, I would identify more with an Acadian or else someone from Clyde Wells's part of the country because, in economic terms, it's not a problem with Québec. In economic terms, it's a problem with Canadian federalism. We maintain, in Canada, interest rates that are 5% to 6% higher, on average, than the American rate. That puts exorbitant pressure on credit, that puts exorbitant pressure on the value of the dollar, that systematically undermines our competitive ability. Québec, and, let's say, the areas around it, Québec is not industries, it's more small and medium-size businesses, which need more credit. So, when we look at the past 10 years, the changes in the tax system, the budgetary changes, we realize that there is less distribution of wealth in this country. Why? Basically, because we have to finance an overheated economy in southern Ontario. So we are now paying an extraordinary price for the Canadian federal system. And since the turn of the century, Québec in particular has paid, at the very least, for 20% more unemployment than Canada as a whole. So there is a price for the

existence of the federal system.

The question I would ask you is whether you think it would be good to change the economic links somewhat, since you don't want to break them? But if we want to correct the monetary policies, the fiscal policies, we might be better to break some of them in order to restore them in a different way, as links that would operate according to Québec objectives, which might mean more things for employment? Because we're already paying a price. I don't know if that aspect worries you.

Mrs. Simard: Actually, what I can tell you is that I believe that, if we think of the very high interest rates, for example, if we think of what is happening, that is, a recession, which we should be, or which we are experiencing now, I believe that it's not necessarily because of federalism, but much more the fault of the people running that federalism now. When you talk about economic links which we could forge or establish in such a way as to restore rights that will mean, I foresee, or anyway people who will eventually sit down in future negotiations for a renewed federalism, the economy will certainly be a matter they will examine and where they will make sure to redistribute rights to those who are entitled to them.

But I think, personally, that a separation... that would still be 5 or 10 years, there will be costs that will be more expensive for us than the links that currently exist, where we can sit down and negotiate, and verify, and renew our federalism. In my mind, it's not the federation that's the cause of the high interest rates, or the recession, it's much more the managers that we have installed.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fifteen seconds, Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Yes, have the managers been bad only for the past 10 years? How do we explain that they have been bad only for 10 years? How do we explain that there is systematically more unemployment in Québec and the areas around it than for Canada as a whole? Is that a problem to do with the managers of the past few years?

Mrs. Simard: Anyway, now it's their fault. The other times, it was certainly a problem somewhere, there was the one in 1980 that happened worldwide. I think the industrialized countries have all gone through it, whether they're a federation or a sovereign nation, everyone has gone through it. So I think that now there is a problem, and other people say so, that there would be the possibility of lowering interest rates. But to do that, the people who are currently in place would have to react differently from the way they do now.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Simard. Thank you for taking the time to come and testify before us. Don't underestimate yourself, you are very capable of asserting your views.

Mrs. Simard: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now move on to the next speaker, Mr. Robert Dole. (10:45 a.m.)

One group has withdrawn, the Table de concertation des groupes de femmes du Saguenay. We will therefore conclude our proceedings at noon rather than 12:30.

Mr. Dole, welcome then. You have five minutes to present your brief, Mr. Dole.

Mr. Robert Dole

Mr. Dole (Robert): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. Two languages cannot live together without one of them being granted superior status. Normally, the favoured language is that of the more powerful social group, the one that holds the country's economic, political and cultural power. For members of the minority, it represents the way to a richer and more attractive future. The need to make oneself understood in the language of the dominant group means that the mere use of the minority language shrinks more and more until it is limited to isolated rural communities or else disappears. The "inevitability" of the dichotomy of the superior language and the inferior language is a hypothesis put forward by the sociolinguist Charles Ferguson.

Another sociolinguist, D.J. Parkin, has demonstrated that members of the socially inferior group tend to use the language with superior status to move up the social ladder. European history shows the disappearance of numerous languages with inferior status. Before World War I, for example, 50 million Europeans spoke a minority language, while now, despite the huge growth in population, there are only 20 million Europeans who speak such a language. In the 18th century, six million Irish people spoke Irish; today, there are only 20 000 who speak it as their mother tongue. In 1880, 100 000 Austrians spoke Slovenian; today only one-quarter of that number do. One hundred years earlier, Germany had 52 000 inhabitants who spoke Frisian; in 1925, there were only 7 000, and today there are fewer still. In 1840, two-thirds of the population of Wales spoke Welsh as their first language; now they make up less than 1%.

The relationship between the history of the disappearance of languages with inferior status and the constitutional future of Québec should be fairly clear. French-speaking Quebecers, especially those in Montréal, are continually

exposed to English. For too many of them, it represents the language of the dominant group, the key to moving up the social ladder, a passport to a more attractive future, and so on. This image of the superior status of English remains in the minds of many Quebecers, despite all the progress made in the past 14 years. Allow me to give you two examples.

One of the characteristics of the duality between the language with inferior status and the one with superior status is that, and I quote Denise Deshaies of Université Laval: "In inter-group relations, it is the language of the dominant group that is chosen." Indeed, it often happens on my visits to Montréal that French-speaking Quebecers insist on speaking to me in English, in spite of all my efforts to continue the conversation in French. For them, English continues to represent the superior means of communication, in comparison with French.

The second example refers to a conversation I witnessed in a restaurant in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region. A group of businessmen were sitting at a table. They were all bilingual. They started the discussion in French, but when it came time to talk business, they switched to English, as if this were quite natural or necessary. French thus becomes a language relegated to inferior status, a language that is only good for talking about matters of no importance. It is obvious that French cannot survive in Montréal or, consequently, in Québec in general, unless a linguistic planning program is rigorously applied. Actually, Montréal is the only major city in the world that maintains a real "diglossia" in which two languages are in a state of continual contact and confrontation.

According to the sociolinguist L.V. Aracil, the only way to ensure adequate language legislation to protect a minority language is either political sovereignty, or a government provided with great autonomy. The political events of the past year have shown that many, if not most, English Canadians are indifferent to the survival of French in Québec. No one needs the opinion of linguists to realize that the disappearance of French in North America is synonymous with the genocide of the Québec people. This language is all that protects it from total assimilation in the larger, English-speaking continent.

According to the rule of the current constitutional situation, all Québec language legislation is subject to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. In British and American legislation, individual rights often have priority over collective rights. In fact, the constitutions of English-speaking countries have never included the notion of the right of a minority people to protect itself from the powers of a majority group. The fate reserved for Bill 101 before the Supreme Court of Canada is a perfect example.

For French to have the status of superior language in Québec, Québec must be able to legislate in the area of linguistic planning without being subject to the opinions of the federal government. For that, independence is indispensable. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Dole. We now go to Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Dole, for your contribution, and I am sure that Mr. Hogue will be happy to learn that you have a PhD in linguistics from Université Laval. This is a brief, in my opinion, that shows great scientific rigour and implacable logic. You say that two languages, then, cannot live together without one of them being granted superior status, and that the one with inferior status ends up declining, disappearing and becoming part of folklore. You cite many examples, and on page 6, you say: "For our descendants to have an idea of the language spoken by Quebecers in days gone by" - if this process continues - "they will have to take a trip to the remotest villages in the Lac-Saint-Jean region". So it will be rather like the death of a people as a tourist attraction. People would come from all over to Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire or Saint-Ludger-de-Milot to see the last vestiges of a nation, a kind of human zoo, if it continues like this, unless there is linguistic planning by a government that is, obviously, perfectly sovereign and autonomous.

According to your demonstration, does that ultimately mean that the fate of French communities outside Québec is settled for good, and that the writer Yves Beauchemin was right to say, about French communities outside Québec, that we are looking at a still-warm corpse, to use his image? In your opinion, does that mean, then, that following the process you describe, it is inescapable, whatever we do, that French communities outside Québec will end up disappearing, since their rate of assimilation is also extremely high? But... how is it - unless you tell me that it's the case as well - that the fate of the English community in Québec will not be the same? Why is there a difference between the two of them?

Mr. Dole: I am personally, I must admit, a little pessimistic about the possibility of the fate of French minorities outside Québec. I'm sure I'm not the only person here who is pessimistic in this regard. I'm sorry, but I'm a little pessimistic. There are exceptions; there are miracles of survival of minority languages. We could think, for example, of the Amish in Pennsylvania, who have spoken German for two centuries, surrounded by English people. That's an isolated community in the sense that they

have their own religion, and the German language is part of their religious practice.

As for the survival of French in Québec, I myself think, I foresee the same story or the same situation as for Francophones in New England. We all know - Mr. Laforge said so this morning - about the exodus of Quebecers of French origin, mainly to New England. Now in New England today, it's very hard to find someone of Québec descent who is able to speak French. They have names like "Desjardins", don't they? They have names like "Langlois". They have no idea of the fact that they are of French stock. Unfortunately, I think that it's almost "inhabitable".

Yesterday, someone suggested that Francophones outside Québec should come back to Québec. Now if I were a Francophone outside Québec and I wanted my children to speak French, my grandchildren to speak French, I would return to Québec.

Mr. Brassard: But why is it, Mr. Dole, that the English minority in Québec is not threatened? Why is it that the process does not apply?

Mr. Dole: The English minority in Québec is mainly in Montréal. In Montréal, now, I'm not convinced that Montréal is a French city. I don't believe that the English of Montréal are isolated from the English-speaking world. There is only 30 kilometres between them and the United States or Ontario. They aren't far from English-speaking countries. That's not the case with the Pennsylvania Amish.

Mr. Brassard: I would have one last question, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): One quick question.

Mr. Brassard: In your view, does institutional bilingualism, as many people advocate it in Canada - there are many defenders of institutional bilingualism in Canada, especially at the federal level - does this institutional bilingualism reinforce, aggravate and accelerate the process of making a language seem inferior?

Mr. Dole: In the sense that French in Québec, for example, in post offices in British Columbia, French there has a symbolic value. Simply put, what does it represent if we try to speak French in a federal post office in British Columbia? It's just a quaint gesture, isn't it? I'm not an expert in the situation of federal bilingualism programs, but often, I think that the value is fairly symbolic. And I know very well, once you're in a Canadian embassy abroad, there's no one who speaks French, for instance.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Dole. We now go to Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague Brassard for pointing out that two PhDs will be talking to each other here. It would be desirable to have more than two around the table sometimes.

Dr. Dole... Vous êtes bien le Dr. Dole n'est-ce pas?

Mr. Dole: In French, Sir.

Mr. Hogue: Dr. Dole...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Hogue, Mr. Hogue...

Mr. Hogue: Je ne vais pas être tendre avec vous et j'espère que vous ne serez pas choqué.

Mr. Dole: (Says something in Spanish.)

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: I'm going to speak to you... Et ne vous moquez pas de ma langue maternelle, s'il vous plaît.  
(11 a.m.)

Dr. Dole, you use your language, you use your status, you use your knowledge, you use your skill to practise demagoguery, and I don't like that. You lack scientific rigour, and your rector mustn't like that. You tell us we are a dominated people and that's easy for you to say because you yourself are in the dominant class. Yours is the language of the dominator. I can't agree with the way you are so insidious in your preamble and in your presentation. Why don't you talk about Hebrew? Why don't you talk about Yiddish? Finally, how many Chinese speak Chinese, and how many Japanese speak Japanese? If it's a question of number, shouldn't the Japanese switch from Japanese to Chinese? You associate, and I don't like the fact that you associate - on page 4 - the French language, my language, our language, with a dialect. This is repeated too often on page 4.

Finally, before asking you my question, I find that in your bibliography... out of 13 quotations, there are 5 that date from 1989 or later; the others are from before 1980. There aren't many papers you could correct at the PhD level with a bibliography like that and give a good passing mark. As far as Montréal is concerned, in Montréal, well I've lived there for 60 years. While you were a young man in Washington, I was a teenager in Montréal, and in Montréal, we had more trouble speaking French, while you were in Washington speaking English, than we have an easy time speaking French now, in 1990. In Montréal, we speak French everywhere.

Before moving on to other things, there are 928 new French words in the dictionary. That comes from Agence France-Presse in Paris. We have the word "drugstore", the word "dufflecoat", the word "dribble", the word "dribbler" and the word "drive" that have entered the French lexicon and dictionary. French is winning points - not the game yet, of course - according to the outgoing chairman of the Conseil de la langue française, Pierre Martel. I don't accept the judgment of a dominator who comes to lay his paw on one he considers dominated, as if to say "que je suis dans une position de force".

Having said that, I will ask you one question. You indicate that, according to your theory, a government that enjoys great autonomy would be in a position to protect the language. You say that. You also said it verbally. That means that great autonomy in this area, within federalism, would allow the goals you are seeking to be achieved, doesn't it?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Unfortunately, you have only one minute to reply, Mr. Dole.

Mr. Dole: If Canada were ready to give Québec 100% of the right to legislate in the area of language, it would, perhaps, be a situation that could be envisaged, but I must tell you that, sincerely, I am in favour of independence and I hope we will achieve our solution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): And now, Mrs. Rosette Côté. I must repeat what I said about the applause.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Before asking my question, I must tell you that I don't very much like what I just experienced. We are Commission members who are mature enough to listen to different points of view, and we are here to be able, afterwards, to propose a solution to the people. I would like us to be able, as Commission members, to listen to what people say, to not agree but to respect them in what they are saying, and I don't like that, both as a Commission member and as a woman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Listen, I just want to talk about the applause and settle the other thing afterwards. Everywhere we've gone, applause has been prohibited. I think I've been patient throughout, and I've repeated it over and over. People are entitled to their ideas. As Mrs. Côté says, the witness is entitled to his ideas, and the Commission members are also entitled to say what they want. Applause is prohibited. Don't force us, at the last minute, to clear the room. Now, Mrs. Côté.

Mrs. Côté: Yes. Did I correctly understand

the message you are giving us when you say that, ultimately, you see independence as an urgent step to be taken to reverse the trend of the supremacy of one language over another? You cite the case of Ireland. You even say you are pessimistic, saying that we should act pretty quickly because the language is threatened. I'll tell you that there is one thing which I understood, in reading your brief, maybe it's also because I didn't look at this enough at the time of the "notwithstanding" clause, but you say somewhere that ultimately, English tradition or culture leads us to always include the supremacy of individual rights over collective rights. And I'm trying to understand why, when there was the "notwithstanding" clause, there was so much trouble understanding that reality, and I say to myself, basically, in life, we always refer to what we have learned, to the standards we learn, and those standards reflect the way we then behave.

And I found it interesting to look at that and, in my opinion, that enables me to understand the reaction of the English, which I didn't understand before reading your text. I would like to ask you one question. In a sovereign Québec where the rights of the majority would be recognized but where the rights of the minority would also be recognized, but where collective rights would be considered preponderant over individual rights, how could we state individual rights and collective rights, with respect to language, without the English feeling they are discriminated against, in the sense that Francophones would feel that they are both the masters of their own land but also open to difference and open to other realities? I'm also including Allophones. How could that be stated properly?

Mr. Dole: That's a very tough question. I don't have any magic solution; I have great respect for the Charter of the French Language and Bill 101 - it's the same thing - and I think that if they are applied to the letter, that's a good solution, we can start with that. And I believe that the English, the Anglophones of Québec know it, I accept it, we accept it. I'm a Québec Anglophone, and we accept the fact that we are living in a French country, we know it, we accept it. Personally, I'm very comfortable with the idea that I'm living in a French-speaking country. I like the French face of Québec, I like being able to express myself in French anywhere in Québec, and I have a big problem every time I go to Montréal and I try to speak French in Montréal. Every time I'm in Montréal and I open my mouth in French with my English accent, there are a lot of people who look at me as if I were completely "nuts" (but why is he speaking French?). I don't like that. And that's why I'm in favour of independence. I find that the language situation in Montréal is



not healthy right now.

Mrs. Côté: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Bruno Roy.

Mr. Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A general feeling that emerges from the briefs I have read is that, I realize that nationalism, all things considered, is not a choice, it's a stage. We are all sovereignists at heart, I feel, but it's quite obvious, too, in terms of stages, that we have reached this one. And I think that the majority, the basic movement, in Québec, is leading us there. That's my first remark. My second is: In your brief, we find this highly instructive sentence: "The language that survives the longest is the one that generally has the most written works." For a writer, such a statement is obvious, but it is less so for certain political decision makers. Still, it sticks in my mind that French, having a status as superior language, as you say in your brief, will ensure, in a sovereign Québec, a status as superior culture. So there is a link between the affirmation of a language and the affirmation of a culture.

Your brief gives historical evidence of what makes a language disappear - and there it echoes the comments of Jean-Pierre Hogue, ultimately - before I even hear them, moreover, which may provide a certain objectivity. You give historical evidence that what makes a language disappear is not its evolution; it's natural for a language to borrow words from other languages, and its evolution isn't what makes a language disappear, but external factors, such as politics and economy.

I'm getting to my question. You suggest, and that's the reading which I make and which I'm going to verify, you suggest that these factors, economy, politics, etc., fit into a context of political sovereignty and that this fitting-in would be favourable to maintaining a French Québec. Could you elaborate, but in the context of a relationship between language and culture? The affirmation of language is also the affirmation of a culture. And external factors can sometimes help and sometimes hinder, whether you are sovereign or not. Have I read you correctly?

Mr. Dole: Yes, you've read me correctly.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm afraid I have to ask you to answer quickly, Mr. Dole.

Mr. Dole: I would simply say that in a sovereign, French, free Québec, the French language, especially in Montréal, would have a better chance of becoming the superior language

in the minds of Montrealers. In their confrontations, in linguistic exchanges, there is, in every bilingual country, among the general population, the idea that one language is more important than the other, normally in an economic or social sense. And I think that if Québec declared itself independent and French-speaking, French would have a much better chance of becoming that language with superior status in the minds of Montrealers, especially. In that sense, French culture would have a much better chance of fully developing in Montréal and throughout Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Let's move on now to Mr. Sébastien Allard, on the Chair's time.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I seem abrupt, Mr. Dole, it's simply to be brief, and you'll please forgive me. I refer you to the next-to-last paragraph on page 5, where you say: "French-speaking Quebecers, especially those in Montréal, are continually exposed to English." I presume you consider that this is not necessarily good. So what must be done for them not to be exposed to English? Secondly, when we read a little further, you say that English represents, for too many of them, a passport to a more attractive future. Is it true that a knowledge of English is a passport to a more attractive future? And is it bad that it might be a passport to a more attractive future? You recognize a little further on that a great deal of progress has been made in the past 14 years. But when we get to the very end of your brief, you say: "For French to have the status of superior language in Québec, Québec must be able to legislate in the area of linguistic planning." Québec has already legislated a great deal in the area of language. You may consider - at any rate, that's the conclusion I draw - that what has been done is not enough, that something else must be done. I would like to know what you have in mind concerning those other things that should be done by legislation and that do not exist now.

Mr. Dole: First, I would very much like to see Bill 101 applied to the letter, something that is not the case as far as teaching immigrant children is concerned. There are many illegals in Québec's English schools. Aside from that, in an independent Québec... Immigrants coming here now very often tend to think of their stay in Québec as a springboard for going elsewhere afterwards, in English Canada, that's all. If they have to learn French, it's in order to live in Québec during their stay here to prepare to go elsewhere. In an independent Québec, this would no longer be the case. Immigrants coming here would have a visa for Québec but not for English Canada. And I think it would be a good

thing for the people coming here to know that they are living in a French-speaking country and that this is the country where they are going to stay. That's one thing, for example. Now I have nothing against exposure to English; it's my reason for being. I expose my students to English; that's my profession. I think it's a very fine language. What bothers me is when Francophones think that English is superior, from an economic or social standpoint, to French. That's what bothers me. And that's what I often see, in Montréal especially.

Mr. Allard: Excuse me. You said, when you were talking about children enrolled in English schools, when you were talking about application of the French language, that the existing laws are not being applied. That doesn't mean we need other legislation; you mean we must apply...

Mr. Dole: Mainly.

Mr. Allard: ...existing legislation more strictly. What you say in your last paragraph is not entirely accurate. You don't want new legislation.

Mr. Dole: No, no, I said in the...

Mr. Allard: Excuse me. Just to finish as far as... I don't want to interrupt you, but I want... You'll answer my three questions. As far as immigrants are concerned, who come to settle in Montréal and who use that as a springboard to go elsewhere, even in a sovereign Québec, we couldn't prevent immigrants, eventually, from leaving Québec and going elsewhere in Canada or to the United States.  
(11:15 a.m.)

Mr. Dole: But first, they would have to have a visa to go there. If they get a visa for Québec, it doesn't necessarily mean they'll get a visa for English Canada. That's not at all certain.

Mr. Allard: Some of these people go to the United States.

Mr. Dole: But...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Quick question, quick comment, Mr. Allard? Thank you. We now go to Mr. Claude Dauphin.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to summon up my memories of the Official Opposition when I put questions to the various ministers, at the time when I sat with my good friend Jean-Claude Rivest, in the Opposition. By way of a preamble, 30 seconds. First, I thank you, Mr. Dole, on behalf of the departmental team, for your participation in our

proceedings. I also wish to say that, obviously, your brief is different, the approach is different from other briefs we have had the opportunity to read.

Also, I wish to tell you that we received this week - not us, but our colleagues in the National Assembly - the annual report of the Conseil de la langue française which said, in fact, that the progress made is still fairly fragile in terms of promotion and protection of French in Québec, and that attention must especially be paid to French in the workplace. It even said, at one point, that computerization is a factor in reintroducing English in companies.

Having said that, I have two questions for you. My first refers to page 7 of your brief - Mr. Roy made some reference to it earlier - when you state that in 1990 it would be natural to say that the language that survives is the one in which videos, horror films and "heavy metal" music are introduced. My question is the following, and that is that in the hypothesis of a sovereign Québec, given that videos, horror films, music videos and "heavy metal" know no boundaries, how, apart from censorship, could we mitigate the effect of importing videos and "heavy metal"?

I have 30 seconds left, Mr. Chairman. I will ask a second question, and allow you to have three minutes to answer afterwards.

At the bottom of page 7, you say that British law and American law, obviously, give priority to individual rights rather than collective rights, and you say that, in fact, the constitutions of English-speaking countries have never included mention of the right of a minority people to protect itself against the powers of a majority group. Still using the same hypothesis of a sovereign Québec with a French-language Québec constitution, would you view favourably the inclusion of rights guaranteeing the English-speaking minority certain kinds of protection in relation to a French-speaking majority, in a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Dole: The Native minorities in the Québec constitution... Certainly, the English-speaking minority in Québec is a reality, and it is entitled to certain guarantees of survival, etc. Also, English-speaking Quebecers are entitled to proper education in French to be able to survive in a French-speaking country, and I can tell you now that this is a fundamental right that is not guaranteed for Québec Anglophones. In English schools in Québec, children are not assured of getting proper training in French, and I tell you that that's a serious problem. Regarding one thing I would do immediately, that would be to improve the quality of teaching of French as a second language in Québec schools, in Québec's English schools. That's a problem. About the question of "heavy metal" and videos, all that, there's no answer to that, unfortunately. I am

not in favour of censorship, in any form whatsoever.

Mr. Dauphin: You know that English, clearly, certainly it holds an attraction, but that's international too...

Mr. Dole: That's right...

Mr. Dauphin: It nevertheless has an importance which we can't...

Mr. Dole: We can't translate "heavy metal"...

Mr. Dauphin: ...set aside.

Mr. Dole: ...as "métal lourd", that doesn't work.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Dauphin: I didn't catch that.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that all?

Mr. Dauphin: Yes, that's OK.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's all? Thank you then, Mr. Dole, for contributing to the advancement of the work of this Commission on the future of Québec.

If the people from the Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi are here, we will start immediately.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:20 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:22 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Ladies and Gentlemen, we will carry on with our work. Mrs. Renée Gagnon, of the Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi. Mrs. Gagnon, could you introduce your colleagues?

#### Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi

Mrs. Gagnon (Renée): With great pleasure, Mr. Chairman. Beginning on my immediate right, Mr. Ghislain Larouche, who was on the action and orientation committee, and who cooperated in drafting the brief. One of the administrators of the Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi, Me Jean Dauphinais; an administrator, an ex-chairman and also an administrator currently sitting on the Chambre de commerce du Québec, Me Richard Bergeron; on my left, Me Martin Lajoie, who is administrator and vice-chairman of the Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi; and Mr. Clément Martel, who has been on the executive for several years.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Madam, you have five minutes to present your report.

Mrs. Gagnon: We will be brief, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mrs. Gagnon: Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Campeau, Ladies and Gentlemen, Commission members, I am pleased, on behalf of the Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi, to present to you today a brief which represents the thinking of our members, on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

Allow me to thank this Commission for the opportunity given us to participate in this exercise which is so important for all of Québec, and to make our contribution. First of all, I must tell you that we support the position of the Chambre de commerce du Québec, and that we generally share its conclusions on economic development. However, secondly, we wanted to take the measure, through consultation, of the opinions of our members, in order to evaluate whether we should take a position on the political status of Québec, something the Chambre de commerce du Québec did not think it should do.

It is therefore because of the interest of our members and of the clarity of their responses that we are appearing before you today. The Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi, administered by a representative board of directors of 15 businesspersons, has preserved its leadership and its membership of between 600 and 750 members over the past years. This assures it an important place among Québec chambers of commerce. Our members work in the industrial, commercial or service sectors. We sent our survey to 655 persons. The question was very clear: "Do you favour the sovereignty of Québec as the constitutional path for the future? Yes or no. If yes, comments; if no, comments."

Very briefly, 80 members replied. Because of the very short time limits, and to validate the response trend, 50 telephone calls were made, chosen at random from the list of members. Both in the first responses and in the telephone validation, the message received was very clear and unambiguous, since 80% favoured political sovereignty for Québec's future.

The comments section allowed us to work out the steps along the road which we propose to you in this brief. What we hope is that the Commission will arrive at a consensus. We will need a lot of determination and conviction to continue to build a dynamic competitive Québec and we need to unite our forces. We are a region open to the markets. We export a very large proportion of our products and our expertise. Our business relations must continue

harmoniously. Our partners have as much interest as we do in continuing to do business and negotiations must take place for the greater welfare of the parties involved.

In conclusion, for nearly a month now, the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec has been sitting and hearing various ideas related to its mandate. The comments that we have been hearing from the Commission members have not yet provided us with many surprises. Each one keeps his positions clearly identified with a political party. Each one is basically trying to convince the others that he is right. In our opinion, the future of Québec rests first and foremost on consensus and not on the perpetuation of past conflicts. The same confidence, the same conviction about the future of Québec must sustain us, along with the same desire to provide all citizens with objective information so that they may take a well-informed position on the political and constitutional future of Québec. Before making their decision, they must know the various possible scenarios for partnership in economic, monetary and social policy matters. Few people can reply to all the questions. However, there are specialists in nearly all areas and no doubt they should be given a chance to speak and granted the credibility they deserve.

The majority of the members of the *Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi* consider that sovereignty is the most promising path for Québec's future. Sovereign Québec, tomorrow's Québec, will be what we make of it all together through a determined, positive and responsible effort. But we already have more than an inkling that Québec will be proud to have taken its destiny in hand. Québec will draw resources from its culture and language, and its nationalist sentiment will grow, supported as it will be by each of its economic successes. Such a momentous step may give us qualms, but if we decide to make the leap after carefully measuring the risks, there is little chance that we will regret it. Tomorrow's Québec will finally be able to negotiate as an equal with the other sovereign peoples of North America in full consciousness of its rights and responsibilities, with all the tolerance of a nation which respects itself and respects others.

There you are, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Gagnon. First question, Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have read your brief with great interest and I think that it contains a great many interesting points. You will allow me first a remark about the survey that you have done. And I am well aware that you do not claim that it was a scientific survey of any sort, but I have

difficulty with your conclusion when you tell me that a majority of the members of the *Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi* consider that sovereignty is the way of the future. If I mathematically calculate the people who replied, 12% of 650 persons makes 80 persons and 80 % of that makes 66 persons, and consequently, we are not of course speaking of a majority of the members. It is your interpretation of the survey which allows you to draw this conclusion and not a majority, as we understand it in the ordinary sense of the term.

But this said, I have found that there is a concept that you introduce in your brief which is completely new compared with the other concepts which have been advanced in the course of the various contributions that we have heard since the beginning of our work. And this concept is found on page 4, where you tell us that the failure of a new referendum would only weaken Québec in the eyes of the rest of Canada and once again reduce the negotiating strength that we presently have. This is the first time that the members of the Commission have been warned against possible failure of the referendum. And we know very well that the pulse of the population of Québec may change dramatically and rapidly. We remember that before June 23, for example, Quebecers in general favoured the Meech Lake Accord, and today, if we look at the scientific surveys which are being taken, Quebecers in general favour the sovereignty option. But in a year, perhaps the pulse will have changed once again. (11:30 a.m.)

Are you telling us to be careful about conducting a referendum because a failure could be very painful to us if ever Québec, once again, voted against sovereignty? I think that this is the message that you want to bring us here, and if this is not so, I would like to hear from you on this. And there is one thing that I would also like to stress, and here I have a little more difficulty because you tell us: in an initial stage, we opt for sovereignty - I think that this is your most basic right, and we must recognize it - but you say on page 3 that this declaration of autonomy will precede any effort at negotiation with the rest of Canada or with other countries. So, if I understand your brief properly, you are telling us to declare sovereignty after a referendum and not to be concerned with negotiating any jurisdiction with Canada or others before declaring this sovereignty. And you add on page 7 - I think that I will try to find the right page, so as not to confuse you and not to confuse myself either - on page 6, excuse me, you say most experts insist that prudence should govern our action, and also that only Quebecers are in a position to build the future of the country. Is there not a contradiction between the fact of saying: Let's proceed immediately to autonomy,

to our sovereignty without consulting anyone, and when you tell us: We must proceed with prudence? It seems to me that there is a contradiction in this and I would like to hear what you have to say about it.

Mrs. Gagnon: So, three questions, Mr. Beaudry, and I will try to be brief. As for the survey, I think that, doing the same calculations as you, we start with a population of 80 respondents in writing, 50 by telephone plus a board of directors who have ratified a decision; and they are, after all, 15 administrators. And I must tell you that as consultants we also have a committee of chairmen who are still within our ranks and this brief has been seen and endorsed by the general organizational structure of the Chamber. So, when we speak of a sampling of more than 150 respondents from a total population of 650, I think that it is very representative. They say that above 100, the sample is valid. So, it is on this basis that we have deduced the strong support of our members, first.

Second, when we speak of failure, we think that we are already on a third try and that the people have already had a rather strong taste of it. I mean that already we have made some progress, we have been through 10 years of progress in which more and more leaders have appeared in Québec. We have a great many in the regions; you represent a good proportion of these leaders. And more and more, we are convinced that we must go forward and that we must stop making gestures which are negative or which leave scars. And I think that, following Meech Lake, we are still in a strange situation, in which, at some point, a people will finally decide they have had enough. Then, when we take steps, they must be thought out so that we go forward and not backward. In this sense, it was fairly clear from the recommendations of our members that we must not fail this time. If this is what we want to do, let's do it, but let's do it properly.

And regarding your statement about declaring independence and then negotiating, it can be understood, we did base our... We have not conducted an exercise as exhaustive as that conducted in the *Chambre de commerce du Québec*, since we already had that work to start from. But still, around the table, we have been able to see, read and summarize certain accounts by economists and others who have nonetheless clearly affirmed that, in itself, carrying out an initial referendum authorized or recognized Québecers' right to make decisions on their political future. And in this sense, we say that at some point we are going to have to act and stop discussing: should we or shouldn't we? What should we do? And later, there will be things to be negotiated, but between equal partners. And since we cannot negotiate between two stools, or

half sitting on one stool, at this moment, we say to ourselves... Well, this is what we have gotten out of the comments of our members.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Gagnon. We will now go on to Mr. Gilles Marcotte, who is the substitute for Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Marcotte: Madam, congratulations on your brief. I particularly like the fact that you take a position in this debate, something the *Chambre de commerce du Québec* did not dare do. My question continues a little on the same line as Mr. Beaudry's. Indeed, you say that the citizens of Québec must know the various possible scenarios in terms of economic partnership. If there has not been a referendum on sovereignty, how can we know the terms and conditions if there have not been discussions with the other partners?

Mrs. Gagnon: I think that the *Chambre de commerce du Québec* was very clear in its statements, both on monetary union and on the different scenarios which could occur. This leads us to believe that... But, for businesspersons, at any rate, a decision must be made. It is certain that if we had to wait to have all the elements in hand before making a decision, we would never make any progress. It is certain that each time we have a decision to make, there are always going to be some risks and some imponderables. On this fact, we could go on for a long time.

I still think that the *Chambre de commerce du Québec* offers ways, offers various solutions. The persons in place and the persons delegated by the people have to see the various scenarios, to see what will happen the next morning in case of Québec separation. Do the borders remain the same, does the currency remain the same, do the interest rates remain the same? What happens the next morning? These business partners have as much interest as we do in continuing to do business with us. Everything is not thrown into question from one day to the next; we think that we must go forward step by step and that the referendum is the first step.

Mr. Marcotte: Several briefs have mentioned regional governments with certain powers.

Mrs. Gagnon: Yes.

Mr. Marcotte: Does this mean that your brief has not examined this question or are you satisfied with the present situations of the municipalities, MRCs, and school boards?

Mrs. Gagnon: On the item of occupation of the territory, we speak of it. However, we were also aware of the share of the other briefs from

the region. I heard Mr. Blackburn, yesterday, tell how we have no free lunches here and it is a fact that... I mean that we may endorse most of the briefs presented to the Commission yesterday. However, our idea was simply that we, in our efforts, asked ourselves whether we would confine ourselves to the position of the *Chambre de commerce du Québec* or did we have more to say. The simple thing that we wanted to say is that, in fact, we endorsed and supported what the *Chambre de commerce du Québec* has done, but at the same time, in the region, the *Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi* has members who believe that we should proceed.

Mr. Marcotte: That is all, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Bouchard, who will be followed by Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to welcome the people of the *Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi*.

Following up on the question which has just been asked, it seems to me that the economic debate which is presently taking place around the decisions that Québec has to make introduces refinements which the debate of 1980 did not bring out. For example, now there is a sort of consensus, if I may say, to the effect that yes, in the long term, the economic perspectives of a sovereign Québec are favourable, so a sovereign Québec is viable, but in the long term. And where the nuance has been introduced this time was in particular by the economists who have come to appear here; it is that in the short term, there will be a transition period which threatens to be difficult.

I would like to ask you about this. You quickly touch on the question on page 5. You brought it up just now in reply to Mr. Marcotte's question. There are economists who say: Careful, we should perhaps not expect English Canada to be rational and that, even if it were in their interest to sit down and settle the terms and conditions of Québec sovereignty within the framework of maintaining an economic union or of a monetary union, even if there were powerful interests which should lead them to do so, English Canada could become very emotional and not do so, in which case the transition could well be difficult and lead to uncertainties which would themselves provoke economic instability.

In your brief, on page 5, you pass over it. You have examined the question. We can see that. But the comment is somewhat perfunctory. You say, for example, that the business world will not come to a stop and this world is not limited and will be never limited to political borders. The Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, in particular, does business throughout the world

and will continue to do so, and so on.

In regard to these comments that certain economists have made here, what do you have to say?

Mrs. Gagnon: You are perfectly right. When we speak of business climate, and this was the main thing that the chamber of commerce was attempting to bring out, there is a business climate even in a period of recession. Are we in a recession, or aren't we? Someone will say: well, anyway, we have a slow-down. The slow-down is aggravated by the uncertainty. We may play on these terms, on these words for a long time. It is certain that if we are in negotiations with partners and we are entering into an aggressive climate, when the negotiations are blamed because the tone changes, the climate may be very different, at that moment. We cannot always foresee it, as we can never foresee the economic climate. Who said it just now? It was in fact Mr. Beaudry who said, from one day to the next, the situation may change completely. It is certain that there are many actions which may change the economic climate. However, we also endorse, like the *Chambre de commerce du Québec*, the fact that the business climate must remain and that we must be a proud people, who work together, who continue to move forward, because facts can't be changed. It was Mr. Benoît Bouchard who said, in a speech to the *Chambre de commerce du Québec*, that the progress Quebecers have made in the last 10 years is irreversible. They cannot be forced to go back.

Mr. Bouchard: 30 seconds.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No, time is up, Mr. Bouchard. I am sorry. Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Do we still have time?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Pardon?

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Do we still have time?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Two minutes.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: OK. That is enough. First, I want to greet you as one chamber of commerce to another, but you should surely give me your recipe for success because I myself am only vice-chairman.

You say, on page 4, that Québec's declaration of sovereignty will not be without a certain feeling of insecurity. To overcome this insecurity, you hope, in addition to a referendum, that the people of Québec will simply be better informed of the consequences, favourable or possibly unfavourable, that the

choice of constitutional status may involve. Could you give us further details? What sort of information campaign or how do you think that this may be done to reassure the people and, second, to provide the further information that you think necessary?

Mrs. Gagnon: I think that I will ask Mr. Martel to reply to this question.

Mr. Martel (Clément): Yes, very quickly. I think that on page 5 of our brief, we speak of monetary and economic union. We have said that what should happen, normally, as a scenario, once Québec has declared its political sovereignty, this is a scenario, of course, which has good chances of becoming reality, from our point of view, and which, up to a certain point, is reassuring.

So, we think, finally, that if people believe that this scenario will take place on the day after the referendum, people must be informed of this and have complete information on a number of questions. We are speaking of economic questions, we are speaking of monetary questions, we are speaking also of matters which affect social programs, for example, which make many people feel insecure when we speak of separation or of Québec sovereignty. But, people, in our opinion, have fears which are not always realistic in relation to this. We must defuse these fears, because it is not by fear that we must decide on our future.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Do you think that we must give the pros and the cons of a series of possible constitutional choices?

Mr. Martel: All information is welcome.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right, Mrs. Steer?

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now go on to Mr. Gil Rémillard. (11:45 a.m.)

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Gagnon, Gentlemen, welcome to the Commission and thank you for agreeing to come and appear before us. You present a brief filled with pride, with determination, a very good brief to follow the brief that was presented to us, to begin our work, by the Chambre de commerce du Québec. Moreover, this morning, Mr. Georges Angers, a journalist from *Le Soleil*, has a very interesting column on this brief by the Chambre de commerce du Québec. It is really interesting to read what he wrote. You go a little further, that is your option, but, in a very special fashion, yours is also a brief of prudence and of wisdom.

Mrs. Gagnon, you have observed the rules of the Commission and you did not read your brief. You presented a summary, brilliantly I might say, very well. If you will allow me, I am not bound by the same rules and I am going to read one part of your brief because I would like my colleagues to understand it very well and to understand your message. The passage that I want to read is on page 4, last paragraph. My colleagues could perhaps read along with me: "Holding a referendum is not enough," - you write - "we must obtain the means to properly inform the people, to show them what we are convinced of in advance. The failure of a new referendum would only weaken Québec in the eyes of the rest of Canada and would further reduce the negotiating strength that we presently have. Confidence in the future of Québec must take root among the political decision makers in order to be communicated to the general public or at least a significant majority. It is precisely this consensus of confidence, the interest of which exceeds partisan sentiments, that we hope to see arise from the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec."

I hope that all my colleagues take good note of this passage that you provide in your brief. And in your opinion, Mrs. Gagnon, what would this consensus of confidence be?

Mrs. Gagnon: I will ask Me Bergeron, who is burning to answer you.

Mr. Bergeron (Richard): You know, Mr. Rémillard, that societies often act like individuals, because societies are collections of individuals. In my area, if an attorney loses all his cases, he quickly loses confidence in himself. The confidence of an individual is like the confidence of a people, it is the accumulation of his victories. And there must be victories. When we say in our brief that another referendum would be harmful, we mean that a people like the Quebecers, with all that this includes, can no longer allow themselves to suffer further failures because as a people, they will lose their confidence in their own ability to take over their destiny and to judge their own worth. We have been through the experience of 1980. It was very different from that of last spring. And in the events of last spring, there was a strange mixture of failure and victory. Failure because Meech Lake, as we all know, did not pass. But victory because - just now, we were speaking of publicity - within this process of disinformation on one side and information on the other, the people of Québec realized, from the testimony of businesspersons who suddenly decided to appear, from the testimony of people from outside, that they were not so bad as all that.

So, we have seen the type of information process which might make the people understand

that, when you come right down to it, they are not so bad, they are not so badly off, they can do it. And this time around, we want to avoid beginning again and spinning our constitutional wheels, which will create an insecure climate for investments and not accomplish much, except that everyone will think that he has won. In the report by the Chambre de commerce du Québec, there was what I would call excessive discretion, which may be appropriate for them. They have established a range of scenarios and they have said: Whatever we choose, we must retain this - but if we read between the lines, because I have worked between the lines, what is said around the table, the 30 representatives of 60 000 members, this as well is perhaps less scientific as a survey, but it is the same - the conditions set by the Chambre de commerce du Québec either are difficult to negotiate, or else lead to a form of sovereignty.

We are excluding the status quo and out-and-out independence. But between the two, if we head towards another form of federalism, we must repatriate all powers over manpower, all powers over the regional economy, all powers over culture, all powers over research and development, education, health, and social welfare. We will leave them stamps and the army. And we are saying even more: We must recover residual powers, those powers in our present Constitution which says that the federal has all the legislative and spending powers which, according to the Chambre de commerce du Québec, do so much harm and are so disastrous economically.

So, finally, when we say that we must be clear - we take a position in this brief - we say yes, it is true but, in the options of the chamber, it says, between the lines - we are on the lines - that no more and no less, we must say, for it to be negotiable, listen, what we want are all economic spending powers, and after that, we will negotiate an agreement with you. But can we hope, logically, seriously, that it is realistic to impose such negotiating conditions on the whole of Canada and expect them to say to us: "Very well, we will sit down and we will give them to you?" They did not even want to give us the Meech Lake minimum. Do we think that they will give us what is asked for in the Chambre de commerce du Québec report? So...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Excuse me, Mr....

Mr. Bergeron: I had finished.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Mr. Blackburn, a quick question.

Mr. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, Madam

Chairman, just now you stated that, effectively, through the survey, the Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi declared itself sovereignist. That is, you do not believe that it would be possible to negotiate a new sharing of powers. And this morning, in answer to a question which was asked of Mrs. Simard, the previous contributor, Mr. Chevette said: How can you say that Canada will not negotiate, or will not desire to negotiate, an economic agreement, and at the same time tell us that it will negotiate a new sharing of powers?

This leads me to say that if we follow this reasoning, are we among those who think that Canada will never want to negotiate a new sharing of powers? Can we really think that Canada will be willing to be associated with us in this economic sharing? And this, basically, is what is disturbing, up to a certain point, for all those who are concerned with this transition period after the referendum. My question is of course also for example in regard to an editorial that we have this morning, in *La Presse*, which says that Canadians, in a survey done by CROP Environics... These surveys show that 72% of the English in the rest of Canada are against sovereignty. My question relates to the chamber of commerce. What is your concern in relation to polls on this scale, which are really worrying for people who are in business, generally?

Mrs. Gagnon: Mr. Blackburn, your question really has several facets. This comes back somewhat to the discussion that we have had since the beginning, that is, we claim, by a statement which has served us that, effectively, Québec is entitled to choose. And from this statement, we say: Let Québec make its choice and after that it will be able to negotiate as an equal. And Mr. Bergeron has just given a quite complete account, given that our chairman almost had to warn him to wind up, of the fact that, in fact, we had already made attempts which had failed and that we could no longer allow ourselves... At present, do we have negotiating strength? At present, do our political representatives feel they have the strength to go and negotiate with the federal side? At present, are we capable of making progress? If we have clear evidence that we are capable of progressing and that, effectively, we are continuing to go forward and that our representatives feel confident, at that point, I should almost turn the question back to you, Mr. Blackburn. Do you feel confident, at present, to go and negotiate things for us in the current context?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Mr. Blackburn, a yes or a no?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!



Mr. Blackburn: An excellent question, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right. We will now go on to Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes, Mr. Chairman, very briefly. Madam Chairman, Gentlemen. I would first like to thank you for appearing before this Commission and I will take advantage of the occasion to point out the remarkable commitment of the *Chambre de commerce de Chicoutimi* to all areas of economic and social development, not only of the city but of the whole region, and, I see, also of Québec.

You have well grasped the mandate of this Commission, which is in fact to formulate recommendations on the political and constitutional future of Québec, since, in the very first part of your document, you take a strong position on what should be the future of Québec. You say that the way is promising in the direction of sovereignty. You base your opinion on a survey that you have carried out, and I was going to say to regret it. Unfortunately, those who question the value of surveys - I am thinking of the one done by the *Caisse populaire Desjardins*, and of yours - have never presented us with surveys which would allow us to say that Québec is in favour of maintaining the federal link. So, I am eager to see this survey. I would not like to take very long since my colleague, Mrs. Marois, wanted to ask you a certain number of questions.

I think I can say, however, that your experience, as professionals, as businessmen and women - in the community of Chicoutimi, you have many members - leads you to believe that the future of Québec resides in sovereignty, and I find you consistent. I would have hoped for the same consistency from the *Conseil du patronat*, which I take the liberty of reading, as Mr. Rémiard did just now. This is a document from the *Conseil du patronat*, fall 1990, which was presented to us, a few months ago, to the members of the National Assembly, which reported on a survey which they carried out among their members and which concludes that, and I quote from page 3 of this document: "Moreover" - speaking of this survey - "about the factors that business considers most critical with respect to the negative influence that they exercise on present economic activity in Québec, business leaders have identified, in order, interest rates" - Québec is not responsible - "the exchange rate, productivity, foreign competition, the general policies of the federal government." And the conclusion of the *Conseil du patronat* was to say, and they invited us, make a pilgrimage to Ottawa. I prefer your conclusion. On this, I appreciate and I also admire your prudence when you say that we will be able to strengthen the determination of

Quebecers to declare sovereignty on condition that we ensure that Quebecers are well informed and that we proceed quite quickly to the holding of a referendum. This is an opinion which I share, and I thank you for it.

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

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I congratulate your chamber, Madam, on having chosen you, and from hearing you and seeing you work with your colleagues, I'm sure that they don't regret it. That being said, you propose a very interesting avenue, in your document. I would perhaps like to hear a little more from you on this, that is... because you mention the risk of insecurity and you say, good, obviously, a decision must be taken relatively quickly, with proper information. And you say, somewhat on the model of collective agreements, basically, the conditions that we had before would continue until we negotiated new ones, once we declared our sovereignty. I think that this is a reassuring detail, but I would like you to tell me a bit more about this, if you have reflected a little more deeply on it. My second question is on types of association. Have you thought about currency, the problem of currency, a monetary union, a customs union? What type of economic association are you thinking of when you say that it will be necessary for us to keep economic links with the other partner that Canada would become?

Mrs. Gagnon: If you wish, Mrs. Marois, we will allow Me Dauphinais to reply to you on this subject.

Mrs. Marois: Certainly.

Mr. Dauphinais (Jean): Mrs. Marois, on the first question, the question of continuity, we are trying to be reassuring; we hope that, if a referendum is held and the people of Québec decide in favour of Québec sovereignty, links will not be automatically cut the next morning. Where we speak of the question of being convincing for the members of the Commission, we hope that this is the mandate that the Commission members think they have. The progression that we are thinking of is that the Commission will decide, after hearing all the briefs, that a referendum should be held. But before holding a referendum, to reassure the population and so that the population will know where they stand, we hope that, with all the briefs and with all the experts who have come before the Commission, the Commission members will be in a position to suggest and recommend to the political authorities who will have to hold the referendum that they establish scenarios, that they determine what are the areas or what

are the items that we can negotiate with Canada, how these elements should be negotiated, what Québec, according to its needs, should go looking for. And in case of failure or refusal to negotiate on the part of Canadians, that they try to establish scenarios which will allow us alternative methods in case of non-negotiation. I will point out to Mr. Blackburn - remembering his 72% - we believe that Canada, after the referendum, after the clear decision of Quebecers that the people of Québec want sovereignty, that the 72% of English Canada will perhaps be different. It is obvious that before separation or before the decision of Québec to accede to sovereignty, English Canada will not say yes to us; they will negotiate with us. This is what we think. But we believe that the method...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We must go quickly...

Mr. Dauphinais: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The form of scenario that the political authorities have put in place, we believe that during the period when the negotiations or the choices take place, business and economic relations with English Canada will continue in normal fashion.

Mrs. Marois: I will tell you that on the other side of the river, in Rivière-du-Loup, the Centre des dirigeants d'entreprises, consulting its members, has also come to the same conclusion as your members. Thank you very much for your contribution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Larouche, Mr. Dauphinais, Mr. Bergeron, Mr. Martel, Mr. Lajole, Mrs. Gagnon, we thank all of your chamber of commerce, your whole group, for its limpidity, its clarity, and also for all the nuances that you bring to working out the process. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:00 noon)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:03 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now resume our work, Ladies and Gentlemen. We welcome the Women's centres of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean-Chibougamau, represented by Mrs. Édith Pelletier and Mrs. Monique Imbeau. Mrs. Pelletier, you have five minutes to present your report.

#### Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean-Chibougamau Women's Centres

Mrs. Pelletier (Édith): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I'd like to begin by pointing out all the respect and open-mindedness the Commission has shown, from the

beginning of these hearings, when receiving Natives, those who have agreed to share their land with us. We hope to receive the same treatment because we believe that, without women, from any standpoint, it would be hard to imagine a future. We think that in addition to undergoing rapid change, new thinking about the role of women has greatly stimulated the emergence of rights-related needs and problems which aren't new, but which are more obvious. For some twenty years now, we've been witnessing a rejection of the system which holds women inferior and half of humanity subordinate. Obviously, the Fathers of Confederation hadn't foreseen such changes and, since that time, the Canadian constitutional framework has proved to be an obstacle to redefining the status of women and increasing their autonomy.

I think that it's now our duty, considering how far we've come, to renegotiate the roles of women and men and the new division of political power between men and women. The Women's Centres in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, in fact there are some 80 in Québec, are day centres. The main objective of our work is to help women develop their emotional, economic and social autonomy. We are not state-controlled or institutional; we rose out of the will of women to have places where they could exchange ideas, help one another and take action. Why? Again it goes back to women deciding to call into question the traditional roles of wife and mother. Pardon me. What can be said is that without money or the right to speak, taught to serve, we can't assert ourselves, we can't demand other roles or occupy a different position.

It's here that the existence of women's centres becomes so very important and that together we'll finally be able to occupy the position we're entitled to and also, among other things, take part in the debate over the political and constitutional future of Québec. For the women's centres in the region, there's absolutely no doubt that a sovereign Québec is the solution for saving the language and culture. However, for the last decade, women's issues have often been tossed like a ball from one level of government to another. Some issues have been considered a hot potato because they affected very traditional moral values. Others have been the subject of election promises and later shelved because there's no money, or it's under federal jurisdiction or provincial jurisdiction depending on who made the promise. To avoid this trap and make sure we get more than just a sympathetic ear, we're now going to give our assent to some achievements.

Therefore we say yes to a sovereign Québec, if it's governed by a team of women and men whose political philosophy is equality and respect for the rights of women; if it favours a system wherein the representation of women in

politics, the courts and other arenas is equal to that of men; if it recognizes and implements the principle of equal pay and equal job opportunities; if it decriminalizes abortion; if it sets up measures to help, not blame, women who are already suffering from poverty; if it takes action against the causes of violence such as the transmission of sexist values, pornography, and violence in the media so that women are no longer killed because they're women and so that assailants are helped before they become killers - remember the Polytechnique and the conjugal violence of the last few months - and if it recognizes the importance of the women's movement and community movements in Québec and the funding that goes along with them.

Don't be shy, you can ask us, we know what we're talking about. We decided, in fact, to limit our participation in the Commission solely to women's issues. We know that other groups have participated and will continue to participate. We support their positions on issues involving the condition of women. We women want to and can invest our skills and energy in a Québec where the rules of the game can be redefined. We think that having a chance to redefine Québec is, in our opinion, an invaluable opportunity to promote new values of equality between men and women. Obviously, many people feel that the demands of the women's movement no longer have a place in today's world and are problems of the past. But I'd like to quote Marie Lavigne, President of the Conseil du statut de la femme, who said that a very wide gap still exists between what women experience and what society thinks they are. In short, we have to move from major principles, what I call symbolic equality, to true equality. We aren't constitutional experts, we don't have any technical solutions. However, we think that women are ready to sit down with the Commission or with Québec so they may further discuss Québec because we know exactly what women experience in their everyday lives. We believe in the enormous potential of women, the "minority" that holds up half the sky. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Madam. The questions will begin with Mrs. Louise Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mrs. Pelletier and Mrs. Imbeau, for taking the time to come and present your brief. I read your brief and observed that many of your concerns are shared by the other women's groups that have preceded you. However, I hope you won't mind if I raise a few comments about your brief. I was somewhat startled by some of the points and I'd like to correct them. On page 1 of your brief, you say that the Canadian constitutional framework has proved an obstacle to redefining the status of women and increasing

their autonomy. I don't really agree with you about that and I'm going to tell you why. First, you'll recall that Canada gave women the right to vote in 1918, some 22 years before Québec. Second, the status of women is really up to Quebecers; you're basically governed by Québec law. We've only to think of the act on family patrimony, the act on family housing, and the 1960 act, a provincial law which put an end to the statute under which a wife was considered as... a woman was considered an incapable person, in the eyes of the law, in the same way as habitual drunks, and so on. Therefore, this is really a provincial framework. I admit that not everything has been done for women, but perhaps the problem shouldn't be attributed to the constitutional framework as such. It is much more a question of provincial authority. But I do agree with you that not enough has been done and that there is still a lot to do, but there are nevertheless bills which have come out, which are very, very advantageous to women.

Another thing which startled me a little was on page 3 when you say that in a sovereign Québec, the language will be saved. I don't quite share your opinion on this subject and I'll tell you why. Language falls under provincial authority. The best proof of this is that Bill 22, Bill 101, and Bill 178, are provincial laws. You could perhaps say that Bill 101 was found unconstitutional by the highest court, the Supreme Court of Canada, I know. But on that point, I could perhaps say that though Bill 101 was found unconstitutional, it wasn't because it had violated the Canadian Charter of Rights, it was in fact because of the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Therefore, it would be... I agree with you that immigration can be a problem in terms of language, but as such, the province of Québec has the power to protect our language. The problem would be much more in terms of immigration, in my opinion. I wanted to mention this in passing.

However, I liked your brief. I was a little... When you say that a sovereign Québec must favour a system wherein the women have equal representation in politics and the courts, I wondered - I agree with you wholeheartedly, the proof is that I'm here - I wanted to know, what kind of election system would you favour to enable women to obtain power?

Mrs. Pelletier: Well, in answer to your last question, we have no mechanism, no system. We think that the day we achieve equality in terms of power, equality on a social and economic level, that's the day we'll obviously be able to reduce inequalities and, in any event, see the entire political and judicial system somewhat differently to avoid arguments like those we've been seeing for some time. I think that it's high time things change and as I said, we have no mechanism, we didn't have the time, either, to

think about that, we aren't... We're working with the foundation, we're working with women who need or who want to go further, but we're nevertheless convinced that we can perhaps... Perhaps after reading this brief one could say: Hey listen, you're dreaming, girls, this won't happen immediately if Québec becomes sovereign. I'm well aware of that. I think we still have a long way to go but as long as we can dream, that means things are going to start happening.

(12:15 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You have 15 seconds left, Mrs. Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: Perhaps I could take a little of your time, Mr. Chairman. I've never gone much over my allotted time before. Couldn't we... Of course there'll be work to do - I agree with you - perhaps even within the political parties, because to attain power, women must first get involved in the political parties.

But someone came here yesterday, André Bédard, and he submitted that each riding should have one female representative and one male representative; the one who was elected would be in the government, and the one who wasn't elected, whether this person was the man or the woman, would be in the Opposition. I'd like to hear your thoughts on the subject.

Mrs. Pelletier: Oh! I'd never thought of that. I don't know, I don't have an answer for you. I don't know. We never gave this any thought. It's as I was saying, we've remained focused on major principles, what we think can help change society. The more women there are in politics and the courts, the more we'll see social change. We need this because...

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

Mrs. Marois: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me pleasure to welcome you and I must tell you, and other women's groups through you, how pleased and proud I am to see women take a stand in the current debate. Everyone knows that this has long been a topic of discussion among women's groups but now, the voice of women is being heard, is being used and heard. Thank you for doing this. Other women's groups have done it across Québec and with the same sensitivity concerning the problems experienced by women.

You're proposing a blueprint for society that I heartily endorse, that I've even defended and continue to defend from other rostrums. Well. You say yes to sovereignty if it adopts this blueprint for society. I'd like to turn the question around. Is the blueprint for society that you're proposing in terms of equality, equity, access to equality, etc., feasible under the current framework of overlapping powers and

debate between levels of government?

Mrs. Pelletier: I think that it is, in fact, difficult when powers overlap. That's what I was saying earlier. Issues are often transferred from one level of government to the other. Everything is always complicated, it's always difficult. There are budgets here, you have to ask for money there... Actually, if we talk about day care centres, no new spaces were created in principle, just the day care centres already in existence were simply given a little support. We think that this is an opportunity to redefine Québec. And we think that trying to take the space we're entitled to, well, this doesn't happen often in the history of a country, a province, the chance to take the time to redefine how we want to function. And, why shouldn't we be there?

Mrs. Marois: Alright. Thank you. I'll give the floor to my colleague who also has some questions for you.

Mr. Dufour: Yes. I'd also just like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and say that I witnessed and took part in promoting the position of women in our society. I'd like to encourage you to continue.

My question, in fact, I'd like to take a look at the manner in which your brief is written. Are you making it a *sine qua non* within a constitution? Are you demanding that everything be in place before you can say yes? And which do you think would be the better way to achieve what you sincerely and wholeheartedly believe in, the proposed system or the sovereignty you seem to support?

Mrs. Pelletier: What's happening is that we're saying "if". Our "if" is very important. Québec sovereignty can of course happen with or without an "if", especially our "if", but, on the other hand, as we represent 52% of the population, it shouldn't be ignored.

Mr. Dufour: Yes, thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Alright? We'll now give the floor over to Mrs. Rosette Côté.

Mrs. Côté: Thank you very much for coming. I fully support your demands. I think that, basically, you've taken advantage of the debate to come and tell the Commission and also the people listening to us that, for quite a long time now, women have been stating demands and wanting to redefine politics and society in another way. You've taken the time to come and restate it and you're not the only group, actually, that has taken advantage of the Commission to say that whether Québec is sovereign or has a renewed constitutional status,

it should provide the means to re-establish the equality between men and women.

However, you know that the women's movement is patient and that there are certain phenomena, such as violence, which cannot be explained by constitutional status. I think that whether we're under a federal system or a sovereign system, we have a long way to go to eliminate the reality of violence. However, you know that the problem of the reality of women is tied to both levels of government. It's more like overlapping, as Mrs. Marois said, and certain cases of overlapping, in fact, put women at a disadvantage. I know that other groups - and you're aware of this as well - have talked, in particular, about all the policies for reintegrating women into the job market, policies which, at the moment, are often taken straight from vocational training budgets or new job retraining programs and also I think that the Criminal Code is tied to abortion. Have you given any thought to what the advantages would be if your "yes" were met and certain powers were patriated, especially in education and vocational training? In what way could women emerge the winners if Québec had sovereign status? Have you given this any thought or did you truly remain on the level of principles?

Mrs. Imbeau (Monique): We really remained on the level of principles. Of course, if vocational training and everything is patriated to Québec, yes, we'll have a lot more advantages, we'll be able to give more to women. That's very certain. But we stayed more on the level of major principles.

Mrs. Côté: Very well.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Fernand Daoust.

Mr. Daoust: When reading your brief and listening to you, I wondered if you weren't bringing up the following problem: you want, like all citizens of a country, to be in a position to clearly see which targets to call into question on an electoral level. Which isn't the case, obviously, in a country such as ours; there are two targets. I won't repeat all the problems of overlapping which were mentioned, the duplication. We've talked about it quite enough over the last few weeks. But you are a constituency that hopes to break through in such and such a field, when you vote federally... Well, this is a target, in fact, this is a political power which is given mandates as a result of the promises it made. When we don't like it, we come back to the level of Québec, to the province, and we elect a government.

Reading your document, I was a little worried. You therefore say yes to a sovereign Québec, if. And then, there are a dozen or so

points. And I said to myself, they basically want only one government, an absence of ambiguity, and to know what they want when they vote. Political formations serve as a vehicle for major projects, and we approve them through universal suffrage. If we don't like them, they are relegated to the Opposition and if we're satisfied with them, men and women, we let them stay in power. Is that, in fact, the basic orientation that you... Listen, you said it yourselves, I'm not putting words in your mouths: being tossed like a ball from one level of government to another, election promises put aside because they are federal jurisdiction or provincial jurisdiction.

This is said in very simple terms but it's a fundamental criticism. My question: Don't you wish there were only one government so that you would know, so we would all know who to call into question? And if we were not satisfied, we could impose electoral sanctions, which are self-evident under those circumstances, against a given political party or formation.

Mrs. Pelletier: Listen, we basically came today to sort of talk about the history of women's demands. These demands aren't easy to attain; we move from one battle to another. Basically, somewhere, I think that another government could advance matters a little, but what we're saying is that, given that we have the opportunity to redefine it, why not build some guidelines into it and introduce stronger, more egalitarian principles which will enable us to move towards equality. That's what we mean. In fact, yes, Québec... but... we can do it. I think it's an incredible opportunity. I can't believe it!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Madam. Two last participants, Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Holden. Let's hope they'll be quick.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. In fact, Madam, there are two opposing things. As you say, there's this long-standing demand for the cause of women, their position in society, employment equality and so on, and, at the same time, there's this project of sovereignty which is on the table, on the political menu. What sort of link do you see between the two? Do you see, in Québec's attainment of sovereignty, in the creation of a Québec state endowed with all the means for finding new approaches to social problems such as women's issues, do you think this link is favourable? Do you see it as a situation that will enable the women's cause to begin reaching its full potential, as you hope?

Mrs. Pelletier: I'm going to rattle on again, just as the women's movement has rattled on for the last 50 years, let's say, and before. We think that now is the right moment for this.

Right because there are things which have changed. More and more, society is realizing that problems of violence, job inequalities, wage inequalities - we can include all this - should no longer exist. Work has already begun, I think. I don't want to be pessimistic, but I think this would provide the women's movement with a great opportunity to redefine it and include some values within a constitution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Go ahead, Mr. Holden.

Mr. Holden: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard, for being brief. Ladies, in the discussion on equality, there are equal opportunity programs and I know that they're more for minorities and that you're a majority. But have you given any thought to the question of affirmative plans or action such as a certain number of positions, let's say, as judges or on commissions, or in the government, so that women would hold at least a minimum of positions and this is controlled by regulation?

Mrs. Pelletier: We have no techniques, no methods. What we wanted to say was that we hope one day things will be 50-50. That's what we wanted to say.

Mr. Holden: Could I suggest to you that if all your "ifs" were granted by a federal government, that it would be the system you'd support?

Mrs. Pelletier: If all our "ifs" were there, we would have nothing to gripe about.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Holden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): It's I who thank you, Mr. Holden, for being so brief. This ends our stay in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, and before handing the floor to Mr. Blackburn, on behalf of the Commission, I'd first like to thank you, Mrs. Pelletier and Mrs. Imbeau, for appearing before us this morning. I'd also like to thank all the people of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region for receiving us so warmly. I might also add at times a bit "too" warmly, but in any event. The floor is yours, Mr. Blackburn.

Mr. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to thank - and I'm sure the regional members of the Parti québécois join with me - the members of the Commission for coming all the way to our beautiful region to listen to our opinions. I'd also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the people who presented briefs, all the participants who presented briefs of quality, and of course,

quality in terms of tone, in terms of clarity. I'm proud to be a minister from a region of such quality.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Blackburn. Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd also like to add my voice to the preceding to say to most, to all the people, that the region has always been a region of heart. But with all we've heard, it must also be described as a region of reason. I hope the work you've accomplished here will be carried through to completion and that we'll have our project in the end.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Dufour. This sitting is now going to turn into a work session and only the members of the Commission and substitutes may be present. Thank you, Ladies. The Commission will remain here.

(End of sitting, 12:31 p.m.)