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

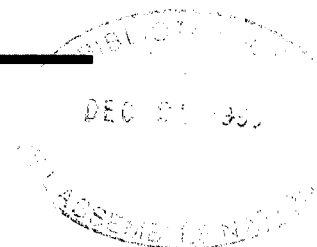
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Val-d'Or, Tuesday, December 4, 1990

Hearings: Organizations and Individuals

(9:34 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We resume our deliberations today in Val-d'Or. I hereby declare open this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. May I remind you that the mandate of the Commission is to study and analyse Québec's political and constitutional status and make recommendations in this respect.

Today, we will hear a fair number of groups from this region which have submitted briefs. We will begin with the Conseil régional de développement de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the Fédération des clubs de l'âge d'or de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue-Ungava, the Town of Val-d'Or, the Regroupement de femmes d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the Collectif rural d'intervention de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the Maison de jeunes La Soupape, the Vallée-de-l'Or RCM, the Abitibi-Ouest RCM, the Témiscamingue RCM, and the Rouyn-Noranda RCM, which are appearing together, the Association étudiante de l'Université du Québec en Abitibi, Mr. Jean Simoneau, the Corporation de la fête nationale du Québec de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Mr. André Richard, the Regroupement d'éducation populaire d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, and the Société nationale des Québécois de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Almost all of today's presentations will last 30 minutes. During a half-hour presentation, provision is made for the group appearing before the Commission to spend five minutes outlining its brief, followed by five minutes of questions from the Government parliamentary group, five minutes of questions from the Official Opposition parliamentary group; members who have registered in advance will have 10 minutes, although each member will be allowed a maximum of five minutes.

We are ready to begin with the Conseil régional de développement de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. I believe you are the spokesperson, Mr. Lemoyne. Would you kindly introduce your colleagues. You will then have five minutes to outline your brief.

**Conseil régional de développement
de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue**

Mr. Lemoyne (Gérald): Thank you, Sir. Here are Mr. Louis-Marie Martin, a member of the executive of the CRDAT, the Conseil régional de développement de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue; Mr. Marcel Jolin, director general of the organization; and Mrs. Lili Germain, a member of the CRDAT secretariat.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, members of the Commission staff, allow me to

first welcome you to the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region.

The Conseil régional de développement de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue is submitting this brief to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec to show its keen interest in our collective destiny. The CRDAT thanks the members of the Commission for allowing it to present its comments on such a sensitive subject. We wish to take advantage of this forum to make known to the members of the Commission our viewpoint on the Québec of tomorrow, from the standpoint of regional development, regardless of the option ultimately chosen with regard to the province's political and constitutional future.

Before I go any further, allow us to describe our organization. The Conseil régional de développement de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue is a private, non-profit public interest corporation. It was founded in 1964 and since its inception has been at the forefront of defending and promoting the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region's interests and development. Since 1987, the CRDAT has also been responsible for ensuring the organization of and follow-up to the Abitibi-Témiscamingue socioeconomic summit.

The CRDAT participates with regional and governmental intervening parties in all initiatives designed to encourage economic, social and cultural development within the organization's territory. At the same time, it acts as a catalyst among dynamic forces in the region and speaks on their behalf. It has over 700 members in 1990-1991, including individuals, school boards, RCMs, municipalities, chambers of commerce, trade unions, big companies, SMBs and so on. In a word, the CRDAT brings together all socioeconomic intervening parties interested in the development of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region. It encourages various activities and collaboration in the community, which it reflects, by acting in regional matters. It is involved in a wide array of activities, in keeping with its membership: forests, mines, agriculture, environment, regional promotion, communications, northern development, transportation, and so on.

The Conseil régional de développement de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue used the notion of regional development as the starting point for its brief, based on the principle that Québec's future is unquestionably tied to that of its regions. The CRDAT feels that Québec's regions must be a party to their future development and ensure that their place in the Québec of tomorrow is reconsidered and reformulated. These recommendations refer to the following principles: increased decision-making power in the regions, coordination of government initiatives, respect for regional priorities, quality

of life, and sustainable development. We are also demanding that regional development fall exclusively under Québec's authority. On more fundamental issues, we reject the status quo and request that a province-wide referendum be held on Québec's political and constitutional future promptly after the Commission completes its deliberations.

Obviously, we feel that regional development is inevitably tied to local development. The recommendations which members of the Commission make will be of great importance to the political and constitutional future of Québec. The CRDAT deemed it worthwhile to submit its ideas on the place the regions must occupy in terms of regional development in the Québec of tomorrow. We feel it is necessary to pay special attention to the place of the regions and the role they can play in regional development.

To this end, powers and structures must be altered in order to give the regions their rightful place. This, members of the Commission, Ladies and Gentlemen, is an overview of the brief we have submitted to the Commission.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Lemoyne. Before we begin the question period, we'll take a few minutes, or a few seconds, to allow residents of the region to welcome everyone. First, Mr. Savoie, then Mr. Gendron, for a few minutes. This will not count toward the time for questions. Be brief, Mr. Savoie.

Mr. Savoie: Thank you, I'll be very quick, first to extend a very cordial welcome to our beautiful region. As you see, we received you with a good snowstorm. We asked for 20 centimetres for the occasion, but the Conseil du trésor only gave us 12, in 1990; obviously, we'll get the other eight in 1991. Welcome. I trust we'll all listen attentively to the briefs submitted and hope that we'll ask the relevant questions.

I am very pleased to see the CRD, which I deem to be very important, start off the day. I also congratulate those who have submitted briefs, who took the time to prepare them and who, I am sure, will arouse considerable interest about our region and spark many questions after. Congratulations to the members of the CRD, in particular, for the quality of their brief. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Gendron, are you to speak, or is it Mr. Trudel, or both of you?

Mr. Gendron: Yes. Very briefly, I would like to cordially welcome members of the Commission. I'm hardly surprised that we start with the statement that the Conseil du trésor has even

found a way, at a time of austerity, to trim the thickness of the snow. That fact notwithstanding, I am very pleased to welcome members of the Commission, but, above all, to say to residents of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, "bravo" for your perspicacity in submitting more briefs than a number of other regions, although we will not have the opportunity to hear all of them.

I congratulate Abitibi residents who have made sure that the message they wish to deliver to members of the Commission is clearly heard. I hope that most of the members of the Commission will bear in mind that residents of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region have always expressed pride in a Québec that more closely resembles them. I think that testifying before the Commission will give us an opportunity to make ourselves better known, because it is always important to make ourselves better known in terms of what is unique. I wish you all a pleasant day, and welcome members of the audience at today's sitting. Thank you.
(9:45 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen. We now begin the question period with the Official Opposition group. Mr. Gendron.

Mr. Gendron: Thank you to the members of the CRD, whom I have the advantage of knowing well. I think that an organization like yours, with over 700 members, was duty bound to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Commission's visit to examine Québec's constitutional future and to present its viewpoint on the matters which have drawn your attention.

I was pleased to note in your brief that you understand, of course, that a better future for Québec is tied, without a doubt, to the future of its regions. You have focused on a number of situations which are close to you, for example that it is vital to grant Québec's regions greater decision-making powers. You are also aware that having to deal with two levels of government for some time has created distortions and major disadvantages. There is every reason to better harmonize various types of intervention at the regional level.

You also note, quite rightly, that it is not everything to define our priorities, we must also have the wherewithal to ensure a little more respect. Showing respect for regional decisions strikes me as rudimentary. The CRD, which has always played a major role in fostering collaboration with regard to various policies here in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, is in a good position, I think, to discuss the disadvantages of and failure to respect certain decisions reached in the regions.

The quality of life and sustainable development are also factors we must stress

because it is certain that the Abitibi region, like other regions, hopes for sustainable development which reflects environmental concerns. When we speak of sustainable development, I think we do so because we share the same values as the rest of Québec.

I would first like to ask the following question: Like others before you, you have proposed, and I am especially proud of this, that our region or the regions of Québec exercise certain powers. After confirming loud and clear that there is every reason to broaden our capacity to exercise certain powers, I would expect you to be a bit more explicit in detailing the types of very clearly defined responsibilities which the regions should enjoy. My question is this: in your opinion, what powers should the regions of Québec exercise?

Mr. Lemoyne: First, what we, like other regions of Québec, would like, is a general law which establishes... that Québec have an established regional development policy and that it be enshrined in a general law. Why a general law? Simply because there are a number of policies which governments have put forward but, unfortunately, these policies have not been elaborated in cooperation with the communities concerned. Often, such policies have come down from on high, and we in the regions have been told: Regional development should be carried on like this. First, then, we are saying that this policy should be devised in the regions and trickle upward, not the reverse. Obviously, this strikes me as an important power, when it is recognized that the basis for the notion of regional development must come from the regions. This strikes me as very important.

Next, with respect, for example, to the programs of various departments concerned with regional matters, we feel that the region should participate in elaborating the regional programming of such departments. Moreover, when regions reach a decision about their own development, governments should, through procedures to be established, respect the regions' commitments or priorities, established by their residents.

In concrete terms, what does this mean? It may mean... A number of possibilities have been contemplated. We have not reached a final decision in this regard. Whether we have a regional government or a different type of deputation, what we are seeking, ultimately, is recognition of the principle that the regions participate in their development, not just in theory. We want decision-making power concerning programs and funding to be made available to existing or future agencies in the region which are thoroughly conversant with the best means of developing the region and are in a much better position to foster regional development.

Mr. Gendron: Mr. Lemoyne, you have also spoken about the duplication of a number of policies and have even judged rather severely, although, in my view, accurately, federalism, which is a failure in terms of implementing regional development policies. Would you have...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You're out of time, Mr. Gendron. There will, possibly, be other opportunities today to discuss the same ideas. May I interrupt you?

Mr. Gendron: It is you, Mr. Chairman, who are in charge.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): When you start so gently it's hard to stop. Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Gendron: Could I finish my sentence?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, yes.

Mr. Gendron: To finish my sentence, as you severely judge the failure of federal policies, I would like to know what policies, concretely, have most adversely affected the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region?

Mr. Lemoyne: Do I have time?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, go ahead, but be quick 'because the answer may be long, but go ahead.

Mr. Lemoyne: Rail transportation is a brief illustration which people in the region will understand fully.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, if people in the region have understood, then the members of the Commission have understood, too. We now move on to another group of questions, from the other members of the Commission, starting with Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had the pleasure of joining some of you for coffee last evening and am happy to see you here. I read your brief. It is well written, open, and stresses successful undertakings. It outlines a situation and needs that all legislators must accept. You answered Mr. Gendron's first question; the second one was shorter and I am pleased. I will not return to it. I would like you to tell us how you manage to operate. And your operating model could surely serve as an example.

The CRDAT, or assistance centre, is an agency run by members of the community. Decisions are also taken by members of the community. Ottawa would not intervene in any way, unless it was to provide funds. Your

reports do not appear to be disputed or even rejected. Sums of money, financial assistance is given to you, which I find important and indeed interesting. With the necessary financial assistance, you manage to organize the community and ensure that decisions are reached in the community.

Would you like to tell us more about this dynamic that you, as an organization, have adopted and made work in a very worthwhile fashion?

Mr. Lemoyne: Obviously, we need money to operate. Money is not always the best tool, but it is one of the most important tools. Like all other CRDs in the province, we receive a grant from the Québec government; the remaining funds come from the community, with funding split fairly equally between the provincial government and the community. We do not receive any operating grants from the federal government.

Within our organization is a 42-member board of directors representing all sectors of the region, and a 10-member executive. Obviously, we seek collaboration and it is for this reason that we speak of ourselves as a catalyst in the brief. We work together on various questions. Occasionally, we endeavour to obtain things for the region. At other times, we carry out particular projects on our own. Our method of operation is very simple: collaboration. I think we succeed fairly well in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region.

We must work together, that is very important. In a so-called outlying region, people must get together to make themselves heard. Obviously, we would like to get a better hearing from the central governments. However, we often have the impression that, because we account for only 2.6% of the population, little or no account is taken of this criterion in listening to us, although, for example, we are a resource region. For example, in terms of forests, we account for 40% of Québec's output, 25% of mining production, and as much in terms of farming.

What is taken into account when governments listen to us is, unfortunately, only that we account for 2.6% of the population. We can perhaps explain this, although not necessarily understand it, by saying that politics being what they are, we account for only 2.6% of voters.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaumier.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to draw your attention to page 6 of your brief where you state that we should maintain rural communities and municipalities. I would like you to elaborate on this matter. I appreciate your viewpoint in wishing to sustain

rural communities because, in the briefs dealing with your region, some organizations and individuals nonetheless advocate creating bigger municipalities. I would like you to explain how this could be expressed in legal terms or in a future constitution.

Mr. Lemoyne: Rural development strikes us as essential. I think that Québec is not only the central regions but the outlying regions as well. However, the regions are not just major centres, but rural communities as well. I believe the principle is the same; regardless of the starting point the principle is the same. In Canada as a whole, I think we must take into account the provinces. Within the provinces, we must take into consideration all of the regions, and within the regions, all of the people living in them.

Why do we feel rural development is important? I do not think we can develop a territory unless we occupy it. This basic principle strikes me as essential. There are residents of rural communities who enjoy what they feel is a good quality of life, and wish to remain where they are. It is a matter of establishing policies which sustain these rural communities. The way to do this is through appropriate policies.

There are a number of things which can be done. Here is an example of what can be done in the regions. There are, at present, some 9000 intramunicipal lots belonging to the government, which the latter has decided to sell. We decided to work together at the regional level. We decided that these lots should serve rural communities, thus enabling them to engage in developing their sector. As someone said, as others have said before me, "Small is beautiful". Things don't necessarily have to be gigantic to be viable and worthwhile. It is in this perspective that we feel rural development is very important. Some residents choose to live in these places because of the quality of life there. We must adopt policies that will enable them to continue to do so. At present, government policies tend toward centralization, at least, we have the impression that our governments are saying: We'll develop the centre and spinoff will reach the other regions. We are saying the opposite. Let's start developing at the base; this will not make a strong centre, but a strong country, Québec.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Savoie.

Mr. Savoie: Yes, thank you. Up until now, the Commission has cited a number of surprising elements with regard to regional development. For example, it has been observed that, in a number of regions, people are more aware and

... speak more aggressively than elsewhere, and that they seek to obtain a bit more authority with regard to regional development in their territory. Obviously, I am also pleased to note that, among ourselves, people have spoken very eloquently. What I have observed is that you say: Well, fine, cities are certainly important, but they must not, ultimately, serve as a guide, with respect to cities, or the RCMs. It is coordination agencies which must be responsible for regional development and this, in essence, is what has been said until now when the Commission has sat in the regions.

On page 3 you say there are too many intervening parties. You, and others, have spoken about this. Personally, I feel it is the key to the brief. When you come along and tell us that there are too many elements, too many intervening parties, for example in planning... I would like to know more. How exactly do you intend to reduce the number of intervening parties, and what new structures must be implemented? Could you discuss this matter further?

(10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Lemoyne: Well, I believe we obviously must reduce the number of intervening parties. The more intervening parties there are, the less efficiency there is. This strikes me as a self-evident truth. How can we achieve this. It's very simple. We think we must... First, what we are saying is that the basic principle is to draw decision-making power closer to people at the grassroots level, so that it is not being imposed from on high, but comes from below. In order to attain regional power, we think that the body in charge of regional development should encompass all of the intervening parties. In our view, it should not be the preserve of one party or a number of intervening parties, but involve all of the intervening parties.

The model of the CRDAT, and I am not saying it must be the CRDAT, but I do feel that a model such as this one could certainly serve as a basis for regional development, because within an organization such as ours are found all of the intervening parties in the region, including trade unions, businesses, municipalities and school boards. Everybody is represented within an organization such as ours and, strangely enough, even though our board of directors has 42 members, the organization functions smoothly. This is because we are dealing with very practical matters, with regional development, and we deal with regional development according to the needs of which we are aware.

Once we know what we want it is fairly easy to reach agreement. However, everybody must be present to do so. Things must be different from what they are now, with programs sent down from on high. There is one example we give frequently, and that is the grant program covering ski centres in Québec. Under

the program, mountains under a certain height are ineligible for grants. There are no mountains of the required height in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, but that doesn't mean we don't want to ski.

I think that people in our region, like the other regions of Québec, are entitled to these things. You have only to look at the congestion on ski slopes to see that skiing is very important in our region. Because standards were set from on high, without consulting people down below, we end up with programs which often do not apply to regions such as ours. Reference is often made in programs to the population or similar things, and we are often excluded for this reason. If an organization based on the CRD was asked to think about regional development, I think the results would be far superior and the country overall would benefit.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): One last, short question?

Mr. Saviole: Yes, one last, short question. I was also surprised to learn that you do not actually take a stand on the basic issue. If I recall, you say: Do what you want, but offer us structures which will enable us to develop and, if I understand correctly, that also includes financing?

Mr. Lemoyne: One correction. We do not say: Do what you want. To the contrary, we say: Do what we want.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Lemoyne: Obviously, this is a significant nuance. The only thing is that we do not take a stand on the basic issue for the simple reason that we have not consulted our members in this respect. The members of the executive and the board of directors could probably have indicated what they thought, but they would only be expressing their own viewpoints. We feel that we should represent the entire region and, because we have not consulted our members, we do not feel that we should take a stand on the basic issue.

Mr. Saviole: So, no consultation, no public position...

Mr. Lemoyne: That's right...

Mr. Saviole: ...still.

Mr. Lemoyne: One of our recommendations is that a referendum be held, and this strikes us as important.

Mr. Saviole: It would be interesting.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It remains for me to thank you, Messrs. Lemoyne, Drouin and Jolin, and Mrs. Germain, for this very interesting presentation. You have opened today's sitting, so you have not yet felt the full heat of debate. Because we have many groups today, I would ask you to leave the table as quickly as possible to my right. Everyone will want to congratulate you, but if they do it on the side, those following you can enter from the other side on my left and be seated. Things will go faster. Thank you, and again, please exit that way. Thank you very much.

I now ask members of the Fédération des clubs de l'âge d'or de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue-Ungava to be seated at the table.

We're feeling the effects of the bad weather; not all of the members representing the group before us have arrived, although one member, Mr. Zéphirin Bouchard, Treasurer of the Fédération des clubs de l'âge d'or is here. Members of the Commission have received the brief and in the interest of maintaining the order of our discussions, we will proceed with Mr. Bouchard, for the time being the only representative. If the others arrive during the presentation, they may be seated at the table. Mr. Bouchard, you have five minutes to orally summarize the brief which members of the Commission have already received. You have the floor.

**Fédération des clubs de l'âge d'or
(Abitibi-Témiscamingue-Ungava)**

Mr. Bouchard (Zéphirin): Thank you, Mr. Bélanger. Here I am, as we say in Québécois, caught with my pants down.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: ...but what's happened, I wasn't...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Take over from them, Mr. Bouchard, take over.

Mr. Bouchard: ...I wasn't supposed to present the brief. So, please forgive me if there are some things that aren't quite right. However, I'll try to get by. The brief prepared by the golden agers, submitted to the Commission, reads as follows: The objective of the consultation of the brief of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec presented by the Fédération des clubs de l'âge d'or, ATU, if you like, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Ungava, representing 12 000 members belonging to 72 golden age clubs in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, whose members are recruited among people 50 or over.

The Fédération des clubs de l'âge d'or was established in 1970 under the name Conseil

régional du Nord-Ouest. At the request of our members, we changed our name in 1978 and again in 1988, when we adopted the current name. However, the objectives of our association have never changed, that is, to group together all the elderly people in our territory to adequately satisfy their needs and speak on their behalf.

Here is the general presentation: The elderly in Québec make up an economic reserve. In 1980, during the referendum, it was said that Québec was not ready to become sovereign. Have we done much since then to prepare ourselves for sovereignty? Perhaps we should have launched concrete initiatives throughout the province to revitalize and enhance farming. We know that farming is the basis of everything. It is the wealth of a country and it has been completely abandoned, in our opinion. Society as a whole must do something about it.

First, we need schools of agriculture and cooperatives, and incentives for young people to take up farming. Among the elderly are a number of retired farmers who would be pleased to advise young people wishing to become farmers and even help them get started. Quotas of all sorts have discouraged young people from engaging in farming. Through cooperatives, it would be possible for young people to start off on a small scale and grow as their financial capacity permits.

We could also assist young farmers wishing to get started by helping them build a house. There are so many lumberyards that are going to be lost and which could help those who want to earn a living. As the proverb would have it, "Give a fish to someone who is hungry and you will kill him. Teach him instead to fish and keep him alive". The elderly, through their experience and competence in a number of fields, can help solve many problems. In this way, the elderly would feel like full-fledged citizens, capable of participating in Québec's expansion. By helping their fellows, they would stay in better physical and mental shape. Sovereignty can be achieved smoothly, without renouncing everything that our ancestors built. The elderly enrich the community, socially and economically, if they are respected and maintained in a stimulating environment. One has to know how to listen to them and analyse with them their needs, our needs, and the needs of all Quebecers.

Throughout the so-called developed world, experienced people are called upon in research, music, and the arts, to name but a few. The elderly share their experience and their competence is stressed. One example is the Nobel Prize. Consequently, when we look at the future of the elderly, the young, the not so young, indeed, the entire province, it is obvious that their experience depends on the success of current and future programs.

Our recommendations. First of all, involve

the elderly in government policies, in everything which affects them directly. One example is home care, keeping the elderly in their homes instead of putting them away, as our former politician R  al Caouette would say, in henhouses. Second, recognize and make use of the experience of the elderly in decision-making, ask their opinions when certain projects are implemented. Third, establish round tables where the experience of specialized elderly people is used with regard to specific sectors, such as education, health, economics, agriculture, culture and so on. Fourth, mandate the CLSCs to do everything possible to facilitate home care. Fifth, the provincial and federal governments should adopt policies governing grants for the elderly whose resources are limited. Sixth, subsidize volunteer agencies such as our *F  d  ration des clubs de l'  ge d'or* to ensure that they maintain or organize information and training programs. Seventh, involve in the elderly on the boards of directors of CLSCs, hospitals, and economic support programs. Choose those people whose experience is relevant to the agency's objectives. Eighth, provide academic training. And, incidentally, develop a program adapted to people capable of helping the elderly in their homes. This would create jobs which would be jointly managed with the health and employment departments. Ninth, persuade the elderly who are able to do so to pay part of the wages of these new employees to achieve some measure of comfort for themselves...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel B  langer): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard for...

Mr. Bouchard: ...and the pride of staying in their homes as long as possible.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel B  langer): I beg your pardon, Mr. Bouchard. You added a ninth recommendation. There were just eight on my list. That is why I interrupted you. I would not have done so otherwise because, all the same, you are representing singlehandedly a group of five. I thank you and have left you a bit of extra time to finish, except I interrupted your last sentence. Would you care to repeat the last recommendation, as not everyone understood it. (10:15 a.m.)

Mr. Bouchard: It is to persuade the elderly who are able to do so to pay part of the wages of these new employees to achieve some measure of comfort for themselves and the pride of staying in their homes as long as possible.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel B  langer): We will now turn to the questions. First, Commission members. Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Mr. Bouchard, it is noteworthy that golden agers in the Abitibi-T  miscamingue

region felt it worthwhile to appear before the Commission. They are one of the few groups who have made the effort to share with us their special problems and their interest in Qu  bec's economic and political life.

Two of your recommendations are of particular interest to me. The first: "Involve the elderly in government policies..." First, I would like to know in what level of government you would like the elderly to get involved. At the provincial, federal, regional or local level? What kind of participation might the elderly engage in with regard to these policies?

Second, in your fifth recommendation, you express the desire for governments to subsidize through their policies those elderly people whose resources are too limited. In this instance do you mean simply increasing existing pensions, or do you contemplate more active participation by the elderly in the subsidies which might be granted to you?

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Beaudry, this perhaps does not necessarily mean increasing pensions. Elsewhere we stated that if you want to kill someone, give him a fish; if you want to help him, show him how to fish. Perhaps we should limit ourselves to these broad ideas. Perhaps...

Mr. Beaudry: What type of subsidy do you think should be granted to you?

Mr. Bouchard: Perhaps it is subsidies... In our federation, we use membership cards. Members in golden age clubs purchase a card, or a membership, if you like. Part of the membership fee goes to the federation. At present, the federation receives \$4 of each membership. With 12 000 members, that means between \$45 000 and \$48 000. We receive another grant from the MLCP which pays our director general for the office. This is all we have; it is not enough to finance the organization. We need perhaps \$40 000 or \$50 000 more. We try to get this money through activities, by involving residents of the region in organizing activities, perhaps, to make up the shortfall. As a result, perhaps if we weren't compelled to proceed in this fashion, we could devote our energies to other things. In the end, we have to find the funds necessary to operate and exist. We cannot call that operating, in essence, we're simply changing four quarters for a dollar. That's what we're doing.

Mr. Beaudry: Now, you also talk about the involvement of the elderly in government policies.

Mr. Bouchard: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: At what level do you think

the elderly should be involved? At all levels? In what way would they participate actively?

Mr. Bouchard: I will perhaps repeat what Mr. Lemoyne said earlier: It is people at the grassroots level who know what they want. So, perhaps they could be involved in all types of... For example, if there were a regional government or a provincial government, you can call it what you like, the government at the time, if we achieve sovereignty, perhaps it would be at both levels. If it's at the local level, that's the first thing, because that is the level where everyone is aware of what is going on locally. Then, perhaps, at the provincial level, or at the national level, the level of the country, perhaps its name will change, the terms will change, in any event, that is more or less what we intend.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn to Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two notes and, as our colleague, Mr. Beaudry, said, we must obviously congratulate you for presenting the report and, above all, for getting directly involved in a fundamental process.

On page 2 of your brief you state: "Sovereignty can be achieved smoothly, without renouncing everything that our ancestors built". How do you see that sovereignty can be achieved smoothly, and what do you mean by "without renouncing everything that our ancestors built"?

My second question relates to your fifth recommendation. I would like you to explain it further.

Mr. Bouchard: Smoothly, I don't know. Perhaps we are accustomed to changes of government, as a result of elections. If we are not satisfied with a government, perhaps, another presents itself and says it will do better. We know that governments are similar to each other; this is the only basis for saying it can be achieved smoothly. I think Quebecers are used to being tolerant. We are, perhaps, capable of distinguishing between something that is good and something that is less so. We live in a democratic country. I think we have learned to exercise democracy. That is how we see the question. This does not mean that some people will not be wronged, but that, in general, we can do it, we can perhaps seek the powers we need.

Sovereignty is practically the only way. At present, we are partly sovereign. There are matters we would like to decide upon, but we cannot do so because we are blocked at another level. If we had the means, I think we are experienced enough, mature enough, as you will, to manage our affairs as best we can. Quebecers

have enough experience in all fields to be capable of administering their own affairs. We already have proof. We have industries, businesses, all sorts of things. Those who think that sovereignty will demolish everything, and we see... At some point, when the idea took root, people thought it was far-fetched. In the past 15 or 20 years, everyone has had a chance to express an opinion and we have gradually come to accept, if you like, the idea that we are capable of administering ourselves.

Mr. Hogue: But you acknowledge, for example, that Mr. Saint-Julien has represented you fairly well until now in the riding.

Mr. Bouchard: It is not a question of our people representing us poorly. That is not the idea. Rather, we are lacking the means and must seek to obtain them. That's all.

Mr. Hogue: And that is the gist of your fifth recommendation?

Mr. Bouchard: Well, to some extent. Perhaps we have somewhat condensed the matter. You have probably noticed that our brief is fairly condensed. We wanted to try to present it in half an hour. Perhaps it's a little too condensed. Anyway.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn to questions from the Government party. Mr. Russell Williams.

Mr. Williams: I would like to thank you very much for the brief you have submitted to the Commission today. With all due respect to those who have contributed to Québec's remarkable development, I must express my admiration for what you have accomplished. In my community, the elderly also play a very important role in terms of the quality of life.

With your permission, I would first like to return to one of your recommendations, specifically the third one concerning the mandate to be given to CLSCs to ensure home care. As you are probably aware, the CLSCs already have this mandate, and it is estimated that over a quarter of their budgets are allocated to such care.

In conjunction with the reform to be adopted next Friday, the pivotal role of the CLSCs in terms of home care will be increased. Increasingly, with average budgets of over \$3 000 000, the CLSCs are playing an important social and economic role in the community. The federal and provincial governments share responsibility for the social affairs sector. Federal umbrella legislation covers the Canadian system. There are five criteria, over \$1 200 000 000 in equalization, but we manage our own social affairs system. Do you think that

the health of the elderly will be better protected in a sovereign Québec or in a system with federal ties?

Mr. Bouchard: Better still, I cannot tell you what the future holds in store because I am living in the present. However, if we seek various powers and achieve sovereignty, it is clear that we will administer all of these programs. That being the case, I have confidence in Quebecers, in those who will manage the programs, that they will be as competent, perhaps as a federal government for the part that it manages and subsidizes. I think that Quebecers, perhaps I am repeating myself, are just as lucid as anyone else and as knowledgeable as anyone else.

As for myself and those I represent, I don't think we're afraid, nor do we wonder: Is this going to work, is that going to work? We have proof. Clearly, there may be a number of hitches, we can't avoid it, it's normal. Perhaps there will be snags. Mistakes will be made as they have always been made. But that is not the question. When you start something... When you leave on a trip in your car, it's obvious there may be problems along the way; however, that does not prevent us from setting out.

I think that the elderly live by things other than hearsay, fears and so on. That means they have set their hand to the plough. They have worked. I think that young people who follow their example are capable of doing as much. This is what we think, this is the general idea. I am confident that, if we repatriate the powers we want, we will be capable of administering them. I have no doubt about this, but to tell you how, at this point, it's hard to anticipate, I'm not there yet, I'm not somebody who has the answer. I am simply confident.

Mr. Williams: But you mentioned the importance of financial security for the elderly. The title of your brief is "Economic force..." We heard Québec economists say that we will perhaps experience economic shortcomings if we obtain sovereignty. Does that disturb you, the possibility of economic shortcomings, and the potential loss of part of the economic security you have demanded?

Mr. Bouchard: I don't think the elderly are afraid of losing their pensions. Perhaps some of them are not as well informed, perhaps it frightens them because we are normally afraid of things we don't know and we ask ourselves questions. However, people who are informed and have been involved in all manner of administrations are not asking themselves this question. They know it will work. There may be things we lose in some instances, and other things we will gain, so things will balance out. But to say that everything will be exactly as it

is today is illusory. A number of things will change, that is normal. In the case of change, we are not striving to worsen our situation, but to improve it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn to Mrs. Blackburn of the Official Opposition group.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bouchard, I would like to thank you for appearing before the Commission and tell you that I find your remarks refreshing because the elderly are builders and you say: We are confident. If we look at current trends, we have the impression that the Quebecers you have mentioned are confident in themselves.

You propose a number of themes for reflection with respect to what might constitute a policy governing the elderly and which are especially relevant to the definition of your needs and the tools you require. I have several questions. The first concerns the referendum which most of the agencies appearing before the Commission have requested at the earliest possible moment. In your opinion, should the referendum be held as soon as possible? What question should be put to Quebecers?

(10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Bouchard: We have not discussed this question among ourselves at the federation. However, reading between the lines we see that a referendum can satisfy everybody, people say, if everybody participates in it. If all Quebecers participate in the referendum and express themselves, it will be a good thing to hold the referendum. If a majority of Quebecers, as the opinion polls suggest, as it would appear at present, I can't see how... The referendum would simply confirm the certainty that this is what people want. It would confirm the wishes of the people. However, if we already have that confirmation, I fail to see why we should spend millions of dollars. This is what we think. It's a matter of being practical.

Mrs. Blackburn: So you are saying: A referendum, yes, but not necessarily if we feel that the conclusions now being drawn are sufficient...

Mr. Bouchard: Well, if the general conclusion is that this is what people want, why say yes, yes, yes instead of saying yes...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: What do you expect, that's how we take it.

Mrs. Blackburn: Ha, ha, ha! Well, assuming there were a referendum, you were saying earlier that fear among those who are not familiar with

matters affecting their future, their income or their old age pension... Do you think, like certain other agencies which have appeared before the Commission, that there should be a solid information campaign to clarify the remarks of the Association des économistes, or better clarify them to ensure clearer understanding among Quebecers, to enable them to reach a more enlightened decision?

Mr. Bouchard: In my view, if the people responsible for elaborating the programs that we feel we'll be capable of establishing in a sovereign Québec of the future explain the programs, this may dissipate doubt. This may be necessary. Not even "may": it would be necessary. Perhaps we will have to dwell on this matter and move away from general notions...

Mrs. Blackburn: Alright...

Mr. Bouchard: ...concerning programs and explain them to people.

Mrs. Blackburn: And your association...

Mr. Bouchard: And perhaps specify the advantages and disadvantages. Overall, what will we be looking for? What will remain?

Mrs. Blackburn: Alright.

Mr. Bouchard: If we make such and such a gesture, do such and such a job or some thing or other, there is always a result. Is the result good or bad? Is it advantageous? If it's more advantage than not, that's that. This is the direction we should move in, and continue to improve. This is what we do in life and this is the standpoint of which we must not lose sight. We are not working with a view to dropping everything or losing everything; we are striving to improve ourselves and do better in the future. This is what we are attempting to do. Experience tells us that we mustn't panic. Instead, we must say: We have both feet on the ground and as long as we can use our heads, feet and arms, we will be capable of doing something. This is how we envisage the matter.

Mrs. Blackburn: Assuming there were a referendum, would your association be willing to disseminate the necessary information?

Mr. Bouchard: Absolutely, because we are already doing so when...

Mrs. Blackburn: Indeed.

Mr. Bouchard: ...we have structures which allow us to do so.

Mrs. Blackburn: Have you thought about...

One minute?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Last question.

Mrs. Blackburn: Last question? Have you thought a bit about what would be the place... In the last paragraph, which I find very interesting, you say that you did not have time to read and which I will take the liberty of rereading, with your permission, Mr. Chairman. On page 5 you say: "We must learn to listen to the elderly; we must learn to listen to Native peoples when they tell us to be careful with the environment; we must listen to young people when they express the ardent wish to find a stable job once they have completed their studies; we must listen to immigrants, who also have a great deal of relevant knowledge and experience". My question is more closely tied to Native peoples and English speakers. Have you thought about what their rights might be in the constitution of a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Bouchard: We cannot sidestep the issue of basic rights. As a people, we cannot allow ourselves to say: We have one category of privileged individuals and the others are cast aside. That's not true. I'm against that, and the federation agrees with me. Everyone must be equal and we must be capable of elaborating the structures required to ensure such equality. We are free to do whatever is necessary to live as free individuals in the 20th century. We must not regress. As I noted at the beginning, I think that Quebecers are tolerant enough to be able to... Perhaps we can criticize and fuss about some things, but essentially this is what we must examine. This is what... This is our underlying thought and our basic way of behaving. That is, I think, the essence of the matter.

With regard to Native peoples, they were here long before us. I worked with Native peoples for 10 years. They are congenial to work with, I was pleased. I would work again with them tomorrow. That doesn't mean that because they are making claims they are no good. They are better than we are. I say this frankly, in front of everybody, because their behaviour, if you like, how can I say this?, their motto about life, if you will, is based on fundamental qualities centred on respect for many things we have forgotten. They try to remind us about it from time to time. In some respects, I think it would be in our interests to listen to them. Then, we must... We cannot do without their contribution.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): With that, Mr. Bouchard, your time is up. We must thank you for brilliantly taking up the challenge of singlehandedly representing your federation. You present...

Mr. Bouchard: Yes, but I wasn't prepared.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Perhaps that proves something, but I don't know exactly what. Please thank the members of your group on our behalf. Please apologize on our behalf for our proceeding without them. I trust the weather has not caused them problems on the way, despite the fact that they were unable to appear on time. Again, with our thanks, we would be grateful if you would leave the table so that we can move on to the next group, the Town of Val-d'Or.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you for listening to me.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear the Town of Val-d'Or. It is one of the prerogatives of this Commission to be able to welcome many mayors in their own municipalities. So, Mr. Mayor, we welcome you in your town and are listening. To begin, please introduce the members of your group, then take five minutes to present the highlights of your brief.

Town of Val-d'Or

Mr. Pelletier (André): With pleasure, Mr. Chairman. To my left is my colleague Pierre Corbell, a municipal councillor; to my immediate right, Mr. Oriol Riopel, and next to him, Mr. Richard Couture, who are also municipal councillors.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, thank you for travelling to the regions. Thank you, too, for joining us in our beautiful valley of gold, or yellow gold, of green gold and, this morning, white gold. In my capacity as mayor and a municipal councillor, it is with... We are aware of what a privilege it is for us to be here this morning and, as elected Val-d'Or municipal officers, we wish you a very cordial welcome. It gives us pleasure to express the opinion of the Val-d'Or town council on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

In order for Québec to achieve its dignity and equality and fully develop its economy, language and culture, Quebecers must be sovereign. The latest constitutional negotiations have demonstrated this clearly: Québec cannot hope to obtain the tools needed to ensure its development without first establishing relations based on equality with the rest of Canada.

Quebecers must first adopt among themselves as broad a consensus as possible on the most effective means of developing fully. We believe that this necessary balance of power will establish itself in the wake of a referendum in which a majority of Quebecers will declare themselves in favour of this option. Once we have established our position and determined our

future direction, we can negotiate as equals all manner of agreements with the rest of Canada and the world. We must not underestimate Québec's socioeconomic capacity to achieve complete sovereignty. Our success in various fields testifies to this certainty: health, education, and the Régie de l'assurance automobile. The success and durability of Québec businesses and institutions, such as the Caisse de dépôt et placement, the Mouvement Desjardins, the National Bank, Hydro-Québec, Noranda, Domtar, Bombardier, Lavalin and SNC, all of these successes show that we have the knowledge and wherewithal to successfully govern ourselves and to control our destiny. Once the process of obtaining Québec's sovereignty has been set in motion, we must negotiate with the rest of Canada the sharing of assets and debt.

When Québec has attained complete legal and legislative autonomy, let us examine its internal constitutional status. In this respect, we will confine ourselves to the sharing of jurisdictions between the different levels of government. The new social blueprint must take into account the development and importance of the regions. To emphasize the regions and ensure their economic and social development, the Québec constitution must acknowledge the existence of the national government and local governments, and attribute to each exclusive jurisdictions and powers.

Obviously, the central government, under the Égis of the National Assembly, will be the first level of government, while local governments, managed by elected officers, will make up the other level of government. The rights, powers and jurisdictions of each level of government must be enshrined in the constitution. The central government must obtain jurisdiction over matters of general and national import, such as education, health, justice, social programs, communications, interregional transportation and roads, and natural resources.

Local governments, which are more attuned to the concerns of residents, will maintain their current responsibilities, acquire others and develop new ones, in the economic, cultural, environmental and social fields. Québec will have several municipal governments. The territories of each municipality could coincide with the boundaries of regional county municipalities. To ensure the viability and independence of each level of government, we would have to make sure that each one had sufficient funds to adequately fulfil its responsibilities and exercise its jurisdiction. Moreover, each government must have the necessary legislative powers to implement structures geared to the execution of its responsibilities. The decentralization of powers related to taxation must be sustained by methods of collaboration between different levels of government.

To this end, the new Québec constitution must explicitly divide the legislation and fiscal powers of each level of government. Some powers and jurisdictions may be exclusive, and others, shared. The same will apply to the tax base. The advantage of establishing these rules within the Constitution is that it ensures that those who are governing can rely upon a stable structure. We believe that a sovereign Québec can count on the enthusiasm and competence of Quebecers to ensure and accelerate its social and economic development.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Mayor, might I suggest that you move a bit more quickly toward the conclusions. We have already run out of time.

Mr. Pelletier: Thirty seconds, my dear Chairman. We believe that local governments can better channel the energy of Quebecers in a new Québec who want to take themselves in hand at the grassroots level.
(10:45 a.m.)

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, the Town of Val-d'Or's undertaking which has brought us here today is an important facet of our reflection on the future of Québec. The makeup of the town council somewhat resembles this Commission. There are nine elected representatives with different political allegiances. During the most recent Québec elections, some of us were in opposing camps. Today, we are still sitting on the town council, as we are here today. Some of us are still Liberals, some of us are still Péquistes. The need for Québec to adopt a strong, clear position before resuming negotiations with the rest of Canada was stronger than our personal feelings, and we adopted this brief unanimously.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Let us now turn to the questions. First, the party forming the Government. Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Pelletier, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Riopel, Mr. Couture and Mr. Corbell, thank you for coming here to testify today. You represent the Town of Val-d'Or, the seat of this very dynamic region. Earlier, Mr. Pelletier, as you were concluding your presentation, I heard you say "my Chairman", which made me think of Mr. Parizeau in the National Assembly the day of the Meech Lake Accord failed, saying "my Prime Minister", which made it possible for us to create this Commission, this broad-based Commission which is listening to Quebecers, through close collaboration between the Official Opposition and the Government.

I have listened with a great deal of interest to what you have to say. I read your brief with

a great deal of interest and find it original, because it is a vibrant plea in favour of federalism. This is the first time that a town has taken so candid a stand on federalism, and has gone as far as advocating a well articulated sharing of legislative jurisdictions. You have clearly understood the meaning of federalism, that is, the possibility of decentralization, by specifying what we have in particular and sharing what we have in common. Our chairman has already said that sovereignty-association is a type of federalism, and I agree with him. It can be a type of federalism.

So, you make a vibrant plea in favour of federalism but, of course, inside Québec, you plead in favour of Québec sovereignty. This means that you are adding another level of government within the regions. We already have RCMs, municipalities and economic summits, which have enjoyed considerable success here. My colleague, Mr. Savole, worked very hard on the 1987 summit; we know we are here in this room, a result of the 1987 economic summit, which was a great success.

My question, Mr. Mayor, is this: Under this federalism you advocate within a sovereign Québec, do you not foresee any problems in creating this new level of government which you wish to add to existing ones?

Mr. Pelletier: First, it's a matter of interpretation. We talked about how we could achieve a new structure, and the answer to that is sovereignty.

Now, the new structure, its name and the form it will take will be that which gives full powers to Quebecers. Does a national government and a central government in Québec, and Québec directed by its local governments, make up a federation? We have not studied semantics. We said to ourselves that Québec, starting with the grassroots level, a level where people's energies and enthusiasm can be channelled, through municipal and local governments... Local government is a broad term. When we talk about local governments in our brief, we do not want to confine ourselves to municipalities as such. A local government could be made up of a group of local governments.

We feel that within such a structure, Québec will be in a better position to... and channel individual enthusiasm as was the case in 1960, when we succeeded not through structures, but through people's enthusiasm. We found a way to channel individual enthusiasm and we called it the Quiet Revolution. In our view, sovereignty, based on the strength of the grassroots level, would be channelled through the municipalities and the national government. This would be one way to experience a second Quiet Revolution in Québec on the economic, social and cultural fronts.

Mr. Rémillard: How do you judge the economic summits? What do you think of them?

Mr. Pelletier: The notion of economic summits, of cooperation, the basic idea of the economic summits is admirable. The outcome has been a failure, but the idea was nonetheless a good one, it is still sound. We must find a way to better channel energies. I think nearly everyone agrees that we have to review the procedures involved. For three or four years, we carried on numerous discussions and came up with very little in the way of results. This lovely room, of which we are indeed proud, perhaps resulted from discussions held in conjunction with the economic summit, but private-sector firms and the Town of Val-d'Or, with perhaps a small contribution from the Québec government, paid for it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn to questions from the Official Opposition party. Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mayor, Gentlemen, welcome and congratulations on your appearing before the Commission. Mr. Chairman, we know that one of the objectives of this Commission is to clarify what is at stake and thus dispel the confusion surrounding a number of concepts now making the rounds in Québec. I don't think the Minister's last remarks will help achieve this objective because, or it's because he sees federalism everywhere, even under his bed, or he is deliberately spreading confusion because, listen, it's not true that every form of decentralization or regionalization is equivalent to federalism. France has regionalized and created regional bodies; as far as I know, France is still a unitary State, it's not a federation. We mustn't confuse matters.

I understand that, in your view, local municipalities are, all the same, inventions of the central State. There is, all the same, a subordinate relationship, so we cannot talk about federalism.

That said, you say little about various forms of association with Canada. I assume you want to maintain very close ties with Canada, especially in economic terms, that a sovereign Québec maintain close economic ties with Canada.

Mr. Pelletier: With regard to language and culture, there's no... It's Québécois to the core. As for the economy and the currency, everything is up for negotiation. However, in our brief, we note that such negotiations will be feasible provided Quebecers first decisively, clearly agree among themselves. Here, we would like, quite modestly, we don't claim to be what we're not, to share our reflection with the entire Commission. We removed ourselves from our

regular work for the town and reflected on the future of Québec, Liberals and Péquistes of all hues and stripes, perhaps there were other allegiances. After several evenings of reflection, we came to the conclusion that we should adopt a clear, strong position before resuming talks with our neighbours. This question prevailed over political partisanship. Earlier, when it was said that the Commission... Our town council somewhat resembles the Commission. You are human beings like us. What we hope is that, in the end, when you write your final report, that it will rise above what individuals may think, that it will achieve unanimity, so that it gives a clear guideline to the rest of Canada and the world. That is what we did, we're just like you, we are different. We didn't change our differences. There are all manner of colours represented before you among members of the Val-d'Or town council. We have not changed our personal preferences, but we did put Québec first.

Mr. Brassard: I would like you to explain your concept of local governments. Since we began visiting the regions, a number of organizations have appeared before the Commission and told us that, of course, there are local municipalities, but we must also have regional bodies. This is often vague, although some people want veritable regional governments, while others talk about a regional body above local municipalities enjoying a number of powers, possibilities and means. You don't talk about it. You talk solely about local municipalities, the national government and local municipalities. Do you not see an intermediate body responsible for a broader territory?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Time is short, Mr. Pelletier. Please be brief to make up for lost time.

Mr. Pelletier: Very briefly, local governments would remain at the level of elected officers. It is elected officers who must answer to the people. The more levels of elected officials we have, the more risk there is of moving away from the grassroots level. Local governments can be broadened. This doesn't mean that here, in Abitibi, there could be several local governments. Reference was made to the RCMs; however, in some instances, the local government could be even bigger than that. This does not prevent such local governments from delegating powers to all manner of cooperative agencies in the region. However, channelling energies at the grassroots level should be done by local governments. This does not mean eliminating small municipalities. It would be in the interests of several small municipalities to combine their administrations to avoid disappearing. It would be to the advantage

of a number of municipalities with 100 families to group together, if only to offer administrative services in order to develop. This is what we mean by local governments which could be similar to or at the same level as the RCMs. Indeed, RCMs are local governments, we're not talking about two different things.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Mayor, but we have run over the time allowed for this period. We now move on to questions from members. First, Mrs. Campbell Steer, then Mr. Assad.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes, Mayor Pelletier, thank you for taking the time to propose your vision of a Québec government closer to Quebecers. However, I would like two small clarifications, both concerning the decentralization of powers, both dealing with the nitty-gritty of the matter. On page 4 you say: "The central government should be granted jurisdiction over general matters". I have difficulty picturing the environmental field under local control. Acid rain comes from all RCMs, if not from neighbouring countries and I fear we may see certain rivalries between RCMs which adopt different environmental standards. How do you see the environment at the local level?

Mr. Pelletier: All environmental matters and major directives or policies would come from the national government. However, it is essential that at the local level someone, somewhere assumes leading responsibility.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Administration should be maintained at the local level?

Mr. Pelletier: Certain permits, perhaps not transportation. Among other things, we've had a lot of problems here with toxic waste and interregional transportation. A national body should take care of these matters. Some decisions reached in a city, for example, whether a particular kind of factory should be allowed, ought to be made locally.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: On the other hand, things should be centrally coordinated at the national level.
(11:00 a.m.)

Mr. Pelletier: This would have to be clearly defined. The national government has various policies and municipal governments, elected officers at the grassroots level, local elected officers in a region have responsibilities with regard to the environment. If things don't work this way, we'll end up with the situation we have now, with everyone passing the buck.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Does that mean that

the municipalities can be even more stringent? Is that what you mean? If there is a national standard...

Mr. Pelletier: Having more powers doesn't mean being more stringent, Madam.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: What I meant was...

Mr. Pelletier: More powers mean more order, but they don't mean being more stringent.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: OK. The other matter about which I would like more information is the fiscal policies you anticipate. Do you foresee equalization payments between the wealthiest and poorest RCMs and a single taxation system for all of Québec?

Mr. Pelletier: There will certainly be two ways of dividing wealth. First, it is unthinkable to divide powers without sharing taxing powers. Sharing... The national government has this power in terms of taxation and local governments have other powers. We even state that these powers should be enshrined in a constitution to avoid losing certain powers every other election after we have enjoyed full responsibility, as happens occasionally.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Perhaps we could push this to an absurd extreme. If I own a company with two factories or perhaps two companies located in two different RCMs, does that mean I would have to file two income tax returns with two different systems?

Mr. Pelletier: No. I'll give you an example. At present, the central Québec government has its own taxation system and the municipalities have their own taxation system. This does not oblige factories in two different cities to file municipal income tax returns. You do not file a tax return because there is a municipal taxation system. There are 1600 municipalities in Québec and you don't file 1600 tax returns.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: So we're talking about the field of property taxes.

Mr. Pelletier: The property tax doesn't keep anyone awake at night.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: No, no, but under this scenario each municipality would collect property taxes, based on a rate of assessment.

Mr. Pelletier: Municipalities wanting to become industrial municipalities, with all that involves, will have the choice of doing so through taxation. What we are saying is that we need other taxation powers aside from the simple

property tax.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Could you give me some examples?

Mr. Pelletier: Among other things, with regard to natural resources, the royalties collected by the national government could certainly be shared.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn to Mr. Assad.

Mr. Assad: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mayor and town councillors, when I was in boarding school a number of my classmates were from Val-d'Or. They were noteworthy for their individualism and I realize that 35 years later, nothing has changed. I listened to you explaining the north, the marker of gold, which leads me to believe that geography has fashioned our history as much as our democratic institutions. When you spoke about the 1960s, the Quiet Revolution, how Québec enjoyed remarkable growth in all respects, everybody of a certain age witnessed it, this economic, social and cultural growth, this suggests to me that what former Prime Minister MacKenzie King said was true, during the 1960s.

He said that Québec would one day awake from its slumber and become a giant within the Canadian Confederation. One might say that this time came long ago. In reading your brief, I note that you have emphasized above all how Québec will declare its sovereignty.

First, I would like you to define "sovereign". I know that your political allegiance or your political philosophy, whatever... I am certain that you have carried out a consultation at least in the region. There are a number of federal government employees in the region. I am sure that they have their own opinions, their own philosophies. First, I would like you to specify what powers you are lacking and what a sovereign Québec means to you? A definition.

Mr. Pelletier: We're not constitutional experts... nobody... We are not conversant with international law, but we proceeded in a simple fashion. We took the dictionary and looked up the word. Sovereign means self-governing. That is what it says, and that's good enough for us.

Mr. Assad: And you used this definition to carry out a consultation among residents?

Mr. Pelletier: May I ask you a question? You're from the government...

Mr. Assad: Federal government.

Mr. Pelletier: ...federal?

Mr. Assad: The Opposition.

Mr. Pelletier: The Opposition? I think that an elected government, such as a municipal government, can legitimately take a stand. If elected officers, leaders did not have the courage to say to the voters what they think about a question as important as Québec's future, if elected officers had to hide what they think, this would be dishonest. I think that honesty is saying what you think and that is what we have done.

Mr. Assad: But I'm sure you want to know what the others think as well.

Mr. Pelletier: What we have said in our short, humble brief is that this is our position, but it must be validated by a referendum.

Mr. Assad: Mr. Mayor, you have spoken about different levels of government; you have said that some levels of government are superfluous. While the Parti québécois was in power from 1976 to 1985, the RCMs were created; they are another level of government. The federal, provincial and municipal governments existed, then we added the RCMs. Do you think this level of government should be eliminated? You did say that there were too many levels.

Mr. Pelletier: RCMs are local governments. If you properly understand the structure of the RCMs, they are local governments, cooperative and administrative bodies. They are made up of elected officers, only local, elected officers. In our view, in the brief, when we talk about local governments, we are talking about the RCMs as well.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Time is up for this question period and the presentation of the Town of Val-d'Or. We are always pleased to visit you, Mr. Mayor. We thank you for this presentation: Mr. Corbell, Mr. Couture, Mr. Riopel, and you, Mayor Pelletier. Would you kindly exit on this side to allow the next group, the Regroupement de femmes d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, to immediately be seated at the table.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:08 a.m.)

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

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear the Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Mrs. Bouchard is the spokesperson for the group and she will introduce us to the other members of the delegation. Mrs. Bouchard.

Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Mrs. Bouchard (Myriam): Members of the Commission, the women at this table are members of the Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue and, of course, come from different parts of the region. Raymonde Paquin, Rouyn-Noranda; Denise Stewart, Rouyn-Noranda; Jovette Saucier, Val-d'Or; Laurette Melançon, Saint-Lambert; and Myriam Bouchard, Amos.

The Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue was established in the region in 1983. It defines itself as a regional women's forum for intervention and action, designed to enable women to act and bring pressure collectively. Its main purpose, of course, is to promote feminist action in the regions. We have indicated in the brief the groups included in it and, as you will see, most of the groups are represented, as are most cities and towns in the region. The brief submitted to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec was adopted at a general meeting held in Rouyn-Noranda on October 27, 1990.

First, I would like to review the historic context and situate the comments of the Regroupement. In the late 19th century, the Fathers of Confederation defined the Canadian and Québec political scene, what was at stake, how the stakes were to be played, the goals, the rules and procedures. However, the economic and social makeup of the country has changed a great deal since 1867 and if some squares on the checkerboard have changed, it should be noted that the rules of the game have also changed.

Under the circumstances, Québec has been seeking for several years to increase its squares, their dimensions and, perhaps, even redefine the game itself and everything that follows. In light of this situation, the Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue aligns its intervention with this trend, that is, the quest for a new country. The trend is therefore to seek for Quebecers a greater degree of responsibility with respect to their future, regardless of the political structure they choose.

This intervention by the Regroupement stresses economic matters. However, this is not the organization's only concern. Time constraints imposed by the Commission have led the Regroupement to focus particularly on this area of intervention.

The Regroupement feels compelled to express its consternation and deep disappointment that women, who make up 52% of the population of Québec, are so little represented on the Commission and, in particular, that no representative of women's groups, the Fédération des femmes du Québec is but one example, is sitting on the Commission.

By the year 2000, 50% of Québec taxpayers

will be women, a situation which is not without economic, political and social consequences. Even today, analysts perceive the economic space as the fruit of the initiatives of homo economicus who, through trade, achieves a rigorous division of labour and, gradually, the establishment of the market, then the expansion of collective wealth.

What is the government's role? For such analysts, the government's role is limited to creating conditions favourable to the development of private initiatives. It is obvious that, to carry out this program, the government must collect taxes and spend the public treasury. It must also develop relations with other governments, to foster trade and expand the market. However, it must avoid intervening otherwise on the market as the latter regulates itself through the law of competition. What analysis does the Regroupement make of this situation?

Should Québec society come out in favour of the Québec government's broadening the areas in which it intervenes and granting itself some leeway in terms of international relations, the Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue wishes to stress the values to be promoted in this new social blueprint. The feminization of poverty we have witnessed means that, in our view, conditions favourable to the development of women's initiatives, on the same footing as those of men, are not being created by current government intervention. For example, the tax muddle is still based on the model of the economic dependency of women, in light of the concrete family responsibilities they must assume, usually on their own. Another example, because it applies systematically in all government intervention, is the supposition that women are society's means of reproduction, a means which, it goes without saying, can be controlled. By making two assumptions which are really one and the same in the eyes of the analysts, the Québec government is inserting a parameter which is creating conditions unfavourable to the development of women's initiatives and impeding their competitiveness.

(11:15 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): To avoid running over the allotted time, Madam, could I ask you to perhaps move on to the conclusions.

Mrs. Bouchard: Under the circumstances, the Regroupement has centred its intervention mainly on the following fact: Above and beyond any political structure, be it federalist or sovereignist, what is important is to first define the substance, then let us reflect on the form. As for the contents, here are the recommendations of the Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. In keeping with the trend to increase and equitably share

responsibility between Québec women and men facing their future, regardless of the political structure Quebecers choose, the Regroupement de femmes de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue recommends:

First, that the Québec government use all possible latitude to foster, on an equal footing, the economic initiatives of women and men through a coherent policy of parental leave, child care services which satisfy needs, full family planning services, a strategic employment equity plan whose results are evaluated annually, and a concerted overall plan to effectively counteract violence towards women and sexism. We recommend that the Québec government realize that, to achieve this objective respecting equity, it must systematically take into account the following parameter with regard to all of its interventions. First, women and men are full-fledged citizens. Second, the procreation of the population depends on the reproductive capacities of women. Third, this distinct characteristic does not mean that women lose their status as full-fledged citizens. Concrete family responsibilities arising from the birth of children are equally incumbent on women and men.

During the transitional period between the current phase and the equality of the sexes in Québec, the parameter must not be applied in a manner prejudicial to women, who are already too heavily penalized. For this reason, we recommend that the Québec government adopt measures to gauge each year the concrete results achieved in relation to the objective of equity and that it modify its interventions as need be.

We also propose that the fair representation of the population be ensured. This means taking into account the fact that women make up 52% of the population of Québec, and seeing that women are fairly represented and that women representatives chosen by women's groups sit on any Québec government agency whose mandate it is to ensure follow-up to the work of the Commission. Provision should also be made to review all political institutions in terms of their form, nature, powers and operations, with a view to drawing powers closer to the population through democratic measures, that is, so that women and men and the regions are fairly represented.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. We have already gone over the five minutes allotted, but this did enable us to hear all of your conclusions. We now turn to the questions. First, Mrs. Marois, from the party forming the Official Opposition.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning and welcome. As I have already mentioned to other women's groups appearing before the Commission, I am indeed proud to see women participate in these deliberations on the

political and constitutional future of Québec. That said, I have a brief remark to make on your recommendation to ensure the fair representation of women: I would like to point out that our delegation is made up of three women MNAs and three men, which is possible because women make up 30% of the Official Opposition. I will reiterate a number of questions on the means of achieving such an objective.

You don't take a stand on Québec's political and constitutional status, although, throughout the brief, one senses the need to review powers and obtain new ones. If you don't take a stand on Québec's political and constitutional status, how do you expect us, or the people of Québec, to do so?

Mrs. Bouchard: Well, as for the process, we want it to be as democratic as possible. I think this Commission is a first step. As we see it, a group obviously cannot take a stand in favour of sovereignty, federalism or something in between because, at this stage in Québec, I think we must realize that within any group, as in any municipality as we saw earlier, mention was made of this earlier, we have different political allegiances.

What we do want, however, is that at each stage of the democratic process, we have the assurance that women will be represented on the basis of their own interests. I don't think it contradictory to bring together a number of women sharing common interests above and beyond their political allegiances. Let me give you an example, mentioned in the brief earlier. It is in the interests of all Québec women to have a clearly articulated network of public, free, universally accessible day care centres. This goes beyond political allegiances, beyond structures.

At this stage, what we are demanding, of course, without offering a clearly defined option, is two things: First, we want to be assured of proper representation for women at all levels of the democratic process. Second, we want this democratic process to start rightside up, not upside down. In other words, in a society which wishes to determine its future as Québec does, we must first ask ourselves the question: What are our interests, what is the social blueprint we are seeking? Then we will decide on structures, not the other way around.

Mrs. Marois: Fine. Now I'll ask you a question...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There's time for only one question, Madam.

Mrs. Marois: I'm aware of that. Given that you seek better recognition of the equality of men and women, that measures to achieve such recognition must be adopted, do you not feel

that the current overlapping of powers between two levels of government hinders the attainment of this objective? We'll put the question in another way.

Mrs. Bouchard: Yes, it is obvious, if we take two very concrete examples, that in the realm of day care centres, it is a question of equalization payments and subsidies from the federal government. When the federal government announces it is cutting back grants to the provinces, we obviously perceive, as does everyone, that women's rights are being penalized. I think everyone will agree with that.

A second example is the matter of abortion, where the powers of the federal government clearly come into play. At present, with the recriminalization of abortion, all Québec women are obviously affected, except that we are beginning, as I said earlier, by defining what we want. Alright? From that point, we will become involved in the process and women will decide for themselves by asking whether, in relation to the social blueprint, we want independence or sovereignty. Do we want to be part of federalism? In our view, the question is of secondary, not primary, importance.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, questions from members. Mrs. Simard, who is replacing Mr. Larose.

Mrs. Simard: Good morning. I found your brief very concise, very clear. Obviously, I agree entirely with all the recommendations, but even more with your premises and analysis.

To follow up on what Mrs. Marois said when she asked about overlapping and problems of jurisdiction, you have overlooked the problem of maternity leave, which comes under the unemployment insurance program, and we could mention other things.

I, too, think it is important, especially for women, to define the social blueprint. This is in fact what we are trying to do at the CSN. Do you not think that if we repatriate all the powers of a sovereign State that this will create conditions more favourable to the realization of your recommendations? Do you not think that, while this may not come automatically when Québec achieves sovereignty, repatriating these powers and obtaining sovereignty will nonetheless create a climate more favourable to the elaboration of the social blueprint about which you spoke?

Mrs. Stewart (Denise): Economic conditions might perhaps be more favourable. Perhaps. However, we must look at the place we wish to occupy in society. We are not seeking just an economic place. Women have things to say and a

place to occupy. We want to know what will become of our values in a new Québec. This is what we are working on. What values will we seek? What is the position of the mother in the family? What about battered women? Will a new structure give us more? Will it afford battered women an opportunity to speak? Will it protect them? We must also look at this aspect.

Mention was made earlier of economic summits. We held an economic summit in the region, but we must also look at our social values. Where are we headed in Québec? This is what we want to discuss. We can talk about economic issues; obviously, that is the Commission's priority, but there are also all manner of social issues that must be dealt with. Social questions.

Mrs. Simard: I'm not just talking about economic matters, but cultural, social and political questions, as you make specific recommendations concerning the political presence of women, not only in quantitative terms, but because their presence will also lead to far-reaching questioning about values. Do you not think that all of these profound changes you are seeking would be easier to achieve in a sovereign Québec than under federalism, which we have known since...?

Mrs. Paquin (Raymonde): This is probably true, but we are in position to ask: What place will women occupy? Until now, we have not had very precise examples, that is, we sought equality at all costs. We are entitled to ask ourselves: Has priority been given to the issues we raised earlier? Will we still have them in mind? Do we really believe that women have the same rights as society overall? We are not convinced of that, which is why we want to focus more on the structure, whatever it is, because if there is no respect for what we have just mentioned, then it is pointless to proceed. We are working with women experiencing daunting problems finding jobs, dealing with violence and so on. The structure is of little consequence to them. What will their place be in this structure? This is what we have talked about today.

Mrs. Bouchard: I might add something that is, in my mind, exceedingly simple. I have not gone very far in the reasoning, but it strikes me that the reasoning also stops there. We repatriate powers with respect to unemployment insurance, we repatriate powers related to health, including abortion as such, we repatriate powers with respect to child care. What we don't want to do is this: We don't want to give a blank cheque to an option with the hope that the taxation powers and the funds repatriated will be automatically allocated as we wish. We want to do the opposite. That is why we cannot

commit ourselves this morning to a specific option. What guarantee is there that if we demand sovereignty, that powers, funds and taxation powers will be repatriated at the same time? At this stage, as women, citizens, voters and participants in production, we cannot give such a blank cheque. That's all. Obviously, recent cutbacks in unemployment insurance were extremely costly to women in this region and to men, because this is not a women's issue. The same applies to day care centres. The same applies to the recriminalization of abortion. Very simply and very humbly, I say what we are saying and that is: Québec may well gain from repatriating powers, but at this stage, we don't want to give a blank cheque to one or the other. We first want to define the social blueprint and, in this context, we will examine which powers we will repatriate, which taxation powers.

(11:30 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Campbell Steer now has the floor.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I'll pass so that the speaker can finish.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ah! Fine. Continue.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Please continue, Madam. I have a brief question that I'll ask later.

Mrs. Bouchard: To summarize, we cannot choose either option, simply because we don't think that Québec's social blueprint is sufficiently clear and widely enough accepted. I'll give one last example. I'm pleased that 30% of MNAs are women. If we look at the House of Commons, well, sure, on your side... What we want is 52%.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: One small question. Could you give us examples of the type of taxation plan you would envisage to really...? I would be more interested in hearing what could be done to give women a few extra tools.

Mrs. Bouchard: Excuse me, I would ask you to please narrow your question down somewhat.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Is there, from the fiscal standpoint or from the standpoint of how we tax people, a way to promote the status of women, a way to help them achieve equality? Should something be done with deductions for day care expenses? Is there anything else that should be done? Something like a pension plan for women was mentioned. Are there other

policies that you envisage in the taxation field?

Mrs. Bouchard: First of all, in regard to taxation and day care expenses, we are talking about the child tax credit. In regard to pensions for housewives, it's obvious that the situation is changing but things are not yet perfectly harmonized throughout Québec.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Do you think there is a way to have a pension for a woman who has to stay at home? Is there a way to pay this woman an old age benefit similar to benefits under the Québec Pension Plan? Or should she receive an old age pension?

Mrs. Stewart: In regard to pensions, I, personally, would be inclined to cover disadvantaged women. Disadvantaged women are helped by mutual assistance groups. And I would be inclined to finance direct services for disadvantaged women first. Then we'll work on the overall question, from a general standpoint. A demographic plan or... Would be handled from an overall perspective. But, first of all, if financing were favoured, I would favour it for disadvantaged women who are abused.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Instead of having a universal plan?

Mrs. Stewart: I would be for a universal plan, but later on. Let's think of disadvantaged women first.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It is now time for questions from the Government party. Mrs. Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank you for coming here and for presenting your brief. I can tell you that, at this stage, your brief coincides, for the most part, with those presented by women's groups in the region.

The most important thing I have gleaned from your brief, from your blueprint for society, is that you want economic equality between men and women to be favoured. And you suggest means to achieve this, among other things, that we establish coherent policies for parental leave, child day care and family planning. At this point, I would perhaps like to tell you that things have been done. You are well aware that the Act to amend the Act respecting labour standards and other legislative provisions is before the National Assembly for amendment to provide for parental leave, precisely to take new family responsibilities into consideration. And in regard to day care services, the Minister issued a policy statement in 1989 aimed at ensuring concerted development, better quality and improved financing. Some 60 830 additional places are

planned. I'm like you: I believe this is good. Some things have been done, but not everything. However, I don't think that independence is what will enable us to solve all the problems. Except that, I feel we are now engaged in a healthy process, because we are changing the situation in Québec profoundly. I believe this is good, but we should stop there.

You gave us parameters, four of them, for government policies in the future. The question I am asking myself is: We have powers, we have gained some broader powers, but what are the powers we, as women, really need to achieve everything you mentioned in your brief? Are there some powers we don't have at this point that we should try to obtain? And you, as women in a region, are there additional powers that you need that urban women do not? That is my question.

Mrs. Bouchard: Yes. I'll answer by giving you an extremely concrete example, if you will allow me. This always helps us to better visualize what we are debating. In the area of employment here in the region, we have, above all, a difficult economic situation that is worsened by the fact that all our municipalities and our entire region are based essentially on the extraction and simple, first-stage processing of raw materials, that is, on mining and forestry.

We have affirmative action programs adopted by the National Assembly. These programs are now valid for firms with more than 50 employees. There are relatively few small and medium-size businesses in the region. All of them have fewer than 50 employees. This means that the adoption of affirmative action programs is at a complete standstill in the region. We'd like to see them implemented. Entrepreneurs would like to see them implemented. But they are not, because of the very precarious situation, on the one hand, and because of the very small number of employees in these firms, on the other.

So, we'll start by dealing with the problem at the lowest level, that is, power will be wielded, first and foremost, at the level of a region like yours, in the particular economic context that we are now in. And we feel that, at that level, a crystal clear definition of demands, adjusted to specific laws that take this regional factor into consideration could give women more power, that is, could first enable them to participate in the production process and then, as a result, express themselves on a political level.

Mrs. Bégin: If I've understood correctly, you support the preceding speakers, saying: We must truly decentralize. We, as women and as inhabitants of a region, are best able to determine our needs in that region.

Mrs. Bouchard: I think the brief was clear on that point. Yes.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. This ends the presentation period for this highly interesting brief. Thank you Mrs. Melançon, Mrs. Saucier, Mrs. Stewart, Mrs. Paquin and you, Mrs. Bouchard, for submitting a brief, presenting it and defending it. Please be kind enough to let the next group take your place, the Collectif rural d'intervention de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Will the representatives of this group please come to the table.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:39 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:41 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear the presentation of the Collectif rural d'intervention de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Would you first introduce the group, then, Madam, introduce yourself and take five minutes to summarize the brief and the subject.

Collectif rural d'intervention de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Mrs. Grondin (Élaine): Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, it is my pleasure to introduce the representatives of the Collectif rural d'intervention de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Mrs. Marin (Denise): Denise Marin, Champneuf.

Mrs. Desharnais (Yolande): Yolande Desharnais, Guyenne.

Mr. Gadoury (Gaston): Gaston Gadoury, Palmarolle.

Mrs. Boisclair (Suzanne): Suzanne Boisclair, Amos.

Mrs. Grondin: Éleine Grondin, Amos.

As a collective, we are very proud of the interest the Commission has shown in the rural voice of our region by deciding to hear the presentation of our brief. We are also confident that the Commission will fulfil its role as a valid link between us and other Quebecers, whatever their political or social role, their financial situation or their roots, so that we can design a common blueprint together.

In a sovereign Québec, inhabited by Quebecers, is there a way for all the people in the four corners of this huge territory to live happily and in harmony, for them to respect nature and participate in the general development of this country of Québec, whose

future we have been mobilized to determine? To this question, raised by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, we respond that just asking the question is believing this can be done, and it is in this spirit that we contribute our part of the answer. The brief of the Collectif rural d'intervention deals with the choices to be made in order to substantiate the principle of sovereignty in our region and throughout Québec: That the territory belongs to those who reside in it and make their living from it, and that they have democratic control over it.

First of all, awareness. The first stage is awareness. It is necessary for every Quebecer who wants to participate in the rebuilding of Québec. This first step is far from over when we consider that the Prime Minister of Québec, at the end of his opening address at the start of the Commission's deliberations, said something like this: In the last 30 years, Québec has undergone extraordinary growth. Robert Bourassa does not seem to realize that, in 30 years, certain parts of Québec have, against their will, undergone extraordinary social and economic disintegration.

Disintegration begins when we have abused the natural resources of a territory and families move away, young people leave to find work elsewhere, schools close and the population ages, as has happened here in Abitibi-Témiscamingue thanks to well-meaning economic policies, solely economic, short-lived ones. We invite Mr. Bourassa and those who think the way he does to read the report *Deux Québec dans un*. Those who control the main financial interests must realize that excessive exploitation of our wealth leads to upheaval or famine. The people also must realize that they have to be more responsible for decision-making about their own future. Greater awareness of our physical, intellectual and collective potential while we learn the lessons of our past and recent history should enable us to adjust.

Adjustment. The Commission's current tour should enable it to accumulate enough material to outline the main thrusts of our constitution, which should be founded on the principles of sovereignty, decentralization, transparency and a fair return on our money. It was stated at the Rochebaucourt symposium that, to eliminate poverty, social problems, economic difficulties, unemployment, excessive exploitation of natural resources, inhumane exploitation of the masses and the destruction of nature...

We must let the true, profound meaning of the word "democracy" have a chance. We have to ensure that the meaning of this word applies in our daily lives as Quebecers, not only on the eve of some election. Adjustment will therefore mean, in this context of democracy, making a choice for the entire territory of Québec,

choosing to recognize the history, the natural resources, the human qualities and the rights of all parties in the territory. Adjustment will mean making a choice to give the whole of the Québec people responsibility, through its communities, for the development of this country.

These choices, enshrined in the constitution, will also recognize rural Québec, regional Québec and urban Québec as the development units of Québec. Then we will be able to think of rebuilding, rebuilding a Québec that meets the aspirations of its inhabitants, a Québec defined by its inhabitants in all their diversity and with all their disparities.

Rebuilding, first of all, by decentralizing work, obligations, powers and decisions, budgets, ideas, education, research, according to the regional characteristics of Québec. Real decentralization, enshrined in the constitution, would make the whole of Québec's territory attractive to everyone, everywhere. Rebuilding a diversified economy, an economy of small projects woven into the fabric of the entire territory, an economy that is, first of all, local, then regional and, lastly, national, but whose parts are intimately connected, since the addition of small units yields big results. We would thereby have a job market in which the individual and the local milieu contribute to the wealth of the country and benefit from it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Could I ask you to go a little faster so that we can hear your conclusions soon? We have already just exceeded the time allotted.

Mrs. Grondin: An economy that will no longer be solely economic, but socializing, ecological if you will, given community needs in regard to the social health of nature. This is akin to the idea we have in our region of how Québec will be built by the people who inhabit it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. We will begin with questions from the members of the Commission. First, Mrs. Drouin, followed by Mrs. Côté, and, if possible, Mr. Nicolet, provided your questions are relatively brief.

Mrs. Drouin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You said, as many groups that preceded you in other regions did, that you would like to have real decentralization in favour of the regions. You even say on page 2 that this territorial division should respect bonds of kinship and peoples' roots in their immediate environment, and that this division should be the same for all services.

Could you explain in more detail what you think this division should be? Are you talking about an RCM? Are you talking about a territory

that would group a larger administrative region? What would that be?

Mr. Gadoury: I think we are talking about an existing structure, the RCM, which is, in fact, closest to the individual. I don't think we had in mind the rebuilding of structures, since the RCM is already a democratically elected structure, through the mayors in each municipality. I think, in that regard, we are really talking about a rural structure, intimately tied to the individual.

Mrs. Drouin: OK. A short question, a second one, in another vein. You also say... It's certain that you affirm sovereignty. You say on page 3: "Québec sovereignty and greater autonomy for the regions could solve many of the problems of which the government should be aware". I would like to know whether Québec could also solve many of the socioeconomic problems you describe if the sovereignty option were not chosen. What federal jurisdictions would have to be repatriated, for example?

Mrs. Desharnais: I would say that we certainly favour the elimination of decision-making and consultation levels so that rural people can be reached in their own communities. To what extent could the federal government be, shall I say, empowered to meet our needs in this way? We feel this is already pretty difficult. I won't go into all the mechanics this morning. We feel it is more important for the rural world to regain its full development value.

Mrs. Drouin: You would really like to have decisions made as close as possible to the grassroots. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Côté.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I think that, because your main concern lies with the rural population, you choose sovereignty as the best way to settle the problems experienced by rural milieus and, consequently, by regional milieus. If I have understood your message correctly, what you are saying is that we absolutely need the development of a policy in rural milieus that will guarantee regional development. If there is a relation between the two, I think that that's not a new message, but one we hear less frequently. Nevertheless, you provide, on pages 4 and 5, a number of ways to settle your problems, and I would like you to elaborate. You say: "give control over income tax collection to the government that is closest to the people, i.e. the municipalities..." Could you explain a little how that would work, since you say it could be done by redistributing the money from income taxes through equalization toward the top instead of

toward the bottom. And you also mention, on page 4, the decentralization of budgets, whereas you must have somewhat... Does that mean both these elements, the decentralization of taxation?

Mrs. Desharnais: Good. Let's say we used very concrete examples of that. In our area, in my village in fact, firms were set up recently, 10 years ago to be exact, a cooperative for the production of reforestation plants grown in greenhouses was set up. A year ago, we calculated the amounts of money paid in income taxes and deductions of all kinds to the various levels of government, and we realized that, ultimately, this was profitable especially for the governments, the two levels of government. It was profitable for us because it created jobs. There are people who worked and were paid wages, and that brought people to our area, that made local development possible. But, the fact remains that the two levels of government, after investing about \$1 million in nine years in the business, received nearly \$5 million in return. So I don't know who benefited, but, in any case, we say to ourselves: If we had that money, if we had control at the regional level... This is one example, one small example. Therefore, if we made the same calculation for a set of things, we are sure there would be a way for the localities to recover many of the economic and social means of development.

Mrs. Côté: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read your brief with great interest. I found in it a number of elements with which I sympathize. You will excuse me for returning to page 3 in regard to a particular question that should perhaps be discussed in more detail. You say: "The Québec government must see to the cohesion, the unity of all rural and urban communities on Québec territory". Let me say that I sympathize with this statement, and I would like to hear you elaborate on it.

Mrs. Desharnais: It is certain that we advocate rural development by giving responsibility for the rural milieu to those who live in it, but we cannot develop only one aspect of the region, of a given region. The urban milieu, an urban milieu is strong as long as the rural parishes around it are themselves strong. If we try to invest only in the urban milieu, forsaking the rural milieu, sooner or later the urban milieu will be in a bad way just like, or possibly just like, the rural milieu.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go on to the questions from the Parliamentary group forming the Government. Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, thank you for being here today. Your team, which was set up in October, has done a good job in preparing a brief in so little time. I congratulate you. On pages 3 and 5, you take a very clear stand for Québec sovereignty.

Furthermore, we all know that your region has a very distinct character, for its economy is tied directly to exports such as lumber, paper and metals. And we all know that your economy is directly linked to prices. We realize that, when the price of gold was high, the region did very well. When the price of gold fell, the region, the paper industry, the lumber industry and so on suffered. What advantage would there be to having the Québec sovereignty you propose in solving the major problem you have every day in regard to the international price of these products?

Mr. Gadoury: You need an expert to answer your question about international prices and I am not your man. I am tempted to say that we would like the community to choose the economy and not the economy to choose the community. If the various communities, rural ones – because they are still important, for they make up 75% of the territory of Québec and 20% of its inhabitants – were given the choice of building their economy with what they have, we would get results. There are rather striking regional and local examples. It goes without saying that we cannot... and here I am really talking about world markets and getting into something important... We now have GATT, as well as our own economy. It began work yesterday. If I recall correctly, in Québec, the position of the farmers, and this really affects the rural milieu, was: Don't fiddle too much with that, that is, Québec's position was... You know GATT policies better than I do; they are aimed at opening borders and so on. We, on the other hand, want to protect our borders because we control ourselves in Québec, etc. We had a Québec position. Even the Minister of Agriculture defended the Québec position at the federal level, and the feds supported the American position. It is easy to see that the further you get from the problem of the milieu, which is our local or regional community, the more you lose control over prices in the final analysis. And we would like it much better if we went for a rural, regional and national economy rather than getting involved in the world market, that is, in terms of control. We have to take this into consideration, but the GATT example is rather striking because, even in Québec, we have taken a position and the federal government decided

that it would defend the American position.

Mr. Benoit: Right.

Mr. Gadoury: It isn't normal.

Mr. Benoit: A second question. I want to point out that we have in this room a class of political science students with their educator, Mr. Denoncourt, and these people lay much stress on the transparency of people in politics, political systems. This is, in fact, what they are studying.

On page 5, you talk about the principle of transparency. People don't realize what government operations cost. We see this every day in our county offices when we say to people that a day in the hospital in the United States costs an average of \$1000. People think it costs \$135 or around that. How would you ensure that people know what the costs of running the government are? Could you explain this to me a little? You mention this but don't go into much detail. I would like to understand a little better.

Mrs. Desharnais: Let's say it's a principle that isn't easy to explain in a few lines. Transparency... It's a fact that people don't know the cost of the services they use. When we go to the hospital, we don't realize what it costs the State. When we go to the doctor, we don't realize what the cost of each appointment is and when we go... we take out our card and we don't realize anything. How would we go about making people aware of the costs?

There could be a simple way to make them realize this. If I had to say... to sign a sort of bill each time I used a public service, that would make me realize the costs I impose on the State. On the other hand, it would be just as important for me to know, at the end of the year, how much money the State spent on me and on a family unit, let's say. We have not gone into the matter in detail, but we still don't realize what the costs are. We also always say: A lot more money is returned to the regions than what they send us. But that's fair. That, too, is not very transparent.
(12:00 noon)

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now give the floor to the Official Opposition Party. Mr. Gendron.

Mr. Gendron: Yes. Quickly, before thanking you, I would just like to comment on what the preceding speaker said. He said that things go well in Abitibi when the price of gold is high and that creates more economic activity. That isn't exactly true. That would be too simple. Because, when the price of gold is high, the mining companies make more profits, but that

does not generate more economic activity. What would make things go well and would generate economic activity is accreditive action, notably in the mining field, which has been eliminated. That has had an effect because unemployment was at 6% and is now at 30%. This is the tragedy we are experiencing now.

But I want to very sincerely thank the speakers before us for coming here to issue this cry of alarm because the Conseil régional d'intervention rurale, also known as the CRI... This cry from the heart clearly says that there is a new reality in Québec, particularly in the regions... It is the reality of rural people. I find it interesting that all the members of this Commission acknowledge this, the fact and the cause, that the rural world is a little, in fact, pretty disappointed, shattered by the idleness, the depopulation it is experiencing. The disintegration is unprecedented because of the lack of policies that take into consideration the development of the rural milieu.

Any remark you make is interesting because we are apt to forget that it is not by means of a true regional development policy that you will be reached. You will be reached by means of a true policy for rural development. And rural development can generate regional development, but the opposite is not true because the parameters are not at all the same.

I have read your brief. I know the group that was created in the wake of this rural emergency you are experiencing, which is the new reality. I would like the members of the Commission to be heedful of this consideration. While we speak, there are more than 750 municipalities in Québec with fewer than 800 inhabitants. So half the municipalities in Québec are very rural ones. Fewer than 800 people; you have to realize what that means. This reality is felt enormously in a hundred or so small grass roots communities which, over the last 10 or 15 years, have experienced gradual depopulation, resulting in significant idleness. There are social costs. The Conseil régional d'intervention rurale has told us, I think, that we have to speak louder and clearer than in the past because this reality is more dramatic than any before and, therefore, everyone must be aware of it. Things have to change.

You indicated in your brief that you feel that Québec sovereignty would make it possible to solve a number of the socioeconomic problems in the Québec regions, particularly in the rural communities. You also feel that the current federalism aggravates the socioeconomic problems of Québec's regions.

Question. Could you give us a few, more specific examples of how federalism now costs us a lot and helps to further weaken the rural areas?

Mrs. Desharnais: I would use the example of

employment development programs that are designed by the federal government and not always easy to adapt to the rural milieu. There are employment development programs that say: This includes training, this includes... In any case, they are not adapted to a municipality with fewer than 800 inhabitants or fewer than 500 inhabitants. They are not for these people. Through our taxes, we have contributed to the amounts used for these programs, to a financial fund for these programs, and we have difficulty getting money back. That's one of the aspects.

There are others. Let's say that it's much more general and I am a little embarrassed to respond with generalities. There are many, many examples similar to that one that I could give, but I'd rather mention only one.

Mr. Gendron: So that some of the commissioners get over their shock, I'd like to point out that my 30% was not a federal statistic from Statistics Canada for unemployment, since the official figure is 14% or 15%. But, since there are a certain number of people who are not included in these figures, I just wanted to indicate that 30% is more probably the real figure, not that of Statistics Canada, just to give you an idea. In any case, I think that the people in this room could elaborate on the subject. It isn't the figures, it's what we are experiencing.

A second important question deals with the fact that you indicate that the Québec government respects people's kinship with and roots in their immediate environment. This seems to me to be a legitimate objective, but I would like an extensive evaluation to be made of the rural environment. I would like you to elaborate a bit. How can a government entrench this kinship and enshrine these roots in each rural milieu?

Mrs. Desharnais: Let's say that a good way to have people grow roots in rural areas is to have services there. If, at 5 years of age, a child leaves his parish to go to school and, from 5 to 25 years of age, he is outside his village, I don't know where he sets down roots. Just about nowhere, I think. He is in kindergarten for a year, in elementary school for six years and in secondary school for five years. His roots are a little scattered. The same is true in regard to various other services. There are also health services. When a rural person is 30 or 50 miles from the health services centre, he has to travel to receive these services. I used health services as an example, but there are others. Therefore, in addition to having to contribute through income taxes to building a beautiful new CLSC or a beautiful hospital in the county seat, he has to dig into his wallet to pay for the services he receives, while others don't. That also helps to uproot people since there comes a time when the wallet can no longer meet the demand. So,

people tend to go to the service because the service won't come to them. These are the type of examples we could give.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. The time allotted for this question period is over. Before thanking you, I would like to make a small comment about GATT, which was mentioned a moment ago. You were correct in saying that there was a Québec position and there is a Québec farmers' position that are, generally speaking, strongly defended by Jacques Proulx, but he is now in Brussels, precisely as an advisor for the GATT meetings.

You mentioned the Québec position, but then you said that the Canadian position is simply to imitate the Americans, or something very similar. That's not entirely true. The position that Canada took, that the Americans took in a certain manner and that some 30 medium-sized countries took as well is that export subsidies for agricultural products must be eliminated. Export subsidies for agricultural products affect Québec producers very little. There are minor problems on the fringe; hence, the position the Canadian government supports is one supported by Australia, Malaysia, Hungary, Argentina and many others that is aimed at eliminating export subsidies in which the main trading partner is the European Economic Community. But that's another matter. This came to mind when you mentioned that. I took the liberty of using 30 seconds of my 5 minutes to simply remind you of a fact, not to correct you in any way about the Québec position.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mrs. Boisclair, Mrs. Desharnais, Mrs. Marin, Mrs. Grondin, Mr. Gadoury, thank you for having prepared this interesting brief for our group and for presenting it and defending it. I would ask you to leave now so that the next group can come in, the Maison de jeunes La Soupape. Mrs. Dufresne.

We are now going to hear the brief of the Maison de jeunes La Soupape, presented by Mrs. Lucie Dufresne. I remind you, Mrs. Dufresne, that you have five minutes to present the brief, which the members have received and read, before we go on to the question period. I remind the members of the Commission that the next group, even though it consists of only one person, is ready to proceed. I give the floor to Mrs. Dufresne.

Maison de jeunes La Soupape

Mrs. Dufresne (Lucie): Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. I thank you for allowing us to speak before the Commission. I, Lucie Dufresne, represent the Maison de jeunes La Soupape of Rouyn-Noranda, which submitted to the Commission a brief and recommendations on the constitutional future of Québec.

I would like to begin by pointing out that, since we are a nonprofit organization, our basic philosophy is to accept all young people without discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, race or political grounds. The brief submitted by La Soupape is the result of the opinions and reflections voiced by young people, which highlight their uneasiness in regard to constitutional, environmental, family, social and education policies. They do not claim they can change the world. They live with all kinds of insecurities. They have tried to offer solutions to the problems they have and, particularly, to make you aware of them so that their lives can be improved.

What is important for us is to ask the people the question as soon as possible, the question that is the reason why we, including the Commission, are all here today: Are you in favour of Québec sovereignty? We want a country that respects us, that takes its people into consideration through policies adapted to our society, that gives the government all the powers for autonomy, control and legislation, that develops a policy for its remote regions, that has among its priorities the improvement of our living conditions, that gives young people a status and favours their quality of life, that recognizes youth homes as preventive organizations, that evaluates the true financial needs of youth homes and that gives them a Parliamentary delegate.

Now, if you like, I can elaborate on the thrusts of the brief submitted to you. The young people wanted to make recommendations from the standpoint of a possibly sovereign Québec. The Commission is wise to hear them. It is certain that they want a country that affirms itself as a distinct society, but they particularly want to take part in decisions and see an improvement in their quality of life. They have been forgotten in the educational reforms and in policies governing part-time and full-time work, and their right to autonomy has been overlooked. Young people are asked to produce, to be stable, to be the coming generation, to be responsible and to be autonomous, but they are not given the means to do so. They have no recognized status and have even more difficulty when they want to live alone in an apartment, or jointly as co-tenants.

The youth homes in the region have already established, with regional cooperation, some of the main thrusts of our demands and our status, which we feel should be recognized by whatever government is in power. We feel that any self-respecting country must recognize its young people as a resource and give them the support they require to achieve their potential, through youth homes and various community organizations that meet their needs, in addition to the existing institutions, so that young people have access to additional tools. Power is the capacity to act

and, in particular, to inject sums of money in areas where needs are felt, in services for the very poor.

There is talk of spending billions to attract immigrants in the years to come. Why not also spend money to increase the birthrate, to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged, low-income and single-parent families and to enable young people living with their parents and attending Cegep and university to become independent, a status that would entitle them to maximum loans and bursaries. Community organizations could also benefit from these sums of money. Let's begin by helping ourselves, then we will be able to think more about others.

The young people talked about a neutrality that is recognized around the world. This vision of the country would mean security for young people, balance and stability for our currency, new wealth to be exploited, plus investments in our banks and our economy, and French everywhere. Young people want to live in French: in the street, at work, in videos, in books, in magazines. But they also want to have translations more rapidly and of higher quality.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): May I ask you, Madam, to perhaps arrive at your conclusion more quickly?
(12:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Dufresne: The conclusion is a very simple one. Any self-respecting country has the priority of thinking about and ensuring the welfare of its citizens. Policies must be reviewed, particularly those governing the family, youth, education, senior citizens, health, work and the environment, everything that affects the real people who are still waiting for a country.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will first hear questions from the Government party. Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Dufresne, allow me first to thank you, on behalf of my political party, for presenting a brief here this morning in the name of young people. You represent the Maison de jeunes La Soupape, here in Abitibi. Assuming that you truly represent young people, you take a firm stand on their behalf for full Québec sovereignty. I think that's so.

Mrs. Dufresne: Full power for the government that...

Mrs. Hovington: So, the full sovereignty of Québec. But I feel that your brief was particularly a plea for young people. It was particularly that.

Mrs. Dufresne: Yes, it was intended especially to be that.

Mrs. Hovington: Because you ask, for example, for a more active youth policy, accessibility to training, improved education, not employment development programs for only three months, but a special budget for young entrepreneurs, housing, low cost rooms, public transportation, recognition for youth homes, including La Soupape, and increased budgets for them.

You know that the total budget for youth homes is almost \$8 million for all of Québec. At the present time, 165 youth homes like yours are subsidized. The amount of the grants... First, \$20 000 is given, then the amount is increased to \$5000 a year up to a maximum of \$50 000. I believe that La Soupape now has a grant of \$50 000 a year.

Mrs. Dufresne: Ah! If only that were true, since it was \$45 000 last year.

Mrs. Hovington: Perhaps it is, according to the information I have. Perhaps I just announced an increase.

Mrs. Dufresne: Thank you.

Mrs. Hovington: So much the better for you. I would be very happy. But you legitimately wanted more and you ask for \$175 000 a year in your brief.

Mrs. Dufresne: It is a study done by the regional delegation. We also mentioned... I don't know whether you read it in the document that you... For a pool of 35 000 inhabitants, it's certain that a youth home in a rural area doesn't need so much money.

Mrs. Hovington: My question, if you will allow me, because we do not have much time: Is it legitimate to ask for \$175 000, and that, I...?

Mrs. Dufresne: Yes, it's really the minimum.

Mrs. Hovington: But do you think that in a sovereign Québec, with all the demands and recommendations you are making, is the sovereign Québec you want more likely to have the financial means to satisfy your demands than the Québec of today in a federation?

Mrs. Dufresne: I think that if it had the means, that would perhaps be the time to awaken the people and all levels of government. I am speaking not only of a country or of the provincial level, I am speaking of the municipal level and the agencies we already have, the school boards. I think that if everyone lent a hand, yes, we would be able to have that amount.

Mrs. Hovington: Because you know, we must

always operate according to the ability of Quebecers to pay, and on behalf of them as well.

Mrs. Dufresne: Of course.

Mrs. Hovington: I have another question to ask you. You talk about immigration in your brief. Are you saying perhaps that you would prefer that there should be no immigration? Does this mean that a sovereign Québec would be closed to all immigration?

Mrs. Dufresne: No, no, no. It is just that I was considering the billions that are supposed to be allocated within the next five years I am not quite certain. I tell myself that if we are prepared to spend so many billions to encourage people to come, when here, there are people under the poverty level who have no means... I am not saying that they shouldn't be encouraged to come but that perhaps, if we have so much money to spend on others we should have, first, more to spend on ourselves.

Mrs. Hovington: Because the young people from the Matane Cegep we met, the young people from the Cegep in Chicoutimi, asked for greater powers over immigration. Are you...

Mrs. Dufresne: I imagine that...

Mrs. Hovington: Are you thinking along the same lines?

Mrs. Dufresne: When people speak of all the management and legislative powers, of autonomy, power over immigration is part of that, of all those powers.

Mrs. Hovington: In your brief, am I mistaken, where you advocate sovereignty, you reject... First you say that renewed federalism is outmoded, sovereignty association as well. Does that mean that you reject all economic ties with the rest of Canada?

Mrs. Dufresne: No. In the document I interpreted the reflections and opinions of the young people, who say that Meech Lake was an attempt that failed, as everyone knows, and that from that time on, people have been talking to them about sovereignty association for 10 years, that from that time on, it would perhaps be more normal, in any case, to go to the people, because they are asking more questions now, then weigh up all the possibilities. And from there: it's sovereignty, it is independence, or we are beginning once again to negotiate with the federal government, I think we are going to have to go farther than that.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall go on now to questions from the Official

Opposition group. Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good day, Madam. I want to know... You take a stand, then, for sovereignty. I want to know how you would propose we achieve this. Are you suggesting a referendum, which is being mooted now, or some other avenue?

Mrs. Dufresne: I think that in my introduction, I really said what was important for us, that is to consult the people, and as quickly as possible. Then the question would be very simple: Are you for or against sovereignty? Is that what you wish?

Mrs. Marois: Fine. There are other questions, but I want to clarify one thing. I think that at the outset you ask, in the blueprint for society, you ask for greater recognition, basically, of community action. You are asking for this when you say: We want to have budgets we can count on. You say: We want a situation that is a little more stable than the one we have, which would eliminate some of the uncertainty. What is the average wage paid, incidentally, in homes for young people, for the people who are there full time as community workers?

Mrs. Dufresne: First, we are paid by the week, depending on the requirements of the youth home and the hours. It is clear that, if I worked 20 hours a week, with the wages I get, that would be adequate. But take what I earn and multiply that by 50, 60, 65 hours, and it comes to \$3.25, \$4.25.

Mrs. Marois: I think, on the other hand, that the precarious conditions in which you live resemble those in which a number of young people have to live, who have enrolled in employment programs. You live with these programs. There are the Québec programs and there are the federal programs. Do you feel that these programs parallel each other, complement each other or overlap? Since you are in the field, and in practical terms your young people are part of it.

Mrs. Dufresne: When I speak, in my document to be precise, not of three-month PDEs. First, these young people are not, in any case...

Mrs. Marois: The PDEs. The employment development programs.

Mrs. Dufresne: We talk about the PDEs, about the EXTRA programs, we can speak about any program, that we, for us, the agencies, it is our only source of personnel. Except that, for us, it is satisfying, it is clear, because that does

not come out of our main grant. But when you look at those who are in these programs, it is not something that is going to upgrade them, since who is going to credit them in the long term with work experience, which could be beneficial.

Mrs. Marois: Do you think that if the programs were regrouped, if they were under a single jurisdiction, we could economize on effort and organize in such a way that planning would be a little more rational, so that the young people could really be reintegrated into the job market in the medium or long term?

Mrs. Dufresne: Yes, it would also be necessary to work on these programs and give, as the group before said, these federal programs are all very well at Ottawa-Hull, except that when you come to a small municipality, it is difficult to set them up, and then that has a certain connection with what you expect from these programs.

Mrs. Marois: Right. Last question, but it is rather important because you say: We want to have a Member in Parliament. How does one achieve that, in the system we have now, which is a bipartite system, where there can of course be other parties but which does not have proportional representation?

Mrs. Dufresne: I think that the question was formulated or the proposition was formulated in the sense that in Québec City or in Ottawa one speaks of youth homes, the problems, whatever, what one receives at the end of the line. What's a youth home, eh? What do you do? Do young people sleep there? Do they eat there? I think that a parliamentary Member would be our resource person, a key person who could say what a youth home is, and describe its mission, its philosophy, the services it offers. In that way we would not be passed from one department to another, from one secretary to another, before we found the right office.

Mrs. Marois: Yes. Basically, you want a respondent. You can perhaps count on the 14, I think, young Members under 30 in the National Assembly, or maybe fewer. You could ask them to make your representations.

Mrs. Dufresne: That makes a good 14 telephones to take over my grant.

Mrs. Marois: I quite agree. That is good.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, questions from other members. Mr. Roy, followed by Mrs. Simard.

Mr. Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your

brief, you write that Québec must advertise itself as a Francophone country, and you continue, saying the Québec government must however foster the learning and mastery of English, an essential tool in finding a job.

I do not contest this statement. I simply want you to be more precise. I want to understand. Maybe I see it as a contradiction, but perhaps it is not one. I want to understand. Do you think, for example, that French is not sufficient in itself and, with regard to employment, there is a need to have this second language? What is the meaning of this sentence in your brief?

Mrs. Dufresne: When I speak of French everywhere, it is obvious that for most Quebecers, Québec is French and everything should be in French, in the schools, in the workplace, everywhere. But we know our geographic and demographic position very well; to limit ourselves to French would be to raise barriers. I am thinking in particular of those who want to travel, those who want to export their expertise, also those who wish to produce. Whether they remain here or leave, I think it is important that all young people have a mastery of English. When we hear that a youngster begins English in elementary school, in the third grade, finishes his secondary 5 studies and is barely able to have a 10 to 15 minute, broken conversation, I think that reforms are called for in the schools.

Mr. Roy: I think you are speaking more from the point of view of the individual and the advantages for the individual of having a second language. But in the very precise context of the affirmation you make, access to and mastery of English with a view to future employment, you are connecting, you are making a very specific connection between access to a job and English. But the question I ask you is, is French not sufficient to find a job in Québec?

Mrs. Dufresne: At present no, because it is still too anglicized and even if one declares oneself Francophone... But it is above all since Bill 101, we are again seeing the...

Mr. Roy: Okay. And in a future sovereign Québec, what would be the status of French in relation to access to employment?

Mrs. Dufresne: Being in the majority and firmly established, this would have nothing to do with increasing our knowledge of English.

Mr. Roy: No, that I can understand very well. It is at the level of the individual. It is in connection with access to employment that I am speaking and I want to understand the affirmation you make.

Mrs. Dufresne: To be sure, if we are a French-language country, let's say, that my company has to call Ottawa, I want to believe that we are French and that everyone speaks French, except that in Ottawa they still speak English. Therefore, we are going to have to adjust to the demographic reality and tell ourselves that we can advocate French for Québec, but...

Mr. Roy: I repeat my question about access to employment.

Mrs. Dufresne: It's that. I have just said it. It is certain that if I work in Québec and I telephone only to Québec, it's fine to speak only French, but at some point I am going to have to phone outside and go outside.

Mr. Roy: Okay.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Simard.

Mrs. Simard: Good day, Mr. Chairman. A comment: I do of course subscribe to your concern when you speak of support for the young, particularly young families, in their parental responsibilities, but you seem to put it in opposition somewhat to the matter of immigration. Mrs. Hovington raised this question.

I want to make one comment. It is that immigration, it's not just that it costs money, it enriches us as well. I think this is important, and in a region like Abitibi, moreover, there was immigration from other regions of Québec and from other countries. We must therefore be a little careful, I think, of conceiving of immigration as an expenditure on our part at the expense of the people of the region. This is also a form of enrichment.

But my question does not concern that point. I would like to hear you speak a little more about one of your recommendations, to the effect that we should recompense and recognize studies as the first work experience. You even talk about remuneration as of secondary III. I know several who would be very happy to receive remuneration, but how do you envisage this? Who would pay the students and for how much time? Because, as a suggestion, that one is quite an innovation.

(12:30 p.m.)

Mrs. Dufresne: That is really a big question, since I am not very well up on taxation, except that we all know that parents have family allowances that belong to them. In my home for young people, there are many youngsters who enjoy the benefits of family allowances because their parents give them a share. Therefore, when the young people made this proposal and saw this as a way of having the incentive to continue their studies... The

amounts would certainly not be exorbitant. If we consider only family allowances, it is not that which... Across the country this is very expensive, but the cheque you get in your mailbox is not very big. This is what I imagine the young people are thinking about when they speak to me about family allowances, in any case in the form of family allowances.

Now, where should this be raised? I think that persons will be elected to the government who will be capable of developing policies on this matter. It is an idea. I felt it good that the young people came up with it, since there are many today going to school who consider it work and for whom it is not evident that when they go home their work will be seen as important for the future.

Mrs. Simard: Fine. In another of your recommendations, you speak of the neutrality of the country. It is, I think, the first statement in your brief. I would like to know if you... Obviously, you are often with youngsters. It is your work. You are yourself young. Is the possibility of world conflict, for example, a source of anxiety or anguish for the young? Why, otherwise, would this be the first objective in your view of a blueprint for society? I want to hear what you have to say on this subject.

Mrs. Dufresne: I think we all know that there is a crisis in the Persian Gulf and this is one of the reasons the young people made this statement. It is clear as well, when we hear Mr. Clark speak, when he sent the ships and he is sending more, we wonder when Mr. Bourassa is going to make a move. I think that the young in this kind of situation, when they say that they want a neutral country, Canada or Québec, they have to be neutral since they see Switzerland as a model in this sense. We won't speak of other resources, but at this level. And they believe that a neutral Québec or Canada would be more beneficent, more tranquil. In the long term, it would perhaps be the source of a new economy or new investments.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Right, Mrs. Dufresne, thank you for presenting this brief on behalf of the Maison de jeunes La Soupape. This brings our morning sitting to an end. May I remind the members of the Commission, a small matter of internal organization, that you must check out by 1 p.m. and that there will be a room behind the foyer where you can put your bags until we leave this evening. The key may be obtained from the desk. You can also check your bags in the cloakroom which is close to the reception desk. The sitting is now adjourned. Thank you, Madam.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:33 p.m.)

(Proceeding resumed at 2:03 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Order please!

Joint Presentation

The first group to speak this afternoon has one and a half hours for its presentation. It is the group of regional county municipalities of Vallée-de-l'Or... I must have them all in front of me so that I don't forget any. Vallée-de-l'Or, Abitibi-Ouest, Témiscamingue, and Rouyn-Noranda. Unfortunately, the representatives of the Abitibi-Ouest RCM have informed us that the inclement weather prevents them from being present, but they have asked Mr. Mandeville, Chairman of the RCM of Vallée-de-l'Or, to formally submit the brief in their name, which will enable them to be with us.

In the one hour and a half allowed for the presentation, discussion time will be divided as follows: 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief, and as there are 3 of you, that means about 4 minutes each; knowing how time can slip by, that means perhaps 5 or 6 minutes, but in any case we'll try to manage that. Then, 10 minutes for the Chair; it will take what remains; 15 minutes for the Government group, 15 minutes for the Official Opposition group, and the remainder of the time, about 40 minutes, for the members registered with the Chair, each of whom have up to 10 minutes.

The floor is yours Mr. Mandeville, for the introduction of the members of your group. You may then proceed to the presentation of all the briefs in whatever way you wish.

Municipalité régionale de comté de Vallée-de-l'Or

Mr. Mandeville (Normand): On my left is Mr. Pierre Monfette, director general of the RCM of Rouyn-Noranda; then Mr. Paul-Arthur Dickey, chairman of the RCM of Rouyn-Noranda; Mr. Claude Chamberland, director general of the RCM of Vallée-de-l'Or; Mr. Ronald Lafrenière, chairman of the RCM of Témiscamingue; and Mr. Denis Clermont, director general of the RCM of Témiscamingue.

If you will allow me, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I am going to begin with the brief of the RCM of Vallée-de-l'Or. To give you the picture, this RCM groups 10 municipalities and is one of the largest geographically in the Province. There are therefore 10 mayors and a population of some 45 000 inhabitants.

At a recent meeting of the RCM, we discussed the nature of the brief to be presented. After discussion, the RCM council clearly indicated that we could go as far as to advocate sovereignty. We based our choice on the following: since 1867 we have come up

against certain problems; since 1931 we have remained a colonized people with a constitutional monarchy; recently we experienced the failure of the famous Meech Lake Accord and there is a feeling that in Canada at the moment we are not, let's say, real partners. For all of these reasons, and I could come up with even more, we are heading towards sovereignty. What form of sovereignty? Without going into etymology... There are several kinds of sovereignty. There is an emotional sovereignty. If you want, you can use this sovereignty to write your love letters. There is juridical or constitutional sovereignty, which is pure sovereignty, and then there is political sovereignty, which is a sovereignty, let's say, of common consent, of having all the instruments that allow us the power to develop as a country. Then we, this is what we want, a sovereignty that ranges from political sovereignty to juridical sovereignty.

Now, we were told, at that point, to be careful, if we move towards sovereignty, that we not replace what we have with a new form of centralization, that would be taken from one place to be put in another. And this would be a danger, because, if the municipalities did not play their part or were not effective partners, we could fall in this way.

Bugbears have begun to appear when sovereignty association is mentioned. We know that there are some who rise up throughout the country and say: We will never accept that from the heads of government. And there is mention of the movement out of Québec of head offices. You find industries and financiers who are saying: We'll leave if sovereignty comes. People speak of jobs and the elderly start to worry about losing their pensions.

For us, the country of which we are thinking, the country we want is one based on our strengths, on the vital forces of our citizens. And we RCM representatives see these citizens as members of municipalities. In 1901, there were 954 municipalities in Lower Canada, and in 1847 the regional county municipalities were even abolished. That means this idea is nothing new.

The first level is the citizen. After that, we want strong local municipalities. We know that at the moment there are three horizontal government levels, the local, the provincial and the federal. Only the local government is not recognized as a legal entity. The two other governments are recognized. And as for...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Finish up, Mr. Mandeville. Quickly.

Mr. Mandeville: ...it will take half a minute. It is that, based on the citizens and the local municipalities, and the regional governments to which they belong, that is to say the governments served by the RCMs. What we want,

then, is a referendum as soon as possible, so that all the elected officers and the whole population, farmers, aboriginals and all those people can state their preference as to our collective future, the society of tomorrow. If, in 1867, we had the Fathers of Confederation, perhaps in 1991 we can have the Mothers of the Québec Constitution.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We must behave ourselves for the rest of the day.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That said, I think we must now also take as read the brief of the RCM of Abitibi-Ouest which you asked to present in their name. Can we now pass on to your colleagues, Mr. Mandeville?

Mr. Mandeville: According to the list.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go ahead.

Municipalité régionale de comté de Témiscamingue

Mr. Lafrenière (Ronald): Ladies and Gentlemen, the RCM of Témiscamingue is in the extreme west of the Province of Québec, nearly 700 kilometres from the city of Montréal. The total population of the RCM is estimated to be 16 901 spread throughout a territory of 19 222 square kilometres. The economy of the RCM of Témiscamingue is centred essentially on the exploitation of forest and agricultural resources and, secondly, on mining, recreational and tourist activities and services to the public.

The region is the real holder of responsibility for regional development. The regional county municipality of Témiscamingue believes that the future of Québec depends above all on its communities taking charge of their own development. Decentralization would allow a kind of development suited to the regions, one that meets the expectations of the local citizenry. The RCM is the equivalent of regions that encompass a number of communities. It is on such a territorial basis, on this natural development milieu, close to the individual resident, that development must occur and the future of Québec be built. Consequently, we are asking that the Québec government preserve and strengthen this feeling of belonging that fosters the mobilization and concerted action of the people.

It is also to be desired that the governments in Québec City and Ottawa undertake to harmonize or to institute a more equitable sharing of jurisdictions and powers

held in common in the matter of regional development.

The future of relations between the government and the regions depends on how much has been learned from the mistakes of the past. To avoid impotence in the face of decisions of the higher levels of government, the outlying regions must from now on be involved in drawing up decentralization and regional development policies. Such association would perhaps put an end to the perpetual begging which the regions have been obliged to engage in. Seen traditionally as purveyors of natural resources, the regions of Québec now need tools and elbow room to assure their socioeconomic development. The problems of the Témiscamingue forest industry constitute a good example of the failure of government to collaborate. Since December 1977, the municipal officers of the region have been demanding that forest operations serve above all to create jobs in the region.

The Québec government believes the field of natural resources to be under its exclusive jurisdiction. This has serious consequences for Témiscamingue. But under the new system, forest supplies for plants located outside the region continue in the same proportions as before, that is to say, 40% of the wood goes out of the region. Furthermore, these supplies are for all practical purposes guaranteed for 25 years. The result is that less than 50% of local requirements and projects is met, and the coming into effect of the development plan of the RCM of Témiscamingue has been delayed for almost four years. In the circumstances, it is essential that all matters of communications and partnership be reviewed and updated. It is imperative that elected municipal representatives have their say in the management and processing of resources.

Respect for parent regions. It is essential to centre development efforts on the territories of the RCMs in order to respect the integrity, the particular nature and the aspirations of each. It will therefore be necessary to harmonize the various administrative boundaries of the departments and agencies operating regionally with those of the RCMs. This is a situation with which we are familiar, particularly with the ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources...
(2:15 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Lafrenière, your time is up. I suggest you move a little, perhaps go on to your conclusion, without leaving anything out that is important.

Mr. Lafrenière: This situation we have in Témiscamingue, especially with the ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources, not only generates additional costs for the milieu, but is highly detrimental to the convergence of local interests and the emergence of an entrepreneurship peculiar to the parent region.

In conclusion, the needs and demands with which the municipal world must cope have changed. The questions of employment, the environment and the quality of life are more and more apparent. These needs and demands will continue to evolve and challenge the municipal world. This is why it is important that the local authority be accorded its true worth. The RCM of Témiscamingue is not taking a stand on the place Québec should hold constitutionally. We consider it preferable that each be left to take such a position. Whatever the structure chosen, the important thing is that the division of powers and resources be clearly and precisely established at all levels, and that agreements to this end be viable, for the benefit of the citizens we represent. Thank you.

**Municipalité régionale de
comté de Rouyn-Noranda**

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Lafrenière. I think that we now go on to Mr. Dickey, for the RCM of Rouyn-Noranda.

Mr. Dickey (Paul-Arthur): That's right.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go ahead Mr. Dickey.

Mr. Dickey: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, municipal officers, members of the Rouyn-Noranda RCM, thank you for the opportunity to take part in the discussion of the constitutional future of Québec. I want to explain to you that the position I am taking today was unanimously adopted by the representatives of the 16 municipalities of our RCM, which has over 40 000 inhabitants.

Our option is a new blueprint for society. Caught fast as we are in a constitution that denies our specific nature and maintains a costly and inefficient duplication of services, the Rouyn-Noranda RCM opts for sovereignty for Québec, and therefore the recovery of all powers. We must elaborate a new constitutional framework, eliminating the double jurisdiction, the competition between decision-making authorities and the lack of integration of the different policies and programs.

How do we achieve this? All consultation on a change as fundamental as the realization of sovereignty must be carried out with the people, who constitute the ultimate decision-making authority in this regard. Our preferred means of consultation is the referendum, for it is the most adequate way of respecting the opinion of each person. The renewed model we advocate does not presuppose the creation of a new intermediate authority, which might eventually take the form of a regional government. One of the basic principles of any change should be the

accountability of the decision maker. The elected municipal officer fits this prerequisite admirably. We have already given our views on this matter, during the consultations on the reform of health and social services, which will have to be integrated into the field of responsibilities devolving upon the municipal officers. Since this is the elective level that is closest to the citizen, we intend to play an active role in this process.

With regard to foreseeable effects, any change will inevitably cause certain upsets. We can expect effects on the organizational structures of the various programs, on infrastructures and on certain services. So we shall have to institute a search for greater efficiency in our organizations and improve our management and cost control capacities.

With regard to discussion at the regional level, we believe in concerted regional action within the meaning of the term "administrative region", which is what Abitibi-Témiscamingue is. However, we reject the regional government formula, within the meaning of "administrative region", and prefer local government in the form of the municipality with clearly defined powers that are enshrined in the Québec constitution, powers that the local government may delegate in part to its regional county municipality.

By way of conclusion, I would like to say that the form selected, and this should be done quickly, must, we feel, also be enforced without delay to relieve the uncertainties of the present state of affairs. Thank you for listening to me.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen. We now have a little over an hour and ten minutes for questions. The first questions will come from the Official Opposition group. Mr. Gendron first.

Mr. Gendron: Good day, Gentlemen.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): When I said one hour and ten minutes, I meant for everyone Mr. Gendron.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Gendron: I understand.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes? Good.

Mr. Gendron: Then I am not worried about your stopping me. Without making any assumptions about the final recommendations of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, I hope these will in fact enable us, as commissioners, one day to remember you and salute you in the future as mayors of the future constitution of a sovereign Québec. More than that, to thank the municipal world, through the structures of the regional

county municipalities, since there are three of them here, for deciding to present to the Commission the point of view of this new structure which, nevertheless, has been in operation for some years, and for sticking close to the reality of the rural world, and to the reality of Abitibi-Témiscamingue in all its parts.

My questions will concern the brief of the Vallée-de-l'Or RCM and my colleague will deal with that of Rouyn-Noranda-Témiscamingue. Essentially, your brief indicates, in a manner that could not be clearer, that retaining the status quo would not correspond in any way to the aspirations of Quebecers, and I think that is something that is important to remember. But it is always important, I think, that the people involved have the opportunity to indicate this in a way that could not be clearer. You also affirm, loud and clear, that the Québec of tomorrow must be sovereign in order to protect its culture and foster its full economic and social development, and you indicate that this must be accomplished through a new blueprint for society based on the municipal structure you know so well.

The first question I want to ask is this: Having affirmed clearly and opted clearly for complete political sovereignty, you nevertheless touch on the matter of the decentralization of powers in favour of the regions. It is perhaps important to indicate to the Commission a little more precisely what powers exactly you would like Québec's RCMs to be able to delegate, in a Québec that is completely sovereign politically. I have another question that I'll come to soon.

Mr. Mandeville: Right. At that point Québec would receive jurisdictions from Ottawa, and I think that it would be prepared to share others with the municipalities. We are having some experience of this at present in certain places, that is at the regional level, in the RCMs; when I say regional I mean RCM. I am thinking for example of roads. That may be it. It may be at the cultural level. There could be deconcentration in favour of the regions in this respect. You know, the regions... There are 94 or 95 RCMs at the moment. That means 94 or 95 different regions. No two are alike. It may be at the cultural level, or the social level, and I see it too at the health care level. We could have at this moment an administrative council for health. Now, we must avoid deconcentrating in one place only to concentrate in another. Action could be taken as part of a framework, whether at the level of recreation, fish and game or the level of justice. And here we have to do with... Someone who has a problem with justice, that is in the fish and game sector, there are five courts that hear... You have one in Joliette, you have them here and there. There are courts and people are obliged to go to these places. Then...

Mr. Gendron: Mr. Mandeville, you are not answering. Look, what I want is more... There are still two ideas, quickly. We can speak of decentralization with attendant taxation powers, but collected directly in the community, just a minute, or another aspect, deconcentration of services with operating budgets.

Of the two hypotheses I put forward, would you choose a deconcentration of services with budget packages with which to carry out the new mission you would be assigned, or real decentralization with corresponding taxation powers to the RCM? Which of the two would you recommend?

Mr. Mandeville: Listen, I am going to speak personally, okay? I would choose the second option; we want to be masters in our own region. Considering the history of such packages, over time they always shrink, isn't that so? Then there comes a time when we have no budgets. Then we would like, all of us, to be masters in our own region.

Mr. Gendron: I thought you said you hoped that... That is to say that when you speak about the regions you said: I am talking about the territory of the RCM.

Mr. Mandeville: That's true.

Mr. Gendron: Good. Let's talk about that for a moment. With regard to the RCM territory, unless I deceive myself, you didn't really mean regional governments in the sense that a government, a sovereign State of Québec, would move towards the creation of regional governments. Do you have an opinion on that? Do you think it is reasonable to envisage that or, according to your analysis, your evaluation, is it not reasonable to envisage the creation of 94 regional governments? Because don't forget that you just told me that your region is the RCM. As there are 94 RCMs, that would mean 94 regional governments. Would you agree with that or not?
(2:30 p.m.)

Mr. Mandeville: Let's say it is possible to envisage it. I do not think it is to be recommended. Give the municipalities powers that are enshrined in a constitution and, then, for its regional power, give it to a renewed RCM maybe and, at that time, I would be satisfied with that.

Mr. Gendron: My colleague will continue.

Mr. Trudel: I would also like to greet the representatives of the municipal world who have come here today to give us their opinions on the political and constitutional future of Québec. I first want to congratulate you on your presentation. It is very clear. You describe the expectations of the municipal world very

precisely, all as part of a definite policy. I think that, yes, like my colleague, the members of the Commission will have to keep this reminder of the need for clarification and put the question as quickly as possible.

I have a few questions nonetheless as to the precise policy suggestions you have made, beginning perhaps with the regional county municipality of Rouyn-Noranda. You ask the Commission to come to a decision rapidly after the completion of its work because you believe we are living in a period in which we have created uncertainty, taking account of Québec's virtual absence of a place at the present time. Could you tell us in concrete terms what this climate of uncertainty means in your RCM municipal life? Can you give us a brief description?

Mr. Dickey: That is felt in several ways. For example, since the failure of Meech Lake, since those particular discussions in any case, we have witnessed a shifting of responsibilities which previously devolved upon the provincial government over local governments, without necessarily having any prior discussion. This appears to us to be one of the consequences of uncertainty. What we are saying, basically, is that we want account taken of the fact that we have every interest in deciding on our constitutional future and in recovering, by this means, all the powers devolving upon the country of Québec; in deciding also on a constitution in which local governments and their powers are enshrined as well as the way in which these powers are to be updated, so that we no longer have periods in which someone decides unilaterally to delegate certain powers to others without having, I would call it that, prior discussion or prior consent with regard to the matter. That has grave consequences, and it is only one example. It also affects the economy and like matters, but we think that uncertainty is never a good thing, whether at the political level, the economic level or any other. We have no desire to remain in a state of uncertainty.

Mr. Trudel: With regard to political formulas, now, on the constitutional plane, that we should envisage for the future, you put forward three viewpoints. You say to the Commission: either renewed Canadian federalism, or outright independence, or sovereignty with association if possible. And you do your duty properly; you choose, then you say, with your mayors: For us, very definitely, it is sovereignty for Québec, and I take it as part of your description, sovereignty with association if possible. What areas should be the object of association, if possible, within Canada?

Mr. Dickey: In fact, I can give examples. Take money for example. If it is in the interests

of Québec and Canada to have a monetary association, I think that could be an example, but all these powers... One could take defence, or there could be free trade agreements, but all these powers should be, if there are agreements to be made, discussed by equal partners, and each party to the discussions should be free to accept or refuse the conditions in which they are made. This, to me, is what is important. Therefore I say: A sovereign Québec will exist with or without an agreement, but I think that first of all we must decide that we are sovereign, and then see whether it is in our interests to entrust certain responsibilities, as a sovereign people, a country, to other entities such as Canada.

Mr. Trudel: A small detail, Mr. Chairman of the Rouyn-Noranda RCM. You do not want to negotiate sovereignty...

Mr. Dickey: Absolutely not.

Mr. Trudel: ...but sovereignty, and we are going to decide, secondly, what we want to pool, according to our own choice. Is this the case?

Mr. Dickey: Yes, that's the case. And for us there can be no equivocation. First we recover all our powers and second we see where our interests lie, whether in concluding agreements or entrusting certain responsibilities to a partner. That is done in other countries and could be done in the country of Québec. But we must not start with the idea that we must come to an agreement regardless of the conditions. We will conclude agreements if it is in our interest to do so.

Mr. Trudel: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would now like to put a few questions to the representatives of the RCM of Témiscamingue.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But you have barely 30 seconds left, Mr. Trudel. A small, quick question perhaps.

Mr. Trudel: One small, quick question. You are on the border with Ontario. In the event of sovereignty, do you foresee problems, tense situations? You have a long history of those.

Mr. Lafrenière: I do not think sovereignty will create problems on the borders. I don't think that it is going to make things difficult. I'll repeat what we said in our brief, it would be better not to go into it too deeply. I think people will decide when the time comes what they want. This was our perception. Apart from that, it is necessary to be careful, here at the table with the mayors, there are 21 of them and perhaps they are not all here...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We carry on now with questions from other members of the Commission, Mr. Nicolet, Mr. Beaudry, Mr. Beaumier and Mr. Assad. Mr. Nicolet is first.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This gives me an opportunity to greet the municipal officers who are my colleagues, and I am always very happy to return to Abitibi-Témiscamingue to see them again. Unfortunately, these occasions are too infrequent.

And as we are gathered together, I would perhaps like to take the opportunity to broach with each of you the different aspects of the shared responsibility of preparing a blueprint for society. To begin with, perhaps, I will ask the questions as a whole, and then I leave you to answer them in the order that suits you.

Mr. Lafrenière touched on responsibilities shared by the Québec government and the RCMs. On page 8, I believe, of his RCM brief, he specifically alludes to the question of natural resources, and in your case, certainly, the forest takes on particular importance. Could you, therefore, elaborate on this question of responsibilities shared by the Québec government and the RCMs?

With regard to Mr. Mandeville, if I may, I'll perhaps refer to Mr. Pelletier's brief of this morning, which emphasized the structural reorganization of the RCMs, which would make them practically supermunicipalities. On the other hand, in your brief, and I would like to recall it, you underline the importance of maintaining a local level, that kernel of democracy, as it were, at the grass roots level of society. If you could elaborate on this relationship between the local municipality and the regional county municipality.

Finally, with respect to the Rouyn-Noranda RCM, Mr. Dickey, you have given a very clear no to regionally administered government. On the other hand, I realize that you work in the health services field, and you know that we are becoming sector-based anyway, and health services are perhaps the best example of this, and that we are moving toward a regulatory system at the level of the administrative regions. There is a logic to all that. I don't think it's up to me to advance a theory here. But could you elaborate on how you envisage this sharing by the region, on the administrative level, and the RCM, on the political level?

Mr. Dickey: I can address, if you will allow me, the regional government dimension. In my opinion, powers should devolve upon local government; then, for practical reasons, we will succeed in exercising, not only a certain form, but clearly, we will exercise regional power in the administrative sense; I think it would be delegated. I have no objections to its being by delegation. But, that power should definitely devolve upon a region, a regional government,

regional as in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, I don't think that corresponds to what we expressed in this brief.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Mandeville: I can go ahead now. You refer to the brief presented by the Town of Val-d'Or. There is no connection as far as the structure of the brief is concerned, no connection as far as our way of thinking is concerned. Your question, then, is a delicate one, in my opinion. And even there, I would have to conduct my own little referendum to be able to answer you. I can tell you how I perceive it. A strong, local, municipal structure is important, and then, these strong local structures can unite to form a municipal superstructure, shall we say, which would be called the RCM. I think the smaller municipalities have something to teach the bigger municipalities, and the bigger municipalities, perhaps, have something to offer the smaller municipalities.

In other words, we need each other. And as far as I'm concerned, the RCM is at the service of the municipality, the municipality is not at the service of the RCM. A strong, local municipality with powers entrenched in a charter, and then, have a local government... Let's say there would be 94 of them. There could be other types of division, look... We won't get bogged down in boundaries. And all together, they would form our regional governments. I don't know if that answers your question?

Mr. Nicolet: Yes, yes.

Mr. Mandeville: Perhaps you don't agree?

Mr. Nicolet: If I have time afterward, I'll come back to it, but I wanted to chance it.

Mr. Lafrenière: Ha, ha, ha! I would like to go back to the beginning of 1977, first. It's going back a long way, perhaps. We weren't quite as gray-headed then. We were always talking about the forestry issue in Témiscamingue. At that time, in Témiscamingue... We must understand each other also, we, ourselves, are always talking RCM. We know that there is a Québec department which looks after the wood. We realize that. We began to claim our forests. At that time, about 35% of the wood went outside. We had said: With the new forestry system, the Timber Supply and Forest Management Agreement coming in, in 1987, we thought that maybe we'd claim them. In any case, we paid to have a study done. And then... I think we're a long way from having won anything. Now, it's more than 40%. I think our claims are being disregarded. And we think it's causing Témiscamingue to lose about 200 to 300 jobs. And it involves revenues of \$10 million or

so a year. Nowadays in Témiscamingue, you can figure on... Some parishes now have 85% of their population out of work. And if we don't create jobs in the forest, I don't know; there is almost nothing else to do. I don't know how we can deal with this problem, but I know that we're losing a lot of jobs, and that we didn't get through to the department on this subject.
(2:45 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have about two minutes left, Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Mr. Lafrenière, in the case of Témiscamingue, is the problem not one of geography in relation to Ontario, where automatically, independently of policies made in Québec, we are left with the fact of Ontario's proximity, and of exporting raw materials to industries in Ontario?

Mr. Lafrenière: Certainly there are compensations; perhaps there are... In Ontario, there certainly is wood. We have to understand each other as well. In Québec, we have systems which are perhaps a little more expensive; Ontario is probably cheaper. Maybe that's what's happening, the supplies... For sure, we go and get our supplies in Ontario. But in Québec, we live with the procedures we have at present.

Mr. Nicolet: I thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We carry on with Mr. Beaudry, who will be followed by Mr. Beaumier.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question will be directed to the Témiscamingue municipal region, and is along the same lines as Mr. Nicolet's. In your brief, on page 7, you state: "It is essential that the whole question of communications and partnership be reviewed and corrected." And you say: "It is imperative that the municipal officers have their say in the development and processing of resources." You just spoke about this to some extent, and you tell us that the representations you have made to Québec to date, are of little or no avail. When you say it is imperative that municipalities have a say, do you mean the local municipality, first, or do you mean the RCM level? And when you talk about having a say, you did have a say, which didn't produce anything. What limits do you put on decision-making powers at the RCM or municipal level? That's my first question.

Mr. Lafrenière: Certainly, as far as the department is concerned, there is a department for distributing the wood. We cannot possibly do that. But what we do say is that we should at least be consulted. The way it will be done,

where it will be done, then, how it will be done... I think that in our resources...

Mr. Beaudry: Let me stop you right there. When you mention "consulting", it seems that there was consultation, and the decisions that were made in Québec did not satisfy you. When you say "consult", if you are consulted, and your opinion runs counter to the department's, which of the two opinions should prevail, if you will?

Mr. Lafrenière: If you give me a choice, probably ours, ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: Is that what you demand in your brief? That's what I'm asking.

Mr. Lafrenière: I think if the dialogue were better, we could always manage to come to an agreement. I think when the Commission comes and sits... It informed us about the Timber Supply and Forest Management Agreement, what it was... They didn't say how it would be given. They certainly didn't say how many would be given, or to whom they would be given. It was no business of ours. I agree on that, but it seems to me that they could have at least... Wood is being cut right now and we can't find out where it's being cut, and how it's being done, and...

Mr. Beaudry: So, you would at least... The overall policy, you leave to Québec, but, on a regional level, you want to have decision-making power of one kind or another on how money is to be spent and where it will be spent.

Mr. Lafrenière: We could at least be consulted and informed about how it is to be done. Certainly, Québec always has to make the decisions because, as far as the department responsible for forests is concerned, it would be impossible for us to do so. But if we were consulted, we could, to put it another way, have a say in the matter.

Mr. Beaudry: Fine. My second question, Mr. Chairman, is directed to the Vallée-de-l'Or regional county municipality, and, in a way, follows from the questions asked a while ago by Mr. Gendron. You advocate a sharing, and suggest that there be a 50-50 sharing of decision-making powers, taxation and fiscal powers by the municipalities and the governments. Before, you were asked a question as to what powers you would like to see at the local level, or at the regional level. Should I understand that, in your mind, these powers would be province-wide, in each regional municipality, or could there be disparities depending on the needs of the area, for instance?

Mr. Mandeville: Let's say that the 50-50 is perhaps a flourish of rhetoric.

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, I understand.

Mr. Mandeville: But what we would want, then, perhaps, would be a provincial policy. I don't see why we would receive preferential treatment. Now, it could be modified within the RCMs. You know, if you take our RCM, or the City of Laval, which is an RCM... It's an economic region and it's a city... Then, when they have their meetings, they turn around and say: Now let's speak as an RCM, it's all the same people. And then they turn around and start talking about the administrative region of Laval. So that's how it is. But certainly, the Laval RCM and the Vallée-de-l'Or RCM will never be identical. I think there can be a framework, but modifications, then, within these RCMs.

Mr. Beaudry: And your taxation power, would it really be a taxation power? You said before that you would prefer it to be a taxation power at the grass-roots level... You yourselves decide what things you want to tax... Is it a universal tax or what?

Mr. Mandeville: Well, that's going pretty far. In our...

Mr. Beaudry: Do you mean that your report goes too far and that you want to retract that part of it?

Mr. Mandeville: Oh no, no, no! We don't retract it, but I mean to say, we want to be masters in our own house; then we could establish some sort of *modus vivendi*, or ways of proceeding, at that point.

Mr. Beaudry: But you haven't stopped to consider ways of one kind or another of realizing this taxation power in the regions?

Mr. Mandeville: I think that the Commission itself, of which you are a member, probably hasn't come to any decision in that regard.

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, no! I know, but because of the suggestion you made... That's why I asked the question, to make it clear.

Mr. Mandeville: Yes, yes.

Mr. Beaudry: Because I'm telling you, others have already said it before the Commission, other regions and other speakers, who would like to see taxation powers at the grass-roots level, and they would be the ones to delegate powers to the central government. So these are propositions which have already been put

forward. So, I ask the question to find out if your view of taxation powers implemented at the regional level is along the same lines.

Mr. Mandeville: I think, at this point, we must await events. We want to give a direction to what we believe is best for Québec. And then, it's the participation of all the people, it's a blueprint for society. And at that point, people will have to take a position on the question. It isn't up to us to determine, I don't think, to impose our will and say: We want such and such a thing. Certainly, if there is a central government in Québec City, it's our central government, and we won't go imposing things on the central government. I mean, we won't give orders, we have no orders to give to the central government.

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, I understand that. You also say that you would like the notion of municipality entrenched in the constitution.

Mr. Mandeville: That's right.

Mr. Beaudry: And in that constitution, there would be municipal powers entrenched as well.

Mr. Mandeville: That's right.

Mr. Beaudry: So, if that is the case, in your blueprint for society, and in your constitution with its powers, there would also be the taxation power concept you have spoken of here.

Mr. Mandeville: Possibly.

Mr. Beaudry: But they wouldn't necessarily be shared 50-50. You simply want the notion itself incorporated, to allow municipalities to have direct taxation powers.

Mr. Mandeville: That's right. And a sharing.

Mr. Beaudry: Which is other than the power of taxation on real estate.

Mr. Mandeville: You have understood very well, and I cannot retract what we have written.

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, I don't want you to retract it, I just want to understand it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaumier, followed by Mr. Assad.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say that, since the beginning of the hearings, the RCMs and the municipalities have come to plead in favour of greater decentralization, of greater powers. Then on arriving in Abitibi, we meet with new terms, for

example, a government, municipal governments on a level with RCMs, or similar in dimension to the RCMs. This is a new scenario. In all the briefs, people from the regional RCMs have also come to speak in favour of regionalization, of assuming more powers. For some years now, we've been aware that people at the municipal level want more autonomy. But there are concerns as well at the municipal level. I would like to ask everyone at the table: Do you believe that the present political and administrative structures at the municipal and RCM levels can support decentralization, or should they be reorganized? And a second question is again... You answered it or skirted it to some extent with Mr. Beaudry... How can we envisage rational financing for this, when we know that the taxpayer, that is, the property taxpayer is becoming more and more pressured, governments have less and less money, programs are less and less generous... How do you see the financing of these governments, of these regional or municipal entities, in quotation marks, taking shape? Thank you.

Mr. Dickey: I, for one, if you will allow me, can give direction to the question you ask. Can the present RCM and municipal structures assume and handle more powers and more responsibility? I say yes. I think one of the weaknesses in these structures is that they are too dependent on the will of the Québec government. Therefore, if they were entrenched in the constitution in the form they now have, they could certainly handle increased responsibilities, as long as they have the financial means to do so, of course, and for us, responsibility goes hand in hand with the possibility of collecting revenue directly through taxation, and not through budgets from the central government, OK? So it's important to make that clear.

Mr. Beaumier: Mr. Chairman, let me explain what I mean. I spoke of administrative and political structures. Do we have the administrative structures? Because we know that, whether it be municipalities or regional county municipalities, there is always an administrative apparatus that costs money, costs which are becoming heavier and heavier, salaries, and everything else that is part of the administrative apparatus. Do we have them at present, or if not, will we have to create these administrative structures?

Mr. Dickey: Well, I think the basic administrative structures are there, and are up to the task as far as their present responsibilities are concerned. Certainly, new responsibilities would most likely mean adding to those administrative structures.

(3:00 p.m.)

Mr. Mandeville: Mr. Beaumier, in reply, knowing that you are very familiar with the RCMs, maybe I can tell you that we have structures... First, they are necessary for the proper functioning of the RCMs. Of course, if we are given more powers, we will have to have another look at the RCMs; maybe, in certain cases, we will have to adjust the boundaries of RCMs, because, at the moment, there are some aberrations. I think we have the basic structures. As for the second phenomenon, the second point you mentioned, the financing, well, you know that funding on another level, that is, the federal government, at some point, at least, certain things may disappear; there is a certain form of income tax and all those things. Above all, we must not do as we're doing now, and that is, being governments, being administrators who shovel off their problems on others.

Now, the federal government shovels off its deficits onto the province, the province shovels them off onto the municipalities, and we get stuck in the snowbank, and what do we do about that? Well, we say: Let's shovel it off onto the backs of the citizens. I think it's a social model we want to acquire, and everyone, then, must be part of this choice. Is that correct? For sure we will have to make sacrifices. There's no... In the final analysis, it's a kind of evolution, in fact, I would even say, it's almost a revolution in our system, but that's what has to be done. We'll have to tighten our belts. Those who think that achieving sovereignty will be a panacea are mistaken. For sure we will have to suffer, but isn't our pride worth a few notches in our belts? Anyhow, I tell myself, in any case, it can be done... There's a lot of coordinating to be done.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We carry on now with Mr. Assad.

Mr. Assad: Sir, I've had occasion in the past to work with the Outaouais RCM, and I've always been struck by how well you know the field of regional development; it's a field about which you have in-depth knowledge because you live in this milieu. I have listened to all the questions and the rest, and you make an interesting case in your concluding words. It's true that things can always be resolved and ways can be found, and if we impose sacrifices on ourselves, we will have chosen to do so. But it's also true that there is always room to manoeuvre in resolving our problems, in organizing our misery, if you will. Because when I had occasion to visit Western Canada during the constitutional debate over the Meech Lake Accord, I heard the same problems discussed, except in English. The problems and "chewing the rag", if I may use the expression, out there, over the central

government, Ontario and Québec. They found us very egotistical here. It shows that, one way or another, everyone has problems and everyone is working for their own interests.

You mentioned before, Gentlemen, the question of a new association, a blueprint for society with association, let's say one that could include monetary union, a common defence if you will, and external trade, obviously. It must be said that, basically, there are many more things uniting us, than anything else. And I am convinced that, regardless of the blueprint for society chosen, we will have to harmonize our relations with our neighbours. And historically, we are developers of natural resources, and I'm convinced that the best tool for that is regional development. Our room to manoeuvre has an international dimension. And because of this, I realize how important it is to settle our problems within the Canadian Confederation, because there is no status quo as such, either in our personal lives, or in our collective lives.

First, I would like to ask you, given the current circumstances and problems: Is there not a way, and I take your good faith for granted, because if we want to discuss monetary union afterwards and other arrangements... God knows it will take an enormous amount of good faith on both sides... But is there not a faint glimmer of hope that we could find a way with a new confederal pact? Or, instead of federal and provincial politicians holding the floor as they have for years now, we listen, finally, to the people at your level, and let them decide where the problems really lie, instead of immediately saying: We'll solve the problem, we'll break away?

Mr. Dickey: I'll give part of the answer, and my colleagues will as well.

Mr. Assad: Yes, mind you, there...

Mr. Dickey: As for myself, anyway, I've been following the constitutional debate for what, for some thirty years now.

Mr. Assad: Yes, it's been long.

Mr. Dickey: For myself and my colleagues, it was proven and amply demonstrated that renewing the Constitution in a way that was satisfying to Québec, within the confederal model, as you call it, was impossible. In my opinion, there is only one solution and that is to recover our powers, and afterward, as equals, if need be, agree on a number of associations with the other government. But, for me, the Canadian federation model is unacceptable for Québec, and on that point I don't want to leave any doubt as to our determination.

Mr. Mandeville: Sir, your question is very

persuasive. Look, ever since 1867, we Quebecers have been fighting for something; you've travelled, as you said earlier, across the country for the Meech Lake Accord. It isn't we who don't want to be part of Canada. It's the others who don't want us. It's the others who don't want us. We specified, and I think at one point our government specified a bare minimum at Meech Lake, five small items, and we saw the discussions, the stir, the wave that washed everything away, in such a way that one person, one person caused the whole thing to collapse. One person, and we're going to keep on playing this game? Look, we may be masochistic but not to that point. It's been...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): May I remind the audience that this is an extended Parliamentary Commission, and in Parliament, in the galleries, it is forbidden to applaud. I didn't want to interrupt you, Mr. Mandeville...

Mr. Mandeville: But it gives one a good feeling nonetheless.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...applause in the galleries is forbidden.

Mr. Mandeville: No, but it does. Look, I would like to end on that note. We would like to, we wanted to... Since 1867, we've been put through all sorts of things, call them knives, call them... Call them what you like. We're still stuck with the Statute of Westminster and still pacing up and down, like the man with the black rod in Parliament and all that. Our institutions are archaic, archaic, out of date. So we want something to call our own. We want to build a country, to build a society. That's what we want. We're not asking for anything unattainable. If others want to follow our lead, let them come along, but I'm tired of following the others, and I think our citizens in Québec are tired of following along in somebody else's wake.

Already they're trying to blackmail us. You want sovereignty-association... I'll be the first to stand against association and my government will vote against it. Listen, it was said only recently. We're not wanted. So if we're not wanted, it's up to us to build something for ourselves. And it's just that, our own society, our own country, our own State.

Then, if there are others, afterward, who find us clever enough, because we will be clever about it, then, the others will follow us. I don't know if that answers your question, Mr. Assad?

Mr. Assad: If, from your point of view, and I don't share it at all, because I've heard many other presentations which were not as radical, if I may use the term, if it was as difficult as you say, I ask myself, how were we able to reach this point, to become such a progressive society?

And if we believe the situation has been so painful, how will we ever be able to create a monetary union or anything else?

Mr. Mandeville: You don't share my opinion and I don't share yours. That is clear. If we've come this far since 1867, here's how we've managed to get as far as 1990. We've come this far, my dear Sir, with threadbare knees. Since 1867 we've been walking on all fours, and I think that time is over. I am not for radical measures. I'm for negotiation, when it's possible. Fear puts limits on us and we set those limits for ourselves. I think, at this point, with all the competence we have, we are able to hold our heads high and dress the wounds inflicted since 1867.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We carry on now with questions from the Government party. Mr. Savoie.

Mr. Savoie: Thank you. Mr. Mandeville is always true to himself, certainly full of colour and full of ideas as well. I congratulate you, Mr. Mandeville. It has been very interesting. It was even encouraging to hear your opinions, because we looked forward to the Vallée-de-l'Or RCM brief with great anticipation, and to all the briefs from the Abitibi-Témiscamingue RCMs. It is certainly one of the functions of this Commission, in touring the regions of Québec, to listen to the RCMs, for they, more than any other group, represent the opinions of the municipal structures. In this sense, your presence today at this Commission, for me at least, arouses great interest, and I thank you for your honesty, your determination and, also, the vision you want us to share with you.

Nonetheless, there are problems. I think that was pointed out by my colleague, François, as well as others, that, finally, when you talk about your RCMs which should develop more, which should... Finally, you went as far as to say that even the Québec government budgets could be paid at the level of the RCMs, and that the RCM will look after, for example, the cultural development of its territory. Economic development in relation to forest management was even mentioned. I have a problem with that, and you know very well what that problem is. I think you refer to it, but you haven't presented it to my satisfaction. It has to do with the regional organizations for concerted action, for example, the CRDs. Where do you stand vis-à-vis the CRD? How do you, in fact, envisage potential relations between, for example, the Abitibi territory's five RCMs and the CRD? The exchange begun a while ago, I believe, warrants still more comment from you.
(3:15 p.m.)

Mr. Mandeville: You are devilish! As we know, we have duplication in our structures at

present... Take forestry, for example. At the local level, we deal with it, at the regional level, we deal with it, at the provincial level, we deal with it, at the federal level, all that. Maybe some levels, maybe certain things should be dropped. I have nothing against the CRDAT, it's a regional development council, but I find the best place for development is perhaps right in our own municipality, perhaps at our RCM level. Then, being as close as possible to those we must answer to, and with the municipal officers being close to the people, it becomes more difficult for them to deceive the public, because if the public is deceived, you'll hear about it in no time. But when there are committees away from the local area, it's easier to tell little white lies, and it's easier to... And when we reach the federal government, well, there, it's appalling!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Savoie: The closer we are to the RCM, the more we tell the truth. Is that it?

Mr. Mandeville: The closer we are to the municipality! But you belong to a municipality too, you should know something about it.

Mr. Savoie: In fact, it's a city, yes. It's doing very well, for that matter. Yes, Mr. Dickey.

Mr. Dickey: I, myself, simply want to distinguish between the local government, which is the RCM, and the consulting and concerted action structure, which is the CRD. I don't think they're the same thing at all. And we're not talking about the same results, we're not talking about the same responsibilities. I think what we're saying is that the local government, the municipality, should be recognized in a future Québec constitution. We also say that the powers devolving upon it should be recognized as well. The concerted action structures, in fact, I mention them in the presentation, we are... I think, on a regional level, we need to consult each other on a number of questions that are of concern to all of us. And a structure such as the CRDAT has its place, except that it isn't a local government or a regional government. And it isn't the same thing. We must make the distinction.

Mr. Mandeville: In other words, the CRDAT may recommend, and the RCM may decide, may administer.

Mr. Savoie: Was there any exchange with the CRDAT on the subject of your brief? Were there any exchanges to try and harmonize the two differing positions, Mr. Mandeville?

Mr. Mandeville: No, we were afraid they

would steal our ideas.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Lafrenière: I would like to add that, here in the north, we have a group of chairmen. We are five chairmen who sit in the group, and I think collaboration is very good in the CRDAT. We meet and we discuss things together. When we have problems, we meet and discuss them. I think the organizations cooperate well.

Mr. Savoie: Yes, that's what surprises me, finally, because it's certainly one of the characteristics of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The fact that there is, indeed, good regional consultation at the CRDAT level, as at the RCM level... And yet, in presenting your briefs, one senses a great deal of friction. That's what I'm trying to get at, in a way.

Mr. Dickey: If I may say so, I think that the deadline for the presentation of briefs did not allow for that kind of consultation. I don't think it was unwillingness, but rather a lack of time and means to do so. Because we didn't know what the CRDAT was doing, and I think we each prepared our own briefs. And for us anyway, the Rouyn-Noranda RCM, what was most important was that our position accurately reflect the will of the municipal officers of our RCM. And that, I think we did adequately, except that the time limits did not allow for consultation with the others. I think the Commission can make the distinctions, and do the cross-checking needed to harmonize all of the wishes expressed in the different briefs.

Mr. Mandeville: Mr. Savoie, there is perhaps one point we haven't mentioned. The issue you mention, or the question you ask, is always dependent on taxation. Certainly, the CRDAT, all joking aside, is quite a valuable developmental tool for a region. But, at some point, that taxation power will be missed. And that taxation power is held by the municipalities, let us say, because it is the government that is closest to the citizens. It is the government elected by the people, and, at some point, it should be the one to grapple with taxation powers. So the CRDAT, I maintain, has an invaluable power to make recommendations. But invaluable as it is, it is up to the RCM to decide, to administer.

Mr. Savoie: You will have to excuse me, I don't want to upset anything, but I must attend a press conference of the regional symphony orchestra, not the RCM. The regional symphony orchestra is holding a press conference next door, and asked me to be present so I'm expected there. Therefore, I will let my colleague...

Mr. Mandeville: Nothing is changed. Harmony reigns in both places.

Mr. Savoie: That's it. Ha, ha, ha! We're singing the same song.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, for harmony's sake, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: That was kind of you, Mr. Chairman. I'm led to understand that the four RCMs advocate sovereignty-association. Have I understood correctly? Do the four...

Mr. Lafrenière: In the Témiscamingue sector, we abstained. We said: Other speakers will speak in place of us.

Mr. Dickey: The Rouyn-Noranda RCM said: Sovereignty, with association if possible, but not at any price.

Mr. Mandeville: The Vallée-de-l'Or municipality is for sovereignty, and that was a unanimous decision, regardless of the political stripe of its members. So, the 10 mayors were unanimous in going as far as sovereignty-association.

Mr. Rémillard: So, listen. We are here to listen, and we are taking careful note of your positions. I heard you say earlier, Mr. Mandeville, that the municipalities are not at the service of the RCMs, but that the RCMs are at the service of the cities and towns. That was an important statement, because that is what has happened to a certain extent in the Canadian federation, where it is the provinces that created Canada, and not Canada that created the provinces. But in the evolution of things, sometimes the structures and superstructures have a tendency to take up a lot of room.

And you have good reason to plead, because if there is one conclusion that can be drawn so far by this Commission after visiting the regions, it is certainly that there is unanimity among the speakers from the regions in pleading for true regional powers. A decision-making power with respect to a social, cultural, political, economic reality which is home-grown, which you are in a position to evaluate because you are intervening at the political level which is close to political power. And with respect to that, I understand you perfectly, and I agree with you completely when you say: We do not need to create new political structures. The RCMs are already there and it wouldn't take much to make them into the kind of structures needed for that kind of political, regional power, by guaranteeing them sources of revenue, however, which would be not be a kind of shovelling off... And I took

note of your use of imagery with shovelling and snowbanks which was quite eloquently handled too. But in that framework, how do you see economic summits, for example, fitting into it, and how do you assess economic summits?

Mr. Mandeville: There certainly have been some benefits, at least, getting to know each other and being able to talk to each other. But we, ourselves, we held our own, and it took a long time for it to lead to anything. It's true we were sliding into a recession at the time. But I think socioeconomic summits have their importance, but they would need further thought, too. I won't go too far on that point. If there are others who would like...

Mr. Dickey: In fact, the socioeconomic summit formula certainly hasn't produced the results the people were counting on. And I don't think it's a formula, in its present form anyhow, that should be promoted. It would surely need to be changed a great deal so that the economic choices are more in line with the choices expressed and exercised for the real benefit of the regions. So, as far as a formula for socioeconomic summits is concerned, we should exercise great prudence, if we want to assess and follow that course of action.

Mr. Rémillard: So, according to you, it isn't a formula we should keep.

Mr. Dickey: Structurally speaking, no. It could be a useful means, if it produces the results expected. But it certainly isn't a formula we should commit ourselves to. And it doesn't have a great deal to do with our constitutional future, in my opinion.

Mr. Rémillard: Economic summits if necessary, but not necessarily economic summits.

Mr. Dickey: That's it.

Mr. Lafrenière: It probably needs to be given further thought, because, you know, an RCM such as ours in Témiscamingue, with a population of about 16 000... A great number of people have to be mobilized for it, and then, for it to be worthwhile in the end, projects are slashed to a third, a quarter. People are very disappointed. I don't know if the formula could be reconsidered, or made to produce different results. I don't know. It probably has its good sides too, but we should reconsider the formula.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, the question period is ended. You probably have some concluding words, Mr. Mandeville.

Submission of the Brief of the Abitibi-Ouest RCM

Mr. Mandeville: Yes, Mr. Chairman. So as not to disappoint them, the people from the Abitibi-Ouest RCM asked me to defend their brief, something which is quite difficult to do when one has not written it and has only been given an hour's notice. But I would ask you to take good note of it, and make it part of your deliberations, as if they had been here. Otherwise, I would betray their trust. So, I submit it, and ask you to give it special attention.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will, of course, honour these wishes. May I remind you, just the same, that had they been here, all of you would have had a little less time to speak. We must let them know that they were missed, and that you made the most of the situation. Thank you as well for agreeing to come here as a group, because it greatly facilitates our procedures, even if it limits you somewhat, not too much, at least I hope not. Our thanks to Mr. Clermont, Mr. Lafrenière, Mr. Chamberland, Mr. Mandeville, Mr. Dickey, Mr. Monfette, on behalf of the regional county municipalities of Vallée-de-l'Or, Témiscamingue and Rouyn-Noranda, thank you for this excellent presentation, and for your concerted efforts to bring your wisdom and support to the work of the Commission. I would ask you now to take the time you need to clear the area for the group to follow you, which is the Students' Association of the Université du Québec en Abitibi.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:27 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:29 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now have with us the representatives of the Association étudiante de l'Université du Québec en Abitibi. Are you introducing the group, Mr. Quirion?

Mr. Quirion (Dave): Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go ahead then, please.

Association étudiante de l'Université du Québec en Abitibi

Mr. Quirion: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, it is a great honour for us to be able to participate in this important Commission on the Constitutional Future of Québec. On my right, Marc Gendron, president of the Association and a student in psychoeducation, and on my left is Katy Mercier, an accounting student. I am Dave Quirion, and I

am studying business administration.

And now our president, Marc Gendron, will read our brief.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): Good afternoon. The theme of our brief is "Education, cornerstone of Québec's future: education, sovereignty and socioeconomic development". Part one deals with the Québec of tomorrow, a sovereign Québec. It quotes from the Parent Report to the effect that the cultural and socioeconomic future of Québec, that is, its will not only to survive, but in particular to grow and realize the aspirations it has today, will depend largely on the educational system it adopts.

In the light of the current sociopolitical context, it is high time to define and clarify the character Québec will take on in the months and years to come. The failure of the Meech Lake Accord has put a final stop to the attempts at reconciliation begun by the people of Québec, who aspire to occupy the place they should have been entitled to within the Canadian Constitution.

It is not our intention to blame the rest of Canada. The failure of the last chance negotiations proves and confirms the non-viability of a country in which two societies are distinguished and often confront one another because of language, history and, even more, the incompatibility of their perceptions of Canada, Québec and its contribution to an artificial nation. Why persist in attempting to maintain an association where the needs and aspirations of one group alienate the legitimate aspirations of the other?

This brief will try to demonstrate the primary place that the Québec University community should hold and its indispensable role in the socioeconomic development of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Let us not forget that these considerations are tied in with attaining the most important objective of a people: to recover the most valuable asset possible, freedom. In AEUQAT we believe we can reach this goal in the following way. Let us create a free Québec, proud of its unique character and its own identity. Let us develop an economic vision based on diversification and the determination to make the maximum use of all Québec's resources, in order to assure the competitive edge of our country in the world's economy. To ensure that these pious hopes become reality, we must invest in the most profitable resources to guarantee a promising future for those who inherit our country, Québec. We must invest in the primary agents of social change, change that consolidates the characteristics of a society centred on improving the well-being of all, without prejudice. Yes, we must invest in our students.

Recommendation 1. Since Québec is perfectly capable of governing itself and thereby adequately meeting the aspirations of its people;

Since, in educational matters, Québec's

sovereignty would enable it to recover the amounts invested by the federal government, which, through its spending power, interferes in a field of action that is not its own, without considering Québec's goals in postsecondary education;

Since, in the economic sphere, Québec has all the resources that characterize the greatest economic powers in the world,

AEUQAT recommends that:

After studying the recommendations of this Commission, which in our opinion, will confirm the will of the very large majority of Quebecers to be masters in their own house, the Québec government ask the people of Québec to express their views on the constitutional option advocating the sovereignty of Québec.

Part two covers the economy and sovereignty and quotes a statement by Marc Gendron, student at UQAT. "When we examine the history of peoples and the revolutions that have made these countries what they are today, we almost always find the same types of phenomena triggering sociopolitical upheavals: destitution, poverty, hunger. In Québec, we are experiencing one of the rare revolutions produced by the will of a nation that wishes to progress and fulfil itself by affirming what it is, and what it will be, by assuming its evolution itself, Québec, a proud, free nation. In spite of everything, we must be prudent, for the economy and what it can lead to is our sword of Damocles!"

When taking, in the near future, the option of sovereignty as our constitutional choice, the government must make massive investments in the education sector, keeping in mind the necessity and importance of training our specialists, our professionals, our workers, who are the indispensable pieces in the interactional puzzle of the economy. The role of the State is not limited to increasing the budget reserved for education, it must tangibly encourage the greatest possible participation of the private sector in financing the development of Québec's human resources.

Recommendation 2. Since the economic development of a society depends as much on the quality of its human resources as on capital investments; Since a dearth of qualified manpower constitutes a factor in economic slow-downs and, by extension, in unemployment; Since the training and presence of specialists constitute substantial economic contributions to society,

AEUQAT recommends that:

The Québec government recognize the indispensable character of a collective effort directed toward easier access to postsecondary education and more specifically to masters' and doctoral programs.

Part three, education...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is almost up. Could you possibly summarize the last part?

Mr. Gendron (Marc): Sure. I'll go directly to the recommendations.

Recommendation 3. Since UQAT does not fully meet the specific manpower needs of the region in a number of fields; Since only the development of a university network that will enable the regions to become self-sufficient in relation to their needs for competent human resources could bring the universities closer to the clientele they are supposed to serve,

AEUQAT recommends that:

The Government review the various university programs offered at UQAT to ensure they are more in line with regional reality and can better satisfy specific regional employment needs.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we go on to members' questions. Mrs. Côté, who will be followed by Mrs. Simard and Mr. Beaumier. Mrs. Côté.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I found it interesting that in the end you made only three recommendations, the first covering a little the stand you have taken for sovereignty and urging it on the basis of the powers it would give for the development of education, for postsecondary education. However, in the first recommendation - I have two questions - in the first recommendation you talk of asking the people to express their views on the constitutional option of sovereignty. First, I would like you to tell me - this is my first question - how you think we should conduct such a consultation and how you think we could encourage the student population to become more interested in the matter, finally, how we can reach the students. And now for my second question. In recommendations 2 and 3, you say that there should be easier access to post-secondary education. And you also mention the need to compensate for the present inadequacy between training needs... Employment needs and economic needs in your region. What measures might be taken by the university to ensure that these training and research and development needs can be met?

Mr. Quirion: For the first part of the question, I believe that, at present, students are very much aware of the national question of Québec. Wherever you go in Québec today and even at the university, people are giving their opinion on a clear question: Are you in favour of Québec sovereignty? And the question that would be asked throughout Québec would be the same: Are you for the sovereignty of Québec, yes or no? So much for the first part of the question.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): And that would be by means of a referendum.

Mrs. Côté: By means of a referendum.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): With regard to the second part of the question, we were talking of the adequacy of the programs offered in meeting employment needs. At UQAT there are... If we look at the region as a whole, we know our economy is based in particular on the exploitation of natural resources, and primarily by mining. At Rouyn-Noranda, at UQAT, there are no programs in mining engineering, or in geology. There is a research centre, but no training is done. This would be something to be examined. And as far as medicine and health care professionals are concerned, there must be some way - I know it would appear somewhat utopian to ask for a faculty of medicine in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue - but surely there is some way, in the training of physicians, of integrating them into the region, earlier, I must say, in their training to encourage them to remain here.

Mrs. Côté: So, in the final analysis, easier access to postsecondary education, because I know you have made many representations in relation to what you have just said, also requires regional development that takes reality into account.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): Yes.

Mrs. Côté: So that too depends on... On everything that has been said today, is it...

Mr. Gendron (Marc): Absolutely.

Mrs. Côté: ...tied in with decentralization, deconcentration, and regionalization? Is that right?

Mr. Gendron (Marc): Yes, absolutely.

Mrs. Côté: OK. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Then we go on to Mrs. Simard.

Mrs. Simard: Mr. Chairman, it is somewhat in the same vein because, obviously, I am very happy to see your concern with regard to training and the accessibility of appropriate postgraduate programs, and I think you have given a very good example with the mining industry in the region. However, as we have heard here, the unemployment rate is very high in the region and we know that there are certain sectors that have had little or no development, or are in decline. I would like to know then whether in your Association you have

thought about this question of regional economic development, and in particular, have you considered full employment development policies? Are these concerns discussed by your Association, and are they, finally, considerations students can envisage?

Mr. Gendron (Marc): Absolutely. I'm sure that in such a short brief, we could not elaborate on the matter, but in the regions the need is glaring when it comes to diversification of the economy. We cannot rely solely on the primary sector to develop a region. We are in the process of developing a stagnant region that will remain so if we do not diversify our economy. A number of industries are trying to diversify but I think it is very difficult at the moment. In the forestry industry, specifically, if things are not really going well in forest exploitation, it seems rather difficult to make our way through the various preparation stages to reach the finished product.

Mrs. Simard: Another little question, Mr. Chairman. Do you have any figures on the number of young people who have to leave the region to receive their training elsewhere or who do not return or, even, those who do receive their training here but cannot find work? Has your Association compiled statistics of this kind?

Mr. Quirion: No, we do not have figures as such, since our economy is a cyclical one: at one time everything will be fine, everyone will be working, or continue studying, and easily find a job. The next year things may be very different. Statistics are never up to date in this area. But there are many young people, especially in Témiscamingue, who are obliged to leave their community to go to university outside and who never return because job prospects are extremely bleak.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You still have some time, Madam.

Mrs. Simard: Oh, thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Because he gives succinct answers to brief questions. That allows much more time.

Mrs. Simard: Well then, that's perfect. Do you have concrete proposals for supporting students who undertake postgraduate studies? You say we must invest in them. Have you submitted or thought about concrete proposals to achieve this goal?

Mr. Gendron (Marc): Support them in what way?

Mrs. Simard: In terms of loans and

bursaries, other forms of support.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): The programs would have to be offered before any support could be forthcoming. There are two or three masters' programs, but not more.

Mr. Quirion: But one thing's for sure, and that is for us to be able to develop our university effectively, we will have to start investing in research. That is part of why we are demanding sovereignty. Because there are people in Ottawa who, when they plan investment, research programs for the universities... We are a peripheral university in a remote region, but our reality is not the same as that in the area of Saskatoon. So the programs are never adapted. So there are great losses of money. There is a significant amount of excellence research that could be carried out in our region, but is not, because the programs are very poorly adapted.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, Mr. Beaumier has the floor.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have attempted to summarize your last two recommendations. I will try to summarize them very... The second is easier access to post-secondary education. The third is a revision of university programs.

My question is going to be very short. Do you think Québec absolutely must be independent to realize those two recommendations? If so, why?

Mr. Quirion: My answer will be yes, it is a prerequisite, since Québec is different from the rest of Canada. As a matter of fact, it is Québec that distinguishes Canada from the United States. Our reality is our own, we have a culture that is our own. So, to develop our talents as we wish, well, we have to accede to something we call the sovereignty of Québec, which will give us the tools we need, and repatriate powers and budgets for developing it. At present, we have big problems with financing education and part of the problem stems from the fact that the federal government cuts budgets that are our due because, in the end, it is money we have paid. It is not charity we want, but equity for what we have paid.

Québec sovereignty would mean that we could repatriate budgets and better develop our existing programs.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go on to the Government party representatives. Mrs. Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should like to extend a special greeting to one of the first student associations that has come to testify before us. I think this is greatly to your credit. I hope that when we hold the forum, we will have the opportunity to hear several of them, and perhaps you will even have an occasion to come back to the forum, since the forum is open to all.
(3:45 p.m.)

I had one question that was asked by Mr. Beaumier. I wish to return a little to the concept of sovereignty. You heard Mr. Mandeville a while ago say that it would be easy to talk about emotional sovereignty, legal or constitutional sovereignty, political sovereignty, sovereignty-association, unhyphenated sovereignty. Since we began our work with this Parliamentary Commission, from time to time we have had people come and explain their vision of sovereignty. In particular, we had a former Parti québécois MNA, Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, come and tell us that the model proposed by René Lévesque in 1980, that is, sovereignty-association, as expressed in the White Paper, was very much like what the present Prime Minister is suggesting, in other words, a kind of superstructure, confederation and all that. Others have stated that sovereignty means taxation power, repatriation, in fact, of all the powers, irrespective of an eventual association.

Since you are the first student association that has come to see us, I would like you to define it for me. What does sovereignty mean to you, to students, and not necessarily everyone, but students studying at the Université du Québec en Abitibi?

Mr. Quirion: It's not really complicated, we have to agree on the words: sovereignty equals the independence of Québec. From there, we will be able to build a constitution that will be our own, develop our programs as we will, but the whole in harmony with everything that exists in the world, free trade programs, GATT, and all that goes with it, sovereignty...

Mrs. Pelchat: Now, that brings me to my second question, specifically the quotation from Marc Gendron - I imagine it is you who are quoted - when you say that the economy is the sword of Damocles, you speak of the globalization of markets, and all that. I think it is a constraint we have to live with every day in this world of ours. Would you be in favour of some form of economic association with the rest of Canada?

Mr. Quirion: Much more than with the rest of Canada, but with the rest of the world, because Canada is a party to a number of accords, the Commonwealth, GATT, and so on. We are in favour of remaining a member of all

those organizations.

Mrs. Pelchat: But I just want to say with regard to continental integration, beginning with...

Mr. Quirion: Ah, yes! No problem. Québec students do not wish to isolate themselves. All we want to do is to develop a strong Québec for tomorrow by opening up.

Mrs. Pelchat: OK. But then, is sovereignty, with perhaps an economic association, whether it is a permanent association, an ad hoc one pertaining to monetary union, customs union, etc. would you look favourably on a political structure or political association, either permanent or temporary, to govern that economic association?

Mr. Quirion: As long as the system proposed does not resemble the system of the Canadian federation as it exists at the present time, because we have experienced that reality for centuries, and we are not interested in renewing the same experience. I think it is part of the purpose of the Commission to come up with a new blueprint for society.

Mrs. Pelchat: Yes, Marc, go ahead.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): I think we should not yet align ourselves with the idea of two levels of power. If we repatriate powers, it is to have them for ourselves, not to create a new structure that is going to put us back into the same mould we have today. Moreover, I think the Commission is here for that.

Mrs. Pelchat: With regard to the decentralization of powers, as requested by the RCMs this afternoon but also elsewhere in the regions, with regard to the decentralization of certain powers, there are even those who talk of the decentralization of powers over elementary and secondary education directly to the RCMs. What do you think about that?

Mr. Quirion: That is a question we did not consider, so we cannot answer. But it is something new, it is a new idea. As with all new ideas, we will wait to see people's reactions to it, then possibly the Association, either ourselves or our federation, FEEQ, will declare our position on the matter.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we will hear the questions of the Official Opposition party. Mr. Trudel.

Mr. Trudel: Thank you very much. Since our

time is very short, I wish to congratulate the students of the Université du Québec on their initiative. As the MNA for Vachon reminded us a few minutes ago, this is the first group of students to come and express themselves very clearly before our Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. And after the elderly this morning, after the municipalities, after the women's groups, really, the Commission can have a very clear idea. Just as clear as your view on the future of Québec, and the constitutional future of Québec. And on the subject, you have presented a brief, as you say, short but extremely precise. Your idea is good and very clear.

I have one question to ask you, because you answered the very first question you were asked by saying that well, everything about the constitutional status of Québec, it will have to be ratified by referendum, we will have to ask the question in a referendum. The MNA for Vachon has just mentioned that the Prime Minister's constitutional option is a superstructure with probably supranational institutions. Can we consult the people about a question like that, in your opinion, in the current context of constitutional debate?

Mr. Quirion: Not at the moment, no. There is much too much confusion to talk about a superstructure. I think we have to come back to basic things and ask simpler questions to enlighten as many people as possible.

Mr. Trudel: And what do you think the question should be like?

Mr. Quirion: Just as I said a while ago: Are you in favour of the sovereignty of Québec? And when we speak of sovereignty, we mean independence.

Mr. Trudel: Fortunately, in demonstrating your point, you also tie the future of the country in with the economic behaviour we are going to adopt and the necessary competitive edge we must develop, like all the nations in the world in a normal country, to be able to become the best and work with our neighbours. Do you think the programs we have in our regional university are sufficiently well articulated in that way for us to succeed in this in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue as elsewhere in Québec?

Mr. Gendron (Marc): In my opinion, at the moment it would be a question of adequate regional economic development with the programs that are currently offered at the university. We have good programs. The programs offered are adequate, but when we speak of research, in forestry or in mining, there is a small group of researchers, but there are no students being trained in mining research, absolutely none. In

our main spheres of activity, nothing is being done and this is a glaring problem. All those involved in the academic community, in other words, the Québec university network, the administration, private enterprise in the regions – by the way, we have not talked much about these firms – must be called upon to contribute to the development of the regional university if they wish to have qualified staff who will remain in and benefit our region. That is essential.

Mr. Trudel: This morning, the elderly told us it was necessary to progress and move ahead at all times and never look back. We must not return to the successive constitutional failures and we really must advance in the direction of sovereignty, of administering ourselves, they said. You, you represent the future. You are in the process of becoming educated. You will soon be on the labour market. Does the uncertainty some observers try to evoke in the context of the national sovereignty of Québec worry you? You will perforce be the people who have to live with it the longest. Is this traumatic for you? Does it disturb you? Do you have certain misgivings in the face of that eventuality?

Mr. Gendron (Marc): No.

Mr. Quirion: No. I believe that the upcoming generation, we are very positive people and, irrespective of the challenges we face, we will do as our parents and our grandparents did when they cleared and opened up the Abitibi. When they arrived here, they faced enormous challenges, successfully. We are going to do the same. If we have to rebuild Québec, we will rebuild it, but we will succeed. We shall succeed in our own way.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): I believe we would be rather more disturbed by the contrary. It is the status quo that would worry us.

Mr. Trudel: Thank you very much for your presentation. It was very interesting to listen to you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We still have a little time and I would like you to clarify something you said earlier, Mr. Quirion, when you answered a question from Mr. Beaumier. You said we would have to transfer the budgets that the federal government is cutting because it is we, ourselves, who have paid the money with our taxes. And that worries me a little, your answer, because I would like to know whether you are aware of the fact that Canada's finances show a deficit on the order of about... Every time we spend \$100, we lack \$30. Are you aware of that or aren't you?

Mr. Quirion: Yes, we are fully aware of the problems of Canada's debt. These are questions that we...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): No, I'm not talking about Canada's debt. At the moment, I mean the annual budget of the federal government.

Mr. Quirion: Yes, yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That means, therefore, that when you recover things from the federal government, you are going to recover a borrowing power. I have absolutely no objection to that...

Mr. Quirion: No, but just to give you a little example, I have been studying business administration. Québec universities receive only about 10% of the budgets allocated to research in that field, whereas we represent somewhat more than 10%. We represent 25%.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I was only speaking of one point in your presentation. You stated we would recover the funds we had paid. And I found that disquieting, not because of the argument you gave, but simply because of the fact. Are you aware, brave as you are at your age, that with the deficits you have before your eyes, whatever our constitutional status, you will indeed have to be brave and courageous, because you will have a lot to pay. This has nothing to do with our status as such. You are aware of that?

Mr. Quirion: We are aware of it and we will assume our responsibilities.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You are ready to take on your debts, whatever their origin?

Mr. Quirion: Of course.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Fantastic. You are going to be really good clients for the bankers of the future. And now, I wish to thank you for your presentation, your appearance before us, for answering all these questions... Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Gendron (Marc): In conclusion, you might call this lobbying, I know that the Fédération des étudiants et étudiantes du Québec, FEEQ, has submitted a brief to the Commission. It has not yet been accepted. I know there is a youth forum to be held, but just the same FEEQ represents nearly 100 000 university students. It is my impression that it would be a perfect spokesperson, that the Commission should...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I have listened to your lobbying with the closest attention. I wish to inform you, however, that only in the regions have we heard groups of young people, students or others, precisely to gather all the opinions expressed in the regions. But our intention, so far, has been to welcome all other groups of young people at a youth forum, details of which are soon to be announced. But your representation has been received. You had no guarantee that you would get results. You promised to make the presentation, and you have done so. Thank you.

Thank you once again. Now, we move on to a presentation by Mr. Jean Simoneau.

Will you please take your place. Mr. Jean Simoneau submitted a brief to the Commission; the brief has been received and seen by the members of the Commission. He will now make a five-minute presentation, covering the essence of his brief. Then we will entertain questions. Mr. Simoneau.

Mr. Jean Simoneau

Mr. Simoneau (Jean): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I wish to thank you for inviting me to come and debate with you on the future of Québec. I must first confess that I have been surprised to see the list grow longer every day of the fields in which the various movements believe that Québec must assume its sovereignty, without venturing to affirm that the only possible way to do so is first to declare the independence of Québec. With Meech Lake, Québec suffered a profound humiliation. English Canada told us clearly what it wants Québec to be: a province like the others. For us, this means that Québec should be a bilingual province, a minority partner in the political sphere and a second-class one in the economic world, in other words, doomed to disappear in the long term.

(4:00 p.m.)

Is there any reason to hope that in the near future there might be a change of attitude on the part of English Canada, enabling us to believe in an indispensable decentralization of federalism? At a conference of the First Ministers of the other provinces, their point of view was stated clearly. There is no question of their negotiating one on one with us before Québec declares its independence. Furthermore, if we examine what has been happening since Québec was rejected last June for, whether we like it or not, Meech was rejected because the governments were aware of the opposition shown by their electorates, the situation has been sombre, more so than ever. Ottawa has not transferred any powers in matters of immigration or communications, instruments that are obviously indispensable for the cultural survival of the French fact in Québec. Worse

still, the federal government is killing the only chance we have of creating a Québec national literature by taxing books with the GST.

Things are scarcely any brighter on the economic scene, since, as usual, for the well-being of Ontario, the feds have been able to create a "made in Canada" economic crisis. Isn't it odd that with every wave of sovereignist thinking we have had to face another economic crisis? However, I believe that this time Quebecers, instead of being afraid, will realize that the interests of Ontario come first in Canada. That's nothing new. It has always been so, it is just a little more plausible. Ottawa, moreover, is pursuing its objective. Canada was created in 1867 for the twofold purpose of enriching an English Canadian middle class and, as Lord Durham said, assimilating the French Canadians, a people without a culture. Durham recommended a gradual assimilation without forcing the issue. He said that once English became the language of work, assimilation would soon follow.

Confederation attempted to drown us in an English-speaking sea. The phenomenon was hastened by massive Anglophone immigration. This kingdom of democracy, for according to Mr. Ouellet, federations are the institutions par excellence to defend it, did not hesitate to hang the Métis, Louis Riel. His people proved an impediment to an economic objective, the railway, and they sent in the army. At the turn of the century, Ontario, again in the name of democracy, enacted Bill 17, which prohibited the teaching of French in all the schools of Ontario. The Québec government of the time considered proclaiming its independence, but the idea was rejected by Prime Minister Lomer Gouin to support Francophones outside Québec and because we did not then have the economic force to fly alone.

Did the fact that we refused our independence enable Francophones outside Québec to become emancipated? Almost a century later, they still have to beg to obtain the absolute minimum for their survival. Businesses could post signs in English, but Francophones do not post signs in French, except in a few communities, for fear of the "red neck" menace and having their shop fronts demolished. Despite every federal effort to anglicize Québec, Bill C-62, the dismemberment of Bill 101, control of communications, the Brink's coup, the War Measures Act, officer Samson's bomb, and the fire at Alliance Québec, we have survived.

If some 1 million Anglophones have learned French because they were afraid of French power taking over the public service, and decided to form a bilingual elite to put Québec in its place and take back control over the civil service, imagine the power we will have when we are independent. By ceasing to survive, to live half a life, by leaving the "beau risque", a

failure, to move on to the magnificent challenge of creating a country, in our own image, a country where everyone will have a place, a Francophone country in its language of work, in all its communications, we may risk, if we do not decide quickly enough, losing a few short years, a certain standard of living, but on the other hand we will be guaranteeing a future for our children. Later we shall offer them a standard of living equal to if not higher than what we know today, and above all, the salvation of our culture.

If we have contributed to the development of southern Ontario, how much stronger we will be when, united at last, united for the first time, Quebecers decide to give themselves a country. A country that will be concerned about ensuring, insofar as possible, there are no second class citizens, or poor, a progressive country, that refuses to take part in any war, a truly democratic country in which the well-being of every one of its citizens will be a constant preoccupation.

I wished to point out, Mr. Chairman, that I have had distributed to everyone here, you have seen the little book entitled *Les Nouvelles du Nord* and published by Les éditions D'ici et d'ailleurs, which is a collective work by the writers of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue. It was not meant to be a bribe, but quite simply because we thought that sometimes, amidst constant readings on economics and other serious subjects, it would be pleasant for you to sense a little bit of the soul of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue through a collection of stories.

I have also given out a sheet on which I summarize the position I defend, from the point of view of how I would like to see things proceed with respect to the future of Québec. I should be happy to answer questions about it. I think this was handed around a while ago, and I would like to explain it sometime, when I have an opportunity.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If you please, Mr. Simoneau, we will take questions first and if, by any chance, the questions do not give you the opportunity to clarify this picture, we will take a little time, whatever remains at the end, to talk about it.

Now we shall go on to questions. The Government party has the floor first. Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Allow me, Mr. Simoneau, to welcome you to the Commission. I have read your brief attentively. Here I am, Mr. Simoneau.

Mr. Simoneau: OK. I didn't see you.

Mr. Maciocia: As I was saying, I have read your brief attentively, and I must say that I was

a little surprised, to say the least, by certain of your comments. And I will get straight to the point. On page 6 of your brief, you wrote, and I quote: Canada not only exploits the fate of Francophones outside Québec to make Québec toe the line, it takes advantage of every opportunity, particularly on the international scene, to portray Quebecers as fascists and racists. Mr. Simoneau, you will understand that I do not believe there is a single member of the Commission around this table who can accept or even endorse remarks like yours, which I have just quoted.

And then, on page 7, where your insinuations about Alliance Québec testify to your respect for the presumption of innocence. And your brief, Mr. Simoneau, led me to think even more about the words of the economists, and I have received a great many at the Association. They said that the problem was essentially as follows: We do not know whether the changes will take place in a climate conducive to harmonious negotiations and an amicable transfer of powers, or whether, on the contrary, they will go on in a vengeful atmosphere dominated by verbal escalation and overtaken by doubt and apprehension. You will understand, Mr. Simoneau, that your brief has not particularly helped mitigate my disquiet, but quite the contrary.

Mr. Simoneau: May I reply?

Mr. Maciocia: I am coming to the question and I wished to make this point, for I believe it is important. We are here to study the constitutional future of Québec a little, but without remarks that are really quite outside the context in which we are working, my question deals rather with the accession of Québec to independence. You say first, a declaration of independence, then a ratification of this declaration of independence by referendum and a little later, a definition of the agreement entered into with Canada, all within a period of four or five months. In a lapse of time... You mention October 31, you mention holding the referendum on April 25 and the election on October 25. My question is: Do you not think, do you not find, that it is slightly anti-democratic to have the declaration of independence precede the referendum?

Mr. Simoneau: I'm going to answer two things. First, the question of Francophones outside Québec. What I am saying is simply that the Francophones outside Québec are frequently used as a pretext. You have seen big headlines in *La Presse*: "Don't leave! Don't go or we'll die!" The problem that arises with respect to the Francophones outside Québec is that for the survival of French, it is imperative for Québec, on the contrary, to become sovereign, and it is

imperative to understand that, for the Francophones outside Québec, since the survival of French is in question there, the sovereignty of Québec is also important for them. When I talked about fascism, I was simply speaking about situations which have existed. I work in an English school, I know some people in Alliance Québec and I can tell you this: When you read, when I mention these accusations that have been made, I speak in particular about the rules. When Bill 178 was passed and we had the crisis at Oka, some people took great pleasure in making sure the rest of the country and the rest of the world understood that we were fascists, that in Québec we were incapable of taking care of our minority, and that the same was true of the Amerindians.

I will remind you, however, and I will nevertheless take you back to my text and I will say to you: I also talk about the rights of minorities. I do more than just say it, I simply state that there is a problem: every time we want to pass a law to defend our language, defend ourselves, campaigns get under way in *The Gazette* and are carried on by other movements, in which we are described as racist and anything else you like. It has to stop some day.

Mr. Maciocia: Mr. Simoneau, it's not that, absolutely not. I did say and you say it in your... I quote your brief in which you say "Canada". You do not speak of certain persons, of the school where you work, or anything like that. You speak of "Canada" taking advantage of every opportunity, particularly on the international scene, to portray Quebecers as fascists and racists. And no one around this table could accept such remarks...

Mr. Simoneau: Yes, but I...

Mr. Maciocia: ...because they are simply not true.

Mr. Simoneau: I have just explained the context in which that means what it means. As for the second part, it is strictly that at a given moment it must be understood that we, the majority, also have rights and it is not every time we pass a law to protect our interests that we become fascists.

Mr. Maciocia: Alright.

Mr. Simoneau: In the second part, you speak of three... That is probably because you did not yet have the text I gave you. First and foremost, I advocate that we completely repatriate all the taxes and that we pay them only to Québec, and that at first Québec will pay them to Ottawa. These are the three basic recommendations I would have. Next, I mention

the declaration of cultural sovereignty by Québec. In other words, I believe it would be imperative for the Commission to advise the Government that there are areas in which we can negotiate and areas in which we cannot. The area in which we cannot negotiate is our culture, that is, everything concerning our language, culture, the family, justice, education, communications. The consensus that could come about, which often exists, besides, between Péquistes and Liberals or other parties that are ready to defend this. There are things about which we cannot negotiate. So on those points, we simply declare that in those fields we have become sovereign. Since, as you said, the Government obviously cannot declare itself sovereign, I recommend that a referendum be held a month later, on April 25, in which two clear questions would be asked. The first would be: Do you want Québec to become a sovereign country? And the second: Do you wish Québec to consider Canada, insofar as possible, as a preferred nation with a view to a new association?

Mr. Maciocia: I think we read that, Mr. Simoneau. But do you believe it is possible, the Commission must make its...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Maciocia, I think we have used up more than the five minutes. Have you one very brief question, for a very brief answer?

Mr. Maciocia: Very brief, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll allow ourselves to be tempted once again.

Mr. Maciocia: Very brief. Here it is. Do you think it's reasonable, when the Commission is to submit its report at the end of March, to hold a referendum on April 25? Personally, I think it would be completely inconceivable.

Mr. Simoneau: Well, here, what I mean. April 25, that was written on November 2. Look, the date as such is not so... What I mean is that the referendum must be clear, and it must take place quickly, for a very simple reason. That is, at a given moment, as you know, in the economic sphere, if you don't have a clear idea of the situation, it is more difficult from the economic point of view. In fact, building a country, it is as if, at a given time, you were a tenant in a house. You decide, because you are not happy, to buy the house. Well, obviously there will be a period when things will be a little more difficult, but at least the house will belong to you afterwards...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll have the questions of the Official

Opposition. Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. Simoneau. You have, in the light of the experience you have had, and your own knowledge, presented a brief that is fairly complete. I would say it touches on various aspects of the question the Commission has been asked, in other words, the political [and] constitutional future of Québec. I have a certain number of questions. Since I would prefer to have you elaborate, I shall say nothing further. On page 9 of your brief, and it comes up again on page 26, you say: If we wish to negotiate economic associations with Canada (I understood), we must do so with the agreement of the population.
(4:15 p.m.)

I think I understand from the presentation you have just made that there are some sectors of economic activity on which you do not wish to see an agreement with Canada if there are any consequences for language or culture, for example. That is what I understood. Could you tell us what, in general, should be the economic associations we might have with Canada and whether that includes a monetary union, a customs union, the free circulation of goods and persons?

Mr. Simoneau: I must say I am not an economist. So strictly speaking, I did not ask questions about those matters. Obviously we could have a currency, and that would meet our needs. But at that time, it would be a matter of looking, I thought in particular, at... If you have a currency, we must look at what the advantages would be.

The approach I suggest would be as follows. It is very simple. There are three things. We go before the National Assembly and we come to a consensus on the fields in which we say we will not negotiate. Then, in the economic world, we remove the whole emotional problem of culture. We make something of it and it is immediately accepted, and later ratified by the population in a referendum.

However, from the economic point of view, at that time, if you have a yes in the referendum, this Commission could continue its work and be broadened, to be able to create the constitution. When it comes to discussions, the new negotiations with Canada, I think before that can be done... I have allowed six months between the two so that the political parties can get together on what they want to offer as an alternative. That also gives Canada the time to realize that things are in fact done from the cultural point of view, things are complete. It allows time to reflect a little and start talking less emotionally about the points, at that time, which are important for both parties, which are profitable for both.

What is important to understand is that the situation of Québec is one in which we have always been kept to a minority. Mr. Clyde Wells says that in 10 years Ontario alone could decide on the future of Québec. It was not I who said this, it was Mr. Wells. If that is so, then in institutions like that, we have no chance of survival.

When it comes to stimulation, there is talk of reaching a given point, repatriating powers, giving them to us, decentralizing. And yet, we had immigration, communications which were an ideal opportunity, because this was a cultural field, to give it all back to Québec. Nothing is done. Instead, you have Mr. Mulroney's approach, he is starting to tell us that Québec will never be isolated. Now he promises that never will another field be allowed to isolate us. It goes from bad to worse and, all the while, immigration becomes increasingly English. There has been even more this year, with less money for francization. If this continues, Francophones will be in the minority in Montréal and that will be the end of Québec. It is not in 20 years we must decide, but now.

Mrs. Blackburn: On another subject, on page 12 of your brief, you make a statement, which I would ask you to expand on a little. Referring to economic associations, you say: "It is up to Canada... To define to what extent it needs Québec in order to ensure its own survival, since this is what it comes down to: Canada cannot survive economically without Québec". Could you elaborate a little?

Mr. Simoneau: I think there comes a time, if you sit down and take a look at Québec, if you consider the incidents involving the Brink's trucks and all the lengths to which people have gone to keep Québec in, this is certainly not because we are not valuable. One must not forget that Québec, in terms of money... Even if I take what Mr. Raynaud said in the presentation he gave on "Le Point". On the topic of Canada's debt, he admitted that it could be arranged so that Québec would be the beneficiary. We will obviously have to pay part of it. But, in terms of its structure, Canada needs us just as much, and maybe even more, than we need it, because, with free trade, we can also turn to the United States, and we have a culture to protect us from being swallowed up overnight.

Mrs. Blackburn: Two more questions. On page 16, you talk about minority rights. You say these should definitely be guaranteed in proportion to the percentage of the population the minority represents. When you speak of minorities in this instance, are you referring to Anglophones and aboriginal peoples, or to the other minorities? With regard to Anglophones, should rights be guaranteed in areas only where

numbers justify this?

Mr. Simoneau: Look, numbers are a means of... Personally, I believe... Let's assume that the most important thing, if Québec gains independence, is that all minorities are guaranteed, and the English-speaking minority is a minority like the others, although it is larger and has historically been more important... Still, this minority must at least have the assurance that it will be able to keep its schools, its right to receive treatment in hospitals and access to social services, for example. That we do what... The Anglophones will very often come along, because they are going to wonder: Yes, but if we are in a sovereign Québec, will we continue to have the rights we had before? I think it is essential that we give them, in a constitution that may be written, as I say, after. If the referendum produces a yes, this Commission may eventually become a means of continuing... And that we create a constitution, and it is absolutely necessary that we enshrine... But what I want to say is that, on behalf of all minorities, because we do not have only an English-speaking minority in Québec, of all the minorities, in order to be sure that the... In fact, what is important is that Québec become a humane country where all the citizens stop telling each other: I am a French-speaking Quebecer and you are an English-speaking Quebecer. We will all be full-fledged Quebecers striving for the well-being of the community as a whole, and, in order to achieve this, there must not be a language or any other kind of barrier.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now go on to the members' questions. Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Roy.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Simoneau, as Mr. Macloca mentioned a moment ago, without using the word, your brief is, to say the least, radical in certain aspects that it covers. One of these is criminal law, and, on page 16, you tell us you would envisage a statute of limitations for all criminal offences which do not involve violence, a one-year statute. I do not know if you realized that, by placing a statute of limitations on crimes for one year, in a sovereign Québec, it could easily happen that a person is guilty of treason, the crime is discovered only two years later, and, at that point, because the offence was perpetrated over a year earlier, the perpetrator could not be prosecuted. I also wonder if you realized that, by using this kind of one-year statute of limitations, all the non-violent thefts that could be committed, all the economic fraud that occurs these days that could be cleared up only after a year, those people would be safe from any legal proceedings. I do not know if you realized that

when advocating this, but, first of all, I would like to hear what you have to say on the matter.

Mr. Simoneau: Look, there are certainly problems in this regard, and it should be... The idea that I proposed was that eventually it will be important, from a legal standpoint, I mean when there is something not involving violence, let's say something that is not extremely serious, if you defraud someone of \$500 million, it is obviously not the same thing as, I don't know, minor shoplifting, that you cannot return... It was concerning privacy, that you cannot go back 20 or 30 years in your life and be able to come and then go... I think that eventually there is the question of... I took it in terms of the following principle: rehabilitation. First, I was considering the fact that it costs at least \$15 000...

Mr. Beaudry: But that is not what I am talking to you about. I am not talking about the fact that you send him to prison and make him do community service. I am talking about the offence as such, the offence that is committed. You say: There should be a statute of limitations for one year when it does not involve violence, or are you telling us: This is perhaps a statement I included, without necessarily understanding all the consequences it could entail in a sovereign Québec; therefore, I would perhaps be willing to withdraw it and to say, well, as in other places, there can be no statute of limitations in criminal law?

Mr. Simoneau: What I meant was, it is an idea, which actually entails... My basic idea, the only thing I meant by it, was that all justice should focus on rehabilitation. It was mainly that. Obviously, there are problems with the question of one year...

Mr. Beaudry: If I understand your answer correctly, you do not feel strongly about the one-year statute of limitations you mention in your brief.

Mr. Simoneau: I would not have a fit if you took it out.

Mr. Beaudry: OK. Let's talk about page 26. You have chosen sovereignty as an option.

Mr. Simoneau: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: And you say: For us, sovereignty is essential, and we must achieve it and, subsequently, hold negotiations with the rest of Canada to discuss our needs, everything concerning the general economy, and other matters. I would like you to explain to me how you reconcile that with page 26, where you tell us: It will be impossible to obtain the assurance

of our cultural survival, of our cultural survival, and the emancipation of our economy without renegotiating the constitutional agreement. How do you reconcile that with the principle you advocate that we must first declare ourselves sovereign? And, further along, you tell us: It will be necessary to renegotiate the constitutional agreement with Canada to ensure our cultural and economic survival.

Mr. Simoneau: It's very simple. If you had seen my recommendation that first you have a statement by the National Assembly declaring our cultural sovereignty. When I spoke of renegotiations, these were strictly economic ones to deal with the currency, customs or those kinds of things, for example.

Mr. Beaudry: No, I understand what you are telling me. You were talking about renegotiating this type of thing. But that is not what I am referring to. I am referring to your statement: It will be impossible to obtain the assurance of our survival, our survival. Do you mean to tell us that, if it were impossible to negotiate something with the rest of Canada, that our cultural survival as Quebecers and our economic survival as Quebecers would be in jeopardy?

Mr. Simoneau: The way things stand now, yes. If, from that standpoint, we have nothing, we maintain the status quo, very soon, Québec will be condemned to exactly the same fate as minorities outside Québec.

Mr. Beaudry: But we are not at the status quo, Mr. Simoneau. We are not at the status quo in your brief. We are at sovereignty.

Mr. Simoneau: Well, obviously, if you are culturally sovereign, there is no problem. You certainly guarantee your survival and, further, you ensure your existence.

Mr. Beaudry: In that case, in your brief, there are no grounds for retaining your statement that, in order to ensure our survival, constitutional agreements must be negotiated. That should also be withdrawn from your brief, if I understand correctly.

Mr. Simoneau: Actually, it was in that context that I explained it to you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, your time has run out, Mr. Beaudry. We will go on to Mr. Roy.

Mr. Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my knowledge, this is the first speaker who has talked about national literature in a sovereign context, and I am delighted by this, particularly because I am a colleague, since we are both

writers, if I am not mistaken. Is that right? However, although I like the idea of sovereignty, I must admit that certain arguments worry me. It is the reasoning that I would like to query. And perhaps the reason I would like to clarify this with you is that it contains ambiguities. On page 9, you state that all the books used in literature must be written by Quebecers so as to ensure a literary future that is particular to Québec. I fully understand the implications of this, but it seems to me that a living literature is one that circulates and that wanting to protect a national literature does not imply, does not presume that we not have access to another form of literature, whether it be French or even English. I would like to hear what you have to say about this. What did you intend by that sentence?

Mr. Simoneau: Actually, what it means, quite simply, is that in courses, in terms of the entire course content, when you learn about literature, in secondary school or in Cegep, for example, obviously, it is completely different at university, but when you are studying at that level, Québec texts should be given precedence to enable us to create a strong book market. As I pointed out in the brief, the problem with literature, for instance, is that our regions are extremely isolated. For example, when we want books to be discussed, if only to mention their publication, no newspaper in Montréal handles this. The principle we are looking at is, if we want to achieve a body of literature, we must understand that the regions have a role to play and that it is important they be able to play it. It's the same with radio, with broadcasting. Here in Val-d'Or, you have 14 cable stations, 14 English and 14 French. I think there comes a time when certain balances must be reviewed.

Mr. Roy: Fine. I have two more questions. This afternoon, a speaker declared that political sovereignty was necessary; however, in the same breath, she stated that learning English provided better access to employment. Although she envisaged political sovereignty, she could not conceive of linguistic sovereignty. I want to tie this reality in with the notion of cultural survival. To me, it appears incomplete, since I seem to notice the same ambiguity in your brief. You say, and I am reading this to you: "You recognize the aboriginal peoples' right to their cultural survival". You also say that the cultural survival of Quebecers is a considerable challenge, and should even be a priority. You even say that it is more important to ensure the cultural survival of Quebecers than to protect Francophones outside of Québec. You mention survival a great deal. In my opinion, wanting sovereignty does not mean wanting to survive, it means wanting to live.

Mr. Simoneau: To live, absolutely.

Mr. Roy: Two questions. How do you reconcile this notion of cultural sovereignty and still distinguish it from what Robert Bourassa said? Though we do not really know what cultural sovereignty meant. You, however, are talking about cultural independence. And the second question that I would like to follow up on is: Doesn't political independence automatically lead to cultural sovereignty? (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Simoneau: The first one, on the subject of employment, it is a...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Without preventing you from giving a complete answer, Mr. Simoneau, our time is almost up. Therefore, I would urge you to be brief.

Mr. Simoneau: OK. Let's say that, quite simply, it is unfortunate that, in order to be able to work in Québec, we are required to speak English. In 1976, I lost my job at Ronalds Federated Graphics in Montréal, because I was writing in French. I find that disgusting, when we represent the majority of the population. And the second question was...

Mr. Roy: Cultural independence and cultural sovereignty. Bourassa has already used the terms.

Mr. Simoneau: What I believe is... Look, if Québec declares... My answer to the question, the way it was formulated there, would be yes. There are no more difficulties with culture. At that point, we would have the task of defining ourselves; and let's hope that the Commission will also hold a forum on culture, where we can discuss the problems encountered by the regions with regard to publications.

Mr. Roy: Your answers were good. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your hoping for forums, however, is not necessarily included in Mr. Roy's commendation, because we will not necessarily have much time to hold forums. A forum on youth has been announced. And, to my knowledge, no others have been announced yet. Well, that said, all I have left to do is to thank you, Mr. Simoneau, for coming before us today and for submitting a brief and other documents. I would now like you to make room for the following group, the Corporation de la fête nationale du Québec de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Mr. Simoneau: Thank you very much for hearing me.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr.

Sévigny, Mr. Vincent, on behalf of the Corporation de la fête nationale du Québec de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, would you kindly take about five minutes to present this brief to us.

**Corporation de la fête nationale du Québec
de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue**

Mr. Vincent (Michel): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Commission members, for hearing us. You were perhaps a little surprised by the style, language and form of our brief. It is a completely different kind of brief, since we are somewhat of a marginal organization. We do not have a specific calling, so to speak, related to economics or social issues, etc. Our calling embraces a bit of culture and leisure and, at the same time, increasing awareness of things like Québec's National Holiday. Our mandate is to encourage and invite people to celebrate Québec's holiday. In the preface, we mention something which, to us, is quite peculiar and quite important. We often wondered why the aboriginal peoples are not seated among you, and we continue to wonder today. They are in fact the first nations. We believe it would have been fair and impartial to have them seated at your side, especially in light of everything that took place over the summer. And the other question that we have asked ourselves is why amendments had to be made in order to allow a cultural representative to be seated among you. We find this disgraceful, since the French language and Québec culture are truly what make us a distinct society. So, those are the two things that we note in our preface.

In our brief, we take somewhat of an historic glimpse at the region, indicating that people came from all over, and I could tell you that there are even people from the Magdalen Islands in Matagami. This region was therefore forged and made by people who came from other places; for example, there were those who came during the crisis, with the Vautrin plan and company. And we emphasize, at the end, that we think, we are convinced that, once Québec is sovereign, the Abitibi-Témiscamingue will be able to get along very nicely.

We speak of our homeland, we speak of it in all senses. We speak of the reality and also of making a choice. The fact remains that here, and everywhere else in Québec, there are still women who suffer, there are children who suffer, there are men too, elderly men, elderly people who are cast aside, for all sorts of reasons. We discussed this issue this morning. A group of women came here to tell us about their living conditions. There were also elderly people who came to talk to us about their living conditions. We think it is very important that, in the Québec of tomorrow, those people have the right to speak out, but, especially, the right to

participate fully in Québec's future. It is also very important, for us, that for the children, who are often perhaps the most disadvantaged in our system, there is immediate recourse, which is often close at hand, in meeting their needs.

Then we discuss mines, forests and agriculture. We talk about a guy called Richard Desjardins, an extraordinary poet from home who talks about all the good guys who have died in the mines, who work in the forests, who work in just about every field all over our land. In our view, this poet brings out the reality of the people from around here. This is very important, because it belongs to us. It's a reality, it's a poetry that is distinctive, and, for this reason, we have a text which somehow reflects it.

We also say that we hope that, in the years to come, all those good guys who die, who live, who work, who sweat, who hope that the future of Québec will respond to them, will one day give them a satisfactory response, that this future Québec, a sovereign Québec, could be closer to them and to their reality.

We talk about culture. Among other things, we point out that for the past few years... I remember, 15 years ago, the culture was in a sorry state. Recently, in the past few years, it has clearly improved. Still, we hope that there will come a day when the creative men and women of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and of other places will finally have the chance and the opportunity to make a living from their art. And, as an actor, I can tell you this: It is very difficult to make a living from that profession. Still, considering all the occupations a person can have, it is surprising that when we study, when we work in that profession, we need to make \$40 000 to make a living from it. It is very difficult, but it is a reality which is not necessarily peculiar to Abitibi for it is found in all parts of Québec.

In addition, we discuss the first nations. We believe it is possible, in a sovereign Québec, for the first nations, the Amerindians, to benefit fully from Québec's sovereignty, because they will have only one level of government to respond to them. We find the events of last summer appalling; however, we see the situation as a reality that resulted because for years, and maybe even centuries, there have always been two government jurisdictions to respond to them, and each time the buck, or should I say the "arrow", has always been passed back and forth.

The only thing left to tell you is, at the end of the brief, we ask you to tell Mr. Robert Bourassa's government to work at making Québec a sovereign country as quickly as possible, with its own borders, and sovereign in the political sense, which would make a country out of it, out of Québec.

Those are the main points that I had...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's begin with the Official Opposition group. Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Vincent, I would first like to thank you for kindly testifying before this Commission. I have read your brief. It does in fact have poetic tendencies, shall we say, but I think that now and again it is a good thing to encounter texts of this nature. In reading it, one feels a strong, a very strong sense of your belonging to your regional community, but also to Québec. One also detects deep affection for Québec's land and the people who inhabit it. And I believe these are important feelings to have when we want to make a country for ourselves.

Formerly, there was a term we used to designate feelings like these. It has now become a little antiquated or outmoded. We used to call this patriotism, the love for one's country, country in the sense of a territory inhabited by a people, a territory where people put down roots. So, it is an old-fashioned word, but one that I think is worthwhile remembering on occasion.

Having said this, I am sorry to have to move on to some very mundane questions. You are obviously in favour of sovereignty, you are hoping Québec will become a country. However, nowhere in your text is there mention of any approach or process by which this can be achieved. What are your thoughts on this matter?

Mr. Vincent: At the time the brief was prepared, no one on the board of directors of the Corporation de la fête nationale suggested whether or not we were in favour of venturing into a referendum. However, there is no doubt in our minds that this step is paramount and very important. At least in our view, this is the first thing that should be done, to hold a referendum in which the people of Québec finally, once and for all, we hope once and for all, and for good, take a stand on their political and constitutional future.

We would be in favour of a referendum that has a clear, unambiguous, direct question asking the people: Yes or no, do you want a sovereign and independent Québec?

Mr. Brassard: Therefore, that would be the clear action, in your opinion, that the Commission should recommend...

Mr. Vincent: Should recommend.

Mr. Brassard: ...to the government. All the while hoping, however, that we will be able to establish an economic association with the rest of Canada?

Mr. Vincent: You know, you were mentioning poetry. I think that if we are capable of talking about the land, about poetry and about words, we surely believe that association should be achieved as well. We have what is known in some circles as an economic reality. And, in my view, we should not isolate ourselves; rather, we must venture out and form ties with people who are willing to form ties with us, once we are sovereign.

Mr. Brassard: Secondly, Mr. Vincent, you of course speak of language and culture, and you associate that with Québec sovereignty. Why, in your opinion, is sovereignty necessary to ensure the survival and full development of our language and culture?

Mr. Vincent: I think, for a variety of reasons, at least, among others, if I consider language, if I consider our culture, there is something specific in Québec that belongs to us, and this is language, and it is culture, and I have never felt such a need for the government in power, either in Québec, especially in Québec, to work toward... Unfortunately, Bill 101 has been entirely distorted, but it did give us a certain security about the future of that language. And, along the way, unfortunately, that bill has been distorted and dismembered. It seems to me there is only one thing that can meet this need, that can provide this protection: sovereignty. And I do not see people in British Columbia wanting to come here and tell me that they are going to protect my language. They can very well defend their reason for being, I respect them for that, but I do not think that, out of the goodness of their hearts, they will come here to Québec to tell me: Look, we are going to defend your language and culture because we love them. Well, I think that somewhere there is surely someone on the other side who loves them, but not to that extent. It is something like that.

Mr. Brassard: In closing, I would like to first congratulate you, Mr. Vincent, because I understand you are an actor...

Mr. Vincent: Yes.

Mr. Brassard: ...and that you earn your living...

Mr. Vincent: So to speak...

Mr. Brassard: ...from that profession. I think it is important to point this out, because you have chosen to practise that profession, and, as a result, to participate in the cultural vitality of your region right here, rather than going and trying your luck in the big centres. Congratulations and bravo!

Mr. Vincent: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This leads nicely into the list of questions I have before me, since the next speaker is Mr. Gilles Duceppe, who is filling in for Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Chairman, initially, your brief raises the question of our ties with the first nations. You recognize their distinct character and you cite the positive achievements of both whites and native peoples and the possibility of their being complementary. However, your brief does not contain any concrete proposals; therefore, I have two questions. First, do you have any examples of cooperation with the aboriginal peoples from your region? And, second, what type of relations are you propounding between the Québec nation and the first nations, within the framework of a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Vincent: The best example I have, since it is part of my own experience, is when the Inuit used to come here, to Rouyn-Noranda, to the Université du Québec, to learn French. This was my first contact with Amerindians, with the northern Amerindians, or, I should say, the Inuk. And through them I discovered a culture and an outlook on life that were very different from ours, a sense of the environment, a sense of respect for many things and a very distinctive sense of humour. I discovered that these people had some interest in learning our words, in knowing about our way of life, and were also filled with childlike wonder when they discovered how we lived. At the same time, what they expected from me, from Michel Vincent, was a little interest in their culture, in their way of life. I can tell you that, among other things, I experienced a unique kind of cooperation among SAGMAI, our group, the Université du Québec at the time, and the Inuit. And, it really worked very, very well; it was extraordinary. I think that recently, just two days ago, we indicated that there was the possibility of agreeing on matters with the Amerindians, recognizing nations, recognizing peoples, even recognizing, for example, the possibility of Amerindians being taxed, etc.
(4:45 p.m.)

Maybe there are paths. Our group has not mentioned any here, because, at the time, we were not quite sure. And, along the way, listening to what has transpired here over the last few weeks, we have said to ourselves: Actually, there are things, possibilities that are materializing, that are taking shape. And I think that if we realize that we speak French and the others speak English, that they are distinct societies, if we recognize their right to be a nation, there is a possibility, I think, of negotiating at various levels, which will result

in a sharing of powers, which will result in everyone eventually being respected, within the limits of what is permitted. Still, I think of the native peoples in the Châteauguay area and elsewhere who perhaps do not have the advantages, so to speak, of the Cree and the Inuit, who have vast territories and who have had the advantage, again, so to speak, of James Bay, to establish themselves, to create economic structures for themselves. With them, I think it will be necessary to take a closer look at their so-called geopolitical and geographical reality and to see, with them, what we can do, in general.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now go on to Mr. Roy.

Mr. Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the 1960s, Pierre Bourgault, and I think he would still say this, but I would have to check, said that the reason for independence is language. Last week, Doris Lussier wrote in *Le Devoir* that the national issue is first and foremost a cultural problem, which, I believe, is the bent of your brief. What is in danger, says Doris Lussier, is the permanence of the French culture, the soul of a people, the soul of a nation, of a Québec nation. Further, in the December 1 issue of *Le Devoir*, Paule des Rivières implies that the Bélanger-Campeau commission is redefining Quebecers' cultural landscape. My question to you is: Do you believe that this commission has a role to play in redefining Québec's cultural space? And, if so, what would this role be?

Mr. Vincent: A very good question. I admit that, I mean, I think I know what you are going to do. Eventually, you are going to go on to talk about a Québec reality, and I think that, among other things, language and culture are part of it. I presume when the time comes... Personally, when the time comes, I would expect the Commission to perhaps emphasize the importance of the survival of the French language and of the Québec culture and to make suggestions, because we have not brought up any methods or proposals for protecting, in future, who we are and what it means to be a Quebecer. I think we are convinced that sovereignty is the ideal means, so to speak. Still, if the people change their minds in the future and decide that a federalist system is the ideal, maybe we will have to make adjustments and, at that time, guarantee that, if a bill is voted in, it will be maintained and preserved and that Ottawa's Tower of Babel will not change the rules.

Mr. Roy: Your answer leads into my second question. In a sovereign Québec that favours control over the Québec culture, how could it compete with the imperialism of American culture, radio, television, etc., which is relatively

effective? And, I do not want to deny that reality or condemn it, but it does exist, and there is a market economy behind it. How does one gain control over the Québec culture in this economic context?

Mr. Vincent: I would first answer with a question: Where is the 1%? I think that if the Québec government, which says it governs a distinct society, because it coined the term at Meech Lake, and this distinct society includes my language and culture, I think that the 1% should come back, and, more than a promise, it should be a reality. For too long in this life, this history of an economic and political society, etc., what has happened in our history for too long is that artists have been left a little by the wayside. And I think that if the Québec government favoured that famed 1%, the emergence of the French language in the schools and institutions and, through all this, culture, or the possibility of being on the stage, shall I say, there would be nothing to worry about. I consider the present state of the theatre, this is the best answer we have. I mean, if I look at Tremblay, a few years ago, actors were embarrassed to play his parts; today, they are proud. A few years ago, here I will give you the best example, we were going to stage an extraordinary play, "Le chien", by Jean-Marc Dalpé, a guy from Ontario, a superb Franco-Ontarian. Actors are proud to be in his plays because they are in French, but, at the same time, they have meaning for us. So, I think that if cultural policies are one day developed, and if they respond to this, personally, I would not be worried.

Mr. Roy: If I understand correctly, it is not a question of being against American imperialism...

Mr. Vincent: Not at all.

Mr. Roy: ...or, rather, against certain other forms of culture, but having the possibility and the means of access to our own culture and our own literature.

Mr. Vincent: On the contrary, we are very open to other cultures. Here, we are talking about Amerindians. I could have spoken about Americans, or I could have spoken about France or some other place. On the contrary, I think and I would cite what René Lévesque used to say: "A person must not limit himself to one language". We have to know several in order to understand what is happening in other parts and to enrich our own culture and our own lives.

Mr. Roy: Therefore, the reason for sovereignty is not only the economy. There is

also, more importantly, the culture.

Mr. Vincent: The culture.

Mr. Roy: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now move on to the Government party's set of questions. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Good day. I admit that reading your brief left me a little perplexed, because I found, as did others, that it was much more the plea of a poet than a search for economic solutions for Québec's future. This poet's plea... At times, I found that the sentence or desire to have a well written sentence took precedence over the accuracy of the text. You even frightened me at one point, on page 6, when you say: "So, in a few words, this is how we see the country of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue". I said: That's it, we haven't solved anything. We could achieve sovereignty and they would want to separate.

Mr. Vincent: I'll tell you something. I have been here for a long time. For 15 years, we have referred to the country of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue. This is for a very specific reason. For a long time, this country, the Abitibi-Témiscamingue, has been isolated from the rest of Québec. The image that the term evoked in my mind back then was so very negative and mean that I think there was a time when people were correct to speak of a country, because they felt completely alone and isolated.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): But you even suggested...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Again, please. It is not because the Commission is opposed...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): You have the same...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...to the applause, but I have already explained that tradition dictates that, in Parliament, there is to be no applause from the gallery, and we are a Parliamentary Commission. Everywhere we go, we ask our audience to refrain from applauding. Go on, please.

Mr. Vincent: As an actor, I find it hard not to be thanked.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I've noticed.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): The way I see it, you are already begging for your bread, since it is said that applause is the bread of artists.

Mr. Vincent: Yes.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): But, we heard relatively similar discourse in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region...

Mr. Vincent: Yes.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): ...where I come from. And Mrs. Blackburn can confirm this, you make me feel that they could pass right by and we would be faced with a different problem.

This is said in jest, but it reflects a very important basic truth. It is this plea by the regions that feel very isolated and very far away, not from Ottawa, which is not even a reality in those regions, but from provincial power, which should be more real and closer, which seems to forget or not be structured in such a way that it takes these regions into account. Sometimes we feel that we would like to form a confederation within Québec, to have full autonomy in those regions, in view of what can happen in the big centres, in Montréal and Québec City. What is your stand on this issue?

Mr. Vincent: You cannot reproach us for having an ideal, I think that the Parliamentary Commission is enabling us to take our ideal to the extreme, to the limit of a dream which belongs to us. For too long, I think, this country, the Abitibi-Témiscamingue, has been isolated and somewhat abandoned. Still, there have been good things. I am not denying what has happened in the past, but... And why not, since we are on a Parliamentary Commission? You might criticize my poetic side, but I will tell you straight away that I am neither a technocrat nor a public employee. Above all, I am an artist. Still, we cannot help, and why should we, building our dream as high as the ceiling to see if it could come true. And I tell myself that I do not feel at all guilty about this. On the contrary, let's do it, because we are, in fact, at that point; I feel we are at that point.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Yes, but you allow me to question your dream, because it appears a little facile to me. Obviously, in a dream anything can happen, anything is possible. Nothing is incoherent. It is a dream. In that sense, don't you think that your view of independence or the consequences you see it having, at least for your particular region, are not a little bit idealistic? Just now, you were talking about sovereignty or independence as an ideal. I had the impression you were referring to something idealized.

Mr. Vincent: I will tell you right now that I am not a constitutional expert, by any means. I am an everyday citizen of this region who is asked whether he is interested in staying in a Québec which is part of a union called Canada or whether he hopes that Québec will become a sovereign country. I am sharing my views with you. There are men here, just now, and there were women before them, who outlined their views, which I perceived as perhaps a lot more down to earth or more practical than mine. The fact remains that I cannot answer in a very practical way when asked how I see all this.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): But, you must understand that I am not questioning your stand. On the contrary, I find it extremely interesting and important. What I would like to emphasize is this plea by the regions, the fact that we must take more notice of these regions, regardless of the decision that emerges from this Commission's conclusions.

Mr. Vincent: Yes.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): That is what you are telling us quite eloquently. In that sense, believe me, I am extremely sympathetic with what you are saying. So, don't get defensive, on the contrary, I would even like you to flair up more to give us your viewpoint on the regions.

Mr. Vincent: Well, the viewpoint on the regions... Look, I am talking about this land of ours, I am giving it to you, I am telling you that there are people, who were here just now, that they discussed the RCMs, that they spoke of those possibilities. I felt what they were saying just now, when they were talking about the reality of their government, at least in the regions, of the RCMs and other matters... I see these as practical and extraordinary means that are within our reach and close to our realities, and those people should have been our first respondents, and then their message could be taken to Québec City. I think that from there, we have the means...

One of the things we have is natural wealth. There are men and women who have potential, the extraordinary abilities to develop this country, the Abitibi-Témiscamingue; however, sometimes I have the impression that they are not going to be sought after, that no one will not come and consult them. In a far-off centre, all sorts of things are dreamed up and then thrown into the regions.

I am thinking, for example, of the system of doctors. How is it that, here at home, it is not easy for us to have doctors? I am thinking of culture. How is it that, at home, once again, we have to fight, we have to fight over territory, over population, over this and that,

when we know that our own reality... That we are not asking for the moon, but to be able to make some kind of a living from that profession? And they always reply: You have so many people, you have so much as a region, you have so many towns, etc., and, to add to that, they come and impose rules on us which sometimes exceed our capacities.

Among other things, we are asked to stage three or four productions a year. We are asked to give about 40... I don't know how many performances; the number is unthinkable and out of the question. It cannot be done here in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue. We are asked to do things which are beyond the standards and impossible. And what I find harmful is that the region's reality is not taken into consideration. And I am looking forward to the day that it is.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): This is what I wanted to hear you say and what I was hoping for, because if the plea of the regions comes from Matane, the North Shore, Joliette, the Laval-Laurentides-Lanaudière, the Montérégie, then it is this plea we have heard all over, and I wanted it to overflow, to transcend the boundaries of this commission to be heard, at the level of the structures and regardless of the government which is in place or will be in place, and reach those people in order to become a true reality, not just to say: We have a regional Minister, and that is enough. I think it goes much further than that.

Mr. Vincent: Indeed.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): And perhaps our structures have never been thought of in terms of the dynamism of our regions.

Mr. Vincent: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The time allotted for this presentation has now expired. All I have left to do is thank you, Mr. Vincent, and the Corporation you represent for having contributed to our work. We are now going to hear Mr. André Richard. Would Mr. Richard please take his place at the table. So, Mr. Richard, for this half-hour presentation, we welcome you. You have five minutes in which to give the summary of your brief, and then we will go on to the questions. You have the floor.

Mr. André Richard

Mr. Richard (André): Thank you very much. Having been a professor, I remember only too well, when I was teaching and had to give the last course of the afternoon, the challenge I encountered in keeping my audience. My presentation had to be the equal of those that had preceded, and if it wasn't, I could lose my

listeners. Mr. Chairman, Commission members, I would like to go on record as advocating Québec sovereignty. In my view, this sovereignty is vital, as a means as much as an end. I also want to go on record as being in favour of a French Québec, of a truly French Québec. While recognizing that Québec's future rests mainly on constitutional, political and economic foundations, the Commission should give no less importance to the current state of our language, its official status, its actual status, the possible status of the French language in the Québec of tomorrow. This is the heart of my presentation.
(5:00 p.m.)

Québec has already defined itself as a distinct society. Unquestionably, the cornerstone of this distinction is its language and culture. Our language, the French language, is the very basis of our identity and the vehicle of our culture. Without the French language, Québec would not exist. Without the French language, Québec would no longer exist. In addition, our society is distinct in that it has its own borders, its own economy, an administrative and juridical infrastructure through which it has managed to develop over the years, not only distinguishing itself within Canada, but earning global recognition.

Québec also consists of the Québec people, who are also distinct and who want to grow as such. They want to be a distinct people. The creation of a sovereign Québec is nothing more than the natural result of this geographic, demographic and socioeconomic entity which belongs to us, which was conceived and developed over the years to reach the required maturity to want, quite naturally, to be all on its own. It is like the natural process of the realization of a human being, this natural process of the nation that we cherish. Just as important is the fact that English Canada refused to recognize Québec as a distinct society. English Canada refused to recognize our uniqueness and, in so doing, refused to recognize our existence. This was not the first time English Canada had rejected us. Therefore, we are no worse off for it.

If Descartes affirmed his existence by saying: I think; therefore, I am, and words are born of thoughts, let's simply extrapolate and assert after his fashion: I speak; therefore, I am. Collectively, we speak; therefore, we are. What is this business of wanting to put our fate and our destiny in the hands of others? A person who actualizes himself does not give himself over like this. He takes himself in hand and becomes responsible. Thus, our sovereignty is seen as an ultimate goal which is logical and natural in the political and social evolution of things. We are; therefore, let's be to the fullest!

It is also Québec's duty to aspire to sovereignty, not only as an end, but also as a means. This sovereignty is necessary in ensuring

the survival of its linguistic and cultural distinction and, more importantly, in ensuring its fullest development. Once its make-up is removed, this beautiful dream of a bilingual and bicultural Canada will translate into the existence and strict preservation of an English Canada on one side and a bilingual Canada on the other, and, to all intents and purposes, the latter will be Québec, Bill 101 included. This one-sided bilingualism, serving as more of a tranquilizer or sleeping pill to keep Québec quiet or satisfied, will always have the effect of diluting the French culture and removing all credibility from the position this language should occupy in its own community. For instance, English Canada would rather welcome the American culture with open arms and embrace it, a culture which it essentially sees as its own, without adding any ingredient, either from the Québec or French culture, to its cultural menu, with the exception, of course, of certain extremely rarities that English Canada would accept in translation from our culture.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Perhaps you should press on to the conclusion, Mr. Richard, to stay within the five minutes.

Mr. Richard: Yes, I'll just finish the page. With the exception... Why, exactly, should one learn French? Why even look into the French reality, if everything French is also bilingual? In addition to this, all attempts by Québec, being surrounded by a sea of Anglophones, to protect its language and culture, to consolidate them, to give itself credence, will be misunderstood by the mass of Anglophones and then attacked by the great majority of federal institutions. Yet, there has always been room for the English language in Québec, whereas the French language in English Canada has always come up against a fierce resistance. This openness, sometimes naive on our part, and not inciting any reciprocity in English Canada, will have served more to diminish the value of our language in our own land and to repress our culture in favour of the culture which has repeatedly been recognized for its imperialist character. Enough is enough. Today, it is Québec's duty to acquire the exclusive instruments that will ensure the survival and full development of its distinction. I thank the Commission members for granting me the honour and privilege of expressing myself in this way and for the attention they have paid to my humble remarks.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will begin with the questions from the members. Mrs. Drouin.

Mrs. Drouin: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Richard, I see that you started your presentation by saying: "I would like to declare

my support for a French Québec, a truly French Québec." And, on page 9, you mention new rules for admission to English schools. And I quote. You say: "Any student, regardless of his nationality, would, however, be eligible to attend an English elementary school, secondary school or Cegep provided he had previously mastered a level of English equivalent to that of the grade or year preceding that in which he would like to enroll." As a representative of the educational sector, I admit that this worries me a bit. Don't you think that laying down new rules for admission to English schools would jeopardize the development of the French language that you initially advocated?

Mr. Richard: Yes, I'll answer that. If people prefer English schools to the point where the existence, development and future of French schools are threatened, then we must ask ourselves why this is so, rather than question the existence of English schools in our society. There's reason to believe that if we set up Russian schools in Québec, and eligibility was universal, that French schools still would not be threatened. If English schools meet the aspirations of Quebecers more fully, shouldn't we question the French character of Québec? As an educator, I find it impossible to contradict the principle that people attend French school not to learn French, but to learn in French. First and foremost, the difference lies in the level of the language in which a person will learn, rather than in the level of the language a person would like to learn. Language is a learning tool. If someone has already mastered the basics of a language, then I don't see how we can deny him access to the educational system which is an extension of that language, provided the system has been duly recognized. And, if people are attracted to English culture, shouldn't we wonder about the attractiveness and strength of our own culture in our own society? I think I discuss this in my brief. If people don't agree, let's simply abolish English schools. But I wouldn't agree with that. I was the principal of a French school in Ontario. I saw how people fought for French schools. If I'd later been told that I couldn't allow a Walloon Belgian or a student from France or Senegal whose mother tongue was French to attend my French school, in order to make them go to English schools, I would have found this gesture highly discriminatory and fought to the finish against it.

It would be better to have these rules, which are sensible and based on common sense, and have people observe them, than to have unreasonable rules that people don't obey.

Mrs. Drouin: Fine. Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear the questions from the Government

party. Mr. MacMillan.

Mr. MacMillan: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Richard, since this is the first day that I've sat on the Commission, I have had the pleasure since last Thursday of being able to read and study several times the brief you have presented. In short, your arguments are based on the fact that Québec has a language, a culture, boundaries, a political and legal structure, and its own economy. However, since Québec has been rejected by Canada — you said "humiliated" — and not for the first time, it would be better to leave the system. I wonder, Mr. Richard, to what extent your position isn't, in fact, a reaction. If I've understood you correctly, your reflection is aimed at identifying the political structure that would best allow Québec to ensure the spread of the French language. In this perspective, I would like to ask you, Mr. Richard, to imagine that we're starting from scratch. I would like you to ignore all the abortive attempts made in the past and, in short, I also want you to think, not in order to react but to act. And I would like to make the following suggestion: If the Commission reached the conclusion that the French language could thrive in a federal or confederal system, as long as Québec had full power, would you continue recommending that we give preference to sovereignty as a structure? If so, why?

Mr. Richard: We would have to be fully independent to preserve our honour. In view of the failure of Meech Lake, in view of the humiliating anti-Québec and anti-French sentiment that has emerged, in view of the indifference, in view of all the contempt for us, full sovereignty is a question of personal dignity and self-esteem. We should have control over everything that affects us, and that's all there is to it. Being sovereign, however, doesn't mean not being dependent. The United States of America, France and Japan, for example, are very sovereign. But God only knows how much they depend on others to live and survive.

I'd like to go back to a comment you made earlier. You spoke as if I were reacting, as if I were looking for revenge.

Mr. MacMillan: Excuse me, Mr. Richard, but, in reading your brief, I had the impression that you wanted revenge for when you were in Ontario, when you couldn't get your message across to Francophones outside Québec. That's how I interpreted it. I don't know if it's vengeance, but your reaction today, which, by the way, you expressed very well, is really a reaction whereby you want to make up for the experience you had as a school principal in Ontario.

Mr. Richard: Are you telling me that I

found the treatment of Francophones outside Québec unfair so as to be able to treat Anglophones the same way here?

Mr. MacMillan: Perhaps.

Mr. Richard: Well, yes, maybe I did find that Francophones outside Québec were treated unfairly. However, the vast majority have adapted themselves to this situation; the vast majority are satisfied. When we talk about militant Francophones outside Québec, we're referring to a very small minority, and those who are still demanding rights are not all those who could call themselves Francophones. The words ACFO and Association des francophones hors Québec are not on the lips of everyone who is of French origin.

Nevertheless, we could sometimes obtain services in French. But the problem was that very few Francophones used them. If there's a referendum... If a referendum were held on whether a province outside Québec should become bilingual and only those who called themselves Francophones were asked to vote, you'd see that very few people would turn out and that all wouldn't necessarily agree. Their assimilation is already very advanced.

In short, I could go on saying it was unfair until the year 2000, but how many Anglophone leaders in English Canada...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes.

Mr. MacMillan: It's as though I'd sent my questions to you.

Mr. Richard: Well, I expected it. I expected your question.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. MacMillan: I mean... I'd just like to change a bit, because you're reacting again.

Mr. Richard: Yes.

Mr. MacMillan: I wonder if someone stole my questions and sent them to you. In any case, I will try and ask you another one you probably haven't seen... at least, I hope not.

Mr. Richard: No one sent me any questions, Sir.

Mr. MacMillan: No, no, no. That's fine. Which rights of the Anglophone minority... Would it be better protected by the Constitution of a sovereign Québec, Mr. Richard? I hope you weren't given this question either.

Mr. Richard: I wasn't given any questions. But I think Anglophone rights in a sovereign

Québec were explained in the brief. First, I want Québec to be French, to be totally French, and would like them, above all, to learn our language. As unilingual Francophones, we shouldn't be made to feel like strangers in our own territory. I think that Anglophones in Québec should continue to have their own schools, not only at the level of... since this right was granted to them in the past, but also as a gesture of reciprocity toward the rest of Canada, which should also have schools for Francophone minorities.

Mr. MacMillan: But don't you think that Anglophones have that, all these...

Mr. Richard: Yes.

Mr. MacMillan: Yes.

Mr. Richard: Yes, but as far as I'm concerned, sovereignty is intended, first and foremost, for French Québec. There's a reality, and that's why I said in my brief that Québec will be French in the same way that English, that Ontario is English, etc. more or less. More obviously, to protect ourselves from this reality, and less of course, since this reality corresponds to the omnipresence of English in Québec. This is something we'll always have to live with... an omnipresence that is not the case with French in Saskatchewan.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now ask Mr. Brassard, the representative of the Official Opposition, to take the floor.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read your brief very attentively, Mr. Richard. First, I must say that, obviously, no one sent you any questions, but that you probably anticipated them.

Mr. Richard: That's correct.

Mr. Brassard: In the National Assembly, some ministers occasionally anticipate the questions they'll be asked and read a sheet of paper. Well, this in itself isn't serious, nor is it wrong; it's perfectly normal that you anticipated the questions. Personally, I didn't see a desire for vengeance in your brief. I didn't see this, because if you'd been motivated by vengeance, you would have challenged the rights of Anglophones in Québec, which isn't the case. On the contrary, you recommend that Anglophone rights in Québec be fully and scrupulously protected. Therefore, it can't be said that you harbour feelings of vengeance, can it? (5:15 a.m.)

On the other hand, I noticed tremendous disappointment on almost every page on account of the many years you championed the rights of

Franco-Ontarians. Your disappointment is obvious. At one point you say: I believed in a bilingual Canada; I believed in a bicultural Canada from coast to coast. You believed in that. You were living in Ontario and you believed in the emergence and existence of a bilingual, bicultural Canada. And, on page 4, you say that, because of Bill 178, it's become... Bill 178 has become the pretext "par excellence", as it were, for revealing the real mood of English Canadian society. And, later, you conclude: Let English Canada be English and French Canada French. Basically, you've reached the conclusion that bilingualism is impossible, since English Canada as a whole will always reject it anyway, or prevent it from developing or really existing. I think, therefore, that your testimony is important since you have considerable experience as a Francophone outside Québec. You've dealt with this situation personally, and you have concluded that English Canada will never allow French to occupy even the most limited place in its society. Is that correct?

Mr. Richard: That's correct.

Mr. Brassard: Therefore, like the teacher, we must then conclude...

Mr. Richard: And they're not being malicious, may I add.

Mr. Brassard: No, they're not malicious. It's true.

Mr. Richard: Not all Anglophones or English Canadians are racist or anti-Québec, although many expressed such attitudes during the Meech Lake crisis. But I understand very well. When we impose the values of bilingualism or the learning of French on people in Vancouver, British Columbia, whose reality corresponds to Hindus or people from Hong Kong, etc., these values mean nothing to them. And I understand that. What I don't understand very well, however, is why they don't even have to learn French when they come to Québec, in order to come here. I have trouble understanding that. Earlier, Mr. Brassard, you spoke of my illusions, my disappointments. When I used to visit a Franco-Ontarian firm in Ottawa and there were no French, or even, bilingual signs... A law exists and, yet, there were no such signs. And I'd say: Why don't you have any French signs? And they'd answer: If you want French, go to Québec. And I walk around Montréal...

Mr. Brassard: Three short points. It's true. You're basically right. In short, English Canada is fully aware that French isn't of any use. Therefore, they don't see why they should promote or take measures to ensure that French play a certain role in their society. And you're

probably right. There's no maliciousness in this. However, it must be concluded that Québec is the only place where we can live completely in French and that Francophone communities outside Québec are doomed to disappear. You too have reached this conclusion.

Mr. Richard: That will be up to them, Mr. Brassard. Francophone communities outside Québec have started attracting attention, not because Mr. Trudeau imposed bilingualism, but ever since Québec began to assert itself in the late 1960s, when the French question began to gain momentum. When the French question... Or when Québec's position was foggy, well, no one respects confusion. It was then that we began to be humiliated. There were fewer criticisms, Mr. Brassard, when Québec passed Bill 101, because it was a coherent, French language charter, than when we introduced Bill 178, which made no sense whatsoever.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is now up, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Is there still a bit of time left?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There's still some time left, but it's at the disposal of the other members now.

Mr. Brassard: But could I just have a minute to... Just to finish what we were discussing?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your request is refused. There's no consensus, Mr. Brassard. However, if you took 30 seconds, we'd allow you...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But, if possible, 30 seconds, not too long.

Mr. Brassard: Yes, 30 seconds just to... Therefore, you conclude that Francophone communities outside Québec are in danger of disappearing and that, ultimately, they would have a much better chance of surviving if Québec became a French society, completely French in all aspects.

Mr. Richard: On the one hand, yes. On the other, it depends on what they do. Two summers ago, I went to Shediac, the Francophone capital of lobster. I didn't see the word "homard" on a single sign in the city. This isn't the federal government's responsibility. It's up to the residents to live and express themselves in French.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'd suggest that, next time, you make a short trip to Cap Pelé. It's right near Shediac. You might be in for a few surprises.

A voice: Bravo!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You never know. Since the members have no more questions, our time is now up. Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Richard.

The sittings are over for this afternoon. We will resume at 7:30 p.m. in this room. The sitting is adjourned.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:23 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:31 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Members of the Commission, if you would please take your seats, we will begin in a few minutes.

Regroupement d'éducation populaire d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

We will resume our work with a presentation by the Regroupement d'éducation populaire d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. They will be with us for 30 minutes; that is, five minutes for presenting the brief and, then, a question period. Mr. Mercier, would you be kind enough to introduce your colleagues and then present your brief?

Mr. Mercier (Jacques): Good evening, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. To my right, Mr. Gaston Lavoie, of the Maison du Soleil levant in Rouyn-Noranda; to my left, Mr. Marcel Guy, former president of the Regroupement d'éducation populaire and one of our resource people; and, again to my left, Mr. Laurier Gilbert, of the Regroupement des chômeurs et chômeuses de Val d'Or.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Please, go ahead and present your brief.

Mr. Mercier: The Regroupement d'éducation populaire d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue is an organization that works for the protection, promotion and development of autonomous popular education. It is intended to provide all community groups in Abitibi-Témiscamingue with a place for exchanging ideas and working with one another. The REPAT was legally incorporated in the fall of 1989. However, it has been active in this region for approximately 10 years. Around 20 groups belong to this organization.

For many years, the popular movement has worked with individuals and groups in activities designed to promote learning and reflection, and

to make people aware of their ability to improve the environment in which they live and work.

Since it is a grass-roots organization, the popular movement is better equipped to know the population's needs. It therefore makes an important contribution to Québec society, for it allows individuals and groups to be active and directly involved in their blueprint for society. This is invaluable to the functioning of a healthy democracy. The government would therefore be well advised to listen to the popular movement and support its activities.

Recommendations. As we demonstrated earlier, the popular movement allows people to be self-sufficient and take charge of their blueprint for society. To ensure that the popular movement and its members continue working toward improving the quality of life in Québec society, measures must be taken to recognize and protect this movement and its autonomy.

For this purpose, we first recommend that popular and community groups be recognized in the Constitution. In practice, this would mean recognizing the expertise related to their activities, providing sufficient funding in relation to the recognition of their expertise, and respecting the autonomy and orientation of these groups. Secondly, we recommend the establishment of a participatory democracy where representatives of the government and the various popular groups would sit at the same table, identify the population's needs and propose solutions. It goes without saying that popular groups would choose their own representatives. If the government and the popular movement worked in an atmosphere of confidence and respect, we believe that many positive repercussions would be felt by the population. This would be possible only if government measures allowed the popular movement to flourish, while ensuring its full autonomy.

I would like to make another comment with regard to the various options available. If we haven't come out in favour of any particular option as to Québec's political future, it's because we haven't had time for the serious debate that such a decision requires. However, the recommendations made in this brief are demands which popular groups have always made. We hope that they will be included in a future Québec constitution.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will begin the question period with a representative of the Government party, Mr. Sirros.

Mr. Sirros: It will be Mr. Bélanger.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I beg your pardon, Mr. Bélanger. Excuse me, a change of program... Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you. Good evening. I'm pleased to meet you here, and we appreciate your participation in the work of this commission. First, I would like to ask you the following question. You talk about including the participation of the various groups and recognizing popular groups such as yours in the Constitution. Would you please explain why you have asked for this?

Mr. Marcel (Guy): Popular and community groups have, in fact, existed for a number of years. Government programs have been adopted to assist them, but their existence is still precarious. Every time we change ministers or governments, we have no guarantee that programs will be continued or developed. We have examples of this. For example, in the field of communications, we had a group of users of means of communication in our region, a popular group. There were groups in other regions as well. Several years ago, the program was terminated. Naturally, the group had to disband. Therefore, from our point of view, this request corresponds to a broadening of democracy: in other words, the right of citizens to form groups to carry out activities aimed at solving problems, meeting needs... that they have this right and that it be permanently recognized. And we believe that, by recognizing this right in a future Québec constitution, it would be maintained and upheld.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I understand your concern for the survival of community groups. But there's a big difference between that and enshrining them in the Constitution. Do you realize the repercussions of such a step? Because if they were enshrined in the Constitution... suppose I set up a group to defend some cause or other, which was more or less essential and created a need more than satisfying one. At some point we'd have a multitude of organizations that would complicate the picture and create more problems than they would solve. Aren't you afraid of that?

Mr. Guy: I don't think that popular or community groups are a major source of problems in our society. I understand, however, that there might be a wide range of demands in this regard. We, of course, didn't go into the details in our brief. But certain approaches might be more logical than others for dealing with popular and community groups as a whole. However, we haven't thought about the mechanisms that might govern these decisions.

Mr. Gilbert (Laurier): Don't forget that when popular and community groups were set up, they were intended to meet the needs of certain segments of the population. The objective was to

form groups in order to try and resolve problems encountered by the population. This is why community and popular groups were set up. They came into existence in response to a social need. Of course, we're aware that there could be a wide range of organizations as you said. I would be surprised, because those created to date have been set up to satisfy a social need. That's why they came into being. Otherwise, they wouldn't exist.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Further on in your brief, you talk about minority rights. What rights of the Anglophone minority could be included in the future Charter or Constitution of a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Guy: You'll have to show me exactly where. Minorities, it seems to me...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Unfortunately, I don't have your text in front of me. I had to act quickly. But let's apply the principle, as it were, that popular groups should be included in the Charter. Would you see Anglophone or Allophone groups having the same privilege, regardless of their allegiance?

Mr. Mercier: Personally, I don't see why not.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Good.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. Your time is up, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear the Official Opposition party. Mr. Brassard.

A voice: Mrs. Blackburn.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Blackburn. Excuse me. Minor errors on our sheets.

Mrs. Blackburn: Two "B's", the same region, but Blackburn. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mercier, Gentlemen. I listened closely to your presentation and have also read your brief. I retain one thing which, in my opinion, is very important. You say: As we demonstrated earlier, the popular movement allows people to be self-sufficient and take control of their own destiny as well as their blueprint for society. It's very true that a society cannot be more independent than its people are. In this sense, your groups' efforts to train people, heighten their awareness, improve their skills and, probably, teach them how to read and write are extremely important

in Québec. But, at the same time, your groups are undoubtedly those which are most directly affected by the problems related to two levels of government and the overlapping of costly, if not, counterproductive programs. This is because the federal government has interfered in manpower training programs, in particular, with the result that, year after year, large sums of money have been left unspent in this area, simply because programs overlap.

When you talked about enshrining the rights of popular groups in the Québec Constitution, I understood that you had opted, in part, for a Québec that would draw up its own constitution and, therefore, for a sovereign Québec. My question is as follows: Without our being able to really include clearly and precisely the rights of popular education groups in the constitution of a country, would you be satisfied if we were able to enshrine, in accordance with the Charter of Rights, the right to education? The right to education. Of course, in practice, the right to education is well recognized for so-called school-age people, which is not necessarily the case once they are self-sufficient. If the right to education, regardless of age, were recognized in the Charter, would this satisfy your need?

Mr. Mercier: Well, if we interpret the right to education as you've described it, this right would be recognized at all levels of the current education system, that is, from elementary school up to university. Is that what you mean?

Mrs. Blackburn: For me, education means more than that. It includes popular education, that is, job training, manpower training, literacy courses, upgrading. This is much broader than schooling, in the school system, that is.

Mr. Lavoie (Gaston): It's because it's important to recognize education, and there are groups that work in this field. In fact, there are many such groups. In some cases, seniors are responsible for education and, in fact, for helping other seniors to acquire knowledge in this regard. But we especially wanted to stress recognition in our brief. Is there anything more valuable to a society that is in search of its identity and in the process of defining itself than people who have a problem, and who decide to join forces, study their problem, and set up services to deal with that problem? I don't think there can be any better example of autonomy. It's precisely this value that we wanted to see enshrined in the Constitution, this power, this opportunity for the population to find solutions on its own and to be offered support, precisely for the solutions it finds to the problems it encounters.

Mrs. Blackburn: Is not this more closely

linked to people's right to organize themselves, while the idea of supporting their efforts is more a question of policies and programs? For example, we have long been demanding veritable manpower training and popular education policies. We all remember the OVEP period...

Mr. Mercier: All this proves is that these programs can be amended or changed at any time, as governments change, while rights that are firmly enshrined in a constitution would exist and be guaranteed by that constitution. Popular groups could thereby base their efforts on something more stable than constantly changing programs.

Mrs. Blackburn: OK. First, when I talked earlier about the overlapping of federal and provincial programs and federal interference on account of its authority to invest in training programs, I imagined... In your area, do you have any examples of how overlapping programs and double jurisdiction have caused problems?

Mr. Guy: Well, in practice, it's the Québec government that has adopted programs for community popular organizations. We haven't dealt with the federal government, except through, I don't know, employment assistance and job training programs. But I would like to go back briefly to the question you just asked me about a person's right to education. We believe that it's more than just the right of the individual; it's a collective right, it's people's right to organize themselves collectively. That's a right. It's this right that we want to have recognized, not only for the individual, which is an important step, but also for the community itself. This is also fundamental. So, this is why...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): No, no. Oh, pardon me. Go ahead, I thought you had finished.

Mr. Guy: Yes.

(7:45 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear the members' questions. Mrs. Simard, and then Mrs. Côté.

Mrs. Simard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for coming here this evening. I think it's important to stress the invaluable contribution made by the popular movement in helping a large segment of the population that faces such blatant problems as illiteracy and unemployment, problems which inevitably entail extreme poverty. And I think you just told us that institutional networks are often unable to deal with these people and that their problems are often better understood and therefore resolved by popular organizations that are closer to their community and grow up in

their midst. I think that's what you just told us, and it's extremely important to emphasize this point. We've talked a lot about decentralizing government, about giving powers to regional communities, in municipalities. I think that, from a social viewpoint, we must understand that it's also necessary to get as close as possible to communities that have to cope with very serious problems. We know how important your work is, and you do it under extremely difficult circumstances, with limited resources. This requires a great deal of conviction and devotion.

You talk about participatory democracy in your brief. You stress the fact that it's important to plan on setting up a participatory democracy. I'd like you to explain this briefly. What form would it take, this participatory democracy? Would it be a forum? Have you specified the form it might take?

Mr. Mercier: This participatory democracy could be something that is elaborated throughout the year. Or, at certain times, members of the government could take time to sit down with the representatives of popular groups and discuss the problems encountered by them and, of course, by the population. In this way, solutions could be worked out. Ultimately, it's simply a question of allowing the expertise of popular groups to be heard and devising solutions together.

Mrs. Simard: I understand that this is an objective. You want elected representatives to listen. But do you foresee a more formal arrangement, such as an obligation to consult? Is it something like that which you foresee? And how could... When you said: We'd like to be recognized in a future constitution, etc., and then you say: We must be consulted... Have you thought about how these representatives might be chosen or have you decided that this should be done according to rules that would not be established beforehand?

Mr. Guy: I think that, first of all, whenever it's a question of problems concerning community or popular groups, decisions, orientations of any kind, or repercussions of other types of activities or structures, well, we'd like to have our say in these matters. And to have our say, we must be recognized as valuable, as having a fairly important role; we must also participate. This is why we also request assistance for this purpose, and autonomy as well... that our autonomy be recognized. I'll give you an example. A reception and reference service has been set up by the ministère de l'Éducation. Representatives of the various institutions, school boards, Cégeps, vocational training commissions - CFPs - vocational training centres, etc. have been invited to participate. And popular groups. It's a kind of forum, as it

were, that is designed to popularize programs, etc.

Well, we've been invited. But those who take part in this forum aren't people who lose a day when they go and sit. Their travel is paid for; their food is paid for. We don't get a cent to cover the cost of sending a representative. Our needs aren't recognized. We look like beggars. This doesn't ensure that we are represented, that popular groups have representatives or spokespeople to express their views. We can't always participate. And, if we respect ourselves, we're obliged to refuse.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The floor is now yours, Mrs. Côté. Mr. Assad will be next.

Mrs. Côté: Yes. Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to note that so many groups - around 20 - belong to this movement. This confirms the message you've conveyed to us, namely, that this is a collective movement. It has emerged in response to the problems and realities people face, and the realities dealt with by your groups as a whole demonstrate that the mission of popular education, which is an alternative approach that also takes social problems into account... Since I believe the groups bear witness to this, I think it's important that this mission be stated and sanctioned. The community and popular movement is also important because of its contribution to Québec.

I would like to briefly go back to Mrs. Simard's question, because what you asked is important, namely, that you not only play a role in defining regional priorities but also in autonomous popular education. Would this be somewhat similar to what happens in existing literacy forums? You know that there are regional literacy forums that request the participation of people from the institutional network and the popular movement, and that jointly define needs or realities established by the Direction générale de l'éducation des adultes since, in any case, this is where most of these groups obtain their financial services, even though I know you're always demanding more money. Would it be something of this sort, or a totally independent structure? It seems to me that you should work with the regions rather than trying to set up a forum at the national level. What form do you think this democracy would take? Would it be national or regional? Would it also take into account the model that brings all groups together or would it actually involve all currently existing forums?

Mr. Guy: Well, as far as joint action is concerned, popular and community groups currently cooperate with one another at the regional level. Nationally, on the other hand, we take part in the Mouvement d'éducation populaire

et d'action communautaire, MEPACQ. This is also a forum for interregional endeavours, etc. It's another forum.

Other forums can be held for specific purposes. For example, a regional socioeconomic conference was held. In any case, it was an exercise in joint action. It was a forum for highlighting the merits of various projects, etc. It's another kind of forum. At least, it allowed us to join forces in order to identify our needs, examine our problems, define our demands and the needs we wanted to meet. It's primarily at these levels.

Mrs. Côté: In other words, what you are saying is that, in addition to all the forums on various themes, you would like a kind of forum where all groups with the same concerns could get together and where you could define your priorities with the region and the educational sector. Is that correct?

Mr. Guy: Yes.

Mrs. Côté: OK. Instead of holding separate forums on education, literacy...

Mr. Guy: No, no.

Mrs. Côté: Therefore, it's more of a grouping together. OK. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Assad.

Mr. Assad: Obviously, popular groups such as yours help people who are often quite helpless, and you work with very limited resources. I've known people like this in my region. Have you made representations to both levels of government, that is, provincial and federal, in the course of your activities?

Mr. Gilbert: Have...?

Mr. Assad: Have you asked for financial aid?

Mr. Gilbert: If we take the Regroupement des chômeurs de Val d'Or, for example... OK, they may have sent an application to Employment and Immigration's job development program. They have applied for four years and have been refused for four years. They were told that priorities lay elsewhere. OK?

If we look at what's happened at the provincial level, we've applied for the community organizations aid program for five years and have been refused. They say we don't meet their criteria. However, we don't only work to protect the rights of the unemployed, but also to help them, to help them cope with this situation. What can I say? In six years, we trained

resource people who were obliged to leave our offices and work elsewhere, because we didn't have enough sufficient funding and they couldn't continue working for us. How can I explain this to you? We've had people, unemployed people – you don't see this in the offices of Employment and Immigration – who come and cry in our offices.

And when I say cry, that's the truth. They were crying because they'd lost everything. They'd lost their house, their car and their job. We see this situation every day, every week. And with the current recession, this is what's happening to people. And then groups like ours, which are there to protect the unemployed, have trouble making ends meet and lose trained resource people because we don't have adequate funding. When you consider the funding requested by popular groups, that's it... they want to be recognized and receive enough money to be able to provide the services the population needs. That's what we're asking for.

Mr. Lavoie: To add to your question, Mr. Assad, I'm the director of a community organization that looks after and helps alcoholics, drug addicts and the homeless. I'm the only permanent employee. I'm the only person employed by this organization and I spend a third of my time looking for funding. The government provides assistance amounting to 20% of our annual budget of \$75 000. (8:00 p.m.)

Mr. Assad: Which level of government?

Mr. Lavoie: The provincial government, 20%. This isn't very much, is it? And, in our organization, 55% of the budget is allocated to popular activities for a population of 35 000. Can you imagine how much work is involved in applying for money? As for making representations to the various levels of government, we do this. You can believe me, Sir, we make representations. And the only answer we get is: We can't do any more. But they tell us, like all the other speakers have said since the beginning of this Commission, that our movement is important. It's important but, in practice, community organizations need recognition and financial support. And I don't think we get that. Therefore, that's what we're denouncing.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This brings the period set aside for this presentation to an end. On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank the representatives of the Regroupement d'éducation populaire d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Mr. Lavoie, Mr. Mercier, Mr. Guy and Mr. Gilbert for their presentation and the efforts they have made to facilitate our work by presenting their viewpoint to us and defending it before us.

I would now like to ask you to make room

for our next speakers, the Société nationale des Québécois de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, so they can take their places at the table.

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry, I believe, is group spokesman and president. And you are accompanied by Mr. Chagnon.

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry (Luc): Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, since I have already introduced both of you, there is no need to do it again. You may now take five minutes to present your brief orally.

Société nationale des Québécois de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. Our perspective is the same in this brief: that of the ultimate creation of a sovereign Québec. Concerning the political formula to opt for, the Société nationale des Québécois de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue supports with no reservations one that would make it possible for the Québec people to take their responsibilities fully, in an autonomous, fully burgeoning French Québec.

In our research concerning the phenomenon of northern-ness, among other things we took cognizance of a formula for political union involving Denmark and Greenland. In that new union, certain powers were apparently totally given over to Greenland, while others remained shared by both governments, or exclusively under Danish control. Without wanting to defend this particular formula to the detriment of another, or to favour certain modalities over others, we believe that the present government of Québec could draw inspiration from an agreement of this type, both by the means taken to arrive at it and by the very nature of the formula adopted.

For us, however, it's the product that interests us more. That is, the product that will give Québec the greatest degree of sovereignty possible. This is not, however, the essence of our brief, since we wish to sensitize the Commission and, consequently, the Québec government, to the phenomenon of northern-ness. I should merely like to reiterate that it is always within that particular framework that we are doing it. Québec, as we can see from any map, is an essentially northern land with a strip of a more or less temperate zone. That very Québec, as we shall design it, however, will usually evoke images or sagas of its majestic river and of the rivers that nourish it and the towns around its borders. The very dynamic of this land will usually seem to become polarized around everything touching on its major cities, large rivers, and no less around the population centres that are more highly concentrated. Since its Parliament is situated there, and its members represent segments of the population rather than

territories, the government machinery will be more finely attuned to the most pressing questions and problems affecting the regions located in the southern part of the territory. Geographically speaking, however, two thirds of Québec are located in the north, that is, more or less above the 50th parallel.

Now, democratically speaking, northern Québec groups only a very small percentage of the population. Québec can be summarized then as a State in which more than 90% of its population lives on some 30% of its territory, while most of the land has an entirely different, not to mention opposite, reality. What importance will be given, then, to this 70% of the territory, where only 10% of the population lives? That is why the future government of Québec must be sensitized to the very concept, and especially challenge, of nordicity.

Some of the data in this brief we compiled in Amos, during the symposium in 1987, on the future of Northern Québec. These documents are still available, at the Université du Québec. We also talk in this brief about language and culture. Notwithstanding the aboriginal communities, more than 95% of the citizens are of French descent. French is therefore the language used every day for communication and, thanks in large part to Bill 101, our signs generally reflect this reality.

Several other cultural elements have taken root over the last few years. Among other examples, we should note the newly-formed *Orchestre symphonique de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, the creation of a number of summer theatres, the cultural centres of our main towns, and the limited existence of certain nightclubs dedicated to Francophone artists and their music. These elements, however, as we shall see, reach only a very small segment of the population, whereas radio, TV and the cinema remain the major poles of attraction for what can be called folk elements.

We also speak in this brief about health and social services. These services have, for a long time, been identified as being extremely problematic in the northern regions. The lack of physicians and of specialized services, constantly overcrowded hospital emergency rooms, the high suicide rate, especially among young people: these are the principal symptoms. While we admit that the latter element could be rather linked to socioeconomic realities, the problems affecting health and social services in the northern regions deserve special attention, while solutions to them once again exceed the simple application of southern norms.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...the time allotted you; perhaps you could conclude quickly.

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: If you allow me, Mr.

Chairman, I shall merely speak a bit about the aboriginal peoples since I think they are of great importance to Québec; then I shall conclude my statements.

The events of last summer taught us several lessons; for example, what are the Amerindians who are so close to us like? How deep is their discontent? How fragile is social order in Québec? And how ineffective is the government machinery, faced with a phenomenon involving problems and a potential for boiling over, that have been known about for so long? The Native people are our fellow citizens and we must learn and relearn to live together, obviously, while respecting their right to be the way they are and their right to live with all the dignity that is their due.

It is also important to mention national defence. I think we had a problem a few years ago with an American ship; I think the Commission should remember that. In a sovereign Québec, we should have a force in the Far North to protect the rights of Quebecers.

Finally, we recommend that this Commission and the government of Québec consider the distinct phenomenon of northernness, as well as the problems peculiar to Abitibi-Témiscamingue, so that regrouping, coordination, turning attitudes into action, that is, seeing activities in favour of the North carried out, not just the dream of isolated communities, but an active, effervescent reality, totally integrated into our new country. *Vive le Québec!*

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall now go on to questions from the group forming the Official Opposition. Mr. Trudel.

Mr. Trudel: Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Since this is the last group to submit a brief today, it is interesting that we can hear from the *Société nationale des Québécois de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, from that great territory that constitutes Northern Québec, or for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region of the pre-North, to use the definition of Louis-Edmond Hamelin, or then again of the northern attitude, which that great expert, Louis-Edmond Hamelin, always talked about. By that attitude, he meant that the inhabitants of the south must have a more "northern spirit", to understand how we have to live our day-to-day lives, whether in the "pre-North" or in the Far North, and the tremendous importance that the occupation of its territory can have on a national basis. Mr. Brunet-Beaudry, at the *Société nationale des Québécois*, have you thought about a model, about a way, in which to be, and to occupy our Far North? You spoke to us of aboriginal communities, of the Inuit and Cree communities in particular that occupy that land, with the type of model for reflection that we should have vis-à-vis those communities. But, in general, have you thought

about a model that we should develop, since it is the option you have chosen, in a sovereign Québec, as to the occupation of our Québec Northland? How should we proceed? What are the main themes we should consider for the occupation of our territory, within the concept of a national territory? Have you looked at that aspect?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: I think that the important thing is the integration of the people living, perhaps on more northern parallels, further north than us. In Abitibi-Témiscamingue, we are aware that we are a remote region, but I feel that things should be made easier for people living in what we call the true Far North for integrating the major centres. But, since we are in a remote region, so many times we have been left aside, and action has been based simply on policies for the major centres of Québec and not on the people of the North.

Mr. Trudel: Do you think that, on the whole, the Québec government has the necessary institutions to effectively occupy, I call that, between quotation marks, the Northland? And should we not develop in Québec a uniqueness, that is, taking into account the nature of our territory, shouldn't we develop, still within a national territory, in a sovereign Québec, specific instruments aimed at occupation, and also at responsible occupation of our Québec North? Have your thoughts gone that far?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: Yes, I think that the northern people are disadvantaged, whether from the point of view of their schools, or, as mentioned in the brief, of social services, of hospital centres; I think those people are highly disadvantaged. Therefore, there is a lack on the part of the government towards these remote regions.

Mr. Trudel: Have you...

Mr. Chagnon (Marcel): You talk about means for occupying your Northland. Are you also talking about... You are referring to the Cree, the Native people who live in the North.

Mr. Trudel: Exactly.

Mr. Chagnon: There is a problem in the text, written in the text. Those people, the Cree of the North, that we call the Far North, that is Québec, that we have always considered Québec, for them the provincial government doesn't exist. It is the federal government, with its Department of Indian Affairs, all that. For them, Québec, the government of Québec, hardly exists. They have adopted a language other than our own. It would be slightly difficult for us, slightly, to integrate them; that's what we want.

In the text, speaking of northern-ness, all these aboriginal peoples, these Native tribes, the Cree and all that, we want them to live with us and have them belong to our community.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry, Mr. Trudel. Your time is up.

Mr. Trudel: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall go on to questions from the members. Mr. Roy first; then Mr. Duceppe.

Mr. Roy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your brief introduced the matter of exports, exports of culture, imports of culture, actually within the territory of Québec, versus Montréal and the regions, the regions near Montréal and then, on a broader scale, what you call the Anglo-American saturation stifling Québec's culture. There is therefore a dual problem. And the regions and Québec as a whole would have reached the phase, as you say in your brief, the phase of cultural assimilation. On the other hand, I am going to quote a full passage, taken from page 8, first paragraph: The problems presented above, those I just summarized, concerning Anglo-American cultural saturation to the detriment of the development of our own culture, applies more to the aboriginal communities. We have reasons to believe that this saturation is also a great obstacle to the development and blossoming of the Amerindian culture and to their sensitization to the existence and the nature of ours.

Could we not talk about a certain wrenching in the hearts of Quebecers faced with the force of attraction of Anglo-American culture? The outline that you apply to aboriginal peoples could perhaps be applied to Quebecers. And in the perspective of the creation of a sovereign Québec, as your brief suggests, how can we solve the problem of cultural assimilation that you brought up? In other words, in cultural matters, what could a sovereign Québec settle that the present state of affairs cannot settle, concerning the regions, concerning Québec as a whole, and, of course, concerning the Native people, still in a perspective of a market economy and the American cultural imperialism to which you often allude?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: It's because, at the present time, most of Abitibi-Témiscamingue is on the border of Ontario. Therefore, perhaps we are drowned in a sea of English media, more than in Montréal. Looking at one sector only, the Témiscamingue sector, there are 4 French-language TV stations, compared with 13 or 14 English-language stations. Young people can

listen to "Much Music"; they can't listen to "Musique Plus".

Mr. Roy: In a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: In a sovereign Québec, there should be, there could be, policies that would persuade broadcasters to broadcast in French perhaps, and have relay stations that would make it possible for people in the remote regions to receive the signals for French-language TV programming from the major centres, such as Montréal or Québec City.

Mr. Roy: What you are saying is that Anglo-American culture is preventing, or delaying, access to our own culture, our own literature, etc. That's what you are saying.

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: Yes.

Mr. Roy: But in a sovereign Québec, is there a solution?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: Yes, the solution...

Mr. Chagnon: There would be a certain solution. In a sovereign Québec, if the Québec government, being sovereign, were to give more encouragement, financially and in all ways, to Québec culture, then there would be more Québec artists who would be interested, because it is a well-known fact that there is a bunch of artists who, even if they are not dying of starvation, don't have much to eat. So, the more encouragement Québec culture gets from a sovereign government, I think young people would appreciate it much more. Then for the stations, it would be easier for us to have...

Mr. Roy: And the relations of the aboriginal peoples with our culture...

Mr. Chagnon: It's the same thing. I heard Mr. Parizeau say that the aboriginal peoples were claiming rights and that he would give them their rights in a sovereign Québec. We are claiming our sovereignty. Why should they, the original peoples of this land, not have it? By granting them their autonomy, I don't mean that we'll give them everything we have. But, granting them their autonomy, which is a type of sovereignty, they could coexist with us, then learn our language. Because we shouldn't hide the fact: 90% of the aboriginal people speak English. Why? Because Québec has always ignored them, whereas they, they have always felt, deep in their hearts, that Québec, and the Québec government, did not exist.

Mr. Roy: The problems that you are raising do not preclude a broadening of perspective?

Mr. Chagnon: Absolutely not. On the contrary, they are favourable to it.

Mr. Roy: Okay, Okay, Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Duceppe, you may take the floor.

Mr. Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Béarn SNQ has also submitted a brief in which it raises certain problems that should and could be solved by a sovereign Québec, to the benefit of Témiscamingue. I am thinking in particular of economic diversification, the exodus of young people, transportation, and, it also stresses that the region gets its supplies primarily in Ontario, particularly in North Bay and Liskeard. In your opinion, would sovereignty change this situation and, if so, in what way?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: If there were adequate policies. At the present time, the people from the Abitibi-Témiscamingue sector, in Témiscamingue, get their supplies in Ontario because they cost less there. When people want to go and buy, go buy their groceries, go shopping, they go to Ontario, where everything costs less. On the other hand, we are supplied by the same wholesalers who come from Montréal or Ontario. That is hard to understand. And I think that, in a sovereign Québec, if there were policies that could help merchants who are in the remote regions, either by... It could be part of the GST that would go there, or something else, but to try to help the merchants be able to compete with Ontario because, at the present time, everything is much cheaper in Ontario. If we look at businesses that are in... If we look at ironworks: you take a foundry in Québec, which is under the same banner as Ontario; ironworks in Québec sell for almost 10% more. When we question that, we are told that transport is the cause. And they are supplied by the same place. Then, when we speak of New Liskeard, which is almost 40, not even... 15... miles from Québec's borders, then the other which is 15 miles inside Québec, there is a 10% price difference.

Mr. Duceppe: And how do you explain that?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: There's no explanation for it. That's what we're trying to understand. When we're given an answer, we're always told that it's the remote regions. But, one day, Québec is going to have to examine the remote regions, then draft policies in consequence. In the remote regions we are already penalized when we send our children to university. We pay twice as much to have our children educated. Then, in addition, the North is losing people because there are no jobs. Therefore, the economic situation is one of misery, and this is

costing us even more. There are still fewer jobs, and it costs us more to buy food and clothes. It's a vicious circle. It's due to a lack of policies for the people of the North. I noticed that the Commission arrived in the Saguenay region and became aware — several members of the Commission became aware — of the fact that there are remote regions. If I were to tell you that I travelled 251 kilometres to get here, in the snowstorm, and that the boundary of Témiscamingue is even 100 kilometres further, that means that, 351 kilometres from here, we are still in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Mr. Duceppe: Thank you.

Mr. Chagnon: The roads must also be considered. In Témiscamingue, it is easier to go to Ontario than to travel in Québec. This means that it's already something that a sovereign Québec should remedy.

Mr. Duceppe: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall now go on with the representatives of the government party. Mr. Savoie.

Mr. Savoie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Luc Brunet-Beaudry has submitted a brief to us, on behalf of the Société nationale des Québécois en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, that broaches an exceedingly vast subject; I think, precisely, about northern-ness, that was the object of numerous efforts in the region in 1987-1988. But, referring to Abitibi-Témiscamingue specifically, you have alluded to the important matter of the constitutional debate, you have seen today the presentation of a dozen or more briefs and you have broached the question from an angle that seems to me, in large part, limited. You have not examined the question, say, of our quality of life, referring for example to jobs in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. How will that affect jobs? Has any consideration been given to that matter? If so, could the outcome be shared?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: I feel that in a sovereign Québec, if there were something, the economy would probably be better off, and in the regions, as in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, I think there would perhaps be more jobs. At the present time, many jobs are given to people who live in Ontario. Mr. Savoie, you must know about the Tembec company in Témiscaming-Sud, where people who live in Ontario come to work in Québec. And there are Quebecers who are not able to go and work at Tembec. Mr. Chairman, since this is the last submission that the Commission will hear this evening, I should like to table a proposal on the part of the people who have not been heard.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I shall allow you to make a statement, to say something, of course, but I shall not agree to the tabling of a proposal. We're not as parliamentarian or juridical as all that, and we already have many papers. Say what you have to say anyway, but do not table a proposal.

Mr. Savoie: And especially not on my time, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): For the time being, that will be excluded from Mr. Savoie's time.

Mr. Savoie: I should hope so.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Say that part, and we'll return to his time afterwards, on the chair's time.
(8:15 p.m.)

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: That's why we wanted to submit a proposal, since it was countersigned by everyone who submitted a brief to the commission and who was not heard this evening. Those people, unanimously, propose that the Bélanger-Campeau Commission ask the Québec government to hold a referendum on the sovereignty of Québec with a clear question: Do you want Québec to become a sovereign state?

I am speaking on behalf of the people who have not been heard.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Proposal?

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I don't like to disappoint you, but it's not exactly the first time we've heard that.

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: No.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): All right. Now we'll return to your time, Mr. Savoie.

Mr. Savoie: Thank you very much. I shall return to what I was saying. Speaking of the economy, of jobs for the men and women here in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, it seems to me that there, the very essence... In Abitibi-Témiscamingue life is tough. It is far away; you stressed that point. People have to fight harder to get what they have. We know that. But, to keep what we have, our jobs, to keep what we have and develop more, have you thought about that? Have you spent hours discussing those elements? What I wonder is why we didn't see that in your report.

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: Since we could have prepared a brief that would have been similar to

the symposium that was held in Amos, I must say that we did discuss those points, but the problem is that, to keep our jobs, we have to start by having policies for northern Québec. Right now we have no policy for northern Québec. We have no specific policy to help create jobs and keep our people in our communities, to help improve industry, and to automatically create jobs. We don't see that in the regions.

It's as if the government arrived and said: The Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, or the remote regions, those regions cost the government money. If everyone came to Montréal, we would settle the matter. The regions would stay there, people would work in the mines, we would pay them, and provide them with housing, but they would cost the government much less. That's about it... The reaction there was at the Société nationale des Québécois when we discussed those problems. Then, the problem that I mentioned to you earlier... The fact that several Anglophone companies or companies from Ontario go to work at industries like Tembec, which prides itself on being the biggest industry in Québec, yet stays in Ontario. Policies are drafted, but they have to stay so many kilometres from the company, but they are on the Ontario border. Therefore, the policies are respected.

If you know Témiscamingue, the town of Témiscamingue-Sud, you must know that there has not been any job creation worth mentioning, despite the millions and millions that have been injected by the Québec government into Tembec.

Mr. Savoie: Those are all half-truths. I have trouble with that one, Mr. Brunet-Beaudry. With all due respect, there is a policy. We had something to do with it. We lent funds. There is a purchasing policy for Témiscamingue. I don't know... I have the impression that, given the importance, since, finally, organizations like yours, that have been preaching for a sovereign Québec for years, should be in the foreground regarding the proposal, the organization, the discussions, discussions that will affect the people of Abitibi-Témiscamingue... I don't know whether you have become acquainted with those who tabled briefs. The chambers of commerce did not appear. The mining companies did not appear. The logging industry is not here, the merchants, the people who make it possible for us to live, in the end who permit us to occupy the territory in a suitable manner, the aboriginal people with whom we share the territory, did not submit briefs. We were counting a bit, in the end, on fine words from your report. I can tell you that, personally, yes, the Société nationale des Québécois means something to me, and I was hoping for something for Abitibi-Témiscamingue. You mentioned northern-ness... true. I find that the very heart of our existence in this territory

was lacking, in a way, from our discussions.

Mr. Brunet-Beaudry: Mr. Savoie, if I were able to read you the brief, that has not been heard, from the Société nationale des Québécois, Béarn branch, I think that, if you became acquainted with this brief, you would have the answers to all your questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The time is now up for this brief. As we noted earlier, it is the last one of the day. On behalf of the entire Commission, I should like first of all, of course, to thank you, Mr. Brunet-Beaudry and Mr. Chagnon, for your presentation, but I should also and especially like to thank the whole northwestern region of Québec, of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Val-d'Or, for the welcome the Commission received here, and which enabled it to progress in its work, even if we did arrive during the storm and we are going to leave under snow. We weren't the ones to bring either the storm or the snow. What do you say?

Mr. Chagnon: Could I ask one question, just one, out of order?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Of whom?

Mr. Chagnon: Of you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I don't guarantee that I'll answer it, but you may ask the question.

Mr. Chagnon: The Commission is a commission that was formed by the Québec government.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes.

Mr. Chagnon: And when I say the government, I understand...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It's the National Assembly, not the government.

Mr. Chagnon: ...The National Assembly, the Opposition. Fine. I wonder whether the Commission is going to let people like Benoît Bouchard or...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There I must interrupt you. The Commission is carrying out its mandate, doing its work, and has no jurisdiction of any kind over what anyone outside wishes to say. They will not come into it.

Mr. Chagnon: It will let itself be denigrated without saying a word.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The Commission has broad shoulders...

Mr. Chagnon: Broad shoulders.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...a strong back and its heart in the right place.

Mr. Chagnon: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We live in a free country. Everyone may say what he or she wants. This being said...

Voices: Hurray!

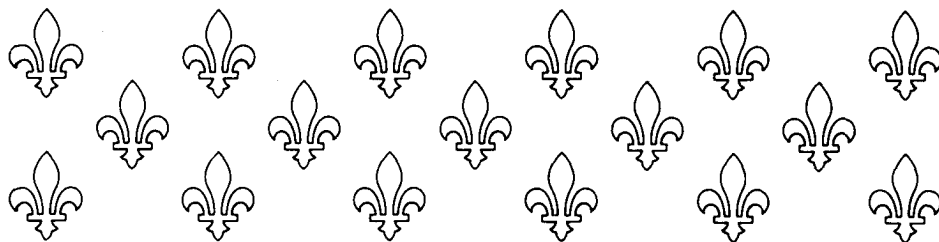
The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I have to prohibit clapping. I must prohibit that kind of reaction too.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): All right. Before adjourning the sitting, I should like to remind the members of the Commission that the 17 people who were advised personally and who have to take the F-27 must go to the door to take the bus as soon as the sitting adjourns. The others who were not advised of anything, who want to leave anyway, must go to the door at 9:15 p.m., and they will take the other plane leaving a little later. The sitting is adjourned. Thank you, all.

(End of sitting, 8:31 p.m.)





ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

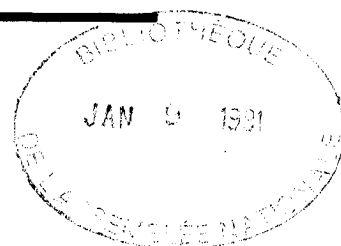
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Hull, Wednesday, December 5, 1990

No 15

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- * Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Hull, Wednesday, December 5, 1990

Hearings: Organizations and Individuals

(9:37 a.m.)

Common Introduction for 13 Organizations

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): If you would be good enough to take your seats. I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May I remind you of the Commission's mandate, which is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon. Once again, today's sitting will be devoted to hearing organizations and individuals who submitted a brief to the Commission.

Today's agenda is: we will begin with the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais; at 10:00 a.m., Mr. Maurice Saint-Germain; at 10:30 a.m., the River Desert Indian Band; at 11:00 a.m., the City of Hull; at 11:30, the Secrétariat régional de la concertation de l'Outaouais; at noon, Mr. Gilles Rocheleau; at 2:00 p.m., the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de l'Outaouais; at 2:30 p.m., the Association des auteurs et auteures de l'Outaouais; at 3:00 p.m., the Outaouais Alliance; at 3:30 p.m., the Assemblée des groupes de femmes d'intervention régionale; at 4:00 p.m., the Association des citoyens de Hull; at 4:30 p.m., Mrs. Manon Guillard; at 5:00 p.m., Messrs. Jean-Paul Murray and Gary Brazier; at 5:30 p.m., the University of Ottawa Law Professors; at 7:00 p.m., Mr. Charles Castonguay; at 7:30, Québec's Native students (Faculty of Law of the University of Ottawa); at 8:00 p.m., Mr. Paul André David; at 8:30, Logemen'occupe.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, we will be starting this morning with the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais, for a half hour. Let me remind you of the speaking times for a half hour: the group presenting the brief has 5 minutes for the presentation, the parliamentary group forming the Government, 5 minutes, the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition, 5 minutes, the other members registered with the Chair, 10 minutes, and the Chair, 5 minutes.

I understand that Mr. Jean-Marie Séguin, Chairman and General Manager of the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais is presenting the brief.

I have been reminded to mention the rules for applause during this Commission. All present will agree that it is very pleasant to voice your approval for a speaker, often by applauding. The rules governing the Commission, however, prohibit applause. I hope that this rule will be observed all day long. Mr. Jean-Marie Séguin, if you would introduce your colleagues.

Mr. Séguin (Jean-Marie): Mr. Chairman, given the fact that 13 organizations have endorsed an introductory statement to avoid having it reread by each organization, we asked the Secretary whether, outside of the time allotted us, it would be possible for me to present this introduction on behalf of these organizations. At that time, I will introduce those at my side.

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

Mr. Séguin (Jean-Marie): Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, welcome to our home, to your home, in the Québec Outaouais. Although this morning you are in the shadow of the federal Parliament buildings, you are very definitely on Québec soil. The people of our region feel that they are first-class Québec citizens and are just as proud to be Quebecers as the people you met with or will meet with in Québec's other regions.

On behalf of a group of organizations, I would like to read the statement we sent to the Commission, asking that it be incorporated as an introduction to each of our briefs.

To my left, I have Sylvain Simard, chairman of the Mouvement national des Québécois, one of the organizations that endorsed this text, and to my right, Normand Saey, chairman of the Société nationale des Québécois de l'Outaouais.

To present a common front for the Québec Outaouais, the following individuals and organizations, who asked to be heard by your Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, agreed to incorporate the same introduction into their briefs. These organizations are: the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais, the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de l'Outaouais, the Secrétariat régional de la concertation de l'Outaouais, the Association des citoyens de Hull, the Association des auteurs et auteures de l'Outaouais, the Société nationale des Québécois et Québécoises de l'Outaouais, the Regroupement francophone, the Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais, the Parti québécois de Papineau, the Parti québécois de la région de l'Outaouais, Mr. Paul André David, Mrs. Manon Guillard, councillor for the City of Hull, Mr. Paul-Marcel Lemaire and a group of Ottawa University professors. These people have all submitted a brief and the following statement is a statement common to these various individuals and organizations.

"We, the undersigned, present this

statement to the Commission studying the political and constitutional future of Québec, as a common introduction to each of our briefs. Even if our analyses and proposals differ on the constitutional future of Québec, we feel it is imperative to present a united front in order to be assured that the problems specific to the Outaouais, in the current debate, can in no way be omitted from the conclusions of the Commission.

To this end, we believe that it is the duty of the Commission to delve deeply enough in its studies to present, in its report and its proposed constitutional changes, a precise plan for the adaptation of the Outaouais to these changes.

Such a plan should be comprised of, among other things, written guarantees for the reallocation within our region of the 26 000 Outaouais residents employed by the federal government who would be affected by the proposed changes. The plan should also provide guarantees with respect to the situation of the 15 000 Outaouais residents who work in Ontario, — and the approximately 3000 Ontario residents who work in the private sector in the Outaouais — and furthermore ensure the free circulation of goods and services.

In order to balance our economic development in the wake of a transition for which the population of the Outaouais would not bear the expense, it is necessary that the plan for the adaptation of the Outaouais to the proposed constitutional changes include a plan for economic diversification. Such a plan would allow our region to attain a certain equilibrium in order to avoid that the economy be dependent solely upon the Public Service."

That, then, Mr. Chairman, is the introductory statement that all these organizations and individuals ask the Commission to recognize as their common statement.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Séguin. Before you begin, I would ask Mr. Robert Middlemiss to say a few words.

Mr. Middlemiss: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of all Outaouais citizens, I would like to thank the Commission for having come to listen to us today. You will see that we have a special message for you. As you have just seen, most of the speakers with different leanings considered it appropriate to present the same introduction. The concern of these groups, their message, is that Québec must take the Outaouais into account in its decision. Our proximity to the national capital, Ottawa, makes us vulnerable to any change in Canada's administrative structure. 26 000 Outaouais residents work for the federal government, 15 000 work for private enterprise in Ontario. This represents 33% of our region's jobs. You

will understand, then, that here, the constitutional question is essentially an economic one. I hope that the commissioners will note the unique nature of the Québec Outaouais and take it into account. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Middlemiss.

Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais

Mr. Séguin: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais is now ready to present its brief. Allow me to introduce, to my left, Guy Gagnon, a lawyer and the general secretary of our agency, and, to my right, Franco Materazzi, an economist and director of research and development for the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais.

As you undoubtedly know, the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais is a Québec government corporation whose mandate is to promote the economic progress of our region. On reading our brief, you no doubt realized that the Outaouais is a special region of Québec. The Outaouais is a prisoner of its border situation: on the one hand, in a state of dependence in relation to Ottawa, and, on the other hand, neglected too often by the gouvernement du Québec in its policies, possibly because of the seemingly reassuring presence of Ottawa, the capital of Canada.

In 1968, the Dorion Commission, on territorial integrity, sounded the alarm concerning the encroachment of the federal government on Québec territory and underlined the Outaouais' state of economic dependence with respect to the Ontario side. The gouvernement du Québec made a few timid gestures in an effort to remedy the situation. I want to point out, however, that it is no historical accident that our economy is integrated with that of Ottawa. At the constitutional conference of 1969, representatives of Québec, Ontario and the federal government agreed that the cities of Ottawa and Hull, together with their surrounding areas, should constitute Canada's national capital region that would be designed to instill in all Canadians a sense of pride, belonging and participation.

Unfortunately, our proximity to the federal capital has not generated, for the Outaouais, all the spin-offs we anticipated. People from outside the region envy the privileged relationship that the Outaouais seems to have developed with the federal government, whereas this spoiled child image is totally unwarranted.

We did not choose our border situation or the geopolitical context. What gives the Outaouais region its distinct character is, first, the great extent of its economic dependence on the federal government and on the Ottawa-

Carleton urban area. Forty percent of the Outaouais labour force is employed by the federal government or by private-sector firms in Ontario. An equally important contributing factor is the strong influence of the federal government on areal planning in the Outaouais. Close to 30% of the territory of the City of Hull is owned by the federal government, including the lands owned by the National Capital Commission, an agency found nowhere else in Québec but which here has very extensive powers concerning the use of our land.

The Outaouais is the only highly urbanized border region that regularly sustains the often unfavourable impact of new budgets or new provincial legislation: a disadvantageous sales tax differential, the Québec GST, restrictive standards of the Commission de la construction du Québec, restrictive clauses in the business assistance programs that are not under Québec's control. For the past 20 years, the Outaouais has had to fight two governments: the federal government for which the Outaouais is a negligible concern and the *gouvernement du Québec* for which the Outaouais is a region like any other and even, in some respects, more favoured than others.

If we are to substantially reduce the dominance of the federal government and, consequently, this dependence of the Outaouais, the *gouvernement du Québec* must undertake to provide the Outaouais with the means necessary to implement an economic diversification plan which would not only benefit the Outaouais but also generate economic spin-offs that would spread throughout Québec. The sooner this program is launched, the sooner the region will reduce its dependence on the federal government as employer and the sooner the region, today a prisoner, will be able to reflect with serenity on Québec's constitutional future.

We believe that this economic diversification plan should be adopted regardless of the constitutional scenario chosen. This plan would ensure that the Outaouais would be less penalized in the event of a major decentralization of powers in favour of the *gouvernement du Québec* and in the event of full sovereignty for Québec. In either case, the Outaouais should not wind up as the unfortunate victim. Economically speaking, our region is not willing to be sacrificed and we feel that the Outaouais should not have to shoulder the negative effects which could result from the various constitutional options. Consequently, the *gouvernement du Québec* must solemnly pledge to maintain in the Outaouais the jobs of the 26 000 federal civil servants and to give us guarantees as to the fate of the 15 000 Outaouais residents who work in Ontario.

In concluding this brief presentation, we do not want to leave the Commission with the impression that these are trivial complaints about

the federal and provincial governments; these are facts widely acknowledged throughout the Outaouais, namely that our economy is dramatically linked to the Ontario economy and to the status of federal capital and that, in the event of the decentralization of powers or Québec sovereignty, the economic future of the Outaouais must be based on new input and on a new balance of power. Consequently, we ask the Commission to take this exceptional situation of the Outaouais into consideration specifically by urging the *gouvernement du Québec* not to neglect its border region in its future decisions, for we are Québec citizens and wish to remain so.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. We shall begin the question period with Mr. Mark Assad.

Mr. Assad: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Séguin, it would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of the national capital in the region and its impact on jobs. Those who are from the Outaouais region are well aware that, despite our efforts, economic dependence on the national capital has existed for years now. Mr. Séguin, I have two questions which relate to that very fact. The point is that despite this economic dependence... and that the commissioners here who come from other regions of Québec are going to believe that they have been misled in the past in believing that we have become anglicized over the years considering this dependence and considering the fact that the *gouvernement du Québec* always told us: You're lucky, you're close to the national capital, you have advantages that aren't available elsewhere in Québec. In your opinion, and in light of surveys conducted by the *Société* in the past, Mr. Séguin, has the NCC, with its greenbelt policies, been harmful, if you will, to the Québec side, and secondly, has the rate of anglicization resulted in a decline in the percentage of Francophones in the Outaouais?

Mr. Séguin: I am going to begin by answering the first part of your question. You know that the National Capital Commission, as I pointed out, was created under a federal law whose scope of application includes both sides of the river and that there has been a Supreme Court judgment recognizing the powers of this agency. It is clear that the National Capital Commission has made certain improvements on our side of the river, the greenbelts in particular. To be fair, I must admit that, in the years when all that was done, urban planning terminology was not part of our vocabulary. So, in that area, they have done some worthwhile things. I recognize that, if we have so many greenbelts and such a high-quality environment, it is because of these positive acts.

However, during those years, capital investment expenditures were being made mostly on the Ontario side, to develop industrial parks and improve the infrastructure, while here they were creating green spaces. And it is obvious that this agency very often plans our territory without including us in the planning process. It happened again just recently. Except that I recognize, Mr. Assad, that some positive things have been done. It would simply be a matter of acting on the remarks of the Prime Minister of Canada when he said that things would be plenty different. Well, I think that, tomorrow morning, the question of the National Capital Commission could be plenty different if Québec, Ontario and Canada as the third party agreed to change its structure immediately, pending other sorts of changes. At present, it is administered by people from all ten provinces.

To come back to your question regarding the language issue, I am obviously no demographer, so I refer to data from Statistics Canada. For the City of Hull, for example, I have as well Lucien Brault's books on the history of the City of Hull; I have, for example, the proportion of Anglophones in Hull. In 1901, it was 11.9%; in 1941, it was 7.3%. The 1986 Census taken by Statistics Canada put the proportion at 5.9%.

Again those are Statistics Canada's figures. Some may dispute them and I can't offer any arguments about that, except that I have figures for the City of Gatineau. In 1981, the proportion of Anglophones was 8.9%; in 1986, 6.4%. Aylmer in 1981 was 37.1% Anglophone, and in 1986, 30.7%.

Mr. Assad: Your years as chairman of the Société d'aménagement... and you have in fact dealings with the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de l'Outaouais. Has this dependence on the national capital shown a tendency to increase or decrease over the last five to ten years?

Mr. Séguin: I think that, whichever the case, we have more control today over part of our economy. We have recovered some sales, that is purchases by people who used to cross the river to do their shopping and contributed to the business economy on the other side. So I think we have done some catching up, but we still have a very long way to go and that is why we are proposing an economic diversification plan. It is obvious that, like all the others - we say it in our brief too, without coming down in favour of any particular constitutional option - we recognize that the status quo is definitely out of the question. It is also obvious that one cannot imagine that the constitutional status quo is going to allow the federal government to boost our economy.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Assad. The next speaker will be Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll begin by welcoming both Mr. Séguin, a friend of mine, and the two persons accompanying him. I want to congratulate him for the brief he has presented to the Commission.

I think it is a brief which describes the problematics of the Outaouais extremely well, in particular, where you point out that the public service in Montréal, for example, accounts for 7.2% of the work force; in Québec City, 14.3%; and in the Outaouais, 25%. I think that these statistics clearly show that the Outaouais is no doubt the most vulnerable region in the whole province in the event of any constitutional change whatever.

Despite the fact that everyone agrees that the status quo is unacceptable, the fact remains that any measure that may be taken and any recommendation that may be made by the Commission with a view to constitutional change will naturally have to take into account the particular problematics of the Outaouais.

Having said that, I would like to know from you, Mr. Séguin, assuming that federal jobs and private-sector jobs on the Ontario side - because we know that over 15 000 people living in Québec work for private-sector firms in Ontario, while only 2500 Ontarians work on the Québec side... In a situation where jobs would be lost, how many indirect jobs might this mean that our region would lose as well?
(10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Séguin: Let's say that I have faith in the reliability of my economist's information to the effect that the impact here of the jobs in the federal civil service, for example, or in private-sector firms, is that, for every two jobs in the federal civil service or in Ontario's private sector, there is a third, indirect job. In other words, the impact that the incomes of these people have, since they spread their spending around here and there, is that it creates jobs for clerks in shops or convenience stores, but one could say: Add 50% to the number of people who would lose their jobs.

Mr. Beaudry: So, if we are talking about the loss in absolute terms, assuming that nothing is done, that the federal jobs would be lost, that there are 26 000 of them, let's suppose we don't lose them all, because shortly we will hear about a study that will tell us that, in a worst-case scenario, we could lose maybe 18 000 or so and that, even in a context where there would be reciprocity with Ontario, we would lose another 12 500 jobs. This means that, in all, including indirect jobs, we would maybe be talking about 40 000 to 45 000 jobs.

Mr. Séguin: According to our estimates, that would be the case.

Mr. Beaudry: There is another thing I want to ask you. Your corporation was created and began operating in 1970, and the primary objective of the SAO, of the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais, was to promote industry and tourism in the Outaouais region of Québec. The aim was in fact to provide a counterpart to the National Capital Commission which, on the other side of the river, was responsible for promoting precisely these two important aspects of our economy. Can you tell us if Québec City, the present government or preceding administrations, has met the objectives of the SAO? Also I would like to know whether, today, your agency is alive and well or whether it is not dying. I would like to hear your opinion on that because you know, Mr. Séguin...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Sir, your answer must be brief.

Mr. Séguin: My answer will be brief, Mr. Chairman. To give you an example, the National Capital Commission has a budget of \$100 million. In the better years, our agency received from Québec City an annual budget of close to \$6 million. This year, it's \$2 million and next year, we've been given to understand that we'll have \$1.5 million. We're living on air.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. We are now going to hear from Mr. Robert Middlemiss.

Mr. Middlemiss: Your brief, no doubt because of the geographical location of our region, sheds an entirely different light on the issue. It's down to earth, it's realistic, in a word, it raises the real questions: What will happen to our region in the Québec of tomorrow?

While you do not take a stand, in your brief, as to which constitutional option Québec should choose, you do describe the considerable concerns you have about the future and I find it only natural to engage in this type of reflection. Up to now, too many groups have taken a stand supported only by a certain number of clichés or by excessive optimism. You tell us, on page 2 of the brief: "Notwithstanding the constitutional hurly-burly, it is advisable to recall that Ontarians are Québec's leading partners and that they will remain so. They are also our neighbours and will remain so". Well, that's true for our region and it's true for Québec as a whole. The Conseil du patronat reminded us in its brief that 61% of Québec's exports go to Ontario.

I also appreciated your reading of the federal presence. I have to tell you that there

have been a lot of briefs presented to us which repeated the old prejudices to the effect that federalism was useless and even harmful. You tell us, on page 6: "... such sectors as specialized services, high technology and tourism, stimulated at the outset by the presence of the federal government, are no longer solely dependent on that client". In other words, it doesn't always happen but it does happen that the federal system allows industry sectors to be launched, thereby helping to promote and support Québec's development. So, maybe people should stop saying that everything in the federal system is bad. It's an insult to our intelligence. But, on the other hand, some things obviously need to be modified to give Québec the leeway it requires for its development.

Having said that, Mr. Séguin, you mention in your brief how important it is for the Outaouais region to be closely associated with the constitutional changes that Quebecers are preparing for. If that is the case, with a view to the optimal development of the Outaouais region, what type of constitutional framework do you and your organization advocate? To put it another way, after having examined different constitutional options, which one would best promote the development of our region and enable us to fully catch up, economically, with the Ontario side?

Mr. Séguin: First let me say that it's quite true that high technology has begun to make a reputation for itself in the region, the field of research as well. But I must point out, on the other hand, that 99% of the jobs in this field are still on the Ontario side. And I must point out that, here again, the federal government is chiefly responsible. Because we had, for example, a research centre in Hull, the Air Traffic Services Research & Experimentation Centre of the Department of Transport on Sacré-Coeur Boulevard in Hull and, by a strange coincidence, at the very time a Quebecer was Transport Minister, they transferred it to Oakland, Ontario. Well, that's the sort of centre we need on this side.

And to do all that, we need an economic diversification plan sanctioned by Québec City. I'll not say within which constitutional framework, I'm saying the provincial authorities. If they are willing to agree to the economic diversification plan which will mean, for example, that the various economy-oriented government corporations would look on our region with a more sympathetic eye. All that together, we will be able to restore a balance in our economy.

Now, under what sort of constitution? That's the mandate of your Commission. As for us here this morning, you are perhaps going to say: You are finding problems in the solutions. Maybe that's true, that I am finding problems in the solutions. On the other hand, I think you

have been given a mandate to find solutions to our problems. So, I say to you: Respond positively to our concerns and you tell us, that is, you tell the Government what position it should take in order to respond to our concerns, so that we too may develop as we wish. We could be regarded as regionalists. But it's true, we are a Québec government corporation with a mandate for one region, and the Outaouais region is not just Hull, it also includes Papineau, Pontiac and the Gatineau valley. And our primary concern is the bread and butter of the people of our region. And that being the case, give us guarantees regardless of the constitutional path chosen. We will analyse it and follow Québec City's lead.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. We will now hear from Mr. François Gendron.

Mr. Gendron: Yes, I would like to thank you, Mr. Séguin, and your two colleagues as well, for agreeing to appear before the constitutional Commission. It is important, I think, for a corporation such as yours, which has dealt with area planning and development, acting somewhat as the counterpart of the National Capital Commission – not always with the same means, I know – it's important that you be heard and it's important for all of us, I think, as we begin our proceedings, to have a clear picture of the current situation in order to evaluate the different briefs that will be presented to us today. I would just like to refer briefly to this reality. When you say that 12% of the territory of the Communauté régionale de l'Outaouais is occupied by the federal government – and it's important to keep that in mind all day – that nearly a quarter of the region's workers are employed by the federal government and roughly a third of the area of the City of Hull is occupied by the federal government, it seems to me that these are realities that it is important for you to bring to our attention.

As time is getting short, I would like to go straight to your brief. Among other references in your brief, you cite Professor Saint-Germain's study concerning the viability of Québec absorbing and integrating Quebecers who are federal public servants. However, you don't mention that this study, the Saint-Germain study... that we would be able to guarantee the jobs of these public servants. So the question is very simple: Why have you omitted this conclusion and talked about the disastrous effects there would be if Québec abruptly declared its political sovereignty? I would like to know from you what justification you had for leaving out one of the conclusions of the Saint-Germain report as to Québec's ability to offer concrete job alternatives to all public servants

here, in the Outaouais region.

Mr. Séguin: To begin with, we cite precisely the observations of Mr. Saint-Germain, and I know he is scheduled to appear next, so he will certainly be able to answer your questions. Why did we not... We said in our text that, theoretically, perhaps it is possible to absorb these people, except that our concern is that, regardless of the constitutional change, if they are absorbed, a certain number of them, following either constitutional renewal or sovereignty, our primary concern is that they be absorbed here, and not relocated in Montréal or Québec City. It's not the jobs of the individuals in particular, it's the jobs and the impact they have.

By the way, we really wish that this Commission would recommend, for example, that the Government provide for something resembling section 45 of the Labour Code. When there is a new employer, he has to keep the employees, then add a short phrase: he has to keep them in the region.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Gendron: Quickly, Mr. Séguin, I would also like to hear your views... I would like to hear your views too on the activities of the National Capital Commission. We know that your agency was created to act somewhat as a counterbalance to offset the activities of the National Capital Commission on Québec territory. Could you indicate to us any specific characteristics of activities said to conflict somewhat with the orientations you would like to have seen taken here on Québec territory by the National Capital Commission?

Mr. Séguin: Yes. Moreover, as you have certainly seen, Mr. Gendron, in Appendix 3, I think, of our report, we list our grievances. As I indicated in my reply to Mr. Assad, I don't mean that it is entirely negative. On the other hand, this federal agency engages in planning for our future and most of the time we have no say in the matter.

Again recently, as an example, "Outaouais 2050" was published, and, all of a sudden, we learned that the brains of our organizations had been used, but without the consent of our various boards of directors. That's what we take exception to, and that's why I said a few minutes ago: I don't see why this structure couldn't be changed tomorrow morning so that it would be limited to Québec, Ontario and Canada at the same table. And when I say "Québec", that could, of course, include people from the municipal or regional level.

Inevitably, the primary concerns of the National Capital Commission in the past were to create green spaces on this side and to build

infrastructures on the other side. The Société d'aménagement was established as a result of the realization that Québec had to do something. Québec has given us, over... Maybe we have received \$150 million over 20 years, but that's not much at all compared to an annual budget of \$100 million, and that agency, inevitably, has promoted the establishment of federal buildings on the other side.

Our side has seen a certain amount of catching-up in terms of federal buildings, but only after some hard battles. And the federal buildings we do have, I must admit that we wanted them. We wanted them because they represent \$1 billion in assessment, it brings money into the coffers, because the federal government is a good employer. Maybe it was good to have the National Capital Commission in the fifties to plan, when "urban planners" did not exist in the Québec language, but today we have municipal governments, we have RCMs, we are capable of planning our territory, particularly in conjunction with Québec City, and I have no objection to its having a say in the matter but I do object to its being the leader.

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

Mr. Gendron: Thank you. Mr. Séguin, I'm sorry, in 15 seconds, it's not possible. Thank you very much.

Mr. Séguin: Mr. Gendron, we could go on for an hour.

Mr. Gendron: We certainly could.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Séguin, Mr. Gagnon, Mr. Materazzi, thank you for your contribution to the work of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

Mr. Séguin: We thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would be happy to provide the Commission with any further information it may require in fulfilling its mandate.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Excellent, Sir.
(10:15 a.m.)

Our next speaker will be Mr. Saint-Germain. Before we hear Mr. Saint-Germain, I wish to draw your attention to two points. First, may I remind the members of the Commission that it was agreed at the last working sitting that we would give our guests as much speaking time as possible. It was agreed that questions would be short and preambles virtually non-existent. So, if we could conform as well, that would allow us to derive the utmost benefit from the comments of the people who appear before us to present their

brief.

My second remark is, of course, addressed to those who hadn't yet arrived when the last hearing began, when I said that this Commission was not allowing any applause. Once again, it is perhaps regrettable, but those are the rules and I hope you will respect them.

Mr. Saint-Germain, welcome. You have five minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Maurice Saint-Germain

Mr. Saint-Germain (Maurice): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the brief I am presenting today focuses particularly on the regional dimension of the transfer of jurisdiction of federal employees, on the assumption that Québec becomes a sovereign state. The reason I did this study was to make known the interests of the Outaouais beyond the region and to defend them, even if it means dramatizing the situation.

I also tried to see how the Outaouais could be a key player in the increase in powers Québec is seeking and how to adjust the interests of the Outaouais to Québec's initiative.

Considering the employed workforce and its payroll, it seems, first of all, that over the years, Québec has not had a share of federal employees that corresponds to its share of the population of Canada. Nor has Québec received a share of federal remuneration corresponding to its share of Canada's gross domestic product. This is a real shortfall which amounted to more than \$1 billion in 1988 and a loss of 32 000 jobs. This means Québec has always had, and will continue to have, the financial capacity to pay a public administration workforce that is as large, or larger, than the current number of federal employees in Québec.

Turning to the Outaouais, there are now about 25 000 federal employees in the metropolitan Hull region. Sovereignty for Québec would mean the capital would shift to Québec City and would affect most of these federal jobs.

I have considered two scenarios. First, the laissez-faire scenario, with no intervention measures. This would involve a potential loss of 15 000 to 18 000 jobs and \$400 million to \$600 million for the metropolitan Hull region.

Second, the government intervention scenario, with specific measures appropriate to the Outaouais that would maintain the current level of employment. Here is the scenario, with two priorities. First priority, systematic decentralization into the region of many national administrations of the new Québec state. The number of jobs involved in this measure could represent from 7% to 9% of the new state's public administration jobs. These measures rely on Hull's existing absorption capacity and on the fact that there would then be an excess number of public employees in Ottawa.

These measures also reflect the federal government's current decentralization, in which 80% of federal jobs are located outside the capital region and in which 2/3 of federal civil servants are also located outside the capital. The Outaouais could then draw, from among federal civil servants alone, on a pool of more than 30 000 jobs currently within government departments a large portion of whose staff would eventually be decentralized to Hull, starting with the 500 new Québec GST civil servants. These measures take into consideration that while there are government functions that can't be decentralized, public employees are more apt to be because they often do work that is common to many departments. Finally, these decentralization measures would take place over time.

As a second priority, these administrative decentralization measures must be supported by development in the region of industrial and service jobs other than in public administration, and by the establishment of transportation, health and education infrastructures. Consequently, we make the following five proposals: first, that the government undertake to guarantee Québec's federal employees their job, their level of pay, fringe benefits and vested rights; second, that the bargaining committee that will handle the integration of federal employees in Québec be based in Hull and include representatives from the region so that the Outaouais is given top consideration; third, that a senior commissioner be appointed as principal negotiator residing in the Outaouais and that a minister be appointed to be responsible for the integration of federal employees, if possible an elected member from the region, with the dual mandate of federal employee integration throughout Québec and economic development of the Outaouais; fourth, that former federal employees working on Québec issues or issues for Québec be based initially in Hull in the short term; fifth, that partial or transitional measures be adopted to inform and prepare the regional population for the measures eventually adopted.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Saint-Germain. First speaker, Mr. Robert LeSage.

Mr. LeSage: Mr. Saint-Germain, first of all, allow me to welcome you among us and to thank you for the brief you've presented to this Commission. If I understand you, you aren't taking a position on the choice this Commission has to make. However, based on the remarks you've just made and from reading your brief, there seem to be some contradictions. You've spoken of potential losses of thousands of jobs. I agree with you there and I'd go even further than to say that the losses are potential. You speak of decentralized departments. You tell us

of commitments the gouvernement du Québec should make to federal public servants in the Québec Outaouais. I'm quoting you there, Mr. Saint-Germain. On page 9 of your brief, you say: "Because of the large number of Francophone federal public servants living in the Québec portion of the national capital region, the government of an independent Québec will maintain a large contingent of civil servants in Hull."

A little later you say: "All these men and women of the federal public service who would like to enter our public service would be entitled to do so. Those in favour of sovereignty commit themselves to decentralizing to the Outaouais all jobs so that the number of jobs increases here as a result of independence." And the leader of the PQ says: Parizeau doesn't want departments to be scattered. And he can't guarantee the jobs will be maintained in the provincial public service.

I've two questions, Mr. Saint-Germain. In an independent Québec, what services could Québec provide that it doesn't have now? And don't talk about mailmen, because the mail runs throughout Québec. I'm talking about departments that would hire, in the Québec Outaouais, a bunch of people to do something specific that we don't have now. And I'd like to ask you if you really believe that a government could provide citizens of the Outaouais with an insurance policy on keeping jobs in the new Québec public service. Because, referring to your brief, and I think this must be a typo, you say it costs something like \$10 billion or \$1 billion with two zeros and two other numbers between two commas, I assume you mean \$10 billion. I think that we're talking roughly a billion plus a few hundred thousand here in the Québec Outaouais.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): The question please.

Mr. LeSage: So, do you think the gouvernement du Québec could provide jobs for those civil servants in the provincial public service? And I mentioned earlier the contradictions with Mr. Parizeau, leader of the PQ. I'm listening.

Mr. Saint-Germain: Your question covers a lot of ground. I think I'll give a general answer. I looked into the feasibility in the event of Québec becoming sovereign, a question that can be asked because the Québec Outaouais represents 4% of the electorate and it may be that one day, in a free democratic vote on self-determination, Québec decides to go that way. O.K. So, that's where my brief starts off. What does that mean for the Outaouais? I looked as much as possible at the possibilities of maintaining the level of employment. There's a possibility because, 25 000 federal jobs in Hull is

enormous but 25 000 federal jobs throughout Québec isn't very much.

Currently, by adding up provincial and federal employees in Québec, we get 260 000 or more federal and provincial employees throughout Québec. So, all in all, we make up about 9% of that total here in the Outaouais. There are jobs, you mentioned mailmen, and so many others, that absolutely cannot be taken from the region. At most, I estimate a maximum of 18 000 jobs that may be in jeopardy. O.K., 18 000 jobs compared to 260 000 jobs throughout Québec... that gives an order of magnitude.

So, I then looked at which departments lend themselves to decentralization. In fact, I prepared a list of departments that lend themselves most to decentralization because, as I said earlier in my presentation, two thirds of Ottawa's public service are in departments located outside the capital. So, a sovereign Québec could apply a similar logic and have two thirds of its public service in the regions, including a large portion in Hull, no doubt. You'd simply have to find 18 000 out of the 230 000 in question. Some departments lend themselves to decentralization such as: Indian Affairs, Agriculture, Veterans' Affairs, Pensions, Employment and Immigration, Environment, National Revenue, both for customs and excise, and income tax, the Canadian Forestry Service, Transport, Public Works. All those departments have components that can be decentralized and many of them are already located in Hull: Indian Affairs, Employment and Immigration, National Defense, Environment, Forests, Public Works. So, there are possibilities.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Could you shorten your answer.

Mr. Saint-Germain: I'd just like to say something about the GST.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I have a question to ask. I'll speak to you about it in a minute. Now to Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Saint-Germain. This is certainly one of the most relevant studies to the issues we are discussing here, but more specifically for the Outaouais region, and we understand that, in Hull, you are very concerned about these issues. I'd like to deal with two pieces of information you provide, but before that, I'd like to emphasize that the possible solutions you propose seem to us realistic and feasible, and also realistic and feasible for the Leader of the Opposition. And what Mr. Parizeau has said and repeated is that he thinks that, in a sovereign Québec, there would have to be a minister responsible for integrating these public servants as smoothly as possible with as much respect as

possible for the regions. And I'd like to hear what you have to say... First, you point out that we have a deficit, that is, we have a little more than 20% of federal public servants, while Québec accounts for almost 26% of Canada's population, which represents a shortfall of \$1 billion. That gives some room to manoeuvre.

I'd like to know if you looked at the handling of the integration of the 500 federal civil servants that will join Québec's public service under the new agreement on the administration of the GST, and whether that could be used as a model.

Mr. Saint-Germain: I think that's an interesting case to look at: 500 employees will move to Québec's jurisdiction. So, these federal employees who move to Québec's jurisdiction will receive their pay cheque from Québec and will work for Québec and should therefore work within Québec's borders. This is a unique opportunity to apply this model in favour of the Outaouais, that we immediately reap these 500 jobs, which, I've been told, could eventually grow to 800 as time goes on, that we reap them immediately and locate them in the buildings already in Hull. That would net us 500 jobs, which would be all the more interesting because, since tax collection is involved and Québec remits the federal portion to Ottawa, the system would be extended and, without rocking the boat, at some point, Québec would only need to use one tax return.
(10:30 a.m.)

Mrs. Blackburn: We're also considering having the Québec Labour Code include accreditation granted and collective agreements negotiated under federal rule and legislation automatically apply to workers in Québec, accreditation granted, collective agreements negotiated under Québec legislation.

In other words, a kind of automatic mechanism would apply, but then there would be harmonization. Is that likely to provide reassurance when that decision has to be taken? I imagine that at the same time sovereignty is declared in Québec or we begin to negotiate, that that would be included in the Québec Labour Code. Did you think about when that could be done?

Mr. Saint-Germain: That's not the main purpose of my work, but I mean, on that subject, I'm confident given the management ability that exists in Québec already. For instance, given that in education, at the time of the Quiet Revolution, we integrated a situation with over 900 collective agreements, we'd be able to integrate just a hundred.

When we're able to manage assets in several financial institutions in Québec, and there are people here who are well aware of that, assets of several tens of billions, in each

of a number of large financial institutions in Québec, we can certainly handle a situation of \$600 million for Hull. When we can manage negotiations with a common front representing 250 000 to 300 000 employees, we can certainly manage negotiations involving 18 000 or 25 000.

Mrs. Blackburn: You very appropriately mention a number of departments that could be advantageously decentralized in a sovereign Québec. Since I come from a region, I know what the urgent need to centralize some government activities means. Have you estimated, for the departments you mention, which it would be advantageous to maintain here in Hull, how many jobs that amounts to?

Mr. Saint-Germain: Yes. I looked. I've got a list. I've an entire document that, by the way, could be distributed to you, except I didn't know how to go about it. The presentation I've just made and the table are here. There's enough for each of you, Ladies and Gentlemen. It would obviously help to clarify the discussion.

I looked at the staff levels of every department that lends itself to decentralization, that is, with less than 33% of its staff in the federal capital at present. So, I've got a list of about 15 departments or government organizations out of 75. This group represents two thirds of public service jobs according to those under the jurisdiction of the federal Public Service Commission. So we have a total of 143 000. I allocated 25% of the total to Québec. Québec had 25.8% of the population of Canada in 1986 and that produces a workforce of 36 000 just from among the types of public service jobs which form the population pool from which Québec can draw.

I then looked at the departments already established in Hull. I looked at the proportion of Francophones. We can also look at the proportion of Québec or Ontario residents, and then move on to the collective agreements as you say.

So, it's operational. We could go further and discuss manpower and immigration... immigration, which we almost had with the Meech Lake Accord... which we didn't get and is one area we have to recover and where Québec's share in terms of jobs is 5252 jobs, according to my calculations, to be gained. In Hull, it would be enough to have 2000 or 2500 even, that would be very good in that case. And so on. Take Environment, which is already in Hull. Environment has 1824 public servants assigned to Québec. We could certainly keep 1000 or 1500. In Hull, there are currently about 1500 in the Environment Canada tower in Hull, on St. Joseph Boulevard.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Very good, Mr. Saint-Germain. We now move on to

Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Saint-Germain, as we all know, we have a high rate of unemployment in Québec and a recession is on the way if it's not already here. We have to streamline our departmental operations and eliminate any governmental burden. Business people complain these days about the weight of government, about too much government.

I'd like to know whether you really think we can increase the number of jobs in the Outaouais regions in departments where the gouvernement du Québec and the federal government share jurisdiction, particularly if the department is already established elsewhere, for instance, the department that administers the Québec Pension Plan.

In your brief, you spoke of old age benefits. I think that if we've already got a department established elsewhere, they could look after that and there's no need to transfer that department to the Outaouais.

Mr. Saint-Germain: If I understand your question, it has to do, let's say, with the zone of shared jurisdiction, with interference that may, and in fact does, exist. You can try to determine the number of public officials, the staff involved. I don't think that's the central issue. Given that Québec has always had less than its share of federal public servants that...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: What I meant was that if these public officials exist elsewhere in Québec and do their job, then, in those departments, is there something preventing them from taking on other federal responsibilities? I imagine there'll be some increase in employment. Will the increase be as great as that? Is it really desirable that it be divided in two, between the Outaouais and, perhaps Québec City, Montréal or elsewhere?

Mr. Saint-Germain: If I understand your question, I see the issue of flexibility in adapting. In other words, if some government functions are centralized and others decentralized, I've said that the public servants are more adaptable. In other words, there are clerical duties, personnel management duties, accountants and so on, that apply to many departments. So, that's not important for the situation of the Outaouais. It's especially a question of maintaining the level of employment. Whether people have to change the name of their department is not the central issue.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: From one department to another. O.K. Just another quick question. We've heard many briefs seeking greater decentralization of powers and the exercise of

these powers in the regions. Since the Outaouais is only one region among many others, do you feel special treatment is needed and desirable? Do you think such treatment could be sold to other regions like Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the Côte-Nord that have their own unemployment problems?

Mr. Saint-Germain: Well, I think the Outaouais needs special measures and that's not to take anything from the other regions which, I realize, have significant economic development needs. It's just that you have to recognize that, for the Outaouais, the regional economy depends on the public service and the level of employment has to be maintained, first, by securing the jobs from the public service of the new State through decentralization and, second, by developing, as we've said, a more diversified economy with jobs other than in public service, and that's feasible.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was starting to worry, Mr. Chairman!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: Mr. Saint-Germain, I want to congratulate you for the work you've done. I think your brief deals with a subject of particular concern to the people of the Outaouais. You've done a massive amount of work to solve the problems that would have to be faced in the context of a sovereign Québec. Earlier, you spoke of two priorities and said: Perhaps the problem will take care of itself, provided two priorities are kept in mind. The first is decentralization and the second, development of service jobs and industrial jobs in the region. You make that a priority. If that doesn't happen and Québec does nothing, as you say in one of your tables, at best, the Outaouais would lose about 15 000 federal jobs and, at worst, the Outaouais would lose 18 617 jobs in the region, simply in terms of public service.

I have a question for you. Did you do your study in the context or have you taken into account that, in a sovereign Québec, Canada could possibly break apart, and there might not be a Canada, and second, assuming Canada continues to be a legal entity, that its capital might not necessarily be Ottawa? And in that context, are your figures and conclusions still valid? That's my first question.

My second is this. In your study, you devote a paragraph to private-sector jobs for people who live in the Outaouais and work in

Ontario. We know they number about 15 000. And your proposal is that there should be reciprocity between Québec and Ontario to maintain those jobs. However, there are only about 2500 residents of Ontario who work in Québec. Assuming we keep to strict reciprocity, the Québec Outaouais loses about 12 500 jobs. Could you also elaborate on this second question?

Mr. Saint-Germain: I'd be happy to. First, concerning reciprocity. It's based on the free movement of people, services, and goods between the two states. I want to say that the dependence of the Québec Outaouais is much less than generally thought. For instance, there aren't 2500 Ontarians who work in Québec but at least 18 000 or 19 000.

Mr. Beaudry: I'm not talking about public servants.

Mr. Saint-Germain: O.K. Still, there are 18 000 to 19 000 public servants. A few minutes ago, we counted them speaking in the other direction. So, just to repeat there are 18 000 in all. So, that includes at least 16 000 civil servants plus the 2500 you mentioned. Let's say we've got 18 500 Ontarians who cross the river each morning and, the day after sovereignty is declared, will want to continue doing so, like the Quebecers who go in the other direction, and I'm one of them.

I also want to say, for recreational purposes, tens of thousands of Ontarians really like the Outaouais, its hills, ski resorts, the Gatineau, their cottages, secondary residences. They'll also want free access to their cottages. So, for their work, for their recreation, Ontarians have a strong interest in having free access to Québec. Just as strong, in my opinion, as Quebecers' interest in the other direction.

On the other point...

Mr. Beaudry: Just a minute, Mr. Saint-Germain. You haven't answered my question. I'm not talking about recreation, I'm not talking about someone going to his cottage. I'm talking about somebody who lives in the Outaouais, who works in Ontario and earns his living because his work is in Ontario. That's not a question of recreation.

Mr. Saint-Germain: I was talking about free movement...

Mr. Beaudry: And don't talk to me about public servants, because there are also people in the Outaouais who cross the river each day into Ontario, just as many, if not more, than those from Ontario who cross into Québec. My question was specific. It had to do with employment in private enterprise. This is the

question: How do those people recover their jobs, assuming Ontario... Because once we separate, Ontario will decide on its own laws. How do those people recover their jobs, assuming Ontario tells them: We no longer allow you to have 15 000 in Ontario, but 2500 like the 2500 Ontarians who work in private enterprise on the Québec side? That's my question.

Mr. Saint-Germain: It depends on reciprocal treatment. By jealously protecting the jobs of Ontarians in Québec, we jealously secure access for Quebecers to their jobs in Ontario. That's the idea. Everything is based on free movement that's always been part of the programs of those who've advocated sovereignty. It's never been presented otherwise. And it also depends on a reality that applies throughout the European Common Market that's often talked about where, every morning, thousands of border dwellers cross the borders to work in the country next door. And frontiers can be crossed more easily that you think, but crossed by frontier workers daily, in both directions, over many European frontiers within Common Market countries that are still sovereign. That mustn't be overlooked.

Mr. Beaudry: What you're telling me is that...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm afraid, Mr. Beaudry, that you're at least a minute over your time. Mrs. Monique Simard.

Mrs. Simard: Mr. Chairman, I think that, obviously, we agree with the concern demonstrated with respect to the fate of Québec federal public servants and that, in the event of constitutional changes that seem just about inevitable, these people have guarantees but that when we spoke of repatriating certain powers, this transfer problem would be raised. You pointed it out, because there are already examples. In the most extreme solution, sovereignty, clearly, we can use existing models.

You also speak of the need to be concerned with regional economic development. You obviously are referring to the development of employment in the private sector as being necessary. I would like to hear your comments on that aspect. Have you investigated that issue? What kind of development would have to be encouraged? In what sector could employment be developed? I think your study is very relevant, eloquent on the subject of public administration. But in the private sector, could you elaborate a little?

Mr. Saint-Germain: Fine, though my work focused on the issue of the public service or federal employees. Still, I looked at this question at the same time, but at a secondary level. What I can tell you is that employment in the

industrial and service sectors can be developed. First because, regardless of what happens, we'll always be part of a very large urban region, the fourth largest in Canada, with Ottawa, having, Hull plus Ottawa, 900 000 people. There is also, in this region, high technology, particularly in Kanata and very little on our side, we even lost Northern Telecom that used to be in Aymer. So we could hope, given the demographic basin and the talents in the region, to see the establishment of a little something to compare with the sizeable mass of jobs in technology on the other side of the river. So, we're part of an urban centre of 900 000 people that won't disappear all of a sudden, whatever happens.

Then, there are other types of jobs, parapublic jobs. There's the whole area of health, education. The other day, we spoke of repatriation as a half-victory for the Outaouais, or a half-defeat, but each time we repatriate it means jobs. The other day, it was in the health field, here in the Outaouais. So, it could be in education. It could be in the area of all kinds of infrastructures and construction that would be started. On the parapublic side, then, there's opportunity because we've always been under-equipped. Québec City always thought we could always find what we lacked in services on the other side of the river. Unfortunately, we'll have to think of having them here one day, and that's a pressing demand in the Outaouais.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Saint-Germain. That brings your time to an end. So, thank you for your detailed study. I'd say, thank you for your very penetrating study. Thank you for your contribution to the work of this Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:48 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:52 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Our work continues.

We now welcome Mr. René Tenasco, who represents the River Desert Indian Band. Mr. Tenasco, you have five minutes to present your brief.

River Desert Indian Band

Mr. Tenasco (René): Merci beaucoup. Mon nom est René Tenasco, je suis un conseiller de la bande algonquine de River Desert à Maniwaki. J'aimerais remercier les membres de la Commission, Monsieur le Président et toutes les personnes qui ont organisé la Commission. Au nom de notre peuple, nous vous remercions et nous accueillons la Commission sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec. Nous vous souhaitons la bienvenue dans le territoire algonquin.

J'aimerais simplement vous présenter brièvement nos inquiétudes à propos du pays et à propos de sa séparation éventuelle, peut-être de son éclatement. Je crois qu'il faut examiner certains points très sérieusement. Je crois qu'il est temps de dire et qu'il est juste de dire que le Canada, tel que nous l'avons connu et tel que nous le connaissons actuellement, ne sera plus jamais le même. Indépendamment des mesures qui seront prises par toute commission ou en vertu de toute recommandation, notre pays est en train de changer, et ce changement sera très sérieux et très important.

Notre position, pour l'instant, est une position de neutralité. Nous ne dirons pas que nous sommes en faveur de la séparation du Québec du reste du Canada, mais comme je le disais, il y a des choses qu'il faut considérer sérieusement, entre autres l'existence des peuples autochtones et ce que le pays entend faire à ce sujet.

Dans toute son histoire, le Canada n'a jamais été si près d'être divisé. Et je crois pas que ce soit à cause des gens ordinaires. Je crois que les gens ordinaires sont poussés à cela, qu'ils y sont poussés par les lois qui sont établies au pays. Je crois que les visions du Canada sont trop galvaudées par les dirigeants du pays. Trop de visions, des visions qui sont vides de sens. Et aujourd'hui, nous ne nous comprenons pas les uns les autres.

Notre priorité, c'est que si le Québec a l'intention de se séparer, il tienne compte des droits de l'homme et qu'il reconnaisse notre peuple, et pas seulement comme une autre race. Je suis sûr que cela va à l'encontre du droit international, lorsque nous parlons du principe des droits des autochtones, qu'une race détermine ce que devrait être la destinée d'une autre race. Voici nos principales préoccupations: la réalité du principe des droits des autochtones et les privilèges qui se rattachent à ces droits. Dans l'éventualité de la séparation du Québec ou de la souveraineté-association du Québec avec le Canada, le nouveau gouvernement du Québec sera dans la même position qu'il l'est maintenant.

Il n'aura pas l'autorité juridique de définir le principe des droits autochtones dans les limites de ses lois. Ce processus est actuellement miné par les gouvernements fédéral et provincial, malgré que les conventions internationales des Nations unies établies dans des lois interdisent ce genre de mesures.

Nous définirons nous-mêmes qui nous sommes et quels droits nous avons. Aucune autre nation, aucune autre race ne le fera, car il n'appartient pas à une autre race de déterminer les droits des autochtones et de dicter la vie d'un autre peuple. L'oppression doit cesser et tous doivent comprendre que notre race existe en tant que peuple et qu'elle s'est installée à l'intérieur des frontières naturelles qui délimitent actuellement le Québec. Dans l'éventualité d'une

séparation du Québec ou de la souveraineté-association avec le Canada, le nouveau gouvernement du Québec ne pourra tenir pour acquis que les autochtones deviendront automatiquement des citoyens du Québec. Nous déciderons nous-mêmes de notre citoyenneté et nous déterminerons notre propre sort en fonction de critères et de règles établis par nous, et en fonction des opinions que nous avons sur l'auto-détermination et l'autonomie.

Nous sommes la seule race au monde qui n'a pas de gouvernement national dans son propre pays. Nous sommes la seule race au monde qui n'est jamais allée dans un autre pays pour imposer ses lois, ses croyances culturelles ou pour dicter une façon de vivre aux habitants. Nous devons cesser d'être dominés dans notre pays. Pour ce qui est des terres et des droits territoriaux, dans l'éventualité de la séparation du Québec ou de la souveraineté-association avec le Canada, le nouveau gouvernement du Québec devra faire face à ces questions. Le gouvernement devra tenir compte du fait que notre peuple n'est pas soumis à des traités. Nous n'avons pas conclu de traités avec le gouvernement fédéral ni avec le gouvernement provincial, et la réalité est que la province de Québec, maintenant gouvernée par le gouvernement du Québec, s'est établie à l'intérieur des frontières naturelles de terres qui appartenaient aux Algonquins et que ceux-ci n'avaient pas cédées. En conséquence, la réalité nous montre que la grande partie des régions développées dans les villes du Québec est située sur des terres dont les Algonquins conservent les titres et appartient à la nation algonquine.

Ce que nous voulons que le Canada et le Québec reconnaissent, c'est notre autodétermination, une réalité de laquelle on n'a jamais tenu compte ici. Nous voulons la justice et nous voulons une coexistence paisible. Nous ne pouvons dire aux gens qui demeurent ici: il faut vous en aller, car nous sommes trop nombreux. Tout comme vous ne pouvez pas nous dire de nous en aller, car nous sommes dans notre patrie. Alors, dans le même ordre d'idées, lorsque nous parlons de changement au pays, il faut nous arrêter et regarder les questions qui sont en jeu. Quelles que soient les raisons qui ont causé les problèmes que nous avons aujourd'hui, si nous voulons établir de nouvelles relations, celles-ci ne pourront être fondées sur la confiance. Elles devront être fondées sur le raisonnement, sur la compréhension de la méfiance actuelle et de nos erreurs passées. Et je pense que cela est très important, si nous voulons préparer l'avenir, l'avenir du Canada, du Québec, des peuples autochtones ou autres. Je crois qu'il est très important d'examiner notre avenir, car de la façon dont les choses se déroulent actuellement, nous ne voyons aucun avenir.

Nous n'avons plus de contrôle sur le développement, sur l'environnement. Nous

estimons que les pouvoirs que détiennent les gouvernements doivent être redonnés pour que les lois soient orientées vers la paix. C'est ce en quoi nous croyons, et nous croyons que cela peut se faire. Car pour qu'un changement se produise, il faut que des gens y travaillent. Il devra y avoir une volonté politique honnête, et nous n'avons pas encore vu cette volonté. Je suis désolé de vous dire que nous ne l'avons pas encore vue. Votre peuple ne l'a pas encore vue.

Lorsque vous parlez d'établir une société juste avec les peuples autochtones, nous vous demandons: avez-vous établi une société juste pour votre peuple? Alors, il faudra donc procéder à des réformes sociales au pays et nous pourrions alors établir nos lois sur cette base. Et vous verrez qu'alors, le développement économique et la prospérité viendront. Mais vous n'avez jamais essayé, vous avez toujours pris sans donner en retour. Les peuples autochtones, depuis 500 ans, sont victimes d'oppression. C'est nous qui avons été les victimes de promesses brisées depuis 500 ans et c'est pourquoi nous nous présentons devant vous aujourd'hui et nous vous disons qu'il faudra chercher des solutions pour en arriver à une coexistence paisible. Il faudra que le pays comprenne ce qui en est de la discrimination, de l'oppression, de la tyrannie et de la domination. Alors, peut-être, nos enfants auront-ils un avenir. Merci.

(11:00 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Mr. Tenasco has told me he is ready to answer questions in French or English.

Mr. Tenasco: Excusez-moi. J'ai dit que je répondrais en anglais, mais mon français n'est pas très bon, et si vous me posez des questions en français, j'essaierai de faire mon possible pour...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Très bien. First question, Mr. Gendron.

Mr. Gendron: Yes. Oui. Je suis désolé, j'ai le même problème que vous. Mon anglais n'est pas très bon.

Mr. Tenasco: O.K. Go ahead in French, I'll answer in English.

Mr. Gendron: Well, thank you for presenting your point of view. I think it's important that your brief present us with your own reality, regardless of the constitutional changes that may come about. A brief like yours reminds us that the territorial rights of the Native peoples have to be taken into account, as must their right to self-determination, the principle of coexistence of Québec and Native peoples. Basically, these claims are normal and sound, regardless of the changes that will be made. I'd just like to recall that we in the Parti québécois, at our national

council last weekend, we passed a resolution to be submitted to our convention to eventually amend that aspect of our political program and, not to take up too much time, we've clearly said that in the constitution of a sovereign Québec, the collective rights of Native nations will be defined and recognized. We think that it's important that this definition of Native rights provide for giving you responsible governments that will have certain specific rights in education, health and other areas. I'll come back to that later.

In your brief, you want Québec to define the kind of relations it would like to establish with the Native peoples, regardless of the constitutional option, but it seems to me you can't just say that because, in any event, if you don't define a different constitutional framework, it's very difficult to be very precise with you to indicate what kind of relations we could have with you. So, here's the question. Do you not believe that, since the constitutional framework will have a major impact on education, for instance, because of federal powers, don't you believe, taking the impact into account, it would be crucial to know a little more about your views on the constitutional framework apart from what we now have, to more specifically consider the kind of discussions and clarifications in the relations that should apply between the Native communities and Québec?

Mr. Tenasco: Votre question est assez longue, mais je vais tenter d'y répondre du mieux possible. Il est vrai que beaucoup de choses ne peuvent être dites dès maintenant et que beaucoup d'étapes doivent d'abord être franchies, mais c'est un peu la même chose lorsque nous regardons, de notre point de vue, ce que le peuple canadien vit actuellement. Les gens ordinaires ne savent pas vraiment la tournure que prendront vos discussions. C'est la même chose. Je crois que c'est de cela que vous parliez? Notre position?

J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer M. Perron le 19 octobre, à son bureau, au sujet des propositions qui étaient faites à ce moment-là. Mais j'ai aussi dit à M. Perron que les Algonquins, tout comme les autres nations, doivent décider eux-mêmes. Les représentants de la nation algonquine n'exécutaient pas la volonté de notre peuple. Et cela doit être très clair, que le comité qui a été mis en place par le Parti québécois, même s'il y a une bonne intention, c'est bien, même s'il y a une bonne intention...

Mr. Gendron: Yes.

M. Tenasco: ...vous savez, cela ne... le représentant qui était là ne me représente pas et il ne représente pas ma bande, ni d'autres bandes algonquines. C'est là une des difficultés, sur le plan des relations, que nous devons corriger. Et

si nous disons que nous voulons mettre quelque chose de l'avant, nous devons avoir une indication sur notre position. Je crois qu'il faut d'abord demander aux dirigeants du gouvernement de définir clairement toutes ces choses. Et s'il doit y avoir une définition précise des droits autochtones ou des privilèges se rattachant à ces droits, la seule chose, c'est qu'il faut qu'il y ait une reconnaissance de la part des autres nations de ce que nous considérons comme nôtre.

Mr. Gendron: Yes.

Mr. Tenasco: Et si je peux ajouter quelque chose, dans toute démarche vers l'autodétermination, une nation doit considérer des choses comme siennes, selon le droit international, et nous le savons tous. Pour devenir une nation, il faut suivre certaines étapes. Et nous voulons régler les incertitudes. Si les dirigeants inscrivent des principes dans la loi, il faudra que ces principes soient respectés, car nous vivons de promesses depuis déjà 500 ans. Il faudrait dire: ceci est la loi, travaillons ensemble pour la compréhension mutuelle de nos peuples. Développons le Québec ensemble. Parce qu'à un moment donné, il nous faudra nous rendre compte de cela.

Mr. Gendron: O.K. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Your time has elapsed again. Mr. Holden.

Mr. Holden: Merci, Monsieur le Président. Il est heureux que les autochtones se présentent devant la Commission. Dans votre mémoire, vous soulignez la situation d'urgence que nous avons vécue durant tout l'été dernier, avec l'échec du lac Meech et la crise d'Oka. Nous sommes donc très heureux que vous soyez ici aujourd'hui. Nous savons que le ministre a promis d'organiser une rencontre et qu'il y aura un forum sur les questions autochtones, avant la fin de mars je crois, qui nous permettra d'entendre non seulement votre bande, mais aussi beaucoup d'autres représentants des peuples autochtones.

Après avoir parlé des problèmes de l'été dernier, vous dites dans votre mémoire à la page 8: «Peut-être que la réalité de la situation globale qui existe actuellement est le vrai principe de la nationalité, qui favorise l'équité et établit l'harmonie pour tous, qui a été éludé dans le processus de la création d'une nation dans notre pays.» D'après ce que vous avez dit devant la Commission, quel que soit le type de gouvernement en place, ce qui vous importe, c'est d'avoir une relation de nation à nation. Ai-je bien compris?

Mr. Tenasco: Pas nécessairement.

Mr. Holden: Alors, pourriez-vous expliquer...

Je veux dire, vous parlez beaucoup de l'harmonie qui doit exister pour que les discussions soient fructueuses. Pourriez-vous nous donner certains... un peu plus de détails, nous dire d'où cette harmonie doit venir et comment elle progressera?

Mr. Tenasco: Elle doit venir de la vérité et de notre honnêteté face au bien-être de nos concitoyens. Nous devons redevenir humains et civilisés. C'est à cela que tout se résume. Le gouvernement va découvrir que pour que nous coexistions et vivions en harmonie, la prospérité du pays doit en venir à dépendre de la bonne volonté des gens, qui désirent travailler ensemble à l'avenir de notre peuple.

Mr. Holden: L'harmonie pourrait être instaurée aussi bien dans un système fédéral que dans un Québec séparé si la volonté existe.

Mr. Tenasco: Si la volonté de produire quelque chose de bon existait, serions-nous tous ici aujourd'hui à envisager la séparation d'une fédération?

Mr. Holden: Très bonne question. Merci.

Mr. Tenasco: L'harmonie doit être instaurée par les dirigeants. Les dirigeants du pays doivent commencer à réfléchir à la façon de réunir les peuples.

Mr. Holden: Merci.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Holden, for your brief question. Mr. Sirros.

Mr. Sirros: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my turn to thank you for coming. You stress, in your brief, the need to develop a harmonious, cooperative and understanding approach, beaucoup de besoins de compréhension, de bonne volonté, de coexistence harmonieuse.

You also say, and you've just said it now: il faut demander aux dirigeants de définir ces choses. À propos des dernières remarques que vous venez de faire, je ne suis pas entièrement d'accord avec vous, et je crois que peut-être de nombreuses personnes ici présentes ne le sont pas non plus, lorsque vous parlez de la nécessité de définir l'«humanité», d'identifier les façons dont nous pouvons comprendre ce que cela signifie d'être des êtres humains, comment nous pouvons tous accepter le fait que nous devons vivre une coexistence paisible.

Mais il y a encore certaines questions très complexes auxquelles il nous faut répondre, puisque nous ne pouvons reculer de 350 ou 450 ans et tout recommencer. Nous devons commencer avec ce que nous avons maintenant. Les questions qu'il faut nous poser, je crois, ont

rapport avec ce que vous avez dit à propos de définir la façon dont nous allons évoluer sur le plan de la reconnaissance du peuple autochtone, de sa capacité de diriger, de gérer, de garantir et de développer son identité dans l'avenir. Il faudra aussi définir comment nous pourrions tous vivre en harmonie, car, vous l'avez mentionné, nous ne pouvons pas revenir en arrière et vous ne pouvez pas partir.

My basic question is this. How do you see the notion of self-government in the context of Native rights? Second, what role... You tell us that, for now, you are neutral in the constitutional debate. Vous nous dites en substance: décidez si vous voulez conserver une fédération ou avoir un Québec séparé ou souverain; nous, ce que nous voulons savoir, c'est ce qui nous arrivera au bout du compte. Et je comprends dans cela que vous estimez que, dans la présente constitution, le gouvernement fédéral a des responsabilités sur les questions autochtones. Quel est votre point de vue au sujet de la possibilité de discuter du transfert de ces responsabilités?

Mr. Tenasco: Vous voulez dire qu'il y a une possibilité?

Mr. Sirros: En effet.

Mr. Tenasco: J'avais l'impression lorsque j'ai rencontré M. Perron qu'il avait dit qu'en vertu de la politique de parti du Parti québécois, si le Québec se séparait, il m'avait dit: Nous allons séparer les nations autochtones du Québec de celles du reste du Canada. Ce sont ses mots exacts, mais cela n'est pas ce que nous voulons, vous voyez, et nous nous sentons menacés. C'est tout comme la menace que ressent une personne qui démolirait une politique gouvernementale d'une façon ou d'une autre. Dans le contexte des nations, ce serait la même chose.

Il est vrai que nous ne pouvons revenir 300 ans en arrière et il est vrai que nous faisons face à certaines réalités qui se sont développées avec le temps. Mais il est vrai aussi que nous n'allons pas vivre l'oppression pendant encore 300 ans. Il y a un moment où nous devons nous asseoir et dire: Ecoutez! Regardez! Regardons la vie. Non seulement la vie des gens, mais la vie de la nature et de tout ce qui se développe.

Vous savez, les hommes et les femmes politiques du pays devraient prendre le temps de se promener et de sentir, de regarder et de toucher la réalité de la vie. Lorsque nous allons souper tous ensemble, peut-être devrions-nous aller à la soupe populaire, au bout de la rue, et sentir ce qui s'y déroule, et nous n'aurions plus à réfléchir à la façon de créer l'harmonie. Mais si nous avons la volonté de nous asseoir et d'essayer de nous comprendre, il n'y aura plus cette oppression continue de notre peuple. Nous devrions avoir la volonté politique de

trouver une direction, car même si nous avons un but, il faut trouver la direction pour atteindre le but. Mais les gens doivent être informés de la direction que vous déciderez de prendre.

Maintenant, si vous voulez me poser une question en français, je ne sais pas si je...

Mr. Sirros: Je vais vous poser une question précise, si vous voulez, en anglais. Nous avons entendu les Montagnais, par exemple à Sept-Îles et à Jonquière, mais ils ne demandent pas un État dans un État. Lorsque vous parlez de nation et d'autonomie, êtes-vous d'accord avec eux pour dire que nous pourrions trouver des modèles qui ne seraient pas nécessairement un État dans un État, et que nous pourrions envisager des modèles de gouvernement autonome?

Mr. Tenasco: Cela dépend de la façon dont on considère la justification des droits et de ce qu'on est prêt à abandonner, non seulement à une autre nation, mais à sa propre nation, je crois. Et je pense que c'est une question que tous se posent. Mais, pour moi, en tant qu'Amérindien, d'une race différente, j'ai donné à mon gouvernement le droit de me gouverner et de gouverner mon peuple, selon mes aspirations. Personne ne peut m'enlever ce droit.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Eh bien, M. Tenasco, merci de votre contribution à la Commission sur l'avenir du Québec.

M. Tenasco: Merci.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): The next speakers are the City of Hull.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:16 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:19 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Welcome to the representatives of the City of Hull. Mr. Michel Légère, Mr. Mayor, if you would introduce your colleagues.

Mr. Légère (Michel): Thank you, Mr. Campeau. With me are Mrs. Gagné, on my right; Mr. Nadon, vice-chairman of the executive committee of the Municipal Council; Mr. Ducharme, Council member.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. You have five minutes, Mr. Mayor, to present a summary of your brief.

City of Hull

Mr. Légère: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. Let me begin by welcoming you to

the City of Hull. Your august assembly will, I am quite certain, help us to establish better relationships between one another. When you come here, you become, for us, among other things, a few of some 4 million people who visit our vast region. And when these visitors look at Hull, they are looking at Québec. That's why we say Hull is a window on Québec. This means, as a result, that we must convey a positive image in all respects, that Hull must make a good impression and, most of all, that it must really exemplify the distinct society.

We are part of the third largest urban centre in Québec. In fact, if we were a single city, we would be the third largest city in Québec. We are at the heart of the fourth largest center in Canada, I mean by that, that we're at the centre of a population of 800 000. Along with Québec City and Montréal, we are the triumvirate that represent Québec in North America, and even on the international scene, mainly because of the number of embassies in Canada's capital.

Hull's situation is very unique in more than one respect. First of all, as a principal economic pole in the Outaouais, Hull is very, if not totally, drawn toward the exterior of Québec by the Ottawa-Carleton urban community, taking advantage of the numerous advantages and privileges that stem from Ottawa's status as the capital of Canada. This economic polarization has been accentuated by the opening of Highway 417, linking Ottawa and Montréal. This Ontario highway encourages competition within the Québec economy to the detriment of the Outaouais. Over time, we have seen the Highway 50 project, linking Montréal to the Outaouais by way of the north shore, pass through all the colours of the political spectrum.

On the social, cultural and business fronts, because of the attraction of Ottawa, the region has a hard time keeping its citizens together. They count, we count, in large part, on Ottawa for recreation, cultural activities, jobs, shopping and even health care. Our ability to create a sense of belonging, of attachment and of exclusive identity within the population, to fully assume our lead role as the French presence in the region is weakening.

Finally, our city is completely subject to the will of the National Capital Commission, which has more say in determining Hull's future than the *gouvernement du Québec*. In fact, it just decided, in Ottawa, that the fire hydrants in front of the Canadian Museum of Civilization should be grey. The result of this situation in Hull and the Québec Outaouais is that there's a slow but sure infiltration of Hull's psyche. This process is spurred on, broadened and accelerated by the invasive presence of the National Capital Commission, so that it has become a silent takeover of this region, turning it into a federal district. For Québec, it is a clear, fundamental

question of the integrity of its territory, as much in terms of the physical territory, as of the decision-making powers related to improving and developing it. For Canada, the Hull situation reflects, through everyday, concrete experiences, on another level, the discomfort of Québec and of Francophones within the Canadian federation. To the open, silent takeover of Hull as a federal region, we answer a resounding "no". Of course, we have to take them for what they are, statements about employment that get tossed about in the Outaouais, in certain cases to frighten us. It would, however, be unrealistic and irresponsible of us to respond offhand that there's nothing in it. To be honest, any major constitutional reorganization in terms of constitutional repatriation of political economic, fiscal, or legislative powers, even if not total, will affect the Outaouais first, and more than any other region in Québec.

This being the case, to give you a complete picture of the situation, I have to tell you that such a repatriation of powers would affect Ottawa-Carleton and the City of Ottawa just as much. They have just as great an interest as Hull and the Outaouais in seeing that none of these things mean jobs are relocated. We hope that the Commission will devote one of its forums to Hull and the Outaouais. We want to remain a French city. We want to remain a part of Québec. We want land currently owned by the National Capital Commission in Québec to be turned over to the *gouvernement du Québec*. We recommend creating a Québec commission confined to the north shore of the Ottawa River, which would be solely responsible for their development and management.

Canada's 11th-hour death-knell has been sounded and heard by Quebecers; politically, there has to be Québec on one side and the rest of Canada on the other, evolving from a common accord, within which there will be a economic cooperative superstructure. Different and distinct from one another, these two political entities will find it mutually and reciprocally advantageous and in their respective best interests to delegate to this superstructure, the joint management of certain economic matters, for example. The latter could be called something like the Canada-Québec Economic Community.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Could you wrap it up, Mr. Lègère?

Mr. Lègère: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The citizens of Hull are perfectly aware that their position will be a major element to consider in determining the political and constitutional future of Québec. Their objective is to participate fully in the process Québec is undertaking and to take advantage, as far as possible, of changes to the Canadian system, in a common front with Quebecers from all other

regions of Québec. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Lévère. First question, Mr. Sébastien Allard, who will be followed by Mr. Gilles Duceppe.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mayor, looking at the last page of your brief, which is very similar to what you just said in closing, where you say that during the time when we're trying to make arrangements with Canada, and I assume that we're talking about a scenario in which Québec becomes sovereign, we'll have to go through a long and presumably delicate period of negotiations and transition, ultimately achieving a situation which will certainly not be the status quo. Therefore, I don't know to what extent you've thought that part of your brief out, but what does a long and delicate period of negotiations mean? Do you mean that it's going to be difficult to negotiate? That's my first question.

If you'll allow me, to go as quickly as possible, my second refers to the last paragraph on page 28, where you talk about... perhaps once again thinking about the possibility of sovereignty... of a superstructure of economic partners. My question is, how do you see such a structure?

Mr. Lévère: For the question about negotiation, negotiation is always difficult, whether you're negotiating a collective agreement, a marriage contract or anything else. At such times, you have to ensure that each of the parties will benefit. That means that on both sides, there will have to be a relationship which will allow us to negotiate with respect, dignity and a determination to exist, so that both parties can ensure a better quality of life for their citizens. That's what people mean when they say... and we agree... that it's always difficult.

Mr. Allard: O.K., fine, it's going to be difficult. In your opinion, does that mean, when you say it's going to be difficult, that Quebecers, during this period, and the people in the Hull region, even more so perhaps, will feel the impact of these difficult negotiations on their quality of life or lifestyle? You're talking about a long period.

Mr. Lévère: Any time there are negotiations, and they're difficult, each party occasionally has to put up with certain elements that are more or less advantageous. But ultimately, the end goal, that's what counts, is to come out ahead. I think that in the current context, it's essential that a message be sent to the rest of Canada to show how serious we are about our determination to exist, and also in our

determination to ensure that our distinct society can exist.

Mr. Allard: Then it doesn't matter if it's hard, you have to get where you want to go, without really knowing where the ultimate destination is?

Mr. Lévère: There's always... You want to try to get me to say if it's good. Negotiations, you know, anyway, at any level whatsoever, even on the interest rate...

Mr. Allard: I'm asking if it's going to be difficult...

Mr. Lévère: If it's difficult?

Mr. Allard: ...for Quebecers.

Mr. Lévère: It's always difficult to come out ahead. But, it's so satisfying when you do! And that's what I think is important, for the whole country to be aware of that.

Mr. Allard: No matter what the cost. O.K., my second question...

Mr. Lévère: No matter what the cost... I think we have to deal with the "no matter what the cost". The result is the cost. And often, the result is very positive. The quality of life, for example, that citizens of Québec benefitted from following collective agreement negotiations... There was a price to pay, and today we're better off.

Mr. Allard: Then what, in your opinion, is a superstructure of economic cooperation?
(11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Lévère: Mr. Chairman, we really didn't want to go into detail, so as not to encroach on the territory of experts who are here to determine just that. We mainly wanted to give you a direction, paths to follow. And, it's in that spirit that we believe it's essential, especially perhaps, in the context of free trade, in the sense that there would be advantages, I'll give you some examples, such as in defense. Therefore, it has to be undertaken within this spirit, where, in effect, you have Québec on one side, with all it represents, and the rest of Canada in terms of what it was vis-à-vis the 11.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Allard. Next speaker, Mr. Gilles Duceppe.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Chairman, your brief is very interesting, very well done. It illustrates how important it is for Québec to adopt special

measures, both in terms of the public service, as well as the need for economic diversification in the region. However, I'd like to hear your comments on a proposal that was put forth this morning in the brief presented by the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais, and I quote: "Should we achieve independence, we can be sure that the free movement of labour and access of Quebecers to jobs on the Ontario side will be called into question by the Ottawa business community." I would like to hear your comments on that. I'd also like to ask you if we wouldn't be wise to look at the Windsor-Detroit example, two cities in two countries where there is, I think, a major exchange of labour every day.

Mr. Légère: In that sense, there are concrete examples and, if you'll allow me, I'll give you one. In the beginning, Hull often dealt with the Ottawa tourism and convention bureau. And what we were hoping was that it would represent us fairly in all its actions so that we could attract conventions here, to the City of Hull. And one did come, one funded by the Ontario government, and we found out afterward that there were efforts behind the scenes to revoke the funding because it was being held here, in Hull. Faced with all that, we decided to create our own tourism and convention bureau. And the result is that, today, our industries are growing, the whole hotel industry and food services industry, while elsewhere, even in Ottawa, there has been a drop. We looked after our own affairs. And we also noticed that, compared to the Ottawa-Hull region, almost 60% of Canadians visiting the region are from Québec. And the industry, both the business side and the Ontario side, want to see this continue.

In terms of agreements, where there's a definite will, and we can see that if there is... We looked at the Windsor-Detroit example a bit... and we noticed that there's a reciprocal taxation agreement between Canada and the United States. Under that agreement, dating back to the 1940s, which is quite some time ago, a Canadian citizen working in the United States, in Detroit, pays his taxes to the United States; an American citizen working in Canada, pays his taxes in Canada. There is no transfer of funds. I have a copy of the agreement here and I can provide it to the members of the Commission. But this shows that when there are mutual economic advantages, we are capable of reaching an agreement. The other element I feel is very important is that when we look at the whole Windsor-Toronto-Hull-Montréal corridor, we see a huge triangle, a huge market. And the market is interdependent, each part on the other parts, and with free trade with the United States on its way, our market here, in this region, including the other side, is worth \$75 million. Therefore, when it happens, in terms of business,

there would be real advantages, we would be able to benefit from certain things.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): O.K. Mrs. Côté.

Mrs. Côté: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Personally, I think your message is quite clear. It is that constitutional revision is necessary and, no matter what option is chosen, we must give more thought to the Outaouais' position because of the impact, you focussed on employment, but in your brief you also talked about a number of fields, transportation, trade, etc. However, there's an element that no group has yet mentioned and which is clear from your brief, and it's that no matter what constitutional option is chosen, communities belonging to the French fact are currently threatened, as is cultural identity, and you also brought up a number of ideas about language. Have you thought about or pondered the steps to be taken, both for the Outaouais and for Québec, should we achieve either... It doesn't matter which option... renewed federalism or sovereignty?

Mr. Légère: Yes, Mrs. Côté. To open, I just want to say that the City of Hull and the Québec Outaouais in general are of major importance. For example, I was going to tell you that when the announcement about the expansion of the Museum of Civilization was made, they didn't say Hull, they didn't say Québec, they said expanding in Ottawa. In terms of property and determination to exist, this is a major point. And if we're not tied to the rest of Québec again, we will become tied to Ottawa, and will, perhaps, become, in terms of the Francophone community and culture, what you find by way of Francophones outside Québec. I think that economic elements are important. The Highway 50 issue is extremely important. The question of repatriating health care, which must occur here, in our region, is essential to really develop our identity, sense of belonging and determination to exist and to end our dependency.

The more we have that, the prouder we will be to represent all regions of Québec. Because of the 4 million visitors who come here, you know, the economic impact is real, but also in terms of recognizing a way of life, a determination which exists in all the regions, one of the areas where it has to manifest itself is here. And the City of Hull can't do it alone. That's a given, the City of Hull cannot do it alone. It must work in conjunction with its government, which is the gouvernement du Québec, if not, in the long term, we will be forced to work with the Government of Ontario. And that wouldn't be good for Québec, nor would it be a good thing for Canada.

Mrs. Côté: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Madam. Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor, Madam, Councillors. First, thank you for appearing before us today. It is a great pleasure for all of us to be here in the Outaouais, to be in Hull, my home town, which I love. You have presented an interesting, articulate, well-prepared brief. It's not a brief prepared by the mayor, this brief is from the whole council, if I understood, from all of you.

Mr. Légère: Unanimously approved by the council, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission.

Mr. Rémillard: Unanimously approved by the members of the council. This brief is probably one of the most important we have received in the sense that we know that any major change in the constitutional links Québec has with the rest of Canada could have a major economic backlash in the region, in particular for the City of Hull. You mentioned yourself in your report: 41 000 people who, directly, or indirectly, based on whether they work for the federal government or for private industry, could be affected. Sovereignty and concentration of power on the Grand-Allée at the same time, which is what people are asking for, I think it's easy enough to see how that would snuff out the region's economy. For the government, that's a priority, for us... First of all, we have to give top priority to economic development in Québec and, in particular, when we approach major changes to the constitution, certainly to pay particular attention to regions such as yours which could be affected directly. This is simply being realistic.

To say that all public servants working for the federal government will work for Québec as public servants is being unrealistic, and everyone would agree. Also to say that economic development of the region has not, perhaps, gone far enough up to now, relying on the federal government's economic administrative driving force, and you're right, you stress it in your brief. You talk about the work of the NCC, about your problems, you talk, in fact, about all the economic relationships that the region has with Ottawa, but your conclusion is very clear. It appears, as you stated so clearly earlier on, Mr. Mayor, on page 28 among others, when you said Québec on one side and the rest of Canada on the other, evolving from a superstructure of economic partners. How do you envision this superstructure? To have reached such a conclusion, you have certainly considered the many economic consequences for your region.

Mr. Légère: In terms of employment, based on your question, Mr. Rémillard, I would have to point out that in terms of the federal public service, currently, all sorts of things are being called into question. Today, there was an announcement that \$100 million would be cut from the CBC. There's a major impact. Strictly in terms of our municipality, we have, for example, Jacques-Cartier Park, which is managed by the National Capital Commission, and they decided not to pay taxes to the municipality anymore or to give grants in lieu of taxes to the municipality. That means that, effectively, there are elements in terms of jobs, in terms of taxes, in terms of our ability to respond to our needs, in terms of a presence which is not as stable as we were led to expect. Which means that society is evolving in our region in terms of its economic presence.

In talking about a superstructure, we wanted to give direction, a path to follow. As for knowing how it would be organized, should we be like the mouvement Desjardins, one man, one vote, that is, as many Québec representatives as Canadian representatives? Maybe yes, maybe no. We would have to examine it based on individual interests. If we're talking, for example, about the Bank of Canada, we could perhaps have equal representation by both parties. We don't have a solution. What we're saying is that this is a direction. It needs to be expanded upon by experts, perhaps, and it is very clear for us that the situation we have experienced up to now has become intolerable for Québec, and in terms of the relationship with the citizens of Hull, where such a large proportion of our territory is controlled by the National Capital Commission, and which, at present, in certain cases, does not act like a good corporate citizen, changes are necessary to the extent that we are able to implement them.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fifteen seconds.

Mr. Rémillard: Yes, Mr. Mayor, I know that you've travelled quite a bit, sometimes by bicycle...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rémillard: ...other times taking other means of transportation, I would also like to congratulate you. You have probably been to Belgium and you are using that a bit, you're taking the terms of community. You know that in Belgium, in Belgian federalism, there's a Walloon community, a Flemish community and a Brussels community, or Brussels itself. Did that inspire you somewhat when you were writing your brief?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Mayor, answer yes or no.

Mr. Légère: A little.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Jacques Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Just a little. Mr. Chairman, I too would like to thank the City of Hull, Mr. Mayor, in particular for the excellent quality of the brief. I think that I have to agree with the Minister, it is extremely articulate and well-thought-out, and you also give, especially, a completely remarkable description of your situation which I find disquieting, in terms of Québec obviously, and in terms of Québec's culture and language. You're talking about a whole string of constraints, about a strongly eroded French fact, about the delicate situation of French, which has become a language of translation, about the power of the cultural-economic driving force of Ottawa-Carleton, about the omnipresent arrogance and lack of respect of the National Capital Commission, about slow but sure infiltration, about the invasive presence of the Commission and you end with a reminder about Mr. Séguin's goat, who, as you know didn't last the night. It was eaten by the big, bad wolf.

Basically then, you're hoping the goat will be changed into a powerful bull, capable of fending off the wolf. This is a very disquieting description. When you think it all out, you arrive, if I'm not mistaken, at a very clear conclusion. I will ask my question about the community soon. What is absolutely and completely necessary for Hull and the surrounding area, is for the situation to change radically and rapidly. Did I understand correctly?

Mr. Légère: Yes. In effect, the situation must change. This means that Québec will have to intervene, with us, at all levels, at all times, on the cultural level, on the economic level and on the social level. There are concrete measures that can be adopted, whether in terms of health, the highway, or economic development, and that should be seen in terms of a partnership to ensure, fairly, that the few acres of snow Voltaire talked about don't apply to the Outaouais.

Mr. Brassard: Secondly, in terms of the community, it wasn't to Belgium... Yes.

Mr. Légère: Excuse me?

Mr. Brassard: I think there was a lady who wished, perhaps...
(11:45 a.m.)

Mrs. Gagné (Denise): I asked if, when someone asks a particular person a question, can others add something.

Mr. Brassard: Yes, of course. Go ahead!

Mrs. Gagné: Mr. Nadon told me no. I didn't listen to him. As usual, someone set me straight. Like Québec itself, we often forget about the Outaouais. I tell you, we want to be a part of Québec. We are French, Quebecers and I'll tell you how we in the Outaouais feel, here, in our home. We feel a little abandoned by our own family, our parents. It's like when you're a parent and you don't want to take care of your children, you put them in a foster home, and personally, I feel like we've been in a foster home for a very long time, the home of the federal government. What we want is to be part of Québec, to belong completely...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm sorry. Listen, you can...

Mrs. Gagné: ...that's why I want to...

Mr. Brassard: You've done a good job of adding to the question.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Except that I must ask, Madam that you tell your friends not to applaud.

Mrs. Gagné: Of course! Don't applaud.

Mr. Brassard: In terms of community, Mr. Mayor, personally, I wasn't thinking of Belgium! Not at all! Because Belgium is a federation. What I was thinking of was the White Paper of 1980 and of Mr. Lévesque's option, which was a community of equals for equals, of Québec and of Canada, on the economic level, where there would be two entities that are not merely distinct, but also sovereign, who would agree under treaty to create an economic community, with community institutions charged with managing those issues and elements not dealt with in the treaty.

Am I mistaken in thinking that when you speak of a Canada-Québec community in terms of the economy, that Canada and Québec, within this community, are not only two distinct entities, but two sovereign entities?

Mr. Légère: I think, considering the rejection of the distinct society, the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord, based on interpretations and speeches made by representatives of Manitoba and Newfoundland, these groups are going to have to review their positions to deal with a situation where, in fact, negotiations

between the two distinct partners wishing to participate fully will have to occur, and occur in a spirit of equality.

Mr. Brassard: But...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Sir, your time is up.

Mr. Brassard: ...you understand that equality can only be achieved on the basis of the sovereignty of debates. It's important.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Nadon, Mrs. Gagné, Mr. Ducharme, Mr. Mayor Légère. Thank you for responding so well to questions from the members and for having helped advance the work of this Commission. No applause, please!

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:50 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:52 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now hear the group from the Secrétariat régional de la concertation de l'Outaouais. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, if you'd like to take your seats. Welcome, Mr. Ménard. If you'll introduce your colleagues.

Mr. Ménard (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my far right, Luc Rajotte, treasurer of our organization; to my immediate right, Nicole Patry, director general of the Outaouais cultural council and a member of our administrative council, and to my left, Gilles Gagné, director general of the organization.

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

Secrétariat régional de la concertation de l'Outaouais

Mr. Ménard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Outaouais has always had a more intense and vivid experience of the conflicts and difficulties generated by the current political system. That's mainly due to the preponderant federal presence, the feeling of the gouvernement du Québec's lukewarm interest in the region and the lack of control over its economic and social development. Because of this lack of control, there are two socioeconomic realities here virtually independent of each other. First, a minority industrial structure that includes the rural, forest and agri-food. Second, a dominant service structure, strictly urban and dependent on the federal public service.

There are more than 41 000 residents who work for the federal government or the private

sector in Ontario, while almost 30% of the area of the City of Hull or 15% of the land of the Communauté régionale de l'Outaouais is owned by the federal government. These figures show the dependence and vulnerability of the Outaouais economic base compared to the Ontario side of the Canadian capital.

Any political or constitutional change that seeks greater sovereignty for Québec will have a significant impact on the development of the region. The Outaouais feels a certain apprehension in rejecting the status quo and aligning itself with other speakers and the rest of Québec to demand a new distribution of powers.

The essential fields that must be placed under Québec's exclusive jurisdiction are, in our view, education, research and development, labour, manpower, unemployment insurance, occupational training, immigration, culture, communications, health and social services, municipal affairs, regional development, natural resources and transport.

A new constitutional order assumes the elimination of the federal government's residual power and spending power, that currently enable it to act in areas that are not within its exclusive jurisdiction. In those areas that remain under exclusive federal jurisdiction, Québec must have a power of inspection over all federal intervention in Québec, even if such intervention falls under exclusive federal jurisdiction.

In terms of communications and culture, cultural integrity requires control by the gouvernement du Québec over the various areas related to the communications sector, in particular the electronic media that are powerful vehicles for transmitting culture and its development. Moreover, a simple transfer of power from the federal government to Québec will not solve the issue of regional development. The Québec of tomorrow will have to redefine the place and role of the regions, particularly of the Outaouais.

That's why, in the best interests of the Outaouais and its population, we recommend that Québec guarantee the territorial integrity of the Outaouais, that Québec ensure the region's economic and social stability through various measures, that Québec redefine the role and place of the regions in terms of regional development to provide the Outaouais, among others, with some control over the directions, means and activities likely to produce integrated sustainable development in the region, and that Québec secure the cultural autonomy of the region by providing it with the means to develop itself.

The importance of the Outaouais' strategic situation does not need to be demonstrated. In addition to its varied physical resources, history and geography have brought together in our

region a reservoir of highly skilled human resources, able to develop leading technologies linked to the software, electronics and telecommunications sectors, and to take on the duties required by public administration.

The Outaouais wants to build its future on its gains. So a Québec City-Outaouais partnership must be developed right away for the joint preparation of a strategy and the implementation of specific means to enable our region to better adapt to the changes ahead.

Our brief has concentrated on the essentials and reflects a broad consensus. Other aspects tied to the composition of the population of the Outaouais, the rural economy, and regionalization, must be studied in detail. There is much at stake. We propose that a study committee, if not a departmental committee with a significant regional presence, be set up to study the question of the Outaouais in greater depth and especially the following items: territorial integrity, integration of federal employees into Québec's public service by keeping jobs in newly repatriated sectors in the region, transfer of jobs to the Outaouais as part of a decentralization policy, creation and maintenance of jobs tied to eventual common institutions, the role and place of regions in various areas, particularly that of regional development, and, finally, the region's cultural autonomy. In this way, the Government and the population will gain the understanding needed to make decisions in the best interests of Québec and the Outaouais. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Ménard. The first speaker is Mr. Lafrenière, who is sitting in for Mr. Ryan.

Mr. Lafrenière: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I want to congratulate you on the quality of the brief you have presented this morning to the Commission and to thank you for your presence this morning. I didn't doubt, since I sat on the Comité de concertation for about three, three and a half years, that you would present something perfectly appropriate.

Mr. Ménard, on page 12 of your brief, you list the powers that should be repatriated to Québec, to be exercised exclusively by Québec. I imagine that in the "natural resources" section, you're speaking in the broad sense? That also includes "exports"?
(12:00 noon)

Mr. Ménard: In every sense of the word, yes.

Mr. Lafrenière: I'd also like you to explain to me what you mean in this statement: "Québec must have the power of inspection over all federal intervention in Québec, even if such intervention falls under exclusive federal jurisdiction." If the area of jurisdiction is

exclusive, how can you include a right to inspect for Québec in the Constitution?

Mr. Ménard: Perhaps through another aspect of the Constitution, Mr. Lafrenière. But I'll give you a very, very specific example of what I mean. Take air transport for instance. You might very well think that air transport would be an exclusively federal area that would be kept in place. On the other hand, though, an airport, an airport like Mirabel, has a sizeable structuring effect on a region. A seaport, for instance, the presence of a seaport, another example, in terms of maritime transport, again has a very structuring influence at the regional level. So, in choosing the location, in choosing the various items associated with it, at that point, Québec having exclusive jurisdiction in terms of regional development, it seems logical to us to subordinate to that the spending power of a federal government that might exist. And it's exactly in that sense that we want to do it. And, via a clause in the Constitution, I think we can provide for a mechanism that would grant Québec this right of inspection on the spending power.

Mr. Lafrenière: The third question deals with the place of the regions. On page 15 of your brief, could you clarify what the operating procedures are, the mechanisms to be set up to harmonize relations between Québec and the regions and also for interregional relations?

Mr. Ménard: There are many possible mechanisms. I don't want to... particularly since he's not here at the moment... I don't want to get into a debate with Mr. Rémillard. But one possibility would be to set up regional governments. And I don't think that should make anyone nervous. There are countries in the world that are unitary countries, not federations and that have a regional government structure. There's also the whole reexamination of transfer of jurisdiction to the municipal level. There are the board mechanisms like your colleague will very likely be announcing Friday, your colleague Marc-Yvan Côté. Boards could be set up.

So, there isn't a single model, there isn't a typical model that we would necessarily try to sketch out. By discussing, by seeing which level can do the best job as effectively as possible, I think we can eventually set up a structure that will in fact make room for the regions, in their development. Everyone agrees now, you know, that development in the regions must be increasingly endogenous. It must be sourced in the region itself. But to be sourced in the region itself, the region has to have the tools. Some of those tools must be decision-making tools and not just tools that, through a minister's discretion, are sporadically applied to a region. A region's ability to take charge of itself has to be

truly institutionalized.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Lafrenière. We now move on to Mrs. Pauline Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome. I in turn want to greet the people living in the Outaouais. I spent some time here. I've previously acted on behalf of the region, and I'll admit I still have the urge to do so.

Having said that, let's begin with something you say in your brief and which, from my point of view, may cause some confusion, when we talk about concepts and the realities those concepts encompass. On page 17, you say that "in a more sovereign Québec, the role and place of the regions must be redefined." I'd like to return to this "more sovereign" and take up a definition given by Jacques-Yvan Morin, some weeks ago, at a symposium on the issues concerning sovereignty.

Very briefly, this is what he said: "A sovereign State is a State that freely determines, by itself, the extent of the powers it wants to exercise or not exercise, or confer to another. But it decides. There is no constitution or constituting body over it saying: This province can do this, but not that. A member State of a federation, for instance, a Canadian province, is not a sovereign State. It is simply autonomous."

Basically, then, when I reread your brief in that light, what you're asking is for much more autonomy for Québec. And for all practical purposes, it's full autonomy, and that's why you feel the need, probably, I'm assuming, to use the term "sovereign", even if it isn't appropriate to the issue of autonomy.

Now let's come back to how we're going to do that.

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

Mrs. Marois: Don't worry, Mr. Chairman, I'm getting there. The question of powers. Since, for all practical purposes, you claim almost all powers, particularly in full employment, and if we agree on what we're talking about, and we're talking about fiscal policy, etc., how do you think it would be possible to negotiate that under the current context? And with whom will we negotiate? With 11 provinces? With one government? What tools will we use to achieve these results?

Mr. Ménard: To answer a question like that, Mrs. Marois, I can only reply on my own behalf, not on behalf of my organization, because it's clear that regional development organizations do not have the authority and do not pretend to have that kind of answer. As for me, it's clear that negotiation between Québec and Ottawa doesn't mean negotiating among 11, but among 2.

But that's a very personal opinion, and the organization I represent didn't really have the authority to answer that kind of question. Neither do I, for that matter.

Mrs. Marois: Did you ask yourself whether you would want Québec to seek a mandate, for instance, to negotiate? At present, there's a lot of talk about the possibility of a referendum. Because I agree that your organization does not have the authority to define the fine technical points of going about it, but your organization is aware that when it proposes a direction, it has to assess, in quotation marks, the feasibility of that option. Did you discuss the possibility of a referendum? Did you debate that?

Mr. Ménard: No, we did not discuss the process, absolutely not. We discussed the basic issue, not the process.

Mrs. Marois: Looking at the members of your organization, do you have the impression, because you identified a number of them in an appendix? I have the impression that a certain number may in fact favour proposing a referendum. Do you intend to consult them on that question?

Mr. Ménard: Yes, if need be, but my impression is that, as a backdrop, for us, it was fundamental that the population of Québec be consulted on its future. So, that's why the discussion was not very long, it was really...

Mrs. Marois: You thought it goes without saying?

Mr. Ménard: We feel it certainly goes without saying, yes.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Mr. Claude Bélard, who will be followed by Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Bélard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if you'll give me a little more detailed answer than you gave Mrs. Marois, because my question is in the same vein. True, many associations come here and tend to say to us: Listen, the constitutional issue is your business. It's true that it's perhaps the business of politicians, but starting from this end of the table, we're people like you, people from the community, and we're here because of a special law, because the government thought it was a good idea, the National Assembly thought it was a good idea to consult people from the community.

I'm like you, and I have a recommendation to make. On page 12, you tell us: "The essential

fields that must be placed under Québec's exclusive jurisdiction..." and you mention education, culture, health, municipal affairs. I found that when I read the history of Canada, 1867, because that was part of the Constitution. You're telling us, even if it's in the Canadian Constitution, it has to be repatriated. And you say: To do so, we abolish the federal spending power. But how do you do that? Sit down with the federal government and say: Would you like to give up your spending power? How do you do that? What kind of recommendation can I make?

Mr. Ménard: That's a really troublesome question, Mr. Béland and I realize...

Mr. Béland: The answer is troublesome. The question is easy!

Mr. Ménard: Yes! Yes, it's like indiscrete questions, it's the answers. There again, we can't get into a discussion of the process, at this time. What we want in Québec has to be defined first. Before getting into a lengthy discussion, saying with whom we'll negotiate, how we'll negotiate, what... Let's first define the framework for negotiation. And I think that's already, that's already...

Mr. Béland: That, you say very well, the framework for negotiation. You want...

Mr. Ménard: Yes, but we say, but it's not obvious that that's necessarily how it will be.

Mr. Béland: But you take it for granted that they say, that you're right. What happens after that?

Mr. Ménard: As far as we're concerned, you have, you have to put it in place. Regardless of what it is.

Mr. Laberge: ...

Mr. Ménard: I'd be too afraid at a lockout, Mr. Laberge.

But, for us, the basis of any negotiation is an affirmation of will at the outset. Then, if we can clearly affirm a will and then a consensus in Québec, I think the negotiation will go smoothly after that. I think our biggest job is to affirm our choices, first in Québec. The rest, as far as I'm concerned, is process. Then, perhaps unlike many others, when we have a clear, definite and specific affirmation of what Québec wants for its future, then I think the process will become secondary at that point.

Mr. Béland: Yes, but an affirmation by the Commission or an affirmation by the people?

Mr. Ménard: An opinion by the Commission,

but very definitely an affirmation by the people.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You have the floor, Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ménard, I congratulate you on how you've answered and the level of answers you've given the Commission. There's a lot of pressure, as you see, from our colleague Béland, and there's a lot of pressure on each of us, we have it with Mr. Laberge, and all that. We've got pressure and when there isn't pressure, there's self-deception. Having said that, I thank you very much. Since this morning, we have figures, we have economic data and I think you're the one who could give us the more human dimension of the changes. It seems to me that each individual, regardless of the change, experiences a human reality.
(12:15 p.m.)

And I'd like to hear you for a while. On page 16 of your brief, is that a note in this sense, when you say that the Outaouais feels a certain apprehension in rejecting the status quo? Necessarily the status quo has been rejected for a long time and federalism, with all its qualifications, doesn't exist much, but a dynamic relation is possible since that's what a relation is and a dynamic federation as well. So you, with "a certain apprehension", and, on page 17, you propose setting up a study committee or a departmental committee that could put some distance between the approaches that, in any event, have to be undertaken and by the very fact would bring an answer of some sort, a less threatening answer for individuals and groups. Is that what you mean by your expression "a certain apprehension"?

Mr. Ménard: Yes, but to finish, Mr. Hogue, I'd like to make a fundamental distinction. The question of jobs that we've been talking about since this morning, and which we'll probably talk about all afternoon as well, is not a constitutional issue. It's a question of regional development and I think it's important to make that distinction. We've come to you with a message of regional development when we say: There are 26 000 federal jobs, and 15 000 others that are related. It's as if another region told you... If, in one of the proposals, we had, I don't know what but which would threaten the economic base of another region of Québec. That's the message. We haven't come... And above all, we don't want to give all of Québec the impression that we're raising bugaboos and engaging in intellectual terrorism.

Mr. Hogue: Good, that's what...

Mr. Ménard: For us, the job question is

really a question of regional development. And it's in that sense that we used the term "apprehension" and it's in that sense that we say that a commission to examine, or a departmental group that would specifically examine the issue of the Outaouais would look at issues of feasibility, not constitutional issues but issues of feasibility in relation to the maintenance of those jobs, in relation to the maintenance of our regional economic base in the Québec Outaouais.

Mr. Hogue: So, regardless of the decisions of Francophones, of Quebecers and citizens of Québec and of French Canadians, regardless of that decision, in a dynamic federation as in any other model, it's not possible to completely eliminate what could be called duplications, that is, areas of jurisdiction that are clearly in one field rather than in another, since we're in the administration and the application?

Mr. Ménard: Well, I don't entirely agree with you. I think one of the problems we have today is that we've got a Constitution that was written a very long time ago...

Mr. Hogue: Oh no, I'm not talking about that. That's outmoded.

Mr. Ménard: Yes, yes, but I mean, I think that when we...

Mr. Hogue: My...

Mr. Ménard: ...rewrite it...

Mr. Hogue: ...question was on the exchange. Regardless of the level, if there are at least two levels, there are necessarily grey areas...

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

Mr. Hogue: ...where means can be developed rather than principles.

Mr. Ménard: Well...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Ménard, a quick answer.

Mr. Ménard: Yes, well, if it's outmoded, I find it difficult to believe that we can't amend it...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Ménard: ...but I think that, if it's rewritten in a modern way, it should be possible, then, to turn it into a mechanism that reflects reality better than these old duplications we've got.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Turgeon, if you...

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Briefly, I don't think you should see questions from members of the Commission as pressure, at least as undue pressure. Obviously, some find it's in their interest to let things dangle, making things nebulous and confused. But there are others, on the contrary, who simply want answers to a clear question, a matter of seeing whether, at heart, we're a short-lived community.

Having said that, the City of Hull, a few moments ago, told us that despite everything Ottawa and the federal government may mean for the city, there's an important point, in spite of that, there's no question of bartering what we are. You say: Something new is needed if we want to protect Québec's cultural integrity. Briefly, do you say the same thing? Do you say that there is something that comes before the sacrosanct economic aspect?

Mr. Ménard: Yes, Mr. Turgeon, we see ourselves as part of Québec and as part of the development of all of Québec.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Turgeon, for your brief question. So, thank you, everyone, for taking the trouble to come and work, to help us in our work on this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. Thank you, Mr. Rajotte, Mr. Ménard, Mr. Gagné and Mrs. Patry. Please hold your applause.

Before welcoming the next guest, I'm told that each time a new speaker arrives, the audience changes so the new arrivals aren't aware of our instructions on applause. So, I will repeat that applause is not allowed here.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Order, please! We continue with our work. We now welcome Mr. Gilles Rocheleau for half an hour. Mr. Rocheleau, you have five minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Gilles Rocheleau

Mr. Rocheleau (Gilles): Thank you, Messrs. Co-Chairmen. Thank you also my ex-colleagues of the National Assembly and members of this Commission for having agreed to hear me. Suffice it to say that I've travelled a rather strange route to date, from municipal councillor to the mayor of Hull, to Opposition member in Québec City, to Minister of Supply and Services... and now fate has taken me to Ottawa.

In Ottawa, I realized, like all Quebecers, that we are at a crossroads because, as far as

I'm concerned, Mr. Chairman, the Meech Lake Accord was unconditional in that it allowed us to humbly enter the fold of the Canadian federation, from which we had been excluded since the unilateral repatriation of 1982. You will remember Meech Lake, agreed to on June 3, 1987. At the time, I was in the Québec Cabinet. I was among those who approved the Meech Lake Accord and I was among those who, over the past two years, that is, up to June 23, defended the Meech Lake Accord in Ottawa.

I was able to make this observation, Mr. Chairman, because, as I said, more than 75% of my own caucus opposed Meech Lake. The election of the new leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Chrétien, dealt the death blow on June 23 to any possible agreement with English Canada.

As you know, sovereignty is a last-resort choice for ensuring our economic, cultural, tourism and social development. And the grocery list seems to grow longer as we hear talk of any form of decentralization. This, too, worries me, Mr. Chairman, because when we talk significant decentralization, we are talking a considerable drop in the number of public servants in the national capital. When we talk sovereignty, we are talking about repatriating not only these public servants but also, Mr. Chairman — and this is a very important element as was discussed last week — health care representing some \$65 million annually to care for our Outaouais citizens. We lack services here in the Outaouais. It costs us three times as much for health care on the Ontario side as it does on the Québec Outaouais side. Repatriating all our public servants, all these driving elements, would allow the Outaouais to enjoy significant development.

I think that if we, in the Outaouais, are currently the "problem" in Québec, we want to be part of the solution. We don't want to be at the tail end of decisions taken elsewhere; the Québec Outaouais is too important within Québec, especially a sovereign Québec, to get only crumbs.

And, Mr. Chairman, this is my role in Ottawa as a Member of the Bloc québécois, who can say what he wants because I am no longer bound into a common front that forces us to shut up or applaud when appropriate.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman... I will have to answer questions soon and I hope, as it is lunch time and you are surely hungry, that I will not be your meal...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rocheleau: ...but that I'll be able to answer your questions.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to tell you that I feel it very important that there be a referendum. I don't want to echo all those who have spoken but I would like there to be a free vote in the National Assembly. Free in the sense

that our MNAs, the elected members from all of Québec's counties, could vote according to the dictates of their conscience, their responsibilities, gut feelings and innermost desires. I remember, Mr. Chairman, that recently in Ottawa we had to vote on a bill, a piece of draft legislation on abortion. That was a free vote. However, the ministers had to vote on the bill tabled in the House of Commons.

Having been a Member of the National Assembly, the Cabinet and now finding myself in Ottawa, I can tell you that fate has brought me to Ottawa to see for myself that Québec must become sovereign. At the same time, I feel that this is the business of all Quebecers and I hope that, as soon as possible, once you have made your recommendations, the National Assembly will decide to finally involve the entire populace in this affair. You know, Mr. Chairman, in politics, we are unfortunately often manipulated by politicians. I am one; I hate manipulation and I hope that the people will be able to participate in this decision that will have to be taken on the future of Québec. I will no doubt have the opportunity to speak about public servants since this is an important element unique in Québec and perhaps unique in Canada with regard to the intensity with which we'll discuss them here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Rocheleau. First question, Mr. Jacques Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rocheleau, thank you very much for having agreed to testify before this Commission. Your testimony is, in my opinion, crucial. It's not because we're hungry that I say it's nourishment, but it's true. And I don't say that to flatter you because we're now somewhat of the same mind whereas we haven't always been in the past. I say this because your testimony is important due to your experience... what you have experienced... your personal experience. At the time of the 1980 Referendum, you were pro "no". So, we weren't on the same side because, I presume, not only do I presume, I think, that you were convinced... that you had faith in Canada 10 years ago. You defended the Meech Lake Accord both when you were a Member of the National Assembly and when you went to the House of Commons. And today, you have come to give what I think is very important testimony in favour of Québec sovereignty.

How did you arrive at the conclusion that the federal system is fundamentally incapable of being reformed or renewed, that it cannot be substantially changed? How did you arrive at this conclusion?

(12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Rocheleau: Thank you, Mr. Brassard. I should preface my remarks, Mr. Chairman, by

should preface my remarks, Mr. Chairman, by saying that the failure of the Meech Lake Accord... All in all, it was so little. It did not constitute constitutional talks. It was designed to allow Québec to reenter the Constitution within certain very important parameters. But you know, the Canadian Constitution always depends on English Canada, on the willingness of English Canada to agree or not to agree. And we will always be alone at the constitutional table against nine other provinces. And in Ottawa, I was able to see this, Mr. Chairman, because within my own caucus, as I told you earlier... and that's where I found these people somewhat dishonest... When they voted for the Meech Lake Accord in June 1987, English Canada was already against Meech Lake. And they used two provinces, Newfoundland, that is, Clyde Wells, a Liberal who had just been voted in and who answered to Trudeau, Chrétien, Lalonde and co., and Manitoba, where, for all intents and purposes, a sort of diversion was used to stall the Manitoba Legislative Assembly so that the Meech Lake Accord would not pass.

And what I find a bit unfortunate is that a Native man was used for these purposes, whereas I feel that here in Québec, our minorities have always been better off than outside Québec. And, Mr. Brassard, I must say that I personally no longer have faith. Not at all, and that's why I say we must take the sovereignty route. We must take the sovereignty route because we need to be free to stand as equals with English Canada, something that will never happen if we don't opt for sovereignty from the beginning. I'm not saying we shouldn't enter into agreements later. But rather than us going to see them, they should come to us "for a change". I feel this is very important.

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Rocheleau, you also state in your brief, and this is an element that cannot be overemphasized, and I'd like to hear your comments on it, you say that Québec is preventing English Canada from endowing itself with the country it wants. In the final analysis, we are preventing Canada, English Canada, from creating a Canada in its image, resembling it. In becoming sovereign, it could build Canada in its image to resemble it. I think it's important to point this out.

Mr. Rocheleau: Listen. I agreed to play the role I now play and I say what I think because I no longer have to show a common front with the political party to which I belonged in Ottawa. And I have noticed that English Canada could do much better if it didn't constantly have to think about what the Francophones in Québec want. I don't believe that today any climate of confidence exists between English Canada and Francophone Québec. It's a situation of constant distrust. We cannot build the economy or a

country on distrust. I have said, and I repeat, that for the good of English Canada and for the well-being of the Québec of tomorrow, we must begin with sovereignty.

Although we have free trade with the United States, we continue to run into tariff barriers with the English provinces. I find it absolutely ludicrous and ridiculous that we cannot bring alcohol from the Québec Outaouais side while we can practically do what we want with the U.S. under free trade.

This is nonsensical, Mr. Chairman, and once again today I reaffirm that sovereignty, as I see it after what I have seen, is not a disease. I think it is probably more of a cure for the problems we are currently experiencing.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. The next speaker, Mr. Mark Assad, who is sitting in for Mr. André Ouellet.

Mr. Assad: Mr. Rocheleau, we could indeed say that the route you have come by is interesting to say the least, and on your road to Damascus... You have touched on many items. What makes you think this distrust exists and that it ruins chances for progress on both sides, on the English Canadian side and the Francophone side? But let's stick to the point you are presenting. We both know that for years now the many public servants working for the federal government and the many businesses whose success depends on it directly or indirectly have been worried, to put it mildly, and are, if you will, hostages in this constitutional conflict. This is a manner of speaking.

As a Member for Hull who represents a great many of these very worried people, how could you, Mr. Rocheleau, allay their fears should the National Assembly decree Québec sovereignty?

Mr. Rocheleau: Thank you, Mr. Assad. I would have liked us to take the road to Damascus together. Who knows, maybe someday? But, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): For the sake of your members, I am prepared to grant you absolution.

Mr. Rocheleau: They aren't my members, it's the community... So, Mr. Assad, this is a very important question and... he's a witness... You are also a Member of the House of Commons; you represent one of the largest counties of the Québec Outaouais. We defend our public servants and it's our role today to come before this Commission to defend the 25 000 jobs that the Outaouais represents in terms of potential assets for a sovereign Québec. I see it as an exhilarating challenge to have among us

structures and employees who are skilled in administering a country that already exists, bilingual employees, employees that can be used to repatriate virtually all the bodies that will have to be created in a sovereign Québec.

And I would like to add in passing, Mr. Assad, you who have also defended Transport Canada: Do you recall how we were taken in the Québec Outaouais in the Transport Canada affair? Surely you recall, Mr. Beaudry? Unfortunately, I don't see him. Mr. Beaudry was also highly active in Transport Canada. Because we would have seen 5000 public servants moved to the Québec Outaouais; we would have toppled the balance favouring the Ontario Ottawa side. That means, Mr. Chairman, that for every four new arrivals in Ottawa, one is allowed to arrive in the Québec Outaouais, if we look at the jobs within the National Capital Region. That's what that means, for one.

And yet what more could you ask for for Transport Canada! Under public calls for tender, four of the five tenderers, the lowest four, were in the Québec Outaouais and the federal government simply tore up the tenders to keep its assets in Ottawa. Mr. Chairman, I could have brought along the figures on this. It's going to cost the federal government \$140 million to keep Transport Canada in Ottawa rather than having transferred it here to Québec.

So, Mr. Assad, I am defending Québec's public servants in Ottawa. Day in, day out, I meet people who sat for exams where others were selected because, to maintain this balance, in addition to exams, we have to take the disparity, the so-called equity between the Ontario Outaouais and the Québec Outaouais into account. And, I think that's what we're doing right now.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): 30 seconds?

Mr. Assad: Mr. Rocheleau, I don't know whether you've had a chance yet to read the brief of the Public Service Alliance, the largest public service union here in the region. They are extremely worried and strongly suggest that there definitely be the possibility of finding common ground to solve this conditional conflict, and they are counting on people who are involved in the issue, like yourself, to find solutions. What would you answer the Public Service Alliance, since you also represent a large number, to suggest a possible solution to this constitutional yoke?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Can we proceed quickly, Mr. Rocheleau?

Mr. Rocheleau: Very quickly, Mr. Chairman. I have not yet spoken to these 26 000 public servants, but all public servants can call me and

come to see me. I would even hope that the Commission would meet with the Public Service Alliance because the Public Service Alliance supports self-determination for the Québec people but, at the same time, wants to make sure that its employees' jobs are safe. We are all here for that, here, in the Québec Outaouais, to make sure that Québec no longer says that we depend on Ottawa... doesn't find us closer to Ottawa... because it's going to be Québec that will have to get involved and get involved in a big way. That, Mr. Chairman, is what all speakers today are telling you...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Perfect!

Mr. Rocheleau: ...how important it is.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After having listened to the mayor of Hull this morning, I wonder... It seems to me he said that Hull, Montréal and Québec City are definitely Québec's richest three economic centres. Mr. Rocheleau, out of 204 countries in the world, Québec currently ranks 11th. If we take only the Outaouais region, Montréal and Québec City, we might rank 5th or 6th in the entire world. Federalism must really be going awry. Naturally, we will have to beat Japan, Germany, etc., but questions like these will have to be studied.

Mr. Rocheleau, your brief is one of the briefs touting sovereignty and you state that the other provinces will never accord the right of veto. Isn't defining sovereignty today a global right of veto? Further on, you state, clearly, that an independent Québec would be much easier to negotiate with the rest of Canada... and this after you told us how with Meech Lake, all these people, etc. it is not easy to negotiate... But after... It will be much easier to negotiate. Unfortunately, there are major issues. I pointed out at the beginning of our Constitution, here, that there were 33 Fathers of Confederation. I was the 34th to speak in the briefs for the opening speech. Thirty-three people told us, one after the other, that things were not going well. It is understandable after 125 years that a social contract might flounder... That's a long time, Mr. Chairman... But Quebecers will want to have details. There are \$2.3 billion more in revenues for Québec than what we give in taxes of any sort to Ottawa. Listen, I want to ask something. The question of negotiations, the question of repatriating certain costs. How are we going to make it once we take a global right of veto over the whole? And there won't be a single Native person in the federal government who'll come and say: Oh no, Québec won't be able to make ends meet because we refused to give anything earlier, but we'll give everything after?

Mr. Rocheleau, these are important questions of which Quebecers must be aware regarding the route that people like you are indicating is the best one to take.

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Poissant, yours is a very interesting question but I must say that I don't think that Québec wants to become, in terms of size, the largest country in the world.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rocheleau: I would like to say, however, that we may be better off being kings at home than servants in Ottawa. In the current context, with the constitutional talks that have taken place over the past 30 years, I think that the observation holds. It does for those individuals that, in the National Assembly, agreed to Meech Lake in 1987, and definitely for English Canada, which had to refuse Québec entry into Canada. And, Mr. Poissant, I really don't want us to bicker about the constitutional aspect any longer. I want us to build, I want us to develop our economy, I want us to look at our young unemployed, I want us to look at cultural development, economic development and social development. When you still see patients waiting for health care... I think that these are all things that we should be doing. Mr. Chairman, rather than bickering over the fly specks that are the Canadian Constitution.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rocheleau: I'm sorry, please strike those last words.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Rocheleau. Fifteen seconds, Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Mr. Rocheleau, you still haven't addressed one issue that will be important for Quebecers: there is a positive transfer of funds to Québec... This was stated in briefs prior to yours.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Poissant, Mr. Rocheleau won't have time to answer your questions if...

Mr. Poissant: My question is: How are we going to go about repatriating, or should I say taxing Quebecers \$2.3 billion annually?

Mr. Rocheleau: Very quickly, Mr. Chairman. Currently in Canada we have rung up a collective debt of \$357 billion and more, of which we will have to assume at least 25%. However, we must also remember the assets

that will be ours. Currently, dual management exists. When Québec gives for regional development, Ottawa gives for regional development and the one giving the bigger cheque is the one that gets the most recognition. When we have our own Québec, we'll do our regional development where we want, and that's important.
(12:45 p.m.)

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

Mr. Rocheleau: We'll spend a half an hour together.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Chairman, please forgive me for going counter to your request of this morning to indulge in a short preamble. I'd like to start by greeting my friend Gilles, for whom I feel much respect and friendship, for the years we've spent together. I remember Gilles Rocheleau as a man who was absolutely extraordinarily dead set against anything that was separatist. He stopped at no one, at nothing... He was ready to fight right down to the last separatist.

And, all of a sudden, my friend Gilles has changed. My respect for him is still as strong, believe me. I also see, in reading his brief, that Gilles has been involved in all struggles. And, I'd go so far as to say, on all sides. In any case, that's what I seem to have understood this morning. I don't want to provoke laughter, please. I'm not trying to make a joke... This is a very serious matter after all. Yet, on page 12 of your brief you state: "Federalism can no longer respond to Québec's aspirations; we must reject it." Yet on page 19, you state: "We have many common interests that should be pooled." There seems to be a difference. I don't want to box you in. I just want to try to understand your position on that. And, if I go further, what I get out of your brief is that you're saying: Federalism is good but we no longer want federalism Canadian-style, the very centralized sort that currently exists. That's what you appear to be rejecting. Am I on...

Mr. Rocheleau: Mr. Bélanger, I must tell you that very decentralized federalism would also be very dangerous for the Québec Outaouais because it would imply a massive move of the Canadian public service in the national capital and elsewhere in Canada as a whole. Coming back to your saying that I have been on all sides... I have, however, always been on the winning side. And I should tell you...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): What you've just said is very dangerous. Take it back

quickly.

Mr. Rocheleau: No. I won't take it back. I've always been on the winning side and time will tell. Mr. Bélanger, some day you too will have to choose. You too will have to open your eyes. It took me a little longer than some to open mine. I was among those that fought the péquistes, those rotten péquistes, who were nevertheless my colleagues in the National Assembly. Sometimes, I would even wake up in the middle of the night to hate them, remember?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rocheleau: ...but, Mr. Bélanger, since June 23, I have been waking up in the middle of the night again to hate those in Ottawa who did us in. And that's important. And having been in Ottawa, I thank the Lord and Gaston and Isabelle, who told me: It'll be like pre-retirement in Ottawa. You're set for life. I've never worked so hard, Mr. Bélanger. I've never worked as hard for my people and I want everyone here to understand the importance of the decision that the Québec people is preparing to take.

I tell my people at home that we want to be part of the solution. We don't want to be on the tail end of a solution that others will have found for us. That's what I'm saying. And if I am frightening people... Yes, maybe in 1980 I was one of the ones saying that we shouldn't take matters into our own hands at that time. But I think that since then we have travelled an important road where we wanted to take matters into our own hands even through a party, the Québec Liberal Party, one recognized as being federalist. So that option couldn't be criticized. But even the Québec Liberal Party will soon have to take an important decision for Québec's future. And it is the Québec Liberal Party, the government, that tabled the Meech Lake Accord, which fell through, in passing. But which fell through through no fault of Québec's. This same government, through Bill 90, created the Bélanger-Campeau Commission with a preamble touting the right of the Québec people of self-determination.

This is what we are doing today. And I want us to be very serious because this region is the nerve centre. And I hope you will listen to the one who used Québec to get himself elected leader of the Liberal Party. I hope you will listen to him because, in the final analysis, he's the one that prevented Québec from reentering the Canadian Constitution. It's unfortunate that it had to be someone who calls himself a Quebecer, but who has lived in Ottawa for the past 25 years. I'll get back to him later... This isn't the time or place.

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

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I see that our colleague still gets as carried away and that he's still as set in his goals. But you haven't answered the second part of my question. What type of connection would you like to see... Should we maintain with the rest of Canada?

Mr. Rocheleau: Listen, I think that the St. Lawrence won't move and that ships will continue to travel up into the Great Lakes. We're going to need shared-cost agreements, etc. I think that Hydro-Québec, which is selling electricity to Ontario, will continue to sell it afterwards. I think there are products we buy from Ontario that we'll continue to buy afterwards and that there are Québec products that we'll want to sell to the other English-speaking provinces.

That's it, Mr. Bélanger. We've just passed free trade. I have a few reservations about how our jobs will be recycled and that's what I asked Mr. Mulroney on many occasions. We've just passed free trade with the United States; surely, we can have free trade with English Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Rocheleau, your time is up. I'd like to pass the few minutes remaining in the hearings to Mr. Laberge. However, before I do, I'd like to thank people for not having applauded during your comments... I hope this can continue until the end... Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Rocheleau, I don't have to tell you that I was very surprised when I began to read your brief, which I read very closely. I was pleasantly surprised. As you said earlier, it may have taken you a little longer than some, but you made your way as you saw fit. You worked very openly for one side and even won an election based on it. But what I really like about your brief is that you don't try to knock Canada to make Québec look better. Responsibilities are involved and you have assigned these responsibilities to the individuals to whom they belong. Many Quebecers were duped in 1980 by false promises. This wasn't the fault of English Canada; it wasn't the fault of the other provinces. It was people who told lies here. Congratulations for having done that. Canada is not a banana republic; I have always said so. Canada is a fine, large country and all that, the Rockies will still be there. I won't go to see them any less often or more often.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Your question please, Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: You make a very special statement on page 4 of the summary: "Rather than a unique status because it is far from Québec City, the Québec Outaouais should be

granted special status because it is close to Ottawa." I think these three lines sum up just about everything we've heard and will hear today. What you say is true. We have to work things so that the public servants are transferred into the Québec public service with all their rights and privileges. This is about what the Alliance brief, which you referred to earlier, says. This is what we've been saying at the FTQ for 15 years. As far as we're concerned, this is not a promise, but a firm commitment, and must be carried out with all the rights and privileges. Congratulations on your colourful language. I would have expected to see a slightly different brief since you sometimes do get carried away a bit, but you maintained a perfectly respectable tone.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Laberge, do you have a question?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: You made me forget it.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Rocheleau.

Mr. Rocheleau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Our work will resume at 2:00 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:54 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:08 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Ladies and Gentlemen, we'll get back to work. Our first speakers are representatives of the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de l'Outaouais, Mrs. Monique Cyr, chairman, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Dubeau, vice-chairman. Mrs. Monique Cyr, you have five minutes to present your report.

Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de l'Outaouais

Mrs. Cyr (Monique): Messrs. Co-chairmen and dear members of the Commission, first of all, please allow me to thank you for giving us the chance to voice our opinion and second, I would like to tell you that our presentation is in keeping with the common front which unites the economic and community organizations in the Outaouais and, you must certainly have seen that we have signed the introduction that was presented to you this morning. Therefore I shall begin my presentation without further ado.

The members of the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de l'Outaouais intervene on a daily

basis in all sectors influencing the economic activity and development in the region. We have 700 members. The geopolitical stakes for the Outaouais region are great where the constitutional issue is concerned. To discuss such things as the constitutional future of Outaouais is to discuss employment and economy. The contents of this brief are based on consultations with our members. Their opinion expresses the need for change as a result of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

And now the Outaouais. We have divided our presentation into three points. We have considered the Québec Outaouais with respect to its situation in Québec and its situation with respect to Ottawa: the territory, the economy and the culture, of course. In terms of the territory, the federal government, for a long time now, has been actively involved in the development of its capital's region. From the Ottawa Planning Commission in 1899, through the Todd Report, the Holt Plan, the Cauchon Report, the Federal District Commission, the renowned Gréber Plan of 1950, the post-war and right up to the National Capital Commission in 1958, Ottawa gave itself free rein in favouring the development of the region, and the building of its buildings there. The first that we had was the Imprimerie nationale, the pet project of Alphonse Fournier, the federal MP at the time. However, as the 1960s wore on, it was noticed that the federal government had invested very little in Québec. It was in February 1969, at a constitutional conference that the first ministers, from both the federal and provincial governments, decided that the cities of Ottawa and Hull and their surroundings would constitute the region of the nation's capital.

The federal and provincial authorities would, from that time on, work together to launch a series of important urban development projects. In that context, the various levels of government, municipal and provincial, collaborated on the project. On May 20, 1969, the Honourable Jean Marchand, the Minister of Regional Expansion, announced land expropriation which would give a certain number of buildings to the City of Hull. It wasn't until 1970 that the gouvernement du Québec decided to intervene by creating the SAO that you heard this morning, and the CRO. The decision was most likely provoked by the work of the commission studying Québec's territorial integrity, the Dorion Commission, which had studied the case of the Outaouais region. They had submitted a series of 37 recommendations which, unfortunately, still apply today. Essentially, it blames both the laissez-faire politics of the provincial government and the interventionist politics of the federal government.

The economy. The regional economic development of Outaouais is largely attributable

to the presence of the federal government. An industrial and blue collar work force at the turn of the century, the Outaouais population is composed mainly of public servants today. The primary and secondary industries, mainly related to lumber, have given way to a blossoming tertiary sector which generates economic and commercial activity in large part due to the existence of these government jobs.

Culture. The cultural identity is the soul of a people. However, the entire Québec Outaouais runs considerable risks of seeing its Québec culture altered. The proximity of an English-speaking community as well as the daily necessity for a large part of the population to speak English at work, compromise the chances of development for this culture, a culture that the gouvernement du Québec promotes. This is how the Outaouais cultural identity is influenced. The members of the Chamber have expressed their willingness for changes at various levels. First, towards a greater autonomy. The members of the Chamber see the present constitutional situation, with respect to the sharing of powers, as a source of duplication of efforts and operational inefficiency. The federal and provincial governments intervene in the cultural, social, and economic lives of the Québec people via numerous programs. The duplication, at the federal and provincial levels, of ministries, services, and programs is generalized. Thus, the tax burden is heavier still and jeopardizes the health of the Québec economy. The Chamber demands a greater autonomy for Québec through the reappraisal of the jurisdictions and fields of activity between the provincial and federal governments in a way that will permit Québec to think of its future in terms of its priorities.

The members of the Chamber are no longer content with the status quo or minor variations. You have a list of the new distribution of jurisdictional powers according to the opinions of our members based on the results of a poll taken. There you will find federal, provincial and joint fields of jurisdiction. Now, the members ...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Could you please quickly wrap it up, Madam?

Mrs. Cyr: O.K. Therefore, the members of the Chamber ask... In conclusion, we want to endorse a vigorous and decisive approach to stop this constitutional vacillation. We repeat our determination to remain an integral part of Québec. We insist that concrete measures be taken to keep these jobs in Outaouais and ensure economic stability. And fourth, but not least, we ask for programs that will facilitate a smooth and well-prepared change in the fields of activity of the work force, and this, to increasingly diversify our economic development. Thank you.
(2:15 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you Mrs. Cyr. In the space of 10 minutes there are eight people who would like to speak. If everyone does as they should, we might be able to have all eight. Therefore if all could display their sense of generosity by having prepared a question that is brief and precise, that would help a great deal.

First question, Mr. Roger Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Madam, I would have liked to hear you elaborate on the problems of the federal government presence in terms of equalization payments. The Chambre de commerce du Québec has already stressed this dimension and I would like to hear, from your point of view, how you situate the federal government's role in terms of equalization payments.

Mrs. Cyr: I would ask Mr. Dubeau, our vice-chairman to answer your question.

Mr. Dubeau (Jean-Pierre): Actually, what we would like to point out to you here is essentially what the Chambre de commerce du Québec had mentioned. If you will recall, each of the different regional chambers was able to contribute to the draft brief. Really, we have nothing to add but the support we are giving to the Chambre de commerce du Québec in terms of equalization payments.

Mr. Nicolet: The withdrawal of the federal government from the entire equalization dimension across Canada.

Mr. Dubeau: With the proposed rearrangements concerning the redistribution of powers between the provincial and the Canadian governments, there will definitely be changes.

Mr Nicolet: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Second question, Mr. Allard.

Mr. Allard: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Madam, I found your report to be quite realistic compared to some of the others we have heard. On employment, you would like to conserve those jobs already existing in the federal public service by replacing them with jobs that would be in the provincial public service and by bringing jobs here that may presently be elsewhere or of other types. But you say: If we wish to save money because of duplication by the two levels of government, something must be done. We cannot allow the situation to remain the same because that would mean no savings. You also say: These savings should not be put towards new programs, and I think that is very realistic. I will now ask my question. It has to do with

what you say on page 9. You ask that any new constitution strictly outline the borrowing power of the governments. Can you please give us further details on that recommendation.

Mrs. Cyr: What we wished to say, is that everyone has read and discussed the infamous residual powers that the federal government presently has. Therefore we would like, if there is repatriation to Québec, that Québec – and mind you this could easily be applied to the other provinces as well – that the provinces be autonomous and then they might delegate certain powers but not that the central government be able to make the laws it wants to make. Therefore it would be somewhat along the lines of a delegation of powers. At the moment, the power is in the hands of the federal government and all that is not implicitly provincial is taken over by the federal government, the power to legislate, the power to tax, amongst others. We would like this to be the opposite of what it is.

Mr. Allard: You want limits on borrowing power.

Mrs. Cyr: That depends on the agreements that will be made.

Mr. Allard: That is what I read.

Mrs. Cyr: That depends on the agreements that will be made and if, at any time, we entrust certain programs or certain fields of jurisdiction to the central government, I think that it would be possible to have an agreement on seeking funds.

Mr. Allard: On borrowing. Thank you.

Mrs. Cyr: It might be taxation, it might be borrowing.

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

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Madam, Sir, thank you Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask you the same question I asked Mr. Saint-Germain this morning so that I might have your comments on the subject. In view of the wave of the decentralization of powers and the related administration as observed in all the regions that we have recently visited, do you think that it is practical and feasible to want a distinct policy and concrete measures to safeguard these former federal jobs in Outaouais? On the Côte-Nord and in Abitibi-Témiscamingue where the level of unemployment is very high, how could we sell this policy, to encourage such distinct measures for Outaouais?

Mrs. Cyr: Mr. Dubeau.

Mr. Dubeau: First, you must realize that a large part of the region's economy is based on these federal jobs.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes.

Mr. Dubeau: Furthermore, there are others that appeared before you to explain the numbers.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But if we repatriate jurisdiction...

Mr. Dubeau: We think that in the short term, a radical transformation or what we might describe in the region as a radical exportation of it's brainpower to the province of Québec, supposing that Québec repatriates a certain number of powers, that leaves an important void in the region, with important economic consequences. We recommend that the first measure be to maintain the region's stability which later might even mean the economic evolution of the region. Therefore I think it is possible to sell this type of idea elsewhere and this would not hinder us from functioning in our region.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I have another short question. Where do you place the central bank in the redistribution of powers?

Mr. Dubeau: I'll answer that question. If you are referring to the provincial fields of jurisdiction, among the fields that were studied and that involved the consultation of our members, we also asked a question concerning currency. You will not find that in the answers since, in our poll, the preferences stating that currency should remain a field of joint jurisdictions, were followed closely by those choosing currency to be a jurisdiction of the federal government. We included in our brief those responses that were very pronounced though, according to our poll, it was not clear whether currency should be a field of joint jurisdiction or be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government. We are therefore bowing to this will and presenting that information to you.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Currency will remain Canadian currency, but let us return to the subject of the bank.

Mr. Dubeau: As far as the bank is concerned, it will probably follow suit. It should be included in the negotiations.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I think they go hand-in-hand. O.K. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Simard.

Mrs. Simard: Mr. Chairman, Madam, Sir. I read your brief with much interest and I must admit that when we see the sum of your requests, of what you would repatriate in the fields of provincial jurisdiction, there are approximately 25, fields of federal jurisdiction, from these and the fields of shared jurisdiction, 8, I asked myself: Would it not be simpler to request total repatriation, sovereignty, and then negotiate a certain number of agreements in different shared fields, on various subjects. I would like to hear your comments on this since you request major changes. When we consider... There are subjects that you mention, in provincial jurisdiction, that haven't been brought up yet; I say: name some! I am thinking of, amongst others, old age pensions. How do you foresee the unfolding of negotiations to repatriate so many subjects? Why did you create this model rather than simply opt for complete repatriation so you could then conclude the various agreements.

And in your brief you say that the constitutional status must be quickly resolved, that is, on the outside, 12 months, but how do you think that this should be done? Would you prefer a large democratic consultation, how have you approached the manner of consultation?

Mrs. Cyr: First, to answer the second question it must be said that we based our work on the poll taken by the Chambre de commerce du Québec and that we added the fields of jurisdiction and the question of employment in Outaouais. But I must repeat something we have often said: We did not base our work on any constitutional models but rather on economic situations, on actual situations and on fields of shared jurisdiction. Also, in this brief, we wanted to highlight what the members of the Chamber had said. And that, quite clearly, is a call for greater autonomy. As an analysis committee, we are very much aware that to move towards a greater autonomy is, in itself, quite a move. You don't go to bed one night, one might say, unfree, and you don't wake up the next morning, free, as regards the organization of this vast experience of autonomy. Therefore, we think that the quest for autonomy is a step, that Québec is moving towards its autonomy, and that it must take the necessary time to do so.

Having said that, the following may be something of a dichotomy but the members of the Chamber said: We are tired of constitutional vacillation. We are anxious to see it end. Therefore it must end within an allotted time that is both short and inflexible, we even mention 12 months, it has to be settled once and for all. Therefore, if you put those two factors together, I think that there is work to be done to secure the procedure and the deadline that we are headed for.

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

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Two questions. On page 11 you say... First of all this path to the Chambre de commerce is easily understood, and we see as well that you are worried about the potential situation, but you say on page 11: "Consequently, it would be out of the question, from the Outaouais point of view, to envision the repatriation of powers by Québec without automatically involving internal reforms in the very structures of the government of Québec." What are you implying with such a statement?

Mrs. Cyr: What we would like to read into that, is that we situate it in phase 1. We say: The day that Québec makes its bed in terms of its constitutional status, whatever it is, if it means something other than the status quo, if it means the repatriation of jurisdictional powers or even sovereignty, the government of Québec must review its method of governing the province. There are structures, there are ministries, there are programs. At that time, I think the Outaouais should become a branch of the gouvernement du Québec. Therefore, with all...

Mr. Beaudry: That would be more than just simple regionalization compared to the other regions.

Mrs. Cyr: We distinguish regionalization. Regionalization is a way to dodge the issue and we don't want to get caught up in that. We agree with regionalization however when we see the experiences of organizations, when an organization, when a body becomes responsible for itself, there is a phase of centralization. You must understand yourself. You must assume your responsibilities, know yourself and know your own potential. It is only after that phase that you can decentralize. And I'm not talking about deconcentration because that's garbage. It is only after decentralization that you can give powers, when you're master in your own home, of your own thing. O.K., so...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine, Madam.

Mrs. Cyr: ...secondly, we think... So, we don't want to be told: In three or four years, we are going to decentralize you. As they say: "No way!" That's what we say in Hull. "No way!"

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine, Madam. I hope your message is understood. We will now move on to Mr. MacMillan.

Mr. MacMillan: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I

would like to take this chance to congratulate you for having presented a brief today and to welcome you. I would also like to take advantage of the opportunity, Mrs. Cyr, that our region is so distinct that following our demands made by the five deputies from Outaouais, Mr. Bourassa made an appointment in the Outaouais... Mr. Beaudry. I would like to take this time to congratulate Mr. Beaudry for the way in which he has represented us since the opening of this Commission. I think Mr. Beaudry has truly been a spokesman for the Outaouais. We are not allowed to applaud.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Your question.

Mr. MacMillan: Yes, do I have five minutes Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, but for the question...

Mr. MacMillan: The question will come. I'd also like to take this time to point out to you, in the Chambre de commerce, the importance of the Outaouais economy. I think that Mr. Rocheleau and the people from regional development, this morning, really stressed that. I would just like to take the little time I have to cite a phrase spoken by the president of the Parti québécois, on November 26, while visiting in Outaouais. The president of the Parti québécois indicated that the temporary presence of a department might prove quite useful in Outaouais. I would just like to mention that Outaouais is anything but temporary. I really think we must... As far back as 1972, and again in 1976 and 1981, the Parti québécois always promised that it would safeguard the jobs of those who work for the federal government. I heard no one today giving guarantees. How are they going to do it, that is, keep these people? So, I'm asking you, as part of the economic driving force of the Outaouais, Mrs. Cyr: Do you have a solution that could be given to our people on the Commission? How can we keep 26 000 jobs here in the Outaouais? Because there are 60 000 altogether in Québec, and we are going to take all of these 26 000 jobs and integrate them into Québec's public service? I think that this is wishful thinking. I call that daydreaming. So, I would like to hear you. What is the future of the Outaouais within sovereignty, Mrs. Cyr?

Mrs. Cyr: Before explaining it to you, Mr. MacMillan, I could perhaps tell you that the guarantees will perhaps be given to us by the Liberal government.

Mr. MacMillan: But if there ever is a sovereignty...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. MacMillan: Mrs. Cyr, I'm glad to hear that, because if there ever is a sovereignty and that's what the people want, perhaps I won't be a part of that government, but I hope that it will be Mr. Bourassa and his team.

Mrs. Cyr: Listen. We have... I'll tell you... I was born in Hull, on Laurier Street, 50 years ago, across from the Peace Tower. When I had good eyesight, I could read the time from our place.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Cyr: In Hull, in 1940, there were factories, there was E.B. Eddy, there were three mills, Robert LeSage was also there with me. There were artisans. There were also 50 000 inhabitants, 50 000 to 55 000, almost as many as we have now; I'm talking about Hull. Now, it's still possible. It's still possible, it's that we have changed from our secondary sector orientation. All industries in the secondary sector, manufacturing, all that, that was put aside. Then, it was the public service. And fathers told their sons: You have to study to get a job with the federal government. That was the goal, as we say.

That must change. The Outaouais has to reacquire a taste for entrepreneurship. O.K.? And I think that we have to take matters in hand. But we can't do it alone. We must have tools. That's why we need a transition period and a governmental mission. If we are for being on the side of Ottawa, with a stronger Québec which has given itself some mandates, I think that the Outaouais has the physical structures; there are the buildings, the expertise, the skill, the work to be done there. Then, a diversification of the economy. And I'll conclude with the entire labour sector. What are we waiting for, in Québec, to repatriate that? I am in the education field. This year, there were adult students who had to be turned away in October because the bloody bill of that lady in Ottawa hadn't yet been passed. Things are on hold everywhere. The labour force is a tool. We have natural resources that are not being developed...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. MacMillan, your time is up. We will now turn to Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to be brief, I have a lot of things to say. First, welcome to our table, our work, and I am pleased to point out... and I will do so again today... that we have another woman as chairperson of the Chambre de commerce. That's the third time that that's happened to us in our travels when we've met with chambers of

commerce, and we are in the midst of changing the rules a bit, and I am very pleased that this is happening like that.

I would like to reassure our colleague, Mr. MacMillan. We have made a commitment that is still very firm by responding this afternoon to the questions asked by the people of the Outaouais regarding job protection and the transfer of jobs and individuals into the Québec public service. It was Mr. Rémillard, I believe, who was worried about the fact that it seemed unrealistic perhaps, so maybe he's the one the question should be addressed to.

Having said this, your brief is excellent, interesting. A question that you didn't answer when Mrs. Simard asked it earlier, you said: The deadline must be short. To be short requires clear methods. Are you proposing that, once the work is finished, we should proceed with a referendum or a consultation? We have used the concept of referendum... with the people, so that they can give their opinion on the status that they want for their future, on what the Québec people want.

Mrs. Cyr: The answer I'll give you, I'm not giving it on behalf of all my members because we haven't consulted them on that, but I can assert that, in the approach, I think, there will be a mechanism, that's almost implicit. In the working committee, in the analysis committee, when we studied the various scenarios... in passing, we did that between 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.... There was one, it's that we said that, if there were a calendar for Québec's claims, because we are very aware that the five little clauses of Meech Lake didn't pass. We said: We have a hill to climb, like Sisyphus, you know... Fine, at that time, we said that a possible scenario - this isn't a position, it's a possible scenario - would be to ask to sit down with Ottawa, one-on-one, to discuss and agree on setting a timetable. If, when the time was up, it wasn't done, the ball would be in Québec's court. A possible scenario would be to declare sovereignty and then hold the referendum, or to hold the referendum first.

Mrs. Marois: O.K. Yes, because I find rather optimistic...

Mrs. Cyr: But we will have to...

Mrs. Marois: ...the possibility of sitting down together.

Mrs. Cyr: That's it. What we think is that, if Québec declares its sovereignty, the gouvernement du Québec, whichever party that will be, will have to seek a mandate from the population, a clear mandate, with a question that is easy to understand.

Mrs. Marois: O.K. Yes, that could be very simple, in fact, you are entirely right. You are proposing areas of joint jurisdiction. What mechanisms... Have you thought about the mechanisms... Which mechanisms are you proposing to manage these areas of jurisdiction? Will we elect people? Will we choose people? How will we go about it? Because there are a certain number of areas which you've identified as being shared jurisdiction, if you will.

Mr. Dubeau: In fact, we haven't anticipated specific mechanisms for dealing with these topics. We can develop some as we go along, but the principle is the gouvernement du Québec's basic involvement in these areas of jurisdiction, but not exclusively, because we recognize a wider dimension. We recognize a dimension that is wider than just the territory of Québec, in which it can be advantageous for Québec to participate within a wider forum in these areas.

Mrs. Marois: O.K. One last question, I was told that my time is up. It surprised me that one of the areas proposed as an area of joint jurisdiction, that is, joint jurisdiction, was research and development. Fine, I know that a survey was conducted, and that you are passing on the suggestions that your members made, the choices that your members made. But it remains that research and development is so important for the entire structure of an economy and for the entire future, ultimately, of an economy. I also wondered: Our industrial sectors, for example, if we take the industrial sector, our resources are different than those which exist in the rest of Canada, and so are our tools, and the amounts that may be earmarked for them could be different. Was that thrashed out a bit in your organization? Not really.

Mr. Dubeau: No, in fact, what was important was providing the Commission with all the results, so that's what we are doing. Now, it's obvious that we could start the debate: That means what, then why, then can we...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, fine. Is that all right, Madam? Mrs. Cyr, Mr. Dubeau, thank you for your very clear presentation, thank you for your contribution to this Commission on Québec's future.

(Proceedings adjourned at 2:41 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:43 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Ladies and Gentlemen, we now resume the hearings with the Association des auteurs de l'Outaouais, and Stéphane-Albert Boulais, who is the chairman. Welcome, Mr. Boulais. If you would introduce your colleagues.

**Association des auteurs et
auteurs de l'Outaouais**

Mr. Boulais (Stéphane-Albert): Yes, on my left, Michel-Rémi Lafond, member, Jacques Michaud, secretary-treasurer, Pierre Bernier, on my right, vice-chairman, and Jean-Claude Boulton, member.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So once again, you have five minutes for the presentation of your brief.

Mr. Boulais: Messrs. Co-chairmen and members of the Commission, we would first like to thank you for having invited us to express our viewpoint on Québec's future. We would also like to remind you that we signed the preamble presented this morning: "Québec in the narrows of its history." Authors, as we all know, are very poorly paid for realizing the power of words. It is therefore, you may rest assured, of their own free will and guided purely by their sense of social responsibility that the members of the Association des auteurs de l'Outaouais québécois submit this brief to you, this brief in progress.

Québec, a narrows. Why have we chosen to name our territory thus? Why did we decide, at a certain point, to entrust it with our past, our future? What does it matter? It is enough to recognize that this small population of French language and culture, isolated on a continent where another language and culture were to rule, has succeeded in surviving contrary to all expectations, against all attacks. Alongside the raging torrent of history, it has succeeded in carving out a narrow, constricted passageway, where the very repercussions of what occurred around it defined it and gave it its coherence.

Thus, by giving ourselves a name, we have perhaps identified the destiny toward which we have been progressing for over 300 years. In the last 30 years, Québec has asserted itself and developed its past so that the country could put down roots. It is through words that we can establish our identity. Our poets, novelists, and songwriters gave the country a name. Since that time, we have understood, like the poet Pierre Perreault, that our past is more important than lifeblood itself, that spirit is more hereditary than hair colour. "If people express themselves poorly, it is because they are in the wrong place", writes the same poet.

The people of Québec, through their authors, have expressed themselves well. They have insisted that the vernacular of the "people from here" be respected. Germaine Guèvremont, Gaston Miron, Michel Tremblay and many others have raised it to the level it deserves. They have discovered a Québec heroism that our history, written by others, had hidden under the

bushel. These authors have made it legitimate. They have ensured that our identity is no longer a synonym for deprivation.

The authors of the Québec Outaouais have decided to take up the torch. We have decided to grant a country and a soul to our imagination. We're tired of borrowing them. We're tired of renting them from the other side of the river. Our word is just as good as anyone else's. No one can argue with that any more, especially since Meech Lake. We want to reconquer our "soul-land" that we have occupied from constitution to constitution, from conscription to conscription. Since the basic problem lies in the difference between us and English Canada and our will to put an end to the chronic insecurity in our future as a society of French language and culture, it is important that Quebecers be asked to express themselves on the subject as soon as possible.

Here is the strategy: Hold a referendum as soon as possible. The questions: 1. Do you want Québec to remain a society of French language and culture? 2. Do you want Québec to be a sovereign country? 3. Do you want a sovereign Québec to negotiate an economic association with the rest of Canada?

We recommend such a referendum over any other approach. We believe, indeed, that the answers to these specific questions should serve as a premise for any mechanism defining Québec's future. Once the referendum is held, it will be up to the government in power to determine the mechanisms best suited to implementing the desires expressed.

We believe that our people is ready for another major consultation on its future. Our position is fundamentally based on the immediate, democratic expression of all Quebecers. Québec must be a sovereign country if it wants to possess all the political, financial and economic levers guaranteeing it the preservation and growth of a society of French language and culture. As a full-fledged sovereign country, it will be able to negotiate on its own terms with Canada and other countries with a view to signing agreements likely to fulfill its social, cultural and economic objectives.

Québec's official language must be French. Its language of instruction must be French. Its language of the workplace must be French. As soon as we opt for a resolutely French Québec, the choice of resources becomes clear. Sovereignty, of course, which is the exercise of full powers over questions inextricably linked to official language, instruction and employment, education, culture, immigration and their counterparts on the international scene, can only be achieved by Québec's full control over its foreign policy.

To affirm itself as a society of French language and culture, a sovereign Québec will have to exercise full powers over its territory in

financial and economic affairs. This is why we recommend complete sovereignty of Québec. We believe that Québec's economy is sufficiently healthy to justify the establishment of its own currency, even if it must be pegged to the Canadian or American currency. We believe that the Québec people is strong enough to rise to international challenges as a sovereign State in the world community. We are even more convinced of this because we have managed to survive in a region culturally dominated by Ottawa. This, then, is a summary of the viewpoint of the Association des auteurs et des auteures de l'Outaouais québécois on Québec's future. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. We now go to Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome among us, first of all, and allow me to thank you for having come to present us your brief. If I may, I will first raise certain points of your brief and make a few comments before asking a short question. There is first this impression received from your document, on page 5, where we sense that cooperation between Québec and Canada is not something that will be accomplished in the near future. You say: "English Canada is, more than ever, resolutely set against the Québec difference." This is being intolerant in their regard, perhaps, but it causes me to reflect on the words of the Association des économistes, who presented us with a brief and who said that the transitional period would be difficult if it occurred in a revanchist atmosphere, subject to verbal escalation.

In this respect, I will say that your document is far from reassuring on that level. You also say that the consensus you sense in the population must be tested and you recommend the holding of a referendum as soon as possible. I would have a tendency to say to you that a consensus should not be tested merely for the sake of testing it. I don't think we can afford the luxury of losing another referendum. The approach taken here aims to make people reflect as carefully as possible on the choices available to Québec. Then, before submitting these choices to the population, we must be sure that, in a very broad, general manner, we are all heading in the same direction. This is important. So, it implies a demonstration, a comprehensive, objective explanation, really, of the choices offered to us as Quebecers. I don't think there's any point in rushing.

You warn us, on page 8 of your brief, against high expectations and you would have us take advantage of the current commotion surrounding the question and our collective future. My answer to that is that perhaps is it a shame and it would be a shame to make a choice

in reaction to something. Not only does wisdom not teach us this...

Mr. Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Hovington, speaking of questions, do you have one?

Mrs. Hovington: Yes, I'm coming to it, but I think that if emotions continue to be the basis for asking the question, for heading toward a referendum, I think we can say goodbye to the power relationship that must be emphasized with respect to English Canada. My question, Mr. Chairman, I come to it after these remarks. Here is the position you adopt, on page 10 of the document. If I understand your viewpoint, and correct me if I'm wrong, it's that we have no direct control over the Bank of Canada, so you say that it is better to create our own currency, and we wouldn't have control over our own money either, since you... but that it could be pegged to the U.S. dollar. It seems to me that this is not entirely logical. Could you explain it to me in greater detail?

Mr. Boulais: Yes, Pierre.

Mr. Bernier (Pierre): I believe that, in the document, if I'm not mistaken, we say "it could be pegged to." Now, if we are a sovereign country, as has been the case in Canada for years, Canada has full control over its currency and decides to let it float or peg it as it sees fit. And this also means that, if the country decides not to peg it, it doesn't. So this is one option. But what we say, what I think is the basic principle, is: Let's have our own currency and let's control our own affairs on our own territory.

Mrs. Hovington: You ask three questions. You hold a referendum, you ask the three questions. They are interesting but, I was left feeling a little unsatisfied concerning the action to be taken following the referendum. How do we go about it, after that? What comes next? Have you thought about this "after"?

Mr. Michaud (Jacques): Madam, we are not politicians. I think this question must first be put to the politicians, because it is not our responsibility to determine what exactly will happen next. We encourage, exhort the governments to adopt significant measures and then, based on the answers the population gives, well, it's up to these people to continue and ensure that we end up where we're supposed to.

Mrs. Hovington: So this means that you have not at all looked at how to carry this out. You came here to say to the members of this Commission: This is what we want, now, you must assume your responsibilities. This, in a

sense, is what you are telling us.

Mr. Boulais: Madam, excuse me, we came to tell the members of this Commission how we live in a state of acculturation in the Québec Outaouais. What we mean, simply, is this: We are a majority in the Québec Outaouais, we live as a minority, and the Québec Outaouais, in this respect, is sort of a microcosm of what Québec is compared to the Canadian federation. This is what we came to tell you. We are an association of authors and we wanted to share with you our situation, the state of culture in the Québec Outaouais.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you.

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

Mrs. Hovington: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, Madam. Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good day, and I would also like to thank you for having agreed, of your own free will, as you said, and guided by your sense of social responsibility, to have come here to enrich the proceedings of the Commission with your discussion. You point out certain facts that perhaps particularly needed to be pointed out, that this small population has resisted and has maintained itself contrary to all expectations and against all attacks, and that we are very different from English Canada. And others have also told us that there are two separate peoples who are perhaps unable to be entirely comfortable in their development because they were not made to live together, and that the restrictions resulting from this cohabitation have made our survival precarious.

The consensus has not been clearly established, you say. Others claim that we must, perhaps, try a second time. The consensus isn't clear. Mr. Mulroney says that the feeling of sovereignty emerging from the proceedings of this Commission is ephemeral; Mr. Ryan calls it fluid. I am not sure I share their opinion on this. But I would like to hear your comments.

Along the lines of Mrs. Hovington's question, could you tell us if you think that, indeed, the feeling of sovereignty emerging from the proceedings of this Commission seems to you fluid, ephemeral, and that a referendum dealing with the very three questions discussed in your document would have a chance of success? Because we are in a border region here where it is probably more fragile. At least, that's the impression I had until this morning.

Mr. Lafond (Michel-Rémi): The question you

are asking me, are you asking it strictly for the Outaouais or for all of...

Mrs. Blackburn: For all of Québec. But you could also refer to the Outaouais; it would give us a good idea as concerns the rest of Québec.

Mr. Lafond: If we start with the Outaouais, we could answer "yes" to questions like this one insofar as there are guarantees given to the people of the Outaouais, and I think that there are guarantees as concerns jobs - guarantees that the Outaouais will not be considered the poor cousin of Québec. This is how we feel in a way and starting from there, maybe here in the Outaouais we will be able to make some progress in this area. For Québec, if we speak of Québec as a whole... including the Outaouais... I think that overall there is a strong sovereignty feeling present.

Mrs. Blackburn: The guarantees which were brought up this morning, those which could be given, for example, to the federal public service, which would automatically be recognized in the Québec Labour Code, like the fact that Ontario or Ontarians working in Québec have at least as much interest in establishing relationships based on free movement as Québec, are these guarantees that would put certain fears to rest? And the instigators of these fears - because there are still people who like to brandish empty threats - in light of these guarantees, will people in this region be able to make a decision on their future in a more tranquil frame of mind?

Mr. Lafond: I believe that the guarantees cannot be strictly verbal. They must be borne out by measures and actions and also by clear, firm legislation. If they are just words, they can't be guarantees.

Mrs. Blackburn: If we said to you that in the Vienna Convention on state succession, there are sections which naturally deal with state succession, the assets, liabilities and responsibility that the cessionary states must assume and in this respect, the responsibilities of the predecessor state become those of the successor state, and we can conclude that this also affects the workers of the predecessor state. I think that automatically, there is a type of guarantee which could be based on this convention which is already enshrined in international conventions.

Mr. Lafond: But, Madam, the problem of the Vienna treaty is that it isn't ratified by Québec's National Assembly. Based on this, the National Assembly must be able to ratify such a treaty. Is this under its current jurisdiction? It's all very well to speak of guarantees based on a treaty, but the treaty in question has to apply first.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): A short question, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes. But the Québec State would have the possibility of ratifying such a treaty. It is not recognized at the international level for the moment; it is not recognized as a distinct society.

One last question. Many people have come before us to say that what is to be the blueprint for society should be drawn up first and then we should become sovereign and establish the basis for the blueprint for society. Here you say: Let's confirm the consensus, and then we'll draw up the blueprint for society. How and with whom should we draw up this blueprint for society?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Would you please answer rapidly, Mr. Boulais.

Mr. Boulais: If you wish, I will answer your question. I think that the basic problem with the constitutional debate in Québec arises from the question: Are we going to remain a society of French language and culture? This is perhaps not the case for lawyers, economists or people in specialized professions, but in general in Québec, this is where the question lies. And we can rest assured that, if we look at the current situation, everyone of voting age has heard this discussion practically since they were born, and everyone else has heard it for the last 30 or 40 years. So we think that there is enough information to establish a specific objective, based on which a comprehensive blueprint for society could be developed.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. We now go to Mr. Claude Béland, who will be followed by Mr. Serge Turgeon.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You say in your brief that you recommend a referendum over any other approach, that we must truly begin with this. However, you suggest three questions. What is not clear to me is that if the answer to the three questions is yes, especially to the third one which is: Do you want a sovereign Québec to negotiate an economic association with the rest of Canada, is the objective merely to negotiate or is it to establish an economic association? And if we fail to establish it, do we disregard the two other questions? Where are your priorities, since you are asking three questions?

Mr. Boulais: The priority is the first question and, of course, the second. For us, in the end, the most important question in the Québec of today is: Do we really want to remain a society of French language and culture? You know very well that to live... O.K. You don't live here in the region, but there is a high rate of

assimilation, at any rate, the Francophones, for example, in Ontario. And here, there is also an assimilation rate in the region. I myself am a teacher and I often hear college-level students speaking English in the halls, which is fairly unusual. For us, here in Québec, this language issue is truly fundamental. And I think that for Quebecers, integration must be carried out with this in mind. It is for this reason that we felt it important to ask, to include in the referendum issue, this language question.

Mr. Béland: No, but the economic association, why would you ask that question?

Mr. Boulais: Economic association, it's that as a sovereign country, Ontario will always be there anyway, and reciprocity agreements could be established. For example, there are Francophones, our brothers and sisters across the river, who should also be able to continue to live in Canada, for example, in Ontario - I don't know what it'll be called - but they should be able to continue receiving their education in French. You know very well, this situation, and I'm passing along the message, every time Québec has had a very powerful independence movement, things happened for Francophones outside Québec. For example, such was the case when de Gaulle came, in 1967: well, Robarts passed a law legalizing French secondary schools, which did not exist at that time. It's still unbelievable when you think about it. And I think that the stronger we are as a French-language people in Québec, the better off the Francophone minorities outside Québec will be.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Turgeon: Yes. So, naturally, when you speak of your brothers and sisters in Ontario, it is precisely on this topic that I would like to comment. So I am asking you if you think Franco-Ontarians or Francophones outside Québec will be unhappy with a sovereign Québec. And I am asking you the question at the very moment when, this afternoon, at this very moment, CBC is announcing the largest budget cuts in its history, from \$100 million to \$200 million, from 10% to 20% of the entire CBC budget. The regions are being cut. There will no longer be any services in Matane, Rimouski, Sept-Îles, but what's worse, the CBC French-language television and radio services in Toronto are being cut. French-language radio services in Vancouver are being cut. Do you think that Francophones outside Québec will be more unhappy with a sovereign Québec than with a federal system that gives them things like this?

Mr. Boulais: I am glad you asked me this question, especially since we have a Franco-Ontarian with us. I will ask him to take the floor. Jean-Claude.

Mr. Boulit: (Jean-Claude): Yes. I am one of these "still warm corpses" mentioned by...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Boulit: But what has kept me warm to date, I think, is having crossed the interprovincial bridge 20 years ago. So, to answer the question, I have difficulty believing that the solution for Francophones outside Québec, at a certain point, can be anything other than wanting to cross the bridge like I did, like others did before us, like Charles Castonguay, among others. I can speak of still warm corpses because I too was subject to assimilation, during a certain era, at a certain point in my life, and it can even be considered a constructive phenomenon, when we look at it outside Québec, for the survival of these people.

If I had children in Ontario, I would probably speak English myself. Therefore, in this respect, a stronger Québec will be a haven for Franco-Ontarians and all French Canadians and I think that... Of course there are people for whom the only reason to study in French - I have met with some as them as a writer, chatted with students - it's really only to be doubly qualified that they learn French. Simply to be bilingual for purposes of salary. Otherwise, as concerns life in general, I think we must definitely leave the door open and say it clearly, encourage people to use Québec as a haven and I think there will be a certain amount of immigration.

Mr. Turgeon: You agree, ultimately, that what is being announced this afternoon is the dismantling of Canadian unity, the failure of Trudeau's, Ouellet's, Chrétien's vision, and that of many others?

Mr. Boulit: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Messrs. Boulais, Boulit, Bernier, Michaud, Lafond, thank you for having agreed to come and discuss Québec's future with us. Please, hold your applause.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:06 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:11 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now hear the Alliance Outaouais group. Mr. Robert May, president. Mr. May, if you would kindly introduce your colleagues.

Mr. May (Robert): Thank you. J'aimerais vous présenter Carol Pritchard-Murtagh, directrice générale de l'Outaouais Alliance. À sa droite, D'Arcy Coulson, un des directeurs de l'Outaouais Alliance, et John Bridges. À ma gauche, Elizabeth Macfie et Alex Johnson, directeurs de l'Outaouais Alliance.

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

Outaouais Alliance

Mr. May: Thank you. J'aimerais d'abord souligner à la Commission qu'à l'Annexe 2 de notre mémoire, nous appuyons la SAO et nous signons en anglais seulement, en signe de respect pour notre communauté. Au nom de la communauté d'expression anglaise de l'ouest du Québec et du conseil d'administration de l'Outaouais Alliance, nous sommes fiers de participer aux discussions sur l'avenir du Québec.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh (Carol): We consider ourselves Canadians, Quebecers, and residents of the Outaouais. Outaouais Alliance has a clear vision: a healthy English-speaking community, a secure French-speaking community, a strong Québec, a united Canada. At this time, we ask our fellow Canadians in other provinces to listen. We appeal to them to devote their energy to Canadian unity. With even one link missing, the national chain that extends from sea to shining sea will be irreversibly broken.

Mr. May: L'Outaouais Alliance a une vision claire: une communauté d'expression anglaise viable, une communauté d'expression française assurée, un Québec résolu et un Canada uni. Nous sommes fiers de cette vision et c'est celle que nous recommandons à tous dans l'ensemble du Canada. En ce moment, nous demandons à nos concitoyens des autres provinces d'être à l'écoute. Nous leur demandons de consacrer leurs énergies à l'unité canadienne.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: In our view, the best approach for Québec and all other provinces of Canada is renewed federalism which ensures more autonomy at the local and provincial level while encouraging and coordinating increased domestic and international cooperation. While many of our members have expressed an attachment to their province, they have also expressed a fear of being denied their Canadian identity, one which they not only believe belongs to all Quebecers but which they hold very dear to their hearts. Our community requires what any Quebecer would expect to find within any modern democracy: quality education, access to quality health and social services, equal opportunity, respect and tolerance, political

recognition, and direct involvement in community and political processes.

Mr. May: J'aimerais maintenant faire quelques recommandations sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec. D'abord, nous recommandons que le gouvernement du Québec fasse la promotion d'un fédéralisme renouvelé auprès de toutes les provinces au sein du Canada, que le gouvernement du Québec reconnaisse les besoins particuliers de la communauté de l'Outaouais, que le gouvernement du Québec reconnaisse la communauté d'expression anglaise comme favorisant et protégeant la langue et la culture françaises au Québec et dans l'ensemble du Canada, que le gouvernement du Québec reconnaisse, dans les programmes d'enseignement, la participation de la communauté d'expression anglaise à la croissance, à la vitalité et au développement économique croissant de la province, que le gouvernement du Québec maintienne la présence de la communauté d'expression anglaise par la promotion des possibilités d'emploi.

(3:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: That the government of Québec ensure continued constitutional and legislative protection for the institutions which serve the English-speaking community; that the government of Québec expand public access to French second language training; that the government of Québec remove the restrictions against the use of languages other than French on public and commercial signs; that the government of Québec promote the supremacy of both the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms; that the government of Québec recognize the guarantees of access to health care as contained in the Canada Health Act.

Mr. May: Que le gouvernement du Québec assure qu'avant tout changement constitutionnel fondamental, les Québécois soient pleinement informés de tous les coûts économiques et sociaux réels. Nous vous remercions.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Merci. We will begin by... First, Mr. Michel Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): An observation, fellow colleagues. In reading the French version of your brief, on page 9, a sentence surprised me, and it says: "...même s'ils sont favorables à la protection et à la promotion des aspirations de la majorité d'expression anglaise, ils croient qu'il est tout aussi nécessaire de promouvoir la dualité linguistique." Earlier, someone handed me the English text, and it says: "...while they do... support the protection and promotion of the aspirations of the French-speaking majority, they feel that it is equally necessary to promote

linguistic duality." In fact, the French text doesn't say at all the same thing as the English text. The majority has become English...

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: It's a mistake...

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): I thought pointing it out immediately might simplify the rest of the discussion.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Sorry, it's a mistake.

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): It's not because it's a mistake, but rather that it could complicate the discussion.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): First speaker, first question, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, the first thing I would like to do is make a comment, followed by two brief questions. In your brief, there are a certain number of contradictions which you will permit me to point out. You say, in the introduction: A healthy French-English speaking community, a secure French-speaking community, a strong Québec, and a united Canada. That always makes me think of Mr. Deschamps, a strong Québec in a united Canada. A strong and independent Québec in a united Canada.

But you say, still on the same page: "In our view, the best approach for Québec and all other provinces of Canada is renewed federalism..." You are surely aware that for the last 30 years we've been trying to renew it without success. And moreover, I think that on that point, you realize maybe it wasn't completely feasible, since we don't find it in your recommendations.

You make a certain number of remarks I would like to recall, and which are interesting. You say you agree with the creation of language-based school boards. You also say, you talk about the strong love of the region's young Anglophones for Québec and their reluctance to leave, and I must say that I'm thrilled.

Elsewhere, you make a certain number of statements which leave me uncomfortable, if not sceptical. Firstly, you say: One of the greatest indignities suffered by our community was the imposition of Bill 178. I ask you, I ask you, if you had to trade the power to put up signs in English for the absence of services in other provinces, which would you choose? If you chose to establish yourself in a community in another province, as a minority, I think you would choose Québec, and we are, we would be very pleased.

For the moment, Mr. Chairman, as a minority... I would like to know... You also speak

about school facilities, and that's an area I know, they're unsatisfactory pretty much all over Québec. But I'd like to tell you that you have here the privilege of having an English-language college, there isn't one in the Baie des Chaleurs. There are about 500 kilometres between two colleges, and there isn't one on Montréal's West Island either. Francophones in Montréal West Island have been asking for one for 10 years. They have to travel for an hour, Francophones, in Montréal, in that area, in order to have access to a cegep. So it's true we have shortcomings in different areas of education and that the facilities aren't always adequate. But it's just as true for the Francophone community; I just thought it was important to say so.

Question: Would you agree to having Bill 101 apply the Canada clause to Québec regarding teaching, which is to say where numbers justify it? And second question, broader, because it's never really been told to us, and it's critical: What rights would you see written in the Constitution of a sovereign Québec for Anglophones?

Mr. Johnston (Alex): O.K. Firstly, we don't see inconsistencies in our document. We truly believe it's possible to have a strong Québec, with dignity, in a united Canada. It's not necessary. And so, even if we've been trying for 30 years to negotiate a new constitutional agreement which would be acceptable for everyone, we say: We may still have time. It's not the end of the world if it takes 40 years instead of 30 to have a new constitutional composition acceptable to Québec and the rest of Canada. And so, that's what we'd like.

Regarding education, and you also spoke of services, as opposed to the right to post signs in English. We don't mean that it's right that there be areas, like Montréal West Island, where there isn't a French cegep. Of course, it's important. But all the other services you can find, we don't see conflict in that. We can have our rights and we want to have our services, our institutions too. So, what we want to see guaranteed maybe in a Québec constitution, whether it be an independent Québec or a Québec that remains in Canada, whether that be guaranteed by the Québec charter of rights, or even that it be ratified, so that a simple majority of the National Assembly can't change it. And, we'd also like to have recognition of the contribution of the English-speaking community. And for the institutions which we've built. And also, in the Outaouais, we would like to have access to the economic level, and so, the level of care, medical care, and to have the right to keep going to Ontario when services don't exist here.

Well, it's pretty much that... I may have forgotten a few things.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: I would like to add

something if I may. Sur la question de la constitution et sur le fait qu'on essaie depuis 30 ans de renouveler la constitution au pays. Cela fait peut-être 30 ans que les hommes et les femmes politiques essaient de renouveler la constitution, mais la population du Canada n'a pas participé à toutes ces discussions. Au Québec, nous faisons figure de chefs de file, nous donnons l'occasion à la population de s'exprimer et de participer à la discussion. Je crois que nous sommes un exemple pour le reste du Canada en donnant à la population l'occasion de participer au développement du pays.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Time is unfortunately... We'll now move on to Mr. Robert Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I warmly welcome the presence of Outaouais Alliance. But firstly, I don't know when Mrs. Blackburn was last in Montréal; you obviously got a bad impression, between Montréal West Island and a French cegep. That'll have to be rectified.

Je crois qu'il importe de souligner que vous touchez un point très important à propos de la Loi 142 dans votre mémoire. Bien que le gouvernement invoque constamment la Loi 142 comme preuve de sa volonté de protéger la minorité anglophone du Québec, l'application de cette loi, et même l'adoption de cette loi, ont été une expérience difficile pour le gouvernement. Celui-ci n'est pas à l'aise avec cette loi. C'est une loi, comme vous l'avez fait ressortir à juste titre dans votre mémoire, qui pourrait très bien ne pas survivre à un changement de gouvernement, parce qu'elle n'est pas garantie et que tout gouvernement à venir pourrait facilement l'écarter par un simple vote de l'Assemblée nationale. Et j'espère que la Commission saisit l'importance de recommander que certaines garanties d'accès aux services sociaux et aux services de santé soient assurées.

Alors, ma première question est la suivante: comment croyez-vous que ce droit d'accès aux services sociaux et aux services de santé puisse être garanti dans un Québec redéfini, ou dans un Québec possédant une nouvelle constitution, qu'il s'agisse d'un Québec au sein du Canada ou d'un Québec souverain? Croyez-vous qu'il faudrait garantir l'accès aux services sociaux et aux services de santé, en tant que droit acquis, droit fondamental?

Mr. Coulson (D'Arcy): I have the impression that in general we always have certain rights, but initially in the legislation for the health and social services reform, certain references to the English-speaking community were ignored, for example, the minority communities in the picture. This problem has been resolved somewhat to date, but in general, for we now have two

pictures. First the delivery of services, but also the right to take part in the administration and planning of services; the other is the community's presence on the boards of institutions as well.

Mr. Libman: Vous considérez ces droits comme une garantie. Deuxième question: je crois qu'une autre chose qui est importante est le fait que depuis 15 ans, les Québécois d'expression anglaise et l'Outaouais Alliance ont toujours servi d'exemple, ont fait un effort légitime et sincère pour s'adapter au fait que le Québec est une province à majorité francophone. De nombreux groupes qui ont comparu devant la Commission, même ceux qui se déclaraient en faveur de la souveraineté, ont dit qu'il était important de reconnaître les droits de la communauté d'expression anglaise du Québec. Pourtant, ils n'ont pas voulu parler en détail de certains besoins et préoccupations de cette communauté, ils ont hésité à parler de garanties dans les domaines de l'éducation et des services de santé, et ils ne veulent pas toucher à la clause nonobstant ou à la Loi 178 sauf, évidemment, pour la rendre plus mordante. Ainsi, depuis 15 ans, nous faisons des efforts, et nos propres médias nous disent qu'il nous faut maintenant nous adapter, nous conformer et ne pas interrompre le mouvement. Et il semble que cela n'ait pas fonctionné. Que pensez-vous de cela? Estimez-vous que les Québécois d'expression anglaise devraient modifier leur stratégie? La communauté anglophone devrait-elle s'affirmer davantage pour tenter d'établir une distinction claire entre les aspirations collectives et les droits individuels? Quelle tournure le débat prendra-t-il, selon vous, dans un avenir rapproché? Quel type de stratégie croyez-vous que les Québécois d'expression anglaise devraient adopter aujourd'hui, en 1990?

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: La responsabilité revient à la communauté d'expression anglaise. Je crois que cela commence au niveau le plus haut, où nous désirons être reconnus et appuyés par les dirigeants du gouvernement. Nous ne voulons pas les entendre déclarer publiquement qu'ils peuvent gagner des élections sans notre appui, qu'ils n'ont pas besoin de nous, que nous ne faisons pas partie de la province. Nous faisons effectivement partie de la province. Nous en avons toujours fait partie et nous aimerions que ce fait soit reconnu. Nous croyons que la majorité des membres de la communauté d'expression anglaise ont de très bonnes relations avec leurs voisins et leurs amis de la province, et nous voulons que cela continue. Je ne peux m'imaginer que les membres de notre communauté aimeraient devenir des militants et descendre dans la rue. Ce n'est pas le message que nous avons communiqué jusqu'à maintenant. Cela ne fait pas partie de qui nous sommes. La

Commission et d'autres tribunes du même genre où les gens peuvent exprimer leurs opinions et faire valoir leurs points de vue constituent d'excellentes occasions pour les gens de se connaître. Nous avons beaucoup de chance que les cinq députés de notre région à l'Assemblée nationale aient reconnu nos besoins et aient établi un comité conjoint. Ce comité n'en est encore qu'à ses débuts, mais il permet aux gens de se rencontrer et de discuter de questions sérieuses qui nous concernent tous, non en tant que minorité linguistique, mais en tant que Québécois vivant dans l'Outaouais, où nous pouvons échanger des idées et trouver des solutions ensemble. Je crois que c'est un exemple que le reste de la province pourrait examiner.

Mr. Libman: Just one last...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): One short question, Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Just one last, short question because when I was in the area this summer I heard talk of this next question. En ce qui touche votre proximité avec la frontière de l'Ontario, voyez-vous comme une possibilité le fait que des anglophones ou même certaines municipalités anglophones situées dans ce territoire, le long de la frontière de l'Ontario, essaient de tenir leur propre référendum afin de décider, dans l'éventualité où le Québec deviendrait indépendant, si certains territoires du Québec, particulièrement dans cette région, afin de décider donc ou d'essayer de rester dans le Canada, en faisant partie de l'Ontario? Est-ce une possibilité ou est-ce une opinion extrême, à votre avis?

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Je crois que c'est là une opinion très extrême. Je crois que nous avons bien convenu que si les Québécois peuvent déterminer leur propre avenir, oui, je suppose que dans la région, les gens peuvent aussi déterminer le leur. Mais je crois que les membres de la communauté d'expression anglaise nous ont dit très, très clairement lorsque nous avons fait le tour de la région avant de rédiger notre mémoire, qu'ils étaient des Québécois et qu'ils désiraient le demeurer.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): O.K. Mrs. Côté, followed by Mr. Allard.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, Mr. Chairman. It seemed to me, in studying your brief, regarding language and education, that you question vested rights on which there is consensus in Québec. I recently heard the Conseil du patronat saying that it could actually live with Bill 178. And you bring up the question of the language of instruction chosen by the parents. You speak of new arrivals who should end their studies in

English; you speak of language laws. It seems to me that there is consensus in the Québec community on these elements, and I would like you to explain to me... On the other hand, you say at the same time: We want to be promoters of the French language and culture. It seems to me that the best way to be such a promoter is to believe in it, to speak this language and to read it. I would like you to tell me... On page 7, you say: "We also demand specific guarantees to maintain a viable school system. This is an essential requirement to assure our future." What are these guarantees? Yes, you say that, specific guarantees.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Yes.

Mrs. Côté: Are there others besides the one I spoke of, like, choosing the language of instruction...

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: The English-speaking people in this community are afraid that, because of the change in the Education Act, Bill 107, that maybe, in the foreseeable future, we're going to lose our schools and the "control and management of those institutions." And this is why people are uncomfortable in this part of the province.

Mrs. Côté: The language-based school boards which have... You speak somewhere about the confessional aspect. Well, you know that we have language-based school boards, and you know that there is the exercise of these school boards.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Oui, nous avons actuellement des écoles et nous avons des commissions scolaires, mais nous craignons qu'en vertu de modifications à la Loi sur l'instruction publique dans la province de Québec, nous pourrions perdre du terrain plutôt que d'en gagner. L'Outaouais Alliance, en théorie, appuie la Loi 107, estimant que de rassembler nos citoyens nous donnera la sécurité et nous permettra d'assurer une éducation convenable à nos citoyens, parce que dans de nombreuses situations, il est difficile d'obtenir un enseignement de qualité dans diverses régions où nous sommes peu nombreux.

Mrs. Côté: So, the real...

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Nous voulons également nous assurer que la Loi 107 ne viole pas ce que nous considérons comme nos droits en vertu de l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord britannique. Et c'est ce qui nous fait peur. Certains d'entre nous ne font pas confiance au gouvernement et estiment que leur droit à l'éducation leur sera retiré dans un avenir rapproché.
(3:30 p.m.)

Mrs. Côté: The real guarantee, in short, is the right of parents to choose the language of instruction.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Yes.

Mrs. Côté: Fine.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Allard, followed by Mr. Duceppe.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer you to page 18 of your brief, your last recommendation. You say in this recommendation: "that, prior to any fundamental constitutional change", I gather you are referring to possible sovereignty, "Quebecers be fully informed of all true economic and social costs." In your view, there would be economic and social costs. Would they be significant, and do you believe that up until now, since we've spoken a lot about sovereignty, that Quebecers have, or have not, been sufficiently informed of these costs? What is your view?

Mr. Coulson: If I may, it's always difficult to determine if it's a question of economic and social costs, or of opportunities. It depends on where you're sitting, of course, but the point is that if it's important for us, it's not a specific recommendation, it's that the decisions are important and the process is important. And if we have a situation where the country is somewhat troubled, where Parliament is troubled by constitutional discussions, that could cost something in terms of investments. We have a very serious situation right now. The economy is very weak. We have people who are seriously affected by real economic and social problems, and our view is that if it's possible, Québec and Canada should present all the facts in order to come up with, for example, an Entente Cordiale, a kind of shared mission for the next five years, in order to lend a certain sense of stability, of certitude. Therefore, we are suggesting that the possible economic implications of change be presented. Can we conceive of an agreement of this kind between the two governments which would identify a process or even a kind of shared mission for a period of time, which would minimize the possibility of economic costs?

Mr. Allard: Then I repeat another part of my question: Do you believe that, currently, we do or do not talk enough about these possible economic implications given that we talk a lot about sovereignty? Do we talk enough about these economic implications in the current debate?

Mr. Coulson: If I may, the answer is "no"; we have not seen many statistics, many studies. We have heard alternatives but never a study of

the implications, but I would say that we are concerned about that.

Mr. Allard: Is there still time?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I would like to turn the floor over to Mr. Duceppe unless... Mr. Duceppe? Thank you, Mr. Allard.

Mr. Duceppe: I read your brief with interest because I have always been sensitive to the rights of minorities, perhaps because of my family background. My mother is Hélène Rowley, my grandfather was John James Rowley and he was originally from Sorrow, a poor part of London. He arrived here, an orphan, when he was 15 and worked for Imperial Oil in Montréal East his whole life. He adjusted, learned French and the whole family was raised in French, all the while preserving the cultural heritage they had. I have also worked with many Anglophone workers as a union counsellor in English-language hospitals in Montréal, in the hotel business.

I was somewhat disappointed with your brief in certain ways. I think you got a bit carried away. When we speak of problems affecting universities, here I remind you that there is a school system for the Anglophone minority which goes up to university with three universities: Bishop, Concordia and McGill and I believe it works well.

On the other hand, there is a kind of blackmail I think, I'm referring to page 3. You say there will be a hostile climate because there will be neighbours who are wounded and angry. Does that mean that, because some people will be saddened by what happens, Quebecers have to stop thinking and making decisions? It seems to me to be rather insidious. Otherwise, I agree with certain established facts.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Question, Sir.

Mr. Duceppe: Yes, I'm getting to the questions. You specify, on page 13, that while our aged population is unilingual Anglophone, it goes without saying, our youth are becoming increasingly bilingual. According to you, isn't it exactly because of legislation that Québec passed that we have reached such a point? First question. And second question, I would like to clearly know if your association agrees with Québec's right to self-determination?

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Je reviens à la question des gens de notre région qui ne se sentent pas les bienvenus, à la question des voisins blessés et en colère et au fait que cela ne serait pas profitable pour le Québec dans toute discussion que nous pourrions avoir avec le reste du Canada. Je crois en effet que cela ne

serait pas profitable pour l'avenir si ce que nous décidions de faire créait ce genre de colère. Et je ne crois pas que cela serait délicat de notre part. Je crois qu'il est très naturel lorsque quelqu'un décide de diviser un pays que les autres citoyens de ce pays soient très en colère. Quelle que soit la direction dans laquelle nous allons décider de nous engager, nous devons nous réveiller et nous rendre compte que le reste du Canada est là et qu'à un certain moment, nous devons traiter avec lui. Nous devons en arriver à une certaine entente avec le reste du Canada; nous ne pouvons donc pas nous permettre de traiter avec des citoyens en colère qui pourraient envisager d'user de représailles. La nature humaine est réaliste et je crois que nous nous devons d'être réalistes dans toutes les discussions. Nous ne pouvons nous leurrer.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You have a second question?

Mr. Duceppe: The two questions haven't been answered. I spoke of an established fact, but the two questions haven't been answered.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): There are 15 seconds remaining to answer the questions. I'm sorry to push you.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Je ne me souviens pas... On page 13?

Mr. Duceppe: Firstly, whether people have become bilingual due to the legislation and, secondly, whether you agree with Québec's right to self-determination?

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Je crois que si nous sommes devenus davantage bilingues, c'est parce que dans les années soixante, nous nous sommes réveillés et nous nous sommes rendu compte que nous voulions faire partie de ce grand pays qu'est le Canada et de notre province et que nous ne voulions pas que nos enfants quittent le Québec en foule, comme cela s'est déjà vu, et aussi parce qu'à cette époque, nos parents ont essayé de s'assurer que nous recevions des cours de français de qualité, ce qui n'était pas souvent le cas, je peux vous l'assurer. Mes enfants sont bilingues parce qu'ils ont pu recevoir un enseignement du français de qualité dans une école anglaise, et ils pourront apporter leur contribution à la province d'une façon dont je ne le pourrai jamais. Ce n'est pas à cause des lois, mais bien parce que nous le voulons.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Merci. We now go on to Mr. Kehoe.

Mr. Kehoe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Il est évident que tout... La plus grande partie de votre mémoire est axée sur la question linguistique,

de même que les questions qui vous ont été posées ici aujourd'hui. Évidemment, c'est très... C'est un débat qui dure depuis longtemps déjà et qui continuera pendant encore longtemps. Mais, fondamentalement, il faut en arriver à un équilibre entre la question de la protection de la langue française et la protection des droits des citoyens anglophones dans la province de Québec. Il est évident qu'il n'y a pas de réponse simple ou facile à ce problème, mais ce que je désire vous demander, c'est: De quels moyens disposez-vous? Vous parlez de tolérance dans votre mémoire, vous parlez de respect, vous parlez de... En fait, quelle serait la solution, selon vous? Faudra-t-il qu'il y ait un changement d'attitude de la part des deux parties? Quelle mesure préconisez-vous pour que les deux peuples en arrivent à une entente?

Mr. Bridges (John): Je crois qu'il y a un certain nombre de points à examiner dans ce problème, mais fondamentalement, voici comment on peut résumer la question: vous nous demandez d'où vient cette idée de tolérance ou cette idée de changement d'attitude? Je crois qu'il est évident, d'après ce que Carol disait tout à l'heure, que la région dans laquelle nous vivons a énormément changé depuis vingt ans. Par ailleurs, il y a toujours une période de décalage entre le début d'un changement et l'application de ce changement, une période durant laquelle il se produit une évolution. En tant que groupe, nous sommes venus rencontrer la Commission pour demander à nos concitoyens de tenter de comprendre les perceptions des citoyens de notre communauté, parce que souvent, ce n'est pas la lettre de la loi qui importe, mais plutôt la perception qu'ont les gens de la loi.

Lorsque nous pourrions comprendre les perceptions des anglophones et des francophones et les rapprocher et, faisant preuve de tolérance, nous parler et nous rencontrer, lentement, mais sûrement, la population anglophone pourra en arriver à faire partie de la majorité francophone dans les domaines de l'éducation, de l'éducation permanente et autres, mais cela prend du temps. Et certaines questions nous ont préoccupés récemment: la Loi 178, entre autres. Aux yeux de nombre de nos citoyens âgés, cette loi est un fléau. Il s'agit là d'une question importante, d'un signe. Nous ne nous sommes pas donné le temps de connaître et de comprendre, que déjà la loi était adoptée. Nous le constatons chez nos jeunes. Nous le constatons parmi les gens qui grandissent dans la région. Nous le constatons par le fait que les gens que nous avons consultés sont des Québécois et désirent le rester.

Finalement, toutefois, oui, je crois que c'est une question de temps et je crois que c'est une simple question de tolérance. La tolérance dont on ferait preuve en protégeant certaines garanties dans des lois, en retirant certaines lois, peut-être, ce qui serait un signe de

compréhension. Voilà!

Mr. Kehoe: Basically, you say that it isn't through legislation but by the change of attitude, the change of perspective, the change of approach which you advocate more than by any legislation. Is that it?

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Je crois que nous devons comprendre que lorsque les gouvernements gouvernent et font des lois, ils influent aussi sur les attitudes de la collectivité. Quand un gouvernement fait des lois, nous pourrions tous rester à la maison et haïr le gouvernement, ou encore haïr un parti ou un autre. Mais lorsque vous prenez des décisions à Québec, nous sommes à l'écoute et cela influe sur la manière dont nous agissons. C'est pourquoi les membres de notre communauté estiment que la Loi 178 est une loi si insidieuse. C'est une vraie gifle qu'on donne à notre communauté. Ce n'est pas seulement une loi qui empêche les anglophones de mettre une affiche, c'est une loi qui empêche tout Québécois d'utiliser une autre langue que le français.

Nous devons être invisibles, et cela est très difficile à accepter. Le gouvernement nous dit que nous devons être invisibles. Il dit à la majorité que nous devrions être invisibles. Alors, il ne s'agit pas uniquement d'un changement d'attitude. Les lois adoptées influent sur les attitudes et déterminent comment les gens doivent agir les uns envers les autres, car les lois sont faites par les dirigeants.

Voices: Bravo!

(3:45 p.m.)

Mr. Kehoe: Mais en même temps, vous reconnaissez que le fait français en Amérique du Nord (la population francophone est de 2% en Amérique du Nord) doit être protégé au même titre que les droits des anglophones. Il faut en arriver à un équilibre. Comment y arriver, c'est ça qui importe.

Mrs. Pritchard-Murtagh: Je ne crois pas que la présence d'un mot anglais sur une affiche soit une menace à la langue française. And if the Government decides to give us French classes then maybe French can be spoken everywhere. On ne nous offre pas encore de cours de français de qualité dans nombre de nos écoles. Lorsque j'ai dit à M. Duceppe que j'avais eu la chance d'inscrire mes enfants à une certaine école, je dois ajouter que j'ai dû rester dans cette ville lorsque j'ai fait ce choix. Je ne pouvais pas déménager. Et je suis demeurée là pour que mes enfants deviennent bilingues. Nous n'avons pas beaucoup de choix. Nous voulons qu'on nous accorde toute l'aide possible pour que nous puissions faire partie de la province. On ne peut faire une loi qui exige que les gens parlent le français au travail si on ne donne pas aux

personnes qui ne parlent pas français les outils qui leur permettront de l'apprendre.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Before thanking you, can we dispense with applause? Well, Ladies and Gentlemen of Outaouais Alliance, merci d'être venus ici et d'avoir discuté avec nous de l'avenir du Québec. Evidemment, l'avenir du Québec est l'avenir de tous les Québécois. Merci.

Mr. May: Merci beaucoup. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:47 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:51 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We are going to hear from the representatives of the Assemblée des groupes de femmes d'interventions régionales. I understand that Mrs. Hélène Dion, you will introduce your colleagues.

Mrs. Lemieux (Micheline): In fact, I'm going to begin.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Can you introduce your colleagues?

Mrs. Lemieux: I am Micheline Lemieux. Marianne Giotcheski, Hélène Dion, Diane Pintal.

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

Assemblée des groupes de femmes d'interventions régionales

Mrs. Lemieux: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we have come here for AGIR, the Assemblée des groupes de femmes d'interventions régionales. For those groups who aren't very familiar with us, our group is a women's group: a non-profit organization made up of approximately twenty member groups as well as about twenty individual members active in the areas of popular education, health, violence, immigration, work and entrepreneurship. AGIR promotes cooperation and dialogue between women's groups in the Outaouais. AGIR supports movements promoting the defence of women's rights to autonomy and integrity. AGIR ensures the involvement of women in regional issues. Although AGIR has only been in existence since 1986, its constituent members have been studying and participating in regional development since 1978. We are concerned about the future of the Outaouais, and the political, social and economic status of women in the Outaouais. Marianne will now say a few words.

Mrs. Giotcheski (Marianne): Our brief does

not take a stand with respect to Québec's constitutional status, but favours instead a blueprint for an egalitarian society which would guarantee the rights and status of women, as citizens of the Outaouais and of Québec. We align ourselves with the brief presented by the Conseil du statut de la femme. We believe that it is essential to repatriate all the powers needed to develop policies dealing with parental leave, health, occupational safety, legislation on marriage and divorce, child care services, income security, reproductive autonomy and physical integrity, training – and by training we mean the whole range of services that includes language training for immigrants, adult education, retraining, career planning, and so forth – the representation of women in institutions.

Mrs. Dion (Hélène): The thing that worries us the most, for the women of the Outaouais, is that any substantial change in the employment structure in our region will have a major impact on the economic situation of women: 56.3% of Outaouais women work, 5% more than for the rest of Québec; 94.5% of these women in Outaouais work in the services sector, which means 14.5% more than for the rest of Québec; 23% of them work in the federal public service, 13 000 women all working for the same employer. These 13 000 women represent 10% of the working population in Outaouais. An extremely large majority of the small and medium-sized businesses run by Outaouais women are directly dependent on the federal public service because they sell it services or offer it indirect services, purchased by public servants. Finally, most of the other Outaouais women in the labour force work for service businesses that rely on the consumer's disposable income. In the event of extensive changes to our constitutional status, 50% of these jobs would be threatened.

In the Outaouais, like everywhere else in Québec, the average woman earns 67% of what an average man does. You've heard this figure before, of course, but have you really thought about what this 67% means? It means that, generally speaking, men in Québec have ten fingers and women only seven. Filling up at the gas pumps, typing a letter, feeding a family, writing a cheque for a mortgage payment, driving a car, or dialing the sitter's number with your kids climbing all over you can be pretty rough going when you only have seven fingers. In Québec society, women are congenitally disabled and the women of the Outaouais do not want their handicap to be worsened by political change. We don't want decisions to be made too hastily and this is why we support the creation of a task force for the Outaouais. We want to stress the fact, however, that this task force must consult the people and ensure the fair representation of women's groups that have the expertise to convey the needs of women and

defend their interests.

We also insist that this task force be given the human and financial resources it needs to conduct a special study on the problematic situation of women and work in Outaouais. Furthermore, we insist that this task force draw up, in cooperation with regional partners, an agreement that includes a clear definition of the role of Outaouais in a new Québec, in its capacity as a border zone in particular, confirmation of the current governmental vocation of Outaouais as well as a description of reorganization mechanisms and a timetable for reorganization, identification of stopgap measures and of ways of facilitating the socioeconomic integration of Outaouais in a new Québec, and mechanisms for disseminating the agreement in all the socioeconomic communities in Outaouais. It is our view that these things must be given serious thought before we act. We remind the gouvernement du Québec and our regional partners that they must recognize the competence of women and their desire to participate in decision-making and in all new political or other institutions. Before we can take a stand in favour of a particular constitutional scenario, we want a blueprint for society to be drawn up, indicating the role of women and the role of regions in a new Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Ladies. The first question, Mrs. Côté.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that it was important and necessary for you to come here and tell us how important it is to consider women in the context of the employment issue, especially since we know, as you stated in your brief, that the jobs concerned are often at the bottom of the social hierarchy. What I found interesting, however, was that you showed that if this consideration is not weighed, it would cost Québec a lot in economic and social terms, since there are a considerable number of single mothers in Québec. If, as you say in your brief, we repatriated the powers suggested by the Conseil du statut de la femme, since you draw your inspiration from their brief, and if there were guarantees for redefinition of employment and guarantees that people who are in danger of losing their jobs would be protected as much as possible, do you think that the sovereignty option would be the best one for the women of Outaouais?
(4:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Glofcheski: We didn't take a stand on the constitutional question for a very simple reason. I feel that a great deal of thinking is going to have to be done first. It would be easy just to say "yes" or "no". We all have dreams, ideals and so on, sometimes ridiculous ideals. What we want the most, obviously, is autonomy, independence, for women. And we don't think

that Québec can be independent if women aren't. We can't totally disregard half, over half of the population. That's my first point.

The second thing, obviously, is that we want to think the question over, of course. You, you're thinking all this over and you haven't reached any set conclusions either, and you've already had a lot of time, quite a bit more than us, to think about this. This is the very reason for our suggestion of a task force to study the Outaouais situation, so that we can look into how it could be done. What would be required from us and what we would be taking a stand on.

So, under these circumstances, I think that the answer to your question comes a little bit further down the road.

Mrs. Côté: Since what women in the women's movement are trying to do is to negotiate, to succeed in negotiating, their rights as equals, in structures, in both the private sector and the public sector, don't you think that the fact that Québec wants to negotiate with English Canada as equals could be seen as a tool that might serve us as well? The women's movement wants independence for women. That's why I say... Wouldn't this status better serve the women's movement?

Mrs. Glofcheski: Yes. I think that my colleague has something to add.

Mrs. Dion: Actually, there's something that we agree on, and that is that sovereignty, or whatever form of constitutional reform, doesn't automatically guarantee equal rights for women or their equal participation in all areas, their representation, in effect, at all levels of the power structure. And, at this time, we don't see how we can answer this question until there's a... we wouldn't know any more about the social context in which the gouvernement du Québec wants to exercise new powers. Also, one thing that we are especially worried about is how this government, with more powers, would redistribute these powers among the regions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, Mrs. Dion. Mr. Allard, followed by Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You just mentioned, I think, some things that are also in your brief. One of your concerns is that you want to make sure that women will take their rightful place in society in the future, a place that you want to define or determine. And you say that, for this purpose, there has to be a blueprint for this new society. You are also conscious of the impact that a major change in Québec's constitutional status could have on workers in your region, what with the

significant role played by the federal public service. And you say that the government would have to take steps to counteract this impact.

Are you thinking that you would like the blueprint for society you have in mind and the steps that the government would have to take to counter this impact to be decided on before Québec reaches a verdict with regard to its future constitution?

Mrs. Lemieux: There are certainly some things that we want to see done first. In terms of what we want, the importance of a blueprint for an egalitarian society, I think basically what we were saying, what Hélène said a minute ago, was that merely one option or another, pure and simple, without other changes being made at other levels, whether it be a question of female representation, making sure that women are involved at different levels... We talked about regional power because we think that this is a way that women could become involved more easily. So, these are things that I think could be defined before we move on to the final option.

I think that we want to make sure that status of women will be improved by a new blueprint for society. If our status remains the same as it is now, no matter what political option is adopted, it won't necessarily change much for us. We therefore want change.

Mr. Allard: So, the blueprint for society first and the constitutional option after.

Mrs. Dion: That's exactly what we mean.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I understand from this last answer is that you want to take your rightful place as full-fledged citizens, the place to which you are entitled. Symbolically speaking, your demands are a bit like those of Québec.

Mrs. Lemieux: I think that this is a fantastic opportunity, that if this wasn't all happening now, we maybe wouldn't get the chance to really tell you what we want. We've said it often enough, but we maybe don't usually get as big an audience as we will now. So, we're giving a lot of thought to certain things, we've defined a set of problems, we have expertise and we have women who are qualified in all sorts of fields, but we are underutilized. Now's our chance to say that we want to take the place that is rightfully ours and we want to take it in different ways. I therefore think that this is a wonderful opportunity for us to come and tell you this today.

Mr. Hogue: And we thank you for... Did you want to say something?

Mrs. Pintal (Diane): I would perhaps like to add something. When we talk about an egalitarian society, we refer to a redefinition of the power structure. This not only means powers shared by men and women but also powers shared by different authorities in Québec society, let's call them levels, by different levels of government. And this brings us to the question of regional government, which could be an area where women would participate more.

Mr. Hogue: If you will allow me, I would prefer to stay with the question of this initiative, which is so exciting and significant, as I see it at any rate. Your rightful place as equals and the recognition to which you are entitled, what Québec is asking for in effect. This is the message I receive from what you say and I hope that you'll continue to speak out loud and clear. I won't give you any advice, I'm only telling you my gut feelings... I hope that you'll continue to speak out loud and clear and that the answers that you provide so far, which, to my mind, show tolerance, wisdom, restraint and respect... and that you won't give way to unwarranted pressure because you're going to help everyone...

Mrs. Głowczeski: Mr. Hogue, if we're not depressed now it means we're not about to be.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: But doesn't this change, and this will be my last point, Mr. Chairman, or this blueprint for society also require profound changes in the whole society's attitudes?

Mrs. Dion: Yes, and this is something that we can't write into a new constitution.

Mr. Hogue: So, how do you see this change, this alteration, this flexibility in terms of attitudes as occurring in time and how much time do you think it will take us?

Mrs. Lemieux: As far as the time factor is concerned, this is something that will come about gradually. But one of the ways is that if there are more women at different levels or throughout the process, this will show. One of the things we've noticed during these hearings is that it's a good thing that there are women, because often, this may have happened in the other regions anyway, it was the women who asked the questions dealing with women and young people. So, one might wonder: If there hadn't been any women, would anyone have paid any attention to our issues? Therefore, if women are the ones who notice the things that

concern women... We hope that this will gradually change, but it is women who bring about this change. So, if women are involved throughout the process, just as we could have had a chairman and a chairwoman, we could have, you know, there are simple little things that we can do...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: Force us to change. Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right, we'll now hear Mrs. Louise Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to congratulate you for coming here to present your brief. What I noticed on reading, it was that you... All the briefs that have been submitted by women are similar to yours, except that you want to present a very special viewpoint, that of the Outaouais, since the Outaouais is so close to the national capital and that has an economic impact on you... I'm right with you. You support the recommendations made by the Conseil du statut de la femme. Among other things, you talk about parental leave. I do hope that when you refer to parental leave, you mean parental leave for women who work for the federal public service, because you're aware that in Québec, we are right now in the process of adopting or amending the Act respecting labour standards so that it provides for parental leave. You also talk about child care services. Child care services come under provincial jurisdiction. I know that you are well aware of this, since in 1989 Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay, who was the minister at that time, issued a policy for creating approximately 60 000 new day-care openings within a seven-year time period. You talked about marriage... provincial jurisdiction. I share your views. We could very easily tie this in with civil rights.

What you're asking the Commission, among other things, what I've retained from your brief, is for us to take your unique situation into consideration and keep it in mind when it comes to deciding on Québec's political status. This is what I believe I understand from your brief, except that when I read it, I was a bit surprised, I'm sorry to say, at what you say on page 9 when you say: "What is more, the present context where the economy is dominated by the public administration is not always economically advantageous to women, since they're still concentrated in the lower ranks of the public service". And you conclude that this is why AGIR considers that the status quo is unacceptable for the people of Outaouais. My question is this: In what way would a new legal status for Québec allow women to move all the way up the rungs of the ladder?

Mrs. Dion: I don't believe that it's a change in legal status that will allow women to attain management positions, but what we have to look at in this context is that this might be a chance for women to change to new jobs that would open up, and that it might also allow women, because there'd also be job reorganization probably, to completely change their work and take on other kinds of jobs. This...

Mrs. Lemieux: Yes, and I'd like to add that these things are related, when we say that it's not just a change in legal status or another option that will change anything, this is where the idea of a blueprint for society that would introduce new rules to play by, this is where... Because just changing, shifting the power from point A to point B, if there aren't any new rules allowing women to really take their place, it's possible that it wouldn't change... It'd change some things, but the rules of the game are very important. If we say that from now on, if we want to facilitate access for women to certain spheres of activity from which they are now absent, if... We talked about regional power because we think that there are competent women in the regions and that it's easier for women to become involved at the regional level, I think that it's things like this too. This is why the blueprint for society and the political option are inseparable.

Mrs. Glofcheski: I might perhaps add something in this connection. We also asked, if you noticed, for complete repatriation of occupational training. The Outaouais has a special problem at this level, because obviously there's a lot of training that's done on the Ontario side, but there are many workers who work there. O.K.? So, there are a lot of adults who cross the river for their occupational training. As a result, the Québec side has done what it could, but it developed as it should have. I'm speaking here as an adult education teacher. But in reality, in a context of new regional policy, with the region having a bit more power, and I would like to believe that this would be one of the areas that would come under regional power, just as it could elsewhere. It seems to me that training requirements could be defined at the regional level, which would allow economic development at the same time, because the two things go hand in hand. It's a bit like the question of the chicken or the egg. The jobs are there. You train for a job or else you train for a job and you create jobs afterwards. It seems to me that the whole field of entrepreneurship could in this way become much more dynamic than it is now.

(4:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you. That answers my question.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Now for Mr. Gendron.

Mr. Gendron: Yes, thank you for coming. Quickly now. You indicated at the very beginning of your talk that you are here for AGIR ("pour AGIR", meaning "to ACT", literally). Well, believe it or not, this is the exact same responsibility that we have as commissioners of this Commission: to act on the constitutional future of Québec. I would like to move on immediately to ask you my questions as rapidly as possible since our time is limited. On page 10 of your brief, personally anyway, I feel that you can't make such bold assertions as you have, and with good reason, in other words about repatriating all powers or developing coherent policies dealing with parental leave, health, occupational safety, legislation, marriage, divorce, and so on, and then go on to say: "Well, we're not really in a position to voice an opinion with regard to our constitutional status". Because the things you were just talking about are all key elements of a sovereign Québec. This is my view and it's the view of many of my colleagues, of many people, including your (counterparts) from the Gaspésie and Côte-Nord regions, who came out clearly in favour of political sovereignty for Québec. So, how do you think, considering that you don't voice an opinion, that we can do this? How can we repatriate the powers you talk about on page 10? And you refer to very specific areas. How are we to do all these things in the present constitutional context?

Mrs. Glofcheski: Look, we've already answered your question in a way. We suggested a draft agreement with the Outaouais. We proposed a process that we'd see, that would allow us afterwards to...

Mr. Gendron: I'm going to interrupt you. I know that you said these things, but it seems to me that what you don't say is that, even though you say that an arrangement would be established with the Outaouais, all of these powers are in Ottawa. How can we do this? How can we do what you want within the present constitutional framework, where you have to amend the Constitution, when you are well aware that we cannot amend the Constitution? We tried to add five insignificant little conditions and we were turned down.

Mrs. Glofcheski: Yes, but Mr. Gendron, it seems to me that first we have to know what we want before we can negotiate anything.

Mr. Gendron: If you'll allow me, let's chat a bit. This is how I think that we can advance the debate. Personally, I want us to try to determine what we want too. But, look... I'm going to try to catch you up with what you say

in your brief. You say very clearly, and this is your inalienable right, that you want to define your blueprint for society, and I know what you mean: shared powers for an egalitarian society, and I'm quoting you here. And I'm saying how can we seriously work on a blueprint for an egalitarian society if we don't have the tools we need, if we don't have all the tools, many of which are mentioned as being required in your demands? We don't have them and you say we should work on developing a good blueprint for society. How are we to do this? The blueprint will be full of holes, Mrs. Glofcheski, it'll be full of holes and it'll be full of problems. So, my question is: How can you intimate that we can develop a blueprint for society if the constitutional framework isn't defined first? Because it's the constitution that will give us our powers.

Mrs. Glofcheski: I'm going to let my colleague here answer you.

Mrs. Dion: Personally, I think that before we decide on our constitutional status... I mean there are probably projects under government control that suggest that we will opt for some formula, be it sovereignty or another scenario, but we feel, again it's hard to believe anyway that people could choose as individuals, because in effect they would be giving it free rein.

Mr. Gendron: Yes I know, Mrs. Dion. I'm trying to understand why we'd be giving it a free rein. You yourself said: The power, mind you... I heard you. Are you aware that occupational training is currently a total muddle and that the main reason is that the federal government can't stop barging in, and it says: Such and such a manpower program is completely inappropriate so it doesn't offer you any jobs worth having. This is what you were talking about a while back. But you're not talking about it now. You say: I want you to define my blueprint for society. I understand your wanting us to be in a better position to act, however. This was your premise. You are here so that we can act together with respect to legitimate demands that I share completely, but you tell us: We're not going to say anything about the major issue. Why don't I have it? I don't have occupational training; it's in Ottawa. So, if you don't take a stand in favour of a new constitutional framework, how can we give you what you want?

Mrs. Lemieux: Maybe we don't have... You know, in 10 or 12 pages, you can't... And in such a short time... We didn't have enough time to delve into this question very deeply. But there are some things we're sure of, and that is that if we're going to have coherent policies, we're going to have to repatriate powers. Regarding

which powers exactly, I personally can tell you, maybe I don't know, but...

Mr. Gendron: Thank you. That's much better. You say that we have to repatriate powers.

Mrs. Lemieux: We have to. We already said that, and our position hasn't changed. The status quo is unacceptable. We reject the status quo.

Mr. Gendron: Aha! Just a minute, now. Look, we're very limited...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, but let her...

Mr. Gendron: I'm almost finished.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No. Give her a bit of a chance to answer.

Mr. Gendron: O.K., O.K. I don't mind. I thought she'd finished, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Lemieux: The status quo is unacceptable to us. That's clear. We want, and we dealt specifically with... This was how we decided to do it... Matters with which we were the most familiar: areas related to the status of women. So, we said: We want to repatriate because we know that it's a problem having different levels of government and that it doesn't make for coherent policies. This we know. This too we already told you.

We're saying that we can't just do this. We also have to define new rules of the game for ourselves. A blueprint for an egalitarian society would at the very least involve writing an equality rule into the constitution and then making rules along the lines of decentralizing things, to make it possible for there to be more women everywhere. Things like that. We don't want to have one without the other. I believe that this is what we told you. We may not have covered all of the ground, but this is how far we've gotten in our thinking.

Mr. Gendron: But on page 9...

Mrs. Pintal: We also say that, as women, if we can separate the women's issue aspect from all the other aspects, we're especially interested in these powers. But if we think about our financial independence, in the Outaouais region, we also have to think about the job context, the employment aspect. This is why we say that, before we go any further, we in the Outaouais want a task force to be set up so that an agreement can be concluded with the region.

Mr. Gendron: I think that this is an excellent suggestion, for a task force, and your

insisting on jobs being protected. I go along with that. But, I would just like perhaps to conclude with this. On page 9, and I wouldn't want the commissioners to misunderstand, so let's read the text carefully. On page 9 of your brief, you don't talk about the constitutional status quo at all, you say: We in the Outaouais don't want to settle for the status quo. But your reference to the status quo bears on economic diversification, and my question...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Your time is up, Sir. Do you have a comment to add?

Mr. Gendron: My question is: Wouldn't it have been better to talk about the constitutional status quo instead of the economic situation, even if what you say is true?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Madam.

Mrs. Glofcheski: Might I...?

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

Mrs. Glofcheski: Just 30 seconds. Look, personally I link that to the beginning, to your question regarding occupational training. This subject has been studied from every angle. At one point, a task force was even set up to look into the matter of occupational training. Perhaps if we got the studies out, the impressive work that has been done on the different questions, occupational training for one, and we dusted them off a bit and then took a look at them, then you'd find some answers. We worked very hard on them. They contain some of the answers, which have already been very widely accepted.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): If you will allow me, I'd like to thank you for your contribution to the advancement of our work on the matter of Québec's future. Thank you, Mrs. Pintal, Mrs. Dion, Mrs. Glofcheski and Mrs. Lemieux.

Now, if you don't mind, I have something to add. I have consulted my colleague and Co-chairman and... Well, Mrs. Lemieux, regarding your suggestion that there perhaps should have been one chairwoman and one chairman on this Commission, my colleague agrees: he would have preferred working with a woman and so would I.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:24 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:28 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now hear the Association des citoyens de Hull. Mrs. Lise Goulet, would you please introduce

your associates.

**Association des citoyens et des
citoyennes de Hull**

Mrs. Goulet (Lise): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. I'd like to begin by thanking you for having us here today. As their brand new chairperson, I'm proud to introduce the people here with me today. On my far left, Pierre Legault, administrator; also on my left, Luc Bouvier, secretary and resource person; and, on my right, Gabriel Lefebvre, first vice-chairman. I'd like to say that the Association des citoyens et citoyennes de Hull participated in the introductory statement this morning. I will now ask Gabriel Lefebvre, who was the Association's chairman for ten years, to present our brief, entitled: Hull: An Occupied City.

Mr. Lefebvre (Gabriel): The Association des citoyennes et des citoyens de Hull wants to limit its comments in connection with the debate that is shaking Québec, to a problem that, although it is local, mirrors the federal link that binds Québec and Canada. Hull experiences the impact of Canadian federalism on Québec society on an everyday basis. The sources of this impact are interventions by the National Capital Commission on the one hand and the federal government itself on the other.

First point: Hull's French character. One of the problems caused by the National Capital Commission is that it wants to destroy Hull's French character by taking the very opposite course to the policies of Québec and the City of Hull. The NCC gives grants to Hull businesses that want to become bilingual. It refuses to let the City of Hull use part of its land to install a welcome sign because it's not bilingual. The federal government, by locating 18 045 public servants in downtown Hull has made this area almost unilingually English. The Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec must recommend that federal government agencies and the federal government itself no longer have the power to infringe upon Québec laws designed to preserve Québec's French character.

Second point: The federal government is not very civic-minded. It behaves like disrespectful citizens who don't fulfill their obligations. It does whatever it likes. If it's had an especially difficult year, it decides to cut its payments or, depending on the technical term it uses, "in-lieu-of" taxes. The City of Hull is going to lose \$5.8 million this year. The effect this will have on the citizens of Hull is that they'll be forced to pay for the federal government. The Commission must recommend that the federal government no longer be able to ignore its civic duties.

Third point: The NCC, a limit to the

development of Hull. The federal government, via the National Capital Commission, has countless square kilometres of land on the Québec side of the Outaouais. The part of this strip of land that people are the most familiar with is Gatineau Park. The problem with the NCC owning so much land in Québec is that, for one thing, the gouvernement du Québec, and as a result the City of Hull, has no authority over this land, which represents approximately 40% of Hull. Another problem is that the NCC takes advantage of this to prevent the City of Hull from developing. The city therefore finds itself strapped into a straitjacket and is unable to decide on the broad lines of its development without the tacit agreement of the NCC, which can block municipal projects. The Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec must recommend that Québec be made the first owner of all its territory.

Fourth point. The NCC works for Ottawa. The NCC works in Ottawa's interests. Over the years, the island of Hull has become a huge freeway that leads to Ottawa. While it works in the Ontario side's favour, it weakens the commercial fabric of Hull. The Association des citoyennes et des citoyens de Hull asks the Commission to restore the primacy of Québec's laws over all other laws that allow the federal government and the National Capital Commission to bilingualize, if not anglicize, Hull, effacing its French character, to block development in Hull and to take over large parts of Québec's land.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will begin the question period with Mr. LeSage.

Mr. LeSage: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a Hull MNA, I'm pleased to see you here, since we more or less represent the same taxpayers or the same citizens. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new chairperson. I gather that you were just recently elected.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to explain to the Association des citoyens de Hull the importance of their submitting a brief to us, and the importance of the members of this Commission understanding their brief properly. Your brief is not all that bulky, but it will nevertheless go the rounds of the province of Québec. It is therefore essential for people to understand it very clearly. If you don't mind, because I won't let myself get caught in the trap of too long an introduction, I'd like to know how many active members you have in your association.

Mrs. Goulet: There are 125 families that are members of the Association, but we also represent a number of groups, groups of merchants who come to see us when they run into special problems, for example.

Mr. LeSage: Now, I'd like to refer to the

last page of your brief, where you say, in the first paragraph, before the conclusions: "Sometimes the NCC's behaviour is virtually indecent. For example, last year, in a poorly managed initiative in the interests of economy, it decided to close a road used by thousands of Hull citizens to get to the Outaouais hospital centre." A statement which implies that this road was closed and that it's still closed. Now for my question. Is it closed?

Mrs. Goulet: Mr. Bouvier.

Mr. Bouvier (Luc): No, the road that the NCC was thinking about closing, the "Promenade de la Gatineau"... They gave in to pressure and left it open in the end, because of the pressure brought to bear on them, though. And I want to point out that the road in question is in Québec and that it was a federal agency, established in Ottawa, that made the decision as to whether it would be opened or not.

Mr. LeSage: So, contrary to what this paragraph of your brief implied, the road is not closed.

Mr. Bouvier: No, the road is not closed, but I can't promise you that it'll be open this winter.

Mr. LeSage: Has it ever been closed? And if so, for how long? To save time, you can answer me in a minute. I'd like to ask you some more questions, because we're very pressed for time. In your introduction, you ask the Commission to make a recommendation that would allow Hull and Québec to recover their full autonomy, thereby indicating that you favour political independence for Québec. But, in connection with your point "The federal government is not very civic-minded", you ask the Commission to recommend that the federal government no longer be able to ignore its civic duties. This implies that you are in favour of some kind of association with the federal government. And under the next point, you advocate a form of sovereignty for Québec by saying that you want the Commission to recommend that Québec become the first owner of all its land. Personally, when I look at these contradictions, what I want to ask you is which constitutional option you favour for Québec's political future.

Mrs. Goulet: As far as the political future of Québec is concerned, of course our brief as such... You're right. We didn't talk about any option in particular, but the reason for this is very simple: it's that we were telling you about a city, Hull, the City of Hull. I should point out, however, that with all the recommendations we talk about in our brief, and I can see that you read it, Mr. LeSage, and I'm glad you did, with

all the recommendations we make, since I don't believe that it would be possible within the federation we belong to now, I think that we'd have to aim for sovereignty, and there isn't anyone here at this table who'd be against that. However, there's one thing that's certain: We talk about a referendum so that it would be all the citizens of Hull, but also all Quebecers, who would be making the decision.

Mr. LeSage: You also talk... In your brief, you place a lot of blame on the NCC. Of course the NCC has made mistakes, but I don't want to be the devil's advocate here; nobody in the world is perfect. You blame the NCC for helping to plan the construction of federal government buildings on the island of Hull, causing the island of Hull to lose its charm, discouraging business... Don't you agree that for years local politicians at the federal, provincial and municipal levels applied pressure, year after year, precisely for the federal government to be shared between Ottawa and Hull and for it to give us what we had a right to; don't you agree that we were desperate for federal buildings?

Mrs. Goulet: Mr. Bouvier.

Mr. Bouvier: Yes. Obviously, for many years, the gouvernement du Québec and the municipal councillors asked for those buildings. The thing that we don't agree on here is the fact that, in the end, it was the federal government that decided how the island of Hull was to be organized, so to speak, how Hull was going to be organized via the NCC, of course, and that it wasn't the City of Hull that decided. In effect, it probably would have been much wiser, if we take the example of the federal buildings, to build them... You remember what the island of Hull was like before the federal buildings. It was about the only place where, in terms of heritage, there were buildings with any charm to speak of. It would have been much wiser, if only for the sake of tourism, to keep these buildings and build them somewhere else. But Hull does not have the privilege of managing its city, so to speak. It's the NCC and the federal government that have it, and that's what we're angry about.

Another thing. When you talk about the fact that we wanted Québec to have what it was entitled to, I'd like to point out that it's quite remarkable that, for almost all Quebecers... and when we talk about what the federal government should build in Hull... we still speak in terms of Quebecers' rightful share in the final analysis, a little like Quebecers were second-class Canadians, and maybe this is true, without the right to their share in effect, 25% in other words. It wouldn't occur to anyone, though, that the people of Ontario only have the right to their share! No, for the people of Ontario, we

never ask this kind of question. We could say, for example, that they are entitled to up to 100% of all federal buildings and it wouldn't bother anyone.

So why, if Canada... imagine... They could have built, if the border, if the federal capital was located between Manitoba and Ontario, for example... Clearly, this kind of question wouldn't come up. They wouldn't wonder: If I put up one more building, will it tip the scales in Manitoba's favour? No, they're all Canadians in the end, but since...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm going to have to cut you short. We'll now hear from Mrs. Pauline Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to begin by welcoming you. Actually, when I saw the title of your brief, it reminded me of the title of another book, written by a man who lived in the Outaouais for a long time, entitled: "Who Stole Main Street?" I'm sure you must recall Roger Poirier, who is now... who's an announcer in Montréal, and who fought very hard to protect Hull's old central district, the island of Hull.

Now, in your brief, you talk about influence, and more than influence in fact, because you talk about the National Capital Commission acting in total disregard for Québec's laws governing the languages used on public signs. I'd like you to indicate which law or other instrument empowers the National Capital Commission to act on Québec territory, with respect to the language used on signs, and to give me a few examples of what this means in terms of Hull.

Mr. Bouvier: In effect, the federal government is not obliged to obey Québec's laws or, in the case we're discussing here, to obey Bill 101, or Bill 178, the law governing languages on public signs, when it comes right down to it, the federal government, as far as signs and so on are concerned, inside its own buildings and on its land at any rate... It's the same thing with the NCC; it obeys the Official Languages Act.

The problem goes beyond the mere question of the languages used in signs. It's also the whole problem of the language used in the federal public service. It's a good thing that Quebecers have managed to obtain part of what was rightfully theirs as far as the federal public service is concerned, for example. But the price they have to pay in terms of culture is astronomical. If we look at the whole of Québec, we see that, in Québec, 52% of the jobs are defined as being bilingual positions. This means, then, that Quebecers, when they work for the federal government - and it's even more flagrant in this region in fact - are very often

forced to work in English. Even the Official Languages Commissioner was shocked by this. D'lberville-Fortier was shocked by the fact that in Québec, in a place that is defined as bilingual, 60% of the jobs were defined as being bilingual, and in a unilingual place in Québec, in other words a place where all affairs should normally be conducted in French, 30% of the jobs were bilingual. But what's happening... The region is a scaled-down version of the same phenomenon... It's the same thing as what's going on in Québec. That is, there's a huge business with 70 000 people, 70 000 Quebecers, 70 000 employees, that is the biggest bilingual business in Québec. And what it comes down to is that the gouvernement du Québec spends buckets of money to francize businesses, while right next to them, right next door... The biggest of these businesses is run in English and, most of the time, forces Quebecers to work in English.

So... All this is going on throughout Québec. It's the same thing that's happening here; it's even more flagrant. Have yourselves a nice time; take a walk down Main Street; go get yourself some lunch. Very often, you have to make a special effort, you have to repeat your request, if you want to be served in French inside the buildings. Of course they're bilingual... or English, etc. There's no shortage of examples.

Mrs. Marois: And you encounter them every day; you experience this every day. What you say is along the same lines as other remarks, regarding the National Capital Commission and its impact here, along the same lines as remarks made by the City of Hull and the Société d'aménagement de l'Outaouais, which says it in a way... with statistics and what not, but says that the Québec side has always been a bit underprivileged. You're saying this too. You say that the NCC works for Ottawa, in Ottawa's interests, and not much for Hull and the Outaouais region. Over the years, the City of Hull has become a huge freeway that leads to Ottawa.

I'd like to go back over a number of factors that confirm this assertion, that you submit in your brief, to the effect that the policies of the National Capital Commission, in the final analysis, have harmed the Outaouais region.

(4:45 p.m.)

Mr. Bouvier: There are all kinds of examples. Let's look at one example: For many years, Hull has been interested in state-of-the-art technology. It created a high-tech industrial park, of course. Now you have to try to picture Hull in terms of its geography. It's almost a south-north strip squeezed in between federal lands. So, when you're looking for a place to set up a high-tech industrial park, generally

speaking it's going to have to be a small park because there isn't much land. Geographical space is really very, very limited. So, while Hull was struggling with this, the NCC offered the City of Ottawa part of its land, at a very generous price, so it could set up a high-tech industrial park of its own. Now, just try after that to attract businesses to Hull as opposed to Ottawa, when the City of Ottawa is so plainly sponsored by the NCC. It's much harder. The same rule applies to hotels...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm sorry to interrupt you, but it's now Mr. Mark Assad's turn to take the floor.

Mr. Assad: I was listening to you, Mr. Lefebvre. In your presentation, you talked about roads built from Hull to Ottawa, but I remember, back when I was in Québec City with Mr. Rocheleau and the others, I was working with the Hull city council, the CRO at that time, and I remember that we developed a plan for improving the road and street system in Hull. So, we were considering our own needs before anyone else's. I noted that the investment made by the Québec ministère des Transports was the outcome of consultations that had been conducted in the Outaouais region, particularly in Hull, to ensure that we would have access not only to the City of Hull but actually so we could get to Ottawa too. So, I think that this aspect was important for our development. And when I listen to your chairperson, Mrs. Goulet, I feel I have to ask you this: In your opinion, have the citizens of Hull reaped any positive benefits from the presence, not of the federal government, but of the NCC?

Mr. Bouvier: Yes. I'd like to begin by responding to your remarks on the road situation. The points you raise are very interesting. I'm going to give you an example of the peculiarities of road building in Hull. We know that every morning, 23 000 Hull citizens who are public servants in the Outaouais region make the trip to Ottawa. There are 15 000 public servants who come over here to Québec from Ontario. So, it's obvious that all the bridges are overloaded every morning and every evening. But as you can see, there is nevertheless a difference of 8 000 people to play with. So, instead of doing their calculations, the NCC, which has in fact said that it looks after long-term planning, instead of saying for example: O.K. then, if there's a difference of 8 000 people, what would happen if I set up a Transport Canada building, for example, that would contain about 4 000 people, in Gatineau? What would happen is it would prevent us from having to build another bridge, which is what we're in the process of planning, a new bridge, because 8 000 people who make the trip would

end up travelling in the opposite direction. So, instead of engaging in this kind of planning, which would save us millions, what does the NCC do? It plans a bridge that's going to be a new road. If the system doesn't change, Québec is likely going to sign the agreement and so on, and this will favour Ottawa because every bridge that's built, of course, is for getting to Ottawa. So, that's my answer to your first question.

Now, you ask us what good things the NCC has done. Because of the geographical location of the Outaouais, the NCC and the federal government have of course done things in Outaouais. We can't deny that. What we have to realize as Outaouais residents is that these things were not done for our sake. The federal buildings haven't been here since the 1950s, the 1920s, the 1930s. The federal buildings are here because Quebecers from everywhere in Québec stood up and said: No, that's enough, we want our share. So, you can imagine what would happen if Québec takes the course of sovereignty, for example, and the Outaouais balks at this in the end. Do you really think that the federal government, when it took so much to get it to...? Think of all the pressure it took to get it to build the federal buildings; it took 100 years before they actually did it. So, you can imagine that if Québec is no longer behind you, if Québec is no longer behind the Outaouais to force the federal government and the NCC to build something, you won't get anything. So, the Outaouais must resolutely go at the same pace as Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Your time is up, Mr. Assad, unless you want to take 15 seconds to say something.

Mr. Assad: About the bridge, I can't help but say that it's only right for you to speak particularly from the point of view of the City of Hull and all that, but the new bridge proposed by the NCC was one a key priority for the City of Gatineau, which is experiencing quite extraordinary economic growth, and it's very important for its development. I don't think that building this new bridge over the Ottawa River would be harmful for the Outaouais.

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

Mr. Bouvier: I want to use this time to point out simply that... Imagine that there'd been a bridge, for example, that linked Ottawa to Gatineau, Nepean-Gatineau actually, do you think that Gatineau would have developed commercially the way it has? Definitely not, because most of the store owners would have said: "O.K., here I am on the other side and there's a virtually direct link, so that'll be enough, they can make the trip".

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Mr. Gilles Duceppe will ask the next question.

Mr. Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You stipulate in your brief that the NCC's activities go against Hull's interests. You talk about loss of control over Québec land ownership. I'd like to know how you explain this lack of respect on the part of the NCC for the City of Hull and the people of Hull, in effect. What is your explanation?

Mr. Bouvier: In effect, they are owners. There's nothing that we can do. What do you want us to do? It's the federal government, it's them, they're the ones that are sovereign. Québec isn't really sovereign. There's nothing that can be done. That's why, between us, I'll withdraw if necessary, but you're right, they couldn't care less about us.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Well, thank you, Mrs. Goulet, Mr. Lefebvre, Mr. Legault and Mr. Bouvier. Thank you for giving the Commission on the future of Québec your point of view. And I'd like to ask you to immediately head to your left. Please no applause and leave so that we can move on quickly to the next brief.

Welcome, Mrs. Manon Guitard. Would you please introduce the person accompanying you.

Mrs. Manon Guitard

Mrs. Guitard (Manon): Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce Lawrence Albert George, the person accompanying me tonight.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I stand before you tonight as an ordinary citizen but also as a lawyer and municipal councillor for the City of Hull. The goal of my brief is to present to the Commission what I think is the current situation of Québec and what it should become if Québec is to develop harmoniously.

In Canada, constitutional negotiations usually take the form of claims by Québec which the federal and the other provinces either accept or refuse according to the political circumstances. Actually, Québec has no real bargaining power, because it is not sovereign. Sovereignty would at least enable it to act while awaiting an agreement. Sovereignty being the attribute of the federal government, it can and does act, but not always with due consideration of Québec's unique character.

In actual facts Québec waits while the federal takes advantage of the situation to encroach on fields of provincial jurisdiction and to use its residual powers to claim for itself fields that were not explicitly provided for in the Constitution. The phenomenon is so true that one of the minimum conditions of the Meech

Lake Accord aimed precisely to limit federal encroachment in fields of provincial jurisdiction. Because of Québec's lack of sovereignty, it is unable to establish a power relationship that would force Ottawa to negotiate. Any formula favoured by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec must include the reestablishment of Québec's full sovereignty. Failing that, there will be no real power relationship and Canada will refuse to negotiate or will negotiate so little that everything will have to be renegotiated again in 2, 5 or 10 years, with 5, 6 or more minimum conditions.

Québec's constitutional problem stems, among other things, from the fact that negotiation involves 10 provincial governments, including Québec, and the federal government. At each constitutional negotiation, Québec must act on two fronts. On the one hand, it must have its claims accepted by the other nine provinces, and on the other hand, it must have them ratified by Ottawa. The history of constitutional negotiations illustrates the twofold requirements faced by Québec. It explains why Québec sometimes tries to unite in a common front with the provinces, while at other times seeking to obtain federal support. Sometimes the provinces accept what Ottawa refuses, and sometimes Ottawa must say goodbye to the agreement it had negotiated with Québec, provided there is no secret agreement excluding Québec, like there was in 1982.

Any formula favoured by the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec must involve negotiation between Québec and Canada exclusively. Otherwise, there will always be someone who will refuse, either because of the special status or the risk of balkanization, and the Meech Lake saga will be repeated. Meanwhile, Québec regresses. For the Québec politicians who supported the Meech Lake Accord, Québec's five minimum conditions were presented as gains, if not as the *nec plus ultra* in constitutional matters. This is quite normal in politics since euphemism remains the prime weapon of political rhetoric. But if one looks at it more closely, the content of the Accord is only a partial solution when compared with the scope of the constitutional problem. For fear of scaring away Canada's provincial and federal governments, how many things were left aside by Québec: communications, occupational training, international relations, monetary policy and regional development, to name but a few?

There is no political blueprint in the Accord, much less a global vision of the future of Québec's society. On the contrary, it is a heterogeneous collection of clauses of unequal value, sometimes quite uncertain, if one takes for instance the distinct society clause. The partial content of the Meech Lake Accord and of the constitutional negotiations in the last three decades has the effect of dragging out the

debate. Even if the ten premiers had ratified the Accord in 2, 4 or 5 years — because Québec would have developed and the situation would have changed — other demands would have emerged and the same scenario would have been repeated. The Commission must be concerned with this vicious circle that undermines Québec's economic development.

The Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec must not only favour a solution that puts a real power relationship in the hands of Québec and restricts negotiation to the governments of Québec and Canada, but also a formula which reflects the entire constitutional problem.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Madam. We begin the question period with Mr. Gendron.

Mr. Gendron: Mrs. Guitard, and the gentleman with you, I would like to thank you, because it is not always easy to come as an individual to express your personal point of view. I think your experience in the Outaouais region, as a municipal councillor or in your previous capacities, enabled you to come here and give the members of this Commission the benefit of your vast experience, and I thank you on behalf of my political group.

Essentially, I think you summarize pretty well the damage Québec has incurred because of its lack of sovereignty and also the repeated federal encroachments in our fields of exclusive jurisdiction. You indicate that, fundamentally, the problem is that Québec, with no real bargaining power, is always going to be taken in, and quickly. In the present regime, before going further, how do you think we could... First, do you think it is possible to have real bargaining power and, if not, how do we get it?
(5:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Guitard: In my opinion, it is impossible to have real bargaining power because, to be able to negotiate, you need to have two equal entities. And since Québec is an entity within the Canadian federation, it cannot negotiate with the federal government. Consequently, if Québec wants to be able to develop and obtain all the powers which are the necessary attributes of a sovereign people, it must begin by becoming sovereign.

Mr. Gendron: What kind of mechanics do you suggest?

Mrs. Guitard: First, I think the population of Québec will have to decide clearly about the reality of sovereignty. As soon as the people have decided, then I think the government in power, in Québec City, will be entitled to declare itself sovereign and to ask for its place on the international scene.

Mr. Gendron: So you favour holding a referendum in the relatively short term?

Mrs. Guitard: Absolutely, because I think this situation has lasted long enough. I think the defeat of Meech Lake was somehow like an abscess that burst. People in Québec had believed for a long time that it was possible to live within Canada. Beautiful dreams have been built on this. But when Meech Lake burst as it did, just like a big bubble of soap... Now I think the people of Québec are ready to take responsibility for themselves and this has to be done quickly.

Mr. Gendron: So there's a referendum and the people of Québec say "yes" to Québec's political sovereignty. After this has been acknowledged, this reality of a sovereign Québec, would you agree to negotiate for certain types of economic agreements? Do you wish to have economic arrangements with the rest of Canada?

Mrs. Guitard: When Québec is sovereign, it may then, just as all sovereign countries, such as France, England, Italy or any country in the world, negotiate on equal terms with other countries, including Canada. And naturally, because of Québec's location in North America, it goes without saying that there will be economic agreements with Canada.

Mr. Gendron: Mrs. Guitard, there is no doubt that it will be possible afterwards. The question is rather: In your reflection, would you wish — precisely because it is possible — that there be negotiations with the rest of Canada to reach certain forms of association? Does your reflection lead you to wish to have forms of association with the rest of Canada or not?

Mrs. Guitard: All will depend on the type of association that could be reached. I don't think we should begin by thinking, first: We are going to associate in this field and in that area. I think that, first, we must become autonomous. And following that autonomy, we will be able to define what the agreements with Canada could be.

Mr. Gendron: And as a woman, between the elaboration of an overall blueprint for society and the idea of being sovereign first, what do you advocate?

Mrs. Guitard: I think that if we want to change something, we have first to be sovereign, and within this new sovereignty, in this new society, we can have a blueprint that is interesting.

Mr. Gendron: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr.

Beaudry, followed by Mr. Hogue and Mr. Libman.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Guitard, your brief is articulate and also reflects accurately the position that has always been yours during your political activities. You are a sovereignist, you have always been and you still are. You are also a councillor on Hull's city council. In this respect, this morning, the mayor of Hull told us that the brief adopted by the city had been adopted unanimously by the mayor and all members of the council, including yourself. You just answered Mr. Gendron that you advocate sovereignty first so as to possibly, later on, negotiate certain powers with Canada. In this context, I have trouble following the scenario explained to us this morning by the mayor of Hull. In the city's brief, on page 31, they tell us: Whatever political and constitutional future is recommended for Québec by this Commission, we have to envisage a long and probably delicate period of negotiation and transition towards something that will certainly be different from the status quo. So there is still no option there: something that will certainly be different from the status quo. We have not yet reached sovereignty.

How do you reconcile the answer you just gave to Mr. Gendron, namely that you prefer sovereignty first, followed by negotiations, whereas in the brief of the City of Hull, you decided in favour of this policy of long and delicate negotiations to take care of the transition before reaching any changes to the status quo? Don't you find this contradictory?

Mrs. Guitard: No, Mr. Commissioner. I would say to you that this is not contradictory. It is true that the City of Hull advocates a process which rejects the status quo and which, in its final conclusions, defines the transfer of... We're thinking more of the Outaouais region at this stage, but ultimately it is the Outaouais within Québec, and Québec holding powers different from those it holds today. Personally, I think it was important to go through this stage now, at the present time, instead of putting it off until later. This is why I go one step further than what the municipal council may have written in its brief. The council's brief, it goes without saying, gathered or included the consensus of almost everybody. But you know as well as I do that when a number of people are sitting at a table, and we have then to present a document to an organization, we take into account... more or less the most encompassing form. But I, personally, thought it was important that... What I wanted to add personally is that sovereignty has to be the first element, and should be carried out as quickly as possible.

Mr. Beaudry: Are you telling us, Mrs. Guitard, that in fact, you personally, your own

personal point of view, is sovereignty in view of later negotiations, but since you are a municipal councillor, you joined the idea of the Council, saying: Let's go a little slower in our process because, in fact, we have to create a consensus among the council members. Perhaps that's what you're telling me.

Mrs. Guitard: Well, as member of the council, I agreed with the steps people were taking, but it goes without saying that I personally preferred to push things further. And this is why I find it important to present that position.

Mr. Beaudry: That can also be seen as an invitation to all the commissioners here who have extreme personal convictions to maybe rally a less drastic position, to try to find a consensus too, if I understand correctly.

Mrs. Guitard: It is not for me to judge what the commissioners should do.

Mr. Beaudry: No, no. It was just a comment in passing.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Guitard. We now proceed to Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: You mean, Madam, that while you take one position, you can at the same time take another one?

Mrs. Guitard: What I said, Mr. Hogue, is that, as a member...

Mr. Hogue: But I don't want to continue. You can answer "yes" or "no", that's sufficient, because we are short on time...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Hogue, you have asked a question, let the speaker answer.

Mr. Hogue: Yes, I said: She can answer "yes" or "no".

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No, no. She is going to answer.

Mr. Hogue: Can I suggest to her to say "yes" or "no", Mr. Chairman? You did it this afternoon and there was no problem.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Hogue, when I did it, it was at the end of my five minutes. So, Madam, the answer is yours. "Yes" or "no", or whatever you want to say.

Mrs. Guitard: I think you had better repeat your question, because with all...

Mr. Hogue: We'll go to the next one. On page 7, Madam, wouldn't Québec have the right to negotiate with Ontario or with the Maritimes, or with other provinces? In the second paragraph of page 7, you say: "...must favour a formula that gives Québec not only a real power relationship and limits the negotiation to the governments of Québec and Canada." But you also mean that the gouvernement du Québec could negotiate with Ontario or with other provinces as well. It is not always Canada or the government of Canada as a unit.

Mrs. Guitard: Well, in the event Québec becomes sovereign, then it will have to negotiate with a State that is on the same footing as it is.

Mr. Hogue: It can be Ontario or the Maritimes, not necessarily the Canadian government.

Mrs. Guitard: If, following Québec's sovereignty, other parts of Canada wish to become sovereign, Québec will certainly be able to negotiate with these new States. But being a sovereign State is precisely what will give Québec all the rights it does not have presently because, at some point, it cannot go any further. Its rights are restricted.

Mr. Hogue: In this negotiation from sovereign country to sovereign country, as you say, the number of people or the importance or the other more technical or material data are not significant? I mean, to the extent that a country is sovereign, whether it is big, small or medium, throughout the world... A while ago, you used a certain number of countries as examples: France, etc., but there are smaller countries in terms of numbers, quality and value, and the fact of being sovereign puts them on the same footing as all other countries, or wealthier countries.

Mrs. Guitard: As part of a negotiation, a State enters into relations with countries with which it can have links, similarities, or a desire to reach economic, cultural or other types of agreements. Small countries have sometimes concluded agreements with larger countries, just as other countries with equal areas or populations can negotiate together. So all depends on the circumstances and on the type of agreements we want to reach with these countries.

Mr. Hogue: And it is this sovereign status that gives them this possibility?

Mrs. Guitard: Absolutely. I have a hard time imagining a country like France or Italy... and I think past experience has shown it. When France attempted to have privileged relations

with Québec, France was called back to order and, for a number of years, Canada and France became very aloof in their links and agreements. To avoid this, France had to back down on the privileged relations it intended to have with Québec. I think this is a good example of what Québec would have to gain, if only with France, not to mention the other countries.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Guitard, you say on page 5: "Falling the full sovereignty of Québec, there will be no real power relationship and Canada will refuse to negotiate." So, the term "power relationship", as a bargaining tactic, has become the real term of the constitutional debate today, and will probably also be the term used during the 1991 debate. But before coming to my question, I would like to follow Mr. Hogue's reasoning a little. So my question is the following: With whom will a sovereign Québec negotiate? How will the rest of Canada remain intact as a block if Québec, by declaring its sovereignty, starts the process of dismembering the country? If this occurs, what is going to happen if the dismemberment of the country should continue in the light of Québec's secession?

Mrs. Guitard: If I understand your question, it is: What will happen to Québec's negotiations with the rest of Canada if the country is broken up?

Mr. Libman: Exactly. Which will be provoked by Québec's secession.

Mrs. Guitard: I think that, first, Québec does not have to be concerned about what could happen to the rest of Canada if it decided to be sovereign. I think that, first, Québec has to represent the Quebecers who live within its territory. In the event of sovereignty, and with the subsequent negotiation of certain agreements, then Québec will have to negotiate with what will be the established authority. If the federal government as we know it now still exists, that is, Ottawa, with certain powers, then Québec will negotiate with the government in Ottawa. If, for all kinds of reasons, there is a break-up and other governments are formed, which might very well be the case, this means that Québec, maybe with other parts of what today is Canada, will negotiate with the federal government, since each will want full sovereignty over its territory.

Mr. Libman: But in view of this possibility, you are ready to accept Québec's sovereignty, or the "pure, hardline" independence of Québec, as

a completely independent country.

Mrs. Guitard: It always makes me laugh when I hear people talk about "pure, hardline" independence. It makes me think of certain...

Mr. Libman: It's Mr. Bouchard's term.

Mrs. Guitard: It always makes me laugh because it reminds me of a very funny discussion I had with someone who was telling me, "pure and hard", are we comparing that with "impure and soft"?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Libman: We already heard this comment two weeks ago. But my last question, Mr. Chairman...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Quickly, please, Sir.

Mr. Libman: Once Québec is sovereign, obviously Canada has much less to gain from these negotiations. So you realize that, if this power relationship is only a bargaining tactic, Canada is must better placed by saying it will not negotiate. So isn't it more appropriate to improve the amending formula, instead of risking the economic consequences if the negotiations fail, because all the forms of economic association intended as the goals of these negotiations already exist within the current Canadian federation?

Mrs. Guitard: I don't think it is the current situation. The reason why, up until now, everything has failed, is that the Canadian government was quite aware it had what is called the big end of the stick. But I think that if we too equipped ourselves with this big end of the stick, then Canada will respect what Québec is - a Québec which stands up for itself. Up until now, we've always come to them on our knees, so to speak, or halfway there, saying: We want a little, we want a little. But when you come face to face with someone, saying: I am your equal and I want to negotiate certain things, I am absolutely convinced that Canada will not refuse, because I think the Canadian people have always been very good at economics and business.

Mr. Libman: The kind of association that's wanted already exists in the Canadian federation. So all we could wish for already exists within the Canadian federation. And we have witnessed a blossoming of Québec in the last three decades.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You have 15 seconds to answer, Mrs. Guitard.

Mrs. Guitard: I don't agree with you, Mr. Libman. I do think Québec has developed, but I think it has done so because certain people here stood up and did things. And Québec did not develop because of Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now have Mr. LeSage.

Mr. LeSage: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mrs. Guitard. I had the pleasure of sitting at the same table with you for many years and I am still pleased to have the opportunity to discuss with you.

I would like to come back to certain topics you mentioned a short while ago and discussed with other colleagues, because this is not absolutely clear in my head. You say, and you defend this in your brief, that not only is Québec's independence necessary, but it must first be declared so as to give Québec an adequate power relationship to begin negotiations with the rest of the country. Fine. And as you know, the others in the Canadian government hardly want to negotiate on the basis of Québec's needs and conditions.

My question is as follows, what makes you believe that their attitude will be different in the rest of Canada once we have broken up this Canada?

Mrs. Guitard: What I'm saying, Mr. LeSage, is that when Québec is sovereign, it is not going to negotiate with each of the provinces. Canada is going to negotiate, because it will have to repatriate things. And after all, we also have property that belongs to us. We're going to negotiate things and we're going to negotiate with one person. We will not work according to the current scheme of things. Look at the Meech Lake Accord. Everything fell flat because, at one point, we tried to sit on the fence. Then, at some point, we were in a situation in which, because one person outside Québec decided to say no, everything fell flat all at once.

So this is why if we try to negotiate bit by bit and piece by piece, with all and sundry, we'll never manage to get anything.

Mr. LeSage: So, if I understand your answer correctly, even if Québec was to become sovereign tomorrow morning, there would be no problem. We will keep negotiating with them, and they will be happy to negotiate with us.

Mrs. Guitard: When you say "with them"...

Mr. LeSage: I don't know what will be left in the part outside Québec, in the Canada that we know today. I'm asking you.

Mrs. Guitard: I'm telling you that the negotiations that will possibly take place then

will be conducted with the government which we now know as the Canadian government, the central government. I am convinced that Québec will not go and negotiate with the government of British Columbia, or of Newfoundland. Unless, when all is said and done, it wants to conclude agreements... But we should see what will then be the status of this new country.

Mr. LeSage: I have one last question, Mrs. Guitard, if you please. You state that Québec has always been on the losing side in its relations and negotiations with the rest of the country. I would like you to explain, to me and to the members of this Commission, how Québec was able to reach one of the most advanced stages of evolution and maturity at all levels, whether economic, social or political, and was able to do so within the framework of a federal system?

Mrs. Guitard: If, as you say, Québec has reached this status, as I said earlier, it's certainly not because the federal government has helped it. And imagine what it will be when we are in possession of all our powers.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Could people please refrain from applauding?

Mr. LeSage: Thank you, Mrs. Guitard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Well, Mrs. Guitard, congratulations for your composure. Thank you for your brief. You defended it very well. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:21 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:23 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now welcome Messrs. Jean-Paul Murray, Gary Brazier and Paul Béchard. So, Mr. Brazier, excuse me. Ladies and Gentlemen, could everybody please return to their seats? Fine, which of you is going to begin?

**Messrs. Jean-Paul Murray, Gary Brazier
and Paul Béchard**

Mr. Murray (Jean-Paul): I'll start, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Chairman, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present you with this brief this afternoon, and we hope it will be useful to you.

Specific historical circumstances have decreed that two peoples, born of different cultures, should live together on the North American continent for over 300 years. Although this cohabitation had very turbulent beginnings, and its share of mishaps, overall, its development resulted in a society which enjoys a degree of freedom and prosperity envied the world over. Indeed, several figures support this statement. According to the 1989-1990 world economic and geopolitical index, entitled "L'État du monde", Canada ranks first of 170 countries for its level of well-being. Moreover, Canada had, in 1985, based on the exchange rate established by purchasing-power parity, per capita GDP equal to that of the United States, and 1% lower than that of Norway, the richest country.

In our opinion, the constitutional status quo offers the ideal framework for French Canadians to grow economically, socially and culturally. We also believe that the unhealthy climate which has reigned in Québec since the failure of the Meech Lake Accord is a throwback. The current impasse is merely the most recent manifestation of the eternal conflicts which have arisen periodically since history united the destiny of our two peoples. The Rebellion of 1837-1838, the hanging of Louis Riel, the issue of separate schools in Manitoba and Ontario, the conscription crises during the two World Wars, the October Crisis, the Referendum and the failure of Meech Lake are examples of trauma suffered by a country in development. Each time problems occur, certain people pipe up that our country is no longer functioning and that the distribution of powers does not reflect reality. Nonetheless, this country does function, and remarkably well at that.

When one looks beyond the rhetoric and turbulent emotions that followed the failure of Meech Lake, one realizes that the so-called problem is not of a constitutional but rather of a political nature. The problem was created by a specific concatenation based on politics, easily understandable when one takes an objective look at the Meech Lake mishap. This failure is the result of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's negligence and ignorance with respect to the history of power relationships in Canada. At the 1987 federal-provincial conference, Mr. Mulroney forgot that as Prime Minister of Canada, his duty was to defend the interests of Canada as a whole. As for Premier Bourassa, he sat down at the bargaining table with five requests that appeared reasonable. Although Mr. Mulroney hastened to agree to them and even added others, he obtained no concessions from Québec.

It is important to point out that the art of negotiation is the art of discussing and exchanging, with a view to reaching an agreement in the interest of all parties. Mr. Bourassa got more than he bargained for and Canada ended up losing out. Mr. Mulroney's

performance threw the federation out of kilter. We all know what followed and we are still experiencing the aftershocks. I now give the floor to Mr. Brazier.

Mr. Brazier (Gary): It is illusory and dishonest to claim that the constitutional status quo has not served French Canadians well. In fact, the current arrangement is a reflection of the important role French Canadians have played in Canada's development. For example, we have only to recall the insight and talent of Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier when he claimed, at the Charlottetown and Québec City conferences, that Canada should be constituted as a federal State. This ran counter to the desires of Sir John A. MacDonald, who defined the very essence of our country and its power relationships.

Given that the current problem is political rather than constitutional, we must conclude that a profound change in our system is not the solution. The politicians responsible for this alarmist, insipid overkill of rhetoric will have to return to the table, eventually, to negotiate the direction they want our country to take. However, this time, they will have to keep in mind the lessons history has taught them.

Since 1763, French Canadians have succeeded in obtaining that which rightfully belongs to them. The failure of Meech is certainly not enough to make us doubt our assets. When certain politicians tell us that, from now on, things must be placed in our hands, they should realize that what they are referring to is Canada, that our roots and loyalties belong to Canada, and that without Québec, there is no Canada. Finally, so that we can continue to develop as a country, reason must take precedence over race. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will begin with Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Is it my turn to speak, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, Sir.

Mr. Poissant: Sorry. Gentlemen, your brief is daring. You will undoubtedly not make the headlines tonight on television because when you're not on one side... everyone else is ignored. You will forgive me, but people aren't always objective. The only thing I'm wondering... You are for the status quo outright, whereas most Quebecers seem to say that this is a formula which no longer functions and why, so there are undoubtedly powers they want to repatriate back to Québec... and you do not seem to indicate this in your brief.

Mr. Murray: First of all, I think that if you look on the last page of our brief, we indicate

clearly, using quotes, that the constitutional status quo is extremely flexible and given the attitude and strength of politicians, several arrangements are possible in the current framework. Therefore, a thorough revamping, as we said, is not the solution and moreover, I think that when people say that most Quebecers believe that such revamping is necessary, I do not agree. I agree that the political elite wants a constitutional change. The elite, which has its own interests, but the people... In any case, a constitutional revamping will not necessarily improve the lot of the average Quebecer. (5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Béchard (Paul): Excuse me. I'd like to add something to that. People often say, almost everyone says: the constitutional status quo must be changed. But when have we heard, in Québec, a discussion which, in my opinion, should have taken place before a Commission such as this one? What is the status quo? Do you know how many people in Québec, how many citizens know what is meant by the status quo? I think that, in my opinion, the first thing to do, and this is very important, before condemning something, is to define it. What are our aspirations, here in Québec? What are the aspirations of Quebecers? And what prevents them from growing and fulfilling these aspirations? That's the question. The status quo has never been defined. And here, almost everyone, from almost every party, condemns it. Whoa, hold on a minute! The status quo is what has made Québec, and Canada, the progressive, modern society it is today. A society which is the envy of just about every country in the world, almost all immigrants the world over. So maybe a definition should be established that has some sort of sense to it, before asking us to pitch it all overboard without even having asked ourselves what it is.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Next question, Mr. Mark Assad.

Mr. Assad: Mr. Chairman, I once read somewhere, I don't know if it was Voltaire who said it: It's difficult to support the status quo and be original at the same time. He said: One must be optimistic. Optimistic you are, and the viewpoints you have expressed are very interesting. But the political reality forces us to examine once again, necessarily, the political situation. You said this situation is more political than anything else. According to you, what are the changes which must be made to strike this new political balance? Because you have put the emphasis first and foremost on the fact that the problem is more political than constitutional.

Mr. Murray: O.K. I will start by saying that the alarmist, insipid overkill of rhetoric must be stopped and that we must look critically at the situation. This is the viewpoint we are trying to

put forward this afternoon, that the constitutional status quo is worth being examined closely so we can judge it critically, in the best interests of ordinary people.

Mr. Béchard: At the risk of angering a number of people, in my opinion, it's very clear: The problem is a political one, which means that we must get rid of politicians who avoid the true issue and try to take the people, the citizens, those who are going to lose money, jobs, here in the Outaouais, for a ride. It's not Mr. Duceppe, Mr. Bouchard, or others like them who are going to lose their job or have problems later on, it's those people. We have to get rid of those people...

Voices: Hey, hey, hey!

Mr. Béchard: People who aren't clear, people who...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Sir! O.K. Please try to answer the question, if you don't mind. Do you have another question, Mr. Assad?

Mr. Assad: Yes. Perhaps just a short question, this time. As you mentioned... The problem with the constitutional accord which failed last June you said was an error in judgment more than anything else, that we ended up in a constitutional yoke. Could you explain to me?

Mr. Murray: If we look at Canada's constitutional history, every time there was a strong movement toward provincial autonomy, whether the first time, during the 1887 Dominion-provincial conference, when Oliver Mowat, the Ontario premier, and Honoré Mercier, the Québec premier, made very insistent, elaborate claims for provincial rights, well, there was a strong Prime Minister who was able to ward off this movement of autonomy. And the same thing occurred during the time of Duplessis and Hepburn against Saint-Laurent and Mackenzie King. And the same thing occurred once again in the case of Mr. Trudeau against Mr. Lévesque. However, when Mr. Mulroney came to power, in order to stay in power, as we say in the brief, he gave everything to Québec. I think Gary has something to add to this.

A voice: To the gouvernement du Québec.

Mr. Murray: To the gouvernement du Québec.

Mr. Brazier: What we want to point out is that the power relationship to which Canada has been accustomed in all its constitutional debates was unfortunately not present at the Meech Lake Accord or during the Meech debate. At the risk

of making people angry again, Meech Lake wasn't a dialogue, it was a monologue.

Mr. Murray: I would also like to add that this does not necessarily mean that the aspirations of the provinces are not legitimate, but they must at least take into account the Canadian unit, if the Canadian unit is to continue to exist.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Do you have any other questions, Mr. Assad?

Mr. Assad: No, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Serge Turgeon.

Mr. Turgeon: Mr. Chairman, I think that if you keep on like this, you're going to make the headlines on the *Téléjournal* tonight.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Turgeon: Not only will Duceppe and Bouchard have to be gotten rid of, but also, without a doubt, all the writers, artists, businesspeople and financiers who have come out in favour of an option that is different from yours, and maybe the 70% of Quebecers who seem to know where they're headed.

In your brief, you say that if Meech Lake had succeeded, if the specific nature of Québec had been recognized, the individual freedoms enshrined in the Constitution Act, 1982 would undoubtedly have been threatened. When I hear that, as a Quebecer, I feel somewhat insulted. Our Minister of Justice, Mr. Gil Rémillard, is not just anyone, and he said, once again this morning, contrary to Mr. Ryan's statements yesterday, that individuals were just as well protected under the Québec Charter as under the Canadian Charter. So why do you assert such a thing?

Mr. Béchard: Well, Mr. Turgeon, if the fact that we are interested in individual freedoms as Quebecers angers you...

Mr. Turgeon: No, that's not at all what I said. Don't twist my words.

Mr. Béchard: No Sir, what you said... I'm a Quebecer...

Mr. Turgeon: No, that's not what I said. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, that's not what I said.

Mr. Béchard: O.K. Let's say that that's not what you said.

Mr. Turgeon: Yes.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Béchard: It makes you angry... but what you said is that it makes you angry because we say that in our opinion, Meech Lake could have endangered the individual freedoms of a number of Quebecers. O.K?

Mr. Turgeon: Yes.

Mr. Béchard: That makes you angry. O.K., fine, if it makes you angry, but...

Mr. Turgeon: Because you don't explain it.

Mr. Béchard: ...there are a number of experts who - and we're not the only ones who say this - throughout the country, were worried about this possibility. And these experts, unfortunately, were completely disregarded. Quebecers were not even allowed to hear them. They were called anti-Quebecers. What Clyde Wells said... How many Quebecers know what he really said? All people said was that he was crazy...

Mr. Turgeon: In fact, the only one who knows what he said is you.

Mr. Béchard: No, but you, do you know what he said? Did you read his comments?

Mr. Turgeon: I recall somewhat, yes.

Mr. Béchard: But that's the problem, Mr. Turgeon. I don't want to be aggressive, when it comes right down to it. It's just that one simply has to take the time to listen to those who do not share our viewpoint.

Mr. Turgeon: Fine, so I am listening to you here, if I have the time, Mr. Chairman. You were saying...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Go ahead, Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Turgeon: You say that since 1793, French Canadians have gotten everything they wanted, especially legislative and judicial bilingualism, the bilingualism of the federal public service. So what we were supposed to have was bilingualism. Well, if that's it, can you explain to me why there is such a staggering assimilation rate among Francophones outside Québec?

Mr. Murray: There may be an assimilation rate outside Québec, but if you consider the figures, you will see that the number of people in French immersion classes is skyrocketing and that the French language is surviving very well in the Western provinces, my dear Sir.

Mr. Turgeon: Very happy to hear it.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now go to Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At any rate, I would like to thank you for the brief you have presented, and begin by saying to you that everyone is entitled to their opinion. Secondly, I'll be honest with you. The way you're presenting your viewpoint right now is not going to help the cause you're defending. And you're not talking to a pure, hardline separatist; I'm not one. You say in your brief that the current federalism is extremely flexible. I think that the question has already been asked on this topic, and since you're speaking of flexibility, you're speaking of the promotion of Québec's specific nature, if Meech had been constitutionalized. It would be exercised to the detriment of individual freedoms... This appears to me very exaggerated, at this point in time. Or otherwise, am I to understand from your reasoning that the federal government is the only one with the firm intention to respect individual freedoms?

Mr. Murray: But we weren't the ones who said that, my dear Sir, it was Premier Bourassa who said: "Where a distinct society is to be protected, individual rights must be subjugated by the distinct society."

Mr. Maciocia: I absolutely do not believe that that is what the premier of Québec said. Absolutely not.

Mr. Murray: Yield to the facts, Sir, the facts...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Please.

Mr. Murray: Let's say that that's not it, my dear Sir...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm sorry. Just a moment so that we can understand each other. Mr. Maciocia, the floor is yours.

Mr. Maciocia: I could go... or I can continue with my second question, Mr. Chairman. My second question is this. Are there constitutional arrangements that could be made, in the current federal context, that would enable Québec to reenter the Canadian constitutional fold of its own accord?

Mr. Murray: I will begin by saying that politicians are known for their willness, and this is the message that's being repeated everywhere. It's a question of politics, and the politicians must decide, they must stop telling people that it's impossible. My God! If we say something is

impossible, it becomes so. It's a question of convincing ourselves that we can return with honour and enthusiasm.

Mr. Maciocia: You force me to say something that I didn't want to say. You work for MPs. Is that it?

Mr. Murray: Good Lord! I'm not ashamed to admit that.

A Voice: What a crime!

Mr. Béchard: But that's it.

Mr. Murray: No, I'm proud of it.

Mr. Maciocia: At a certain point, I think that one must be instead... As I said earlier, it's very important. I am convinced that Québec has really grown remarkably within the federation.

Mr. Murray: In the current constitutional framework.

Mr. Maciocia: If you would let me finish, you would understand that on certain points, we agree that Québec has grown remarkably within the federation over the last 20, 30 years. But you also know very well that not everything has gone smoothly. So, at the present time, I ask you the question, and I think the next one is my last one, Mr. Chairman. In case the Commission decides or recommends at the end of its hearings, to the gouvernement du Québec, the repatriation of certain powers exclusive to Québec, which ones, in your opinion, should Québec have in its possession?

Mr. Béchard: Your question, my dear Sir, Québec at the present time, Quebecers, for example, we here, we are Québec citizens, the people in back are Québec citizens. The rest are citizens. We have all the resources, if we are in good health, we have all the resources here in Québec, in this Canadian province, to grow pretty well as much as we want. The problems, the boundaries, are only those that we choose to impose upon ourselves. So, in the end, whether the government has a little more or a little less power, as a citizen, I must say that I really don't care. As citizens, we have the powers right now. We must stop leading people to believe that they can't do it. We can - the French Canadians of Québec - we can grow as we want. And yet you are always going on about how can it be that we aren't able to. Yes, we are able to. Maybe the problem is more psychological than anything else.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You have 15 seconds, 15 seconds to comment.

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, Mr. Chairman. That's not what I said and I have no choice but to conclude that, at a certain point, people have no intention of responding forthrightly to the questions asked.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Maciocia. We now go to Mr. Jacques Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Chairman, I think that, contrary to what Mr. Assad just said, you are the proof that one can support the status quo and be very original, because I said to myself, upon hearing you: Finally, partisans of the status quo. Finally. Those who think or who thought that the Trudeau galaxy was uninhabited, are wrong. There are still signs of life there. I find that interesting. I think that perhaps anthropologists should hurry and study this endangered species, but I find it interesting because your thesis is clear. At least, I give you that, it's clear, it's transparent.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): How about a clear question?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: It's clear and it's transparent. For you, the current form of federalism, as it functions now, is completely satisfactory. There's no reason to revamp it thoroughly, as some would like. Québec is a province like all the others and, consequently, there is no question of a specific status for Québec. You say that it is even dangerous in theory and unfounded in fact, to use your own words.

Mr. Murray: Federal. We use the term federal pact.

Mr. Brassard: You were referring to the pact, of the theory of the pact?

Mr. Murray: Yes.

Mr. Brassard: In this respect, I am pretty much in agreement with you. I am not a great believer in the theory of the federal pact either, historically. But didn't you come here to tell us that, currently, there are two possible options: yours, yours which is legitimate, in which you defend the system as it functions at the present time, consider it completely satisfactory, or else that where you choose the path to a sovereign Québec? And between the two, there's barely anything feasible, including the specific status. And I'd like to point out, as an aside, that the most severe criticism of the concept of specific status appears in the 1980 White Paper, on page 45. I won't quote it to you, but on page 45, the most severe criticism of the concept of specific

status... Basically, do you not admit that these are the two true options available to Quebecers, yours, and, of course, mine, a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Murray: I thank you for your balanced question. But if you had read the document, on page 6, we say that the status quo does not necessarily mean a static regime that doesn't develop or grow. I would like to quote what Mr. Trudeau quoted or presented before the Lesage government's constitutional commission in 1965: "That Canadian federalism must develop is understood, but the fact is that it has been developing, and progressively at that, for the last 100 years, without the Constitution requiring any drastic amendments. Periods of profound decentralization have alternated with periods of intense centralization throughout the course of our history."

Mr. Brassard: Yes, except that I don't agree with that. It's historically false. The trend towards centralization is constant throughout Québec's history, it's just its rate that has changed. But that, as concerns that, of course we could discuss it at length. But when you refer to the flexibility of the system, why is it, if the system is as flexible as you say, why is it, for example, that there are so many difficulties, that Québec is experiencing so many difficulties right now in concluding administrative agreements, not amendments to the Constitution, but administrative agreements in the areas of immigration, communications, and occupational training? Why is it that there is an impasse, that Mr. Bourassa's government is incapable of reaching agreements on such topics, administrative, and that you say that federalism or the system is so flexible?

Mr. Murray: You say the problem is administrative. You just admitted that the problem is not constitutional.

Mr. Brassard: No, no, that's not what I meant...

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

Mr. Brassard: Respecting administrative agreements that are on the table, and which are not being concluded, and which don't amount to anything, which don't result in anything. Why, if it's so flexible, can't a conclusion be reached?

Mr. Murray: Mr. Brassard...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): The time is now up. So, gentlemen, thank you for your presentation.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:49 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:51 p.m.)

University of Ottawa Law Professors

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now turn to a group of law professors from the University of Ottawa. Mr. Daniel Proulx, if you would introduce your colleagues.

Mr. Proulx (Daniel): Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Just a moment. I would ask the members to take their seats.

Mr. Proulx: I would like to introduce my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left, at the end of the table, Professor Michel Morin; to my immediate left, Professor André Braën... My name is Daniel Proulx... To my immediate right, Professor Jean-Denis Archambault; and at the end of the table, to my right, Professor Jean-Paul Lacasse.

So, before beginning to read the brief, Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out and stress the fact that we are speaking on our own behalf. We do not claim to be representing the University of Ottawa or its faculty of law or another department of the university.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine.

Mr. Proulx: Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, at the risk of seeming to be ambiguous at first, we have decided to set aside all partisan labels. We are neither federalists nor sovereign supporters. And I would even dare to add, after our predecessors, especially not defenders of the constitutional status quo. This neutrality enables us to clearly take a position in favour of a new constitutional definition of Québec and to propose a new way of legally breaking the impasse into which Québec was plunged by the Constitution Act of 1982. The goal of our brief is therefore to answer the question that you have been asking since the beginning of your work. How can Québec reopen constitutional negotiations with the rest of Canada without becoming trapped once again?

As Meech has shown, Québec has no choice other than to define itself outside of the framework of the current constitutional amending procedure. The main political parties in Québec have established that. Negotiations between the 11 governments, based on the principle of equality between the provinces, makes any review of Québec's political and constitutional status virtually impossible. Regardless of Québec's future, the change, the transition must first be managed upon Québec's initiative, under its control and in pursuit of dialogue with the rest of Canada.

There is widespread consensus in Québec in favour of rejecting the constitutional status quo and increasing Québec's powers and jurisdiction. We don't know what is the threshold or the ideal limit of this increase in powers and jurisdiction. We are simply stating that, regardless, this change must be made in an effective, orderly and democratic manner, without striking a blow at Québec's economic stability to no purpose, and with the greatest respect for fundamental rights. To set such a process in motion, we propose a two-phase approach.

First, that the National Assembly pass a statute establishing the paramouncy of Québec's statutes. Under this statute, Québec statutes would henceforth override any other statute, federal or otherwise. Current and future federal statutes would continue to apply to Québec, but the National Assembly would henceforth have the power to decide that a given federal statute must cease to be applicable to Québec so that it can be replaced by a statute which better meets the needs of Quebecers.

The second phase in the process which we are proposing consists in holding a referendum. By this highly democratic method, the people of Québec would themselves put Québec's legislative paramouncy statute into effect and make it entirely legitimate. Our bill is based on principles which are almost unanimously accepted in Québec, namely, democratic principles, fundamental freedoms and the right of the Québec people to self-determination. This is why we believe that it would be ratified by a large majority of the population during the referendum.

The new legislative paramouncy statute would also have other major assets. First of all, it would provide Québec with the framework and the freedom of action which are indispensable in determining its own destiny. It would also ensure that Québec has the necessary political strength to negotiate with the rest of Canada the constitutional arrangement which would best suit its needs without abruptly breaking the ties which bind it to Canada. The new statute would open all the doors without closing any, whether it be decentralized federalism, sovereignty-association, economic community, monetary union, etc.

The passage of the statute on the paramouncy of Québec's statutes and its massive approval through a referendum would create, in our opinion, a political dynamic that is entirely different while providing Québec with an effective change management mechanism. The method we are proposing would also have the enormous advantage of terminating the constitutional status quo, of ensuring the continuity of institutions, of not disturbing Québec's economic security to no purpose and of enabling Québec to serenely and effectively seek

dialogue with the rest of Canada. Thank you for your attention.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. The first speaker, Mrs. Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: So, Gentlemen, I would like to welcome you. It gives me even more pleasure to welcome you because I am the sole alumnus of the University of Ottawa. Unfortunately, I didn't study law. I studied political science and you can see where that's gotten me. So, I would like to ask you a few questions, especially because your brief is quite innovative. I must tell you that, since November 6, this has been the first time that we've heard this thesis, this hypothesis, of the paramouncy of Québec's statutes. Since I didn't study law, I'll rely on you to explain your point of view because I don't think I'm the only one who didn't find it very clear. Please explain how a statute which declares the paramouncy of statutes could be deemed valid by our superior courts in Québec.

Mr. Proulx: Listen, I think the answer to that question is fairly simple. You must yourself explain to me how Québec's sovereignty will be declared valid. Let's suppose that the option that the Commission and the government choose is... Just as, for example, the caisses populaires proposed, it seems...

Mrs. Pelchat: No, but I would like to know...

Mr. Proulx: ...Québec's sovereignty. I'm telling you: Obviously, Québec's sovereignty is unconstitutional. Our bill is unconstitutional from the time when we no longer negotiate with 11 governments around the table and we don't obtain unanimous consensus.

Mrs. Pelchat: I agree with you there.

Mr. Proulx: Yes.

Mrs. Pelchat: What I'm trying to find out is, for example, say that we said that we will hear 100% Francophone music on Québec radios.

Mr. Proulx: O.K.

Mrs. Pelchat: Should this happen, since our statutes are beneath federal statutes, how could the Superior Court of Québec rule such a statute valid? I don't want you to make comparisons.

Mr. Proulx: No. O.K. I will discuss this directly. We think that our bill should be applied by Québec's courts, because this constitutes an exercise of Québec's right to self-determination. It doesn't go as far as pure and simple

independence, but it constitutes an exercise of the right to self-determination, and in this regard, it is as legal as another bill on sovereignty, or any other declaration.

Mrs. Pelchat: Sir, can you tell me, right now, wouldn't it be simpler, and more legitimate at the international level, to, 1. pass this statute by referendum before enforcing it in Québec; and, 2. make a unilateral declaration of sovereignty? That would be much simpler, in any case, I'm thinking in terms of international law, if we had that legitimacy, even if, domestically, we have a sort of illegality, as you have said, because there will always be this... **Mr. Archambault,** I think that you want...
(6:00 p.m.)

Mr. Archambault (Jean-Denis): Mr. Chairman, if I may. It is obvious that the question was asked to find out, if we want a change which would take place in accordance with a procedure that is different than the one provided for in the Constitution Act of 1982, must the referendum come before or after? The question will be in the hands of the politicians. That's why we proposed a referendum as the second phase. It seemed to us that it must be submitted to the population of Québec, it wasn't a leap into a policy statement or into something that is almost unknown, but a proposal that has been somewhat fleshed out.

The means of expression in parliaments, in democratic societies, is the law. And in this case, it is initially passing a concrete proposal, whose goal would be to effectively increase the powers of the National Assembly, in accordance with a constitution which already exists in Québec. We already have many elements for a constitution in Québec and our bill is aimed at enabling the National Assembly to lay before the electorate, the population, what the Assembly intends to equip itself with as a working tool rather than to ask a policy question or propose a leap, I would even say, into the unknown. If I may, I will finish. And why have we based ourselves on that, why have we taken this position? It's because, traditionally, Quebecers... If we look at how the Quiet Revolution took place in Québec, what did the government do? They made specific proposals: the nationalization of electricity, education reform, the reform of the 1960s...

Mrs. Pelchat: Mr. Archambault, I must stop you there, because time is very limited, and I would like you to try to answer my question.

Mr. Archambault: Well, that's what I was trying to... It's that...

Mrs. Pelchat: Professors are always going on and on, eh?

Mr. Archambault: Listen, there's no such thing as a silly profession. Madam, there is no such thing as a silly profession, let me tell you.

Mrs. Pelchat: Oh no, on the contrary!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Archambault: It's that it's a political approach in which we leave the choice to politicians, but the fact of passing a bill first constitutes submitting to a referendum not a policy statement, but a concrete plan which will enable those who will vote to know what they are committing themselves to, even if it subsequently entails resetting...

Mrs. Pelchat: But before enforcing it, why couldn't this bill be the referendum question?

Mr. Archambault: But, Madam, that's exactly what we have anticipated in the document.

Mrs. Pelchat: Before it is enforced, ratified, before being enforced, what I'm telling you, it isn't entirely...

Mr. Archambault: If Mr. Chairman will allow me... Our plan initially consists in formulating a bill, something which can be improved on, in having it passed by the National Assembly and in putting it into effect by means of a referendum. Therefore, it is quite obvious that the second phase isn't left to the whim of the lawmaker, but that this statute will not come into effect unless it is sanctioned by a positive referendum.

Mrs. Pelchat: May I ask one last question?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Madam, thank you for not abusing the privilege. Your question... No. Thank you for not abusing the privilege.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Campeau. You are normally too generous. Thank you.

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Chairman, I would like to understand also. There is the statute on the paramountcy of Québec's statutes, which is passed by the National Assembly, which is approved by means of a referendum, but we don't yet know where that will end. It could end with renewed federalism, or it could end with Québec's sovereignty. Therefore, there is an element of uncertainty. The people make their opinions known by referendum, but they don't know how the tool they are giving the government will be used. Because the approach and the result are not negligible. If you decide to take a federalist approach, you cannot back out of the Constitution of Canada. You cannot back out of the Constitution of Canada if your

approach is within the federal framework. And, from that time on, your tool will be entirely useless because, in using it, you will be rejected by the courts.

Let's take an example. Say we stay within the federal framework. There is the statute on the paramountcy of Québec's statutes, which is passed, supported, approved. Québec passes a statute on immigration, concurrent powers with federal ascendancy, or on agriculture, it's the same thing. We pass a statute. We say: Here's this immigration statute; it overrides everything. It has paramountcy over everything, including federal statutes, and you thereby contradict the Canadian Constitution, and since you are remaining within the federal framework, the courts will cancel your immigration statute and prevent its enforcement. I don't know if you understand. In my opinion, a statute like that can be justified once we decide to become sovereign. Then, we would have decided to back out of the Constitution of Canada. This is a statute, a tool which may be useful, but not if we decide to remain within the federal framework.

Mr. Proulx: Fine. May I begin to try to answer the honourable member? We think that it isn't only the approach of pure and simple sovereignty which can give Québec the power to modify federalism or even to enter into an economic community or sovereignty-association, whichever. In any case, the people must at the very least, in one way or another... The method we are proposing is the statute on paramountcy... The people must exercise their right to self-determination. If they exercise their right to self-determination, we believe that the people are entitled to back out of the Constitution of Canada, whether to return to another form of federalism, maybe, maybe not, it's up to the Commission... We aren't interested in the ultimate goal. What you must do is determine whether the ultimate goal must be pure and simple sovereignty or a new form of confederation or a community, you are juggling with these... We are interested in the process.

Québec cannot function in the current system... I think that you agree with that; its political status is as a province like the others. And we say: Québec must refuse this legal status. It must say: We are not a province like the others. We are a people, we have the right to self-determination and we are exercising it. We exercised it in 1980 to indicate that we wanted to remain with federalism as it was. We can exercise it to determine that we want to have pure and simple sovereignty; but we can also exercise it to clearly back out of the Canadian constitutional framework without breaking away abruptly and thereby making dialogue on sovereignty-association, on the economic community, more difficult.

In any case, it must be understood that, with the statute on paramountcy, Québec will always have the last word. That's what must be understood. If the judges refuse to enforce it, Québec has the power to reform the courts. The Barreau du Québec is not a reactionary body, I think, a revolutionary body, excuse me.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Proulx: Horrors! ...which isn't a revolutionary body, is proposing court reform, is proposing that Québec appoint its own superior court judges, it will be enough for Québec to do so. If the judges...

Mr. Brassard: And the Supreme Court?

Mr. Proulx: Listen, the rest... The Supreme Court, it's enough to abolish appeals to the Supreme Court, to create the Supreme Court of Québec. That's much less complicated, Mr. Brassard, I think, than to create the Ministère de l'Éducation in 1960, than to bring about the Quiet Revolution. It's enough to change 150 judges. If they refuse to recognize Québec's right to self-determination based on... That's what it's about.

Mr. Brassard: In that case, the referendum must not focus solely on the approval of the statute on the paramountcy of Québec's statutes, it must also focus on the status that we want Québec to have.

A voice: But Québec is providing itself...

Mr. Brassard: The right to self-determination that we will exercise by means of a referendum, the people must give their opinions on the status...

Mr. Proulx: Yes, but the people will give their opinions on its status in our bill.

Mr. Brassard: And if they give their opinion on the status of Québec by remaining a province, you are done for with your statute.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine, we will now turn the floor over to Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In any case, I found your brief in fact had an element of originality and the formulation of the beginning of an answer to that question which, as you yourself pointed out, affects the "how". The "how" being truly at the heart of the entire problem which we must address. But, taking this for granted, there is still a dimension in all this which worries me. Don't you think that we will create, over a certain period, an enormous legal

stagnation? Everything that is now a matter of analysis, of evaluation before the courts will... Whether it's civil law, or... Without even talking about the very heart of the constitutional problem which will be the target of one-upmanship in procedures at all levels. Will we not create, by means of the mechanism that you are shaping, a period of instability throughout the legal system?

Mr. Braën (André): Yes, with your permission, Mr. Chairman. I don't think so, for the following reason: Section 2 of the bill that we are proposing provides for the continuity of law and institutions. Currently, by virtue of shared jurisdictions, neither provincial and federal legislation is in conflict. As long as Québec doesn't act and legislate for itself jurisdiction which it deems necessary and important, there won't be a conflict. Once again, the purpose of our proposal is to break through the legal impasse. We aren't making presumptions about the final choice or the ultimate future of Québec on the constitutional level, all we want is for Québec to provide itself with a tool... by having defined its position... a management tool for the transition period, because there will be a transition period.

One of the premises on which we based our brief is the necessity of dialogue. We have the policy of its geography as such. That's why we think that passing a bill like this puts quite a different complexion on the constitutional dynamic and the political dynamic without creating the legal chaos that you referred to overnight.

A voice: Basically, we would get caught up in the legal debate.

Mr. Proulx: No, this may seem odd, because we are legal scholars. We think that the debate, the true debate will not be legal. Take a simple, very recent example. Alberta passed, only last year, a statute which is clearly unconstitutional, the one providing for the election of Senator Stan Waters. The reference to the Senate of 1980 is categorical: it is impossible to amend by means of single statute, neither federal nor provincial, the method for selecting senators. Have we begun to contest the statute on the election? Not in any way, we even appointed Stan Waters. Because Alberta, through an exercise of the people themselves, clearly made it known to the politicians that they had no choice.

It's even worse for Québec because it's the only province... perhaps there others, probably... in any case, it is certainly a province which is a nation, what is more, which has the right to self-determination. So what we believe is that the legal debate is a false debate because the rest of Canada will know from that statute that

Québec has the last word in any case. And if the problem is a legal problem, too bad! Québec has the last word. All legal and provincial apparatuses are for that, a court of law. The only thing that is federal in this are the judges of the superior courts. That's not a big deal.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We can now turn to someone else. Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like the others, when I saw your report, it pleased me, first for many reasons, but one above all: Imagine, I have five Francophone professors who teach at the University of Ottawa. Finally, I will have the best of both worlds. And this question, when I saw the system of the paramountcy of laws, I said: That's it, finally we have our solution. But I returned to the same question Mrs. Pelchat asked earlier. When I read the brief, when I continued through the brief, I told myself: What difference is there between that and simply declaring our sovereignty? And the question, I'll go even further than the question of the people who spoke before me, it's that, if the federal government, in its statutes, whether there is juxtaposition or the two interfere... We spoke of various statutes, it's not necessary to list them here... decided that its laws also have paramountcy, what will we do?

A voice: We stop.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Proulx: Listen. From the time we declare that, in Québec, it's Québec statutes which have paramountcy, from the time we recognize that Québec has the right... If you don't admit that Québec has the right to self-determination, obviously you will say: Federal law will override Québec law. But if you admit it and if you make the 100 judges of the Superior Court admit it, failing which they will find themselves... they will lose their office...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Proulx: Eh? Ultimately, that's it, if you want to get caught up in the legal debate. If Québec has the right to self-determination, it will determine, it has the right to determine which law will override. It's like Canada. It's Canada which determines that its statutes override British law. This is how Canada's independence developed, little by little, not overnight by a referendum, but from year to year. That could be another formula.

Mr. Poissant: Yes, I agree with you, in assuming that we can do it, but I have another partner who says: My laws have paramountcy

over Canada as a whole, including Québec... because we are still part of Canada. So then, we get into jurisdiction... not into jurisdiction, but into legal processes. It will never end and I wonder if we really have the solution.

Mr. Archambault: I don't have an answer which will ease all your concerns. But, if I may, with great respect for this honourable assembly, this assembly is completely unconstitutional. I will tell you why. You are completely unconstitutional. Reread the Act which established you and you will realize that we are seeking an amending process for Québec's constitution which will be different from the one provided for in the Act of 1982. And the Prime Minister of this province refused to negotiate and said straight out that he wasn't going to negotiate in accordance with the constitutional amending procedure of 1982. That means that we are seeking, you and I, all together, an approach which is contrary to that of 1982 and which, brace yourselves, will be unconstitutional by definition. And I don't want to worry you. We are all unconstitutional here today.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, Mr. Beaudry...

Mr. Poissant: I don't have the time for another question?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Poissant: It was going so well!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): For the others, yes.

Mr. Beaudry: It's clear to all of us that your proposal is unclear. That's my impression.

Now, you told us that with the courts that we have - Québec courts - if the courts recognized our right to self-determination, the courts at that time should take the side of this statute declaring the paramountcy of Québec's statutes in the areas in which we would want to enforce them. That's what I understood from what you said. Wouldn't it be possible, in this context, in order to give people a feeling of security, to take the plan that you have tabled before us, submit it to the courts right now and ask by means of a declaratory judgement whether, should we table such a bill before the National Assembly and it were passed, whether this statute, because it will have been confirmed by a referendum on our right to self-determination and using the legal references that you put in it, whether the courts would be

willing to recognize it? We would certainly dispel all doubts then. I'm not sure if I'm going in the right direction as what you said, but I'm asking you the question.

Mr. Proulx: But because you have disregarded the political dynamic. It is obvious that this bill is unconstitutional.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, yes. I understand that.

Mr. Proulx: O.K. We all understand that.

Mr. Beaudry: But if it's true...

Mr. Proulx: I think that the speech of my colleague Archambault is fairly clear on that.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, yes, but if we get away from that. You told us that it is unconstitutional. I agree and I'm behind those who say: We would pass a statute anyway or we would say: In immigration, henceforth we will not go through Canada, our immigrants would enter Québec directly; because it is constitutional, the statute we would want to subsequently pass or the statute we would want to back out of, we couldn't do it. So, to use your statute on paramountcy, by relying on our right to self-determination, can we truly say: We have the right to our self-determination? And that should be recognized by our courts in Québec for all the reasons that have already been given. I will refrain from repeating them. If that's true, that premise, what prevents you from taking this bill and going before the Superior Court tomorrow morning and saying to the Superior Court: Do you recognize Québec's right to self-determination? And here we have a bill before us which could be passed as a statute on Québec's paramountcy and, by means of declaratory judgement, which could even go to the Québec Court of Appeal, and which would be confirmed up to that point. We would at least have security for the National Assembly for the action which we have taken even before taking it. I'll let you respond to that.

Mr. Archambault: If I may, Mr. Chairman? It's that the Superior Court, the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada, today would declare it unconstitutional because it is contrary to the Act of 1982 which provided for an amending procedure for the Constitution of Canada and the provinces. I'm sorry, perhaps things aren't running smoothly. But, it is obvious that, so long as there is no referendum, Québec's constitution is that of the Constitution Act of 1982.

Mr. Beaudry: Are you telling me, in this case, that once we've had the referendum, assuming we pass the statute... assume that we

pass it... Tomorrow morning, we would hold the referendum and we would ask the population: Do you agree with this statute, before enforcing it in the various spheres of government which you spoke to us about, in the various jurisdictions at the provincial level which overlap those of the federal? Would it be possible, in your opinion, to take this statute before enforcing it and go before the Court to say: The action we have taken as the National Assembly, confirmed by a referendum to determine our self-determination, we are asking you, the Superior Court, to tell us by declaratory judgement whether this statute is legal or illegal?

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

Mr. Beaudry: Would this process suit you? Let them answer...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I will perhaps...

Mr. Beaudry: ...please, Mr. Chairman!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, I will let them answer.

Mr. Beaudry: We are all caught up in the problem. Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): But I will let them answer, even if it entails what, even with such an in-depth intellectual exercise, I'm telling you: Can you answer "yes" or "no"?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Archambault: The legality would be that of any referendum, including that of 1980.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine. So, we will stop there, and I will turn the floor over to the Secretary, who has a point to make.

The Secretary (Mr. Rousseau): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to say that I believe, understand, despite everything that was said, that Bill 90 which established this Commission is entirely constitutional. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, thank you, Gentlemen, for this excellent intellectual exercise. A few short news items for the members of the Commission, good news for those who don't like flying. Because of the uncertainty about the weather, the trip between Hull and Sherbrooke will be made by bus. We will leave the hotel at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning and everyone is requested to be on time. Today, buffet for the members at the La Jardinière restaurant, and work will resume in 30

minutes, at 7:00 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:22 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:10 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will resume our work. Welcome, Mr. Charles Castonguay. You have five minutes to summarize your brief.

Mr. Charles Castonguay

Mr. Castonguay (Charles): Thank you, Mr. Campeau. I would like to thank you as well, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission for inviting me. It's a great honour to be addressing you as an individual. I am not part of an association, but I do research, and I thought that something I noticed in the last Canadian census statistics would interest the Commission, so I prepared this very short brief for you, adding, in the appendix, a more substantial work which was published two years ago. Of course, I have all sorts of other things on the go, and what I really lack is the time to publish and to write. Therefore, this brief, which you have undoubtedly read, is very short, and can be summarized in a few words...

What I noticed was how vulnerable Québec's francization is, specifically, the francization of immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. From one wave of immigration to the next, the French portion, the attraction of French for immigrants whose mother tongue is neither French nor English increased from the early 1960s to the end of the 1970s, while for the last period for which we have statistics, in other words 1981-1986, thanks to the last census, the 1986 one, the French portion, or the attractive force of French as I and others before me have called it, has flagged. I tried to find an explanation for this trend, to discover why new immigrants whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, who used to choose French as their second language, stopped doing so during this period.

We automatically think about the 1980 referendum, about a certain laxness, a certain sluggishness, at the heart of Québec society that journalists were talking about for two or three years afterward, we think about the rebirth of the concept of a bilingual Québec which dates back to election promises like... O.K., we're going to reinstate bilingual signs when we return to power. That was part of the Liberal Party election platform in the 1985 elections, people seemed to be looking for a change in power, and with that change in power, a change of direction and the type of consensus or linguistic peace that we were familiar with, that we had had for quite some time, was frittered away and, as you all know, at least those of us living in Québec

or Canada, there's new dissention about Québec's goals, the way to achieve them, Québec's powers compared to the federal government's in terms of defense or French and English on signs, and I believe that the reversal of this trend, which was advantageous for French, can be explained almost completely by major changes in the socio-political climate which made newly arriving immigrants, the very latest immigrants, we've just compiled the new statistics, ask, as all immigrants do: What language offers me a better future? And a significant percentage of new arrivals began to choose English over French.

This is a very minor study, which has been added to many previous ones, but I'd like to take the few minutes remaining to me to deal with the subject from a broader angle. That is that this conflict, this linguistic and political battlefield we find ourselves on in Canada at the moment, which I would say began with the Commission before this one, the B and B Commission, I believe, the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, which was charged with identifying the causes of the Canadian political crisis of the 1960s.

At that time, there was a major debate between the personality principle and the principle of territoriality in terms of linguistic policies. And as you all know, the personality principle won out. Since then, we've experienced a political situation where the federal government has made itself the defender of this personality principle to the detriment of the principle of territoriality, of territorial bilingualism, which would give Québec the right to legislate and protect the language as it sees it, useful and necessary in its territory. This is the type of linguistic policy we see in other countries which live in relative peace. I say "relative linguistic peace" such as Switzerland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, etc. These countries have not been split apart. But we were presented with this type of territorial bilingualism... Really, we fought a holy war against this concept, and I think that perhaps we took a wrong turn at that time and it's time to review the basis for any eventual or future understanding with the rest of Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. If you like, Mr. Castonguay...

Mr. Castonguay: I'll stop there.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): ...we're now going to move on to other speakers.

Mr. Castonguay: Very well. Excuse me.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): O.K. We'll start with Mrs. Pauline Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As usual, Mr. Castonguay is too modest since his research contributed in large part to all the thought given to the French situation in Québec, and it has been doing so for some time. So, I thank him for helping in our work.

In the document, the one attached to your short brief, which is in fact an article you wrote, you mention in the next-to-last paragraph on page 59, in the following sentence: "If most of our future immigrants are not Francophone or do not become French-speaking, the Francophone population of Québec will decrease both in terms of number and relative importance." Since we began our work, several people have talked about the state of health of the French language in Québec. Some of us and some who appeared before us wanted to reassure us by telling us that we don't have any reason to worry. Others were nervous about its ability to grow and be a language that attracts a following, if you will. That's a very hard sentence then, because you say that the Francophone population in Québec will decline both in number and relative importance. Have you given any thought to the critical moment or critical mass at which this might happen?

Mr. Castonguay: Until further notice, demographers predict a levelling out of the Québec population... and this varies from one demographer to another... between 2005 and 2015, 2020. A levelling out of the Québec population followed by a downturn, a decline in numbers. Francophones being the overwhelming majority of the Québec population, this will mean of course a decrease in the number of Francophones. What will decrease the proportion of Francophones in Québec? O.K., as you all know, we're struggling with an extremely low birth rate here in Québec: 1.4, 5, 6 children, 1.4, 1.5 children per woman. How can we renew our population? How can we maintain the numbers, the relative importance of this population without looking for a major influx of immigrants, either Francophone or non-Francophone, who will, over time, with succeeding generations, decide to learn French as their daily language in the home? There's no other escape. Demographically, there are increases and decreases to the population. Increases are due to birth and immigrants. Decreases, to death and emigration. It can basically be summed up in that way. Therefore, when we look at the future of the Francophone population of Québec, there aren't 36 ways to sustain, to merely maintain, the current numbers. Therefore, the threshold you're talking about... I think we're going to reach it very shortly. Evidently, the forecasts will become more precise the nearer we draw to that time. Currently, the birthrate of Québec Francophones seems to be rebounding very slightly. We'll have to keep an eye on it.

Mrs. Marois: O.K. Thank you. You know that we've taken some pretty major and significant steps in terms of the language of the workplace, because a certain number of us felt that if it was possible to live, and also to work in French, the choice was likely to be easier to stick to.

Do you share this point of view and does it appear sufficient? At the end of your brief you make a minor recommendation: To clarify, once and for all, the Québec's goals and powers in linguistic matters. Of course, I'm talking about French as the language of the workplace, but there's everything that follows... French as the language on signs and everything else. Do you believe that essentially, with the powers we have and by enforcing use of French in the workplace it will be enough, or will we need other powers to ensure not only survival, but growth? Because survival isn't the important thing either.

Mr. Castonguay: Making French the language of the workplace has certainly caused new people to adopt French language. We only have one explanation. In the past, massive numbers of people whose mother tongue was neither French nor English living in Montréal were anglicized, because English was the language of the almighty dollar. But why were Francophones in Québec becoming anglicized? Even today, some are still becoming anglicized, particularly those with the highest incomes. The rate of anglicization of Francophones in Québec, among those with the highest incomes, is significant. And also, we can look at Francophones outside Québec. Why, in mixed marriages, when it comes time to choose a language for the children, do they opt for English and not French? I'm sure that they're convinced that the economic, social and socioeconomic future of their children outside Québec depends on English, more often than not. Therefore, there's no doubt about the effectiveness and importance of the language of the workplace in companies with 50 employees or more. People whose mother tongue is neither English nor French currently arriving here live in a slightly contradictory situation. Their children are, by law, educated in French, while they work in small or medium-sized businesses where the language spoken is English...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll move on to another speaker if you don't mind.

Mr. Castonguay: O.K.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Mr. Castonguay, it's a thrill to be able to ask you questions. You have a reputation, in all the papers, that makes us want

to read you more often and... Well, I'm impressed. I think you... While I just try to collect my thoughts, I'd like to congratulate you.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: On page... I'm asking you a question and want your comments. On page 5, you say "It seems essential to remove, for all time, any ambiguity, etc." Of course you recognize this, it comes from your own text. "...which surrounds the nature and the powers of Québec society in linguistic matters." When you say, "remove, for all time, any ambiguity", does that apply to your brief? Will you allow us, by reading, to remove the ambiguity or are you merely pointing out..."statement", are you stating the issue?

Mr. Castonguay: I don't quite understand.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha.

Mr. Hogue: A statement. Are you pointing out what we need, or what we would need, to remove the ambiguity surrounding the nature and powers of Québec society for all time?

Mr. Castonguay: I think that the ambiguity in question, is in knowing: Is this a bilingual society, or a society where French is incontestable... irrefutably the common language, the language of the working stiff, the language of the almighty dollar, the language of public communication, and so on? I'm not talking about private communication, of course. I think that everyone agrees that the presence of the French fact in North America, especially with the current situation in terms of the low birth rate, the French presence is vulnerable, more vulnerable than ever before. In the past an extraordinarily high birth rate allowed us to bypass all the problems of assimilation. The millions of Francophones outside Québec were assimilated, not only in Canada, but also in New England and other American States. Millions left Québec for economic reasons and their children or descendants were ultimately anglicized. Therefore, I think... Our brief helps to demonstrate this again, if you like. Its just another indication among many others which show how vulnerable the French fact is in Québec, even with the considerable efforts that have been expended with bills 22 and 101.

I heard the news again this morning, that the Immigration Québec had proposed new measures to better control the cultural and linguistic composition of the Québec territory. By removing the ambiguity, I mean clearly agreeing, reaching a new consensus. I think that it existed already, once, several years ago. I had a lot of English friends with whom I automatically spoke French; I mean that French was the everyday

language... was what we call the common language... in Québec for a number of years. At one point, that stopped, and we had people answering us in... Anyway, I read reports in the papers, by a lot of other people as well, this type of rumour wound up painting a composite picture showing a number of public linguistic behavioural pattern, and it was pretty disquieting.

Mr. Hogue: May I ask a hypothetical question? Do you find that the more standards and regulations there are, the less important it is to be aware of its pride? I would say "yes", but...

Mr. Castonguay: I think that... I don't know. It seems to me that the two are fairly different things.

Mr. Hogue: Yes, yes, its a dichotomy, that goes without saying. I'm using it as opposite of...

Mr. Castonguay: In my opinion, standards are a type of power, while pride is basically a personal issue. We can't force someone to be proud. It's something that's spontaneous. It comes naturally.

Mr. Hogue: The more pride you have, the more able you are to have the type of exchange you described earlier with your Anglophone friends and colleagues.

Mr. Castonguay: If we remove the ambiguity, not only from the nature of Québec society but also of the means at Québec's disposal to achieve this society, to ultimately achieve security in the French fact in North America, we could probably be sorry that... Already, in the papers, you read about limiting or controlling immigration, taking action so that more Francophones are allowed in. In a way, I feel it's a sign of weakness to have to pass such new measures and that Québec is, perhaps, depriving itself of, as it did in the past, in the far-away time of colonization, when Huguenots were not allowed to settle...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Castonguay, we're going to move on to other speakers...

Mr. Castonguay: ...I think that, perhaps, we cut ourselves off from certain skills which might have been useful.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll move on to a new speaker. Mrs. Côté.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, I think you just mentioned that the French fact is very vulnerable in Québec, and we had a doctor of linguistics here

from the Université de Chicoutimi who just delivered a message similar to yours. However, what I find interesting about your brief is that you use numbers to illustrate that the attractive force of English has led to an increase in the percentage of English-speakers, from 39% to 46%, among people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and you send out the double message of promoting both languages. But you also talk about the phenomenon of assimilation. Earlier, you spoke of the language of the future, of stronger laws, of the language of everyday life, which, right now, is English.

But, when I look at your proposal, you propose repatriating, negotiating complete power over linguistic matters. However, you know that this affects all sectors of activity of a person's life. Don't you think that the time that it would take to negotiate, bearing in mind the difficulties we had with Meech Lake, is going to mean that the trend you spoke of might become irreversible and that French will never be able to return to its status as the language of prominence for Quebecers?

Mr. Castonguay: Yes, we've been living in a very crucial period for several years, since we first realized the importance of the low birth rate among Francophones in Québec. We have to have what I called a demographic turnaround in the appendix of my brief. Just as, at one time, we talked about an economic turnaround, a demographic turnaround is also needed, and I think that it can be negotiated by being in control. If we don't have maximum control, we risk getting ourselves into an inescapable prison.
(7:30 p.m.)

I have to say it, if the proportion of Francophones in Québec continues to decline, it will be extremely difficult to stop it. If we hadn't taken the extreme measures we did when people could freely choose the language of education, I mean the time of bills 22 and 101 again, and other measures of this type, I think that we could say with certainty that the stagnation, or rather the lack of progress made by French in Québec society that we see now, would have been replaced by a total derailment. If we hadn't done anything, if we didn't have these standards, these regulations, and all that, I think that it is fairly certain that with the massive choice that residents of Montréal whose mother tongue is neither French nor English or whose mother tongue is Italian made at the time of the Saint-Léonard crisis and all that, of teaching in English, the English fad...

Today, 90% of young Italophones in Montréal choose to use English rather than French. The importance of the Catholic religion in the past may perhaps have created a certain bond between the Italian community in Montréal and the Francophone community. At that time,

more Italians chose French over English.

Today, we live with the results. In a certain sense, Italians have been lost to the Francophone community. There was... We passed a certain point and have reached a point where they almost all choose English. Therefore...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): O.K. Great. I'm sorry to keep interrupting you, but time is limited. Mr. Duceppe, if you have a quick question, I'll give you some of the Chair's time. And then I'll let Mr. Maciocia have the floor.

Mr. Duceppe: O.K. In your opinion, what are Québec's responsibilities in terms of immigration, in order to give Québec the means to respond to the problem of integrating immigrants into French Québec society?

Mr. Castonguay: As Mrs. Côté hinted in her speech just a second ago, controlling the linguistic policies in a territory is a huge undertaking. It touches on so many things. Among them, and I already wrote about this 15 years ago, I don't see how we can secure the French fact in Québec in a definitive manner, so that we can think about other things, so that we can move on to other things, without controlling immigration in Québec, and communications and the cultural and linguistic policies; at least these three things, at least.

Now, I think that when I mentioned the rejection of a type of territorial bilingualism, suggested by Canada, by the Trudeau government, first. Following that, eventually, we ended up understanding... I think that we can say... The rest of Canada cannot live, cannot, during negotiations, accept a form of territorial bilingualism, where Québec would be the master of its fate, in terms of its programs, its policies in its territory. I think that we're going to have to force their hands, because now... It's been 25 years since the B and B Commission, since that whole discussion, and I think that the time has gone by slowly enough, and the turn we're taking right now is very, very, very critical. The situation right now is extremely, extremely unique...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I will have to interrupt you again, Mr....

Mr. Castonguay: ...and it's now or never.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): ...Castonguay. Mr. Ciaccia, a short question... Maciocia.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): He's a

good friend...

Mr. Maciocia: I would simply like, Mr. Castonguay, to clarify a statement that you made earlier, to the effect that 80%...

A Voice: 90%

Mr. Maciocia: ...of Italophones go to English schools. That is completely incorrect, Mr. Castonguay. Perhaps in the 1960s or in the early 1970s, yes, but I can tell you that today almost 50% of Italophone students go to French schools.

Mr. Castonguay: Excuse me, Mr. Maciocia. I wasn't talking about what schools they attend, I was talking about the language shift, about the linguistic choices people whose mother tongue is Italian are making when they chose to use either French or English in their homes. The language used in the home is the lingua del cuore, O.K....

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

Mr. Castonguay: ...it's the language of identity. I'm not talking about what school they go to. For that you might want to talk about school transfers, that's one thing. I'm talking about adopting a sort of principle language with which you identify. The principal language chosen by Italophones in Québec, at the present time, is 90% English as opposed to 10% French. In other words, the opposite of what it was in the past.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): One final question, Mr. Maciocia. Go ahead.

Mr. Maciocia: Fine, because it is my colleague who has to...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No, no, no, go ahead. Do you have something to say?

Mr. Maciocia: No, I only want to add that it's not completely true, Mr. Chairman, that 90% of Italophones choose English as the language they use, even in their homes. I would have to say that a large majority chose their mother tongue, I mean Italian. The largest majority... as in my home, we speak Italian, not French or English, but as for schools... and outside, today, it's leaning more and more toward French and most speak all three languages.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine.

Mr. Castonguay: I don't want to deny the fact that Italophones are sterling examples of trilingualism...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): O.K. Fine. We'll move on to Mr. Robert Benoit. You

can wrap things up.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Castonguay, thank you for being here with us this evening. Certainly the Minister of Immigration knew that you were coming to see us. She announced, as you mentioned earlier... She issued a policy which would double the number of Francophone immigrants from 9900 to 19 000 over the next five years. Will this measure be enough or will we have to go further in the years to come?

Mr. Castonguay: Personally, I had some trouble understanding the news, Mr. Benoit, because in 1988, the number of Francophone immigrants in Québec was 2258. So, there's already a problem. What are we talking about? I think that the previous speaker... He was perhaps talking about certain sources of information. Personally, I'm talking about Statistics Canada data, not mine. When you read in the papers that there were 20 000 Francophone immigrants, and we're going to look for 40 000 more or something like that, are we talking about people who are able to speak French or people who say they are able to speak French? Are these people whose first language is French? Of course not, because people whose mother tongue is French, as I've said, according to a document prepared by the Ministère de l'Immigration du Québec which I just received, for 1988, there was a grand total of 2258 immigrants to Québec whose mother tongue is French, out of a total of 25 700 immigrants. That means 9%. Therefore, I don't know what percentage... I would really like journalists to clarify their news before printing it. What kind of Francophones are we talking about? Perhaps if you could reformulate your question, I might try to answer...

Mr. Benoit: No, that's fine. I'll ask another question. I know that we agree on the numbers, both in your document and in the department's, showing that a large percentage of immigrants settle in Montréal on the two islands, either Montréal or Île Jésus.

Mr. Castonguay: Yes.

Mr. Benoit: I think we agree on that. Eighty-seven percent, we're agreed.

Mr. Castonguay: Yes.

Mr. Benoit: What steps would you take to lead these immigrants to regions where there seems to be a higher rate of adaptation to the Francophone community, faster and more significant? The problem is getting them to go to these regions. I see it in my own region. What steps do you suggest we take?

Mr. Castonguay: I'm afraid I can't help you

with that. My specialty is data analysis. That already takes up all the time I have, with teaching as well as other duties. Looking for solutions... Evidently, we have to look at economics, because we can't ask people to leave the metropolitan region and starve and be out of work. How can the economies of regions outside of Montréal be restimulated? I think those of you on the Commission have talents far greater than mine when it comes to this. I'm sorry I can't give you a better...

Mr. Benoit: I'll try to make my next question a little more precise. Your work is based, in large part, on the 1986 statistics, the 1986 census. There's going to be another census in 1991. From your research, do you believe that the trends that you pointed out to us will continue in 1991, that they will have accelerated or slowed down?

Mr. Castonguay: I normally reserve judgement until I have the figures in front of me. I'm not a demographer and I don't gaze into crystal balls. I look at the present, I look at the past, but claiming to foresee the future... I very, very rarely dare to do so. When we talk about the almost unavoidable decrease in the population of Québec or of Canada, that too is an issue, for that I look to experts' forecasts.

I think that one could say, anyway, that the sociopolitical climate in Québec at the present time is not yet one of consensus. Perhaps the exercise we're undertaking right now will reveal a formula which will allow us to get our spirit back, the linguistic peace that we knew in the past, and then we can get onto other things.

But what will happen in politics in two months, in three months, to this spark of hope? I wouldn't hazard a guess. As you know, all kinds of turnarounds happen with things like this. I'll repeat what I said before. We're living in a very delicate period and I am going to wait until 1993 to see the 1991 results. I'm sorry. I have to be cautious.

Mr. Benoit: Very well. Thank you, Mr. Castonguay.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Castonguay, thank you for the depth of your answers. Thank you for your contribution to the Commission on the future of Québec.

Mr. Castonguay: Once again, it was an honour and a pleasure.

(Proceedings adjourned at 7:41 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:43 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will

now welcome three Native students from Québec, from the Faculty of Law of the University of Ottawa, Mr. Armand McKenzie, Mrs. Marie-Josée Simard and Mr. François Xavier. I understand that Mr. McKenzie will begin the presentation. It's you, Mr. Xavier?

Mr. Xavier (François): Yes.

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

**Québec's Native Students
(Faculty of Law of the University of Ottawa)**

Mr. Xavier: First, (speaks in his language). That's a form of greeting, we are thanking you for listening to us. First of all, we are speaking on our own behalf, not on behalf of Québec's Native students, but we feel responsible for our future, given that 50% of the Native population is under age 20. As Native students in law, it is important for us to present the means to preserve our dignity and our pride in being Amerindians, with solutions of new law, justice and equity within the communities and Québec.

Regardless of the orientation chosen by the Commission, the Native question is inevitable, because we are an integral part of this country. Québec is entering a decisive era of its history. We understand and we are in a good position to understand the legitimate position of the Québec people. As a distinct people, we are proclaiming, along with you, our right to self-determination, because we are seeking to preserve an identity and a cultural heritage which belong to us.

The only goal of the assimilation policies is to fully integrate us into the mainstream of the population. However, if we must live together, we do not accept and categorically reject that the First Nations are under Québec or federal guardianship, because there is no longer a place for paternalism. Jurisdiction must not be transferred from Ottawa to Québec City either, because that would represent negotiating a sort of secondary statute on Indians which does not take our cultural identity into account. The future of the First Nations must be decided by the First Nations above all.

For us to simply participate in negotiations in which the majority would prevail is not the solution. To date, all Native claims have led only to Canadian or Québec solutions. For Québec's future to be prepared, Native people must be recognized as a distinct nation.

Too often in the past and again recently, the First Nations have been second-class citizens within their own country. We have been the last individuals to be considered in the constitutional priorities of your governments. Nevertheless, that must not prevent us from entering into discussions. The sovereign position of the First Nations will remain, and we want to fully

participate in Québec's political, economic and social life.

You will no longer be able to and you must not, within a sovereign Québec or within the framework of constitutional reforms, go ahead without the active participation of the First Nations. That's why we believe that, now, in the manner of René Lévesque's initiative, Québec must sit down with the First Nations to discuss relations between Québec and Native people within the framework of a neutral, independent commission.

We no longer want to claim rights. Our rights have always existed, but have not been respected. You have based your claims not on how many there are of you, but on your cultural uniqueness. That's also what we base ours on. We believe that that's the necessary basis for defining our future of all of us.

Mrs. Simard (Marie-Josée): The main recommendations that we are making to the Commission are the following:

First. An independent and neutral commission must be jointly established by the First Nations and Québec, whose mandate will primarily be to make discussion possible on the relations between the First Nations and Québec, to study all the measures proposed by the First Nations and Québec with regard to the following issues: an autonomous Native government, management and development of the territory, territorial claims and treaties, financial issues and tax measures, and to act as a mediator in the case of conflict.

Second. Before any modification of its status, Québec must come to an agreement with the First Nations on the measures to take regarding section 91 (24) of the Constitution of 1867, that is, the section on Indians and lands reserved for Indians.

Third. Regardless of Québec's status, this must not derogate from the aboriginal rights and freedoms of the First Nations, the recognized and confirmed rights under the treaties between the First Nations and the Crown, the rights and freedoms recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763. And, finally, regardless of Québec's status, this must not be interpreted by the province as a denial on the part of the First Nations of their aboriginal right to freely circulate on their territory.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): First speaker, Mr. Serge Turgeon.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find your report to be very interesting, very clear on this subject. Nevertheless, even if I agree with that, that is, regardless of the option we choose, we will have to recognize the rights of Native people. Nevertheless, I would like to have more information.

Do you see a difference between Québec's right to self-determination and the First Nations' right to self-determination?

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): Based on... I will first answer in the Montagnais language, what I understand. I mean... for us... Because these are Francophone terms, these are French terms, and for us, what that initially means is: (speaks in his language). That's in Montagnais. That means having control over one's life, that is, control over myself. Therefore, for us, these concepts of the right to self-determination, to sovereignty, to responsible government, these are all Western concepts. Therefore, it is already difficult to clearly see the difference. Nevertheless, I think that, based on the Charter of the United Nations, the right of people's to self-determination, I think that that would apply to you as it would apply to us.

Mr. Turgeon: For us, having control over ourselves, as a collectivity, is making our own laws, being able to levy taxes and sign international agreements. Overall, that's pretty much it. Realistically, what does having control over your life mean to you?

Mr. McKenzie: It's having legislative powers, executive and legal powers. That is, it's a form of government, what could be called responsible Indian government. It's a government which derives its authority, not from a Québec statute or a federal statute, but from the sovereign position of the First Nations of Indian peoples.

Mr. Turgeon: Therefore, it isn't enforcing a Québec statute yourselves, it's deciding on a statute yourselves?

Mr. McKenzie: Yes. That is, which statute will apply to us on our territory.

Mr. Turgeon: Fine.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. We will now turn to Mr. Gérald Larose.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I should feel embarrassed by being among you this evening. According to Mr. Ryan, it's when you don't have anything to do that you come to sit here. I would like to tell you that for one, it's with a definite feeling and will to fulfill an exceptional civic duty that I am sitting here and I am sorry for not having done so all the time. I would like to thank the Native students' group for being with us and I would particularly like to discuss the mechanism that you are proposing, which is the independent and neutral commission.

If I understand your discussion, sovereignty

or not, that isn't your concern, it's the fact that the Native peoples can assume their own destiny. And to settle disputes, you propose an independent and neutral commission. There are people who have conducted research to see if such a thing existed, and it does exist. There is a court in New Zealand, the Waitangi court, perhaps I have the wrong term, which is, in fact, a sort of joint, permanent commission, and which reviews each dispute and proposes to the various parties, guides the parties in settling disputes. Is it sort of like that?

Mr. McKenzie: I've already heard about this court or this commission in New Zealand. I have never gone there but I think that it's a good step for... I don't really know the nature of this commission, of this type of court, but let's say, according to what I was able to get out of it and according to what I was able to read on this court, that this had beneficial effects, both for Australians and for the aborigines who were present on that island.

Mr. Larose: If I may be inspired by those who came before us, either in Sept-Îles or in Jonquière, both groups told us that we must first recognize the rights of Native people in the Constitution, entrench this recognition in the Constitution. Both spoke to us about a mechanism. In Sept-Îles, it was a peoples court instead; in Pointe-Bleue, it was less specific than that, but it seems to me that the political framework in which both were positioned is that, from Québec sovereignty, we must carve out Amerindian sovereignty, which isn't the same, if I may say so. To begin with, they would eliminate the army or external relations with other governments. What they wanted is to assume the Amerindian destiny on specific lands, by settling disputes, obviously. In response to Serge Turgeon, I wondered if you weren't seeing both types of sovereignty as being equal.

Mr. McKenzie: Let's say that you, what you are seeking as a distinct people, as Quebecers, is really when you are speaking about defining sovereignty. That's truly a sovereign country, an international State, internationally recognized. Our sovereignty is first the autonomy of the Indian people; that is, Indian authority is not derived from Québec or Canada, it is derived from us. That authority, that sovereignty or this Indian government would have jurisdiction, legislative jurisdiction which could perhaps conflict with that of the provincial and federal governments. And there are certain things from the federal level which may be of interest to us. But, from the outset, it has been obvious that, when we speak about sovereignty, it means controlling everything regarding our lives. I spoke about the army, but it's obvious that it's within the framework of this sort of commission

or offices of Québec-Canada/Native relations that we could define these things. But I can't tell you today: I refuse jurisdiction over the army, I refuse jurisdiction over family law, I refuse jurisdiction over banks, over labour law...

Mr. Larose: That's subject to negotiation?

Mr. McKenzie: Yes.

Mr. Larose: O.K.

Mr. McKenzie: Depending on our interests.

Mr. Larose: That's fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Sirros: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to invite Mr. Larose to take up his question with Mr. Ryan, because I'm not sure that that's exactly what Mr. Ryan said... In getting back to the hearing which we have before us, Mr. Chairman, you said something at the very beginning, when you explained a bit about your concept of self-government which was closer to sovereignty over a given territory, which didn't seem to me to be entirely... and that's also perhaps the meaning of Mr. Larose's question... The same thing that we heard in Jonquière or Roberval and in Sept-Îles. Because there is a difference between self-government and total sovereignty over a territory. I would like to hear you speak a bit more about sovereignty as you see it, and the mechanisms to gain it.

Mr. McKenzie: I told you, for us, in our language that means (word in his language), it's control over ourselves. When you speak of self-government, that implies, for us, both Canadian and Québec political discourse over past years. That implies delegating powers. For us, this is unacceptable. Therefore, there must be a sort of recognition of the sovereignty of the First Nations. If it's within a sovereign Québec, fine. We must, as Mr. Larose said, carve out a Native sovereignty, a sovereignty of the First Nations within the framework of a sovereign Québec.

Mr. Sirros: Can you explain a little bit about what sort of government you would have on this sovereign territory that you see?

Mr. McKenzie: Without giving you a definitive position, it would be a government, we call it a responsible Indian government. It could have jurisdiction over civil law, wait a moment, it may be over the law regarding the family, property, renewable resources, financial institutions, environmental and social protection,

administration of justice, education, culture, language, agriculture, business, professions, companies. Those could be the areas of jurisdiction of the responsible Indian government.

Now, how could this be established? I think that it's through negotiations. That's why we are proposing a sort of commission, or an office of relations between Québec and Native people, the First Nations. That's why we are thinking that establishing... That's really our main recommendation, to establish a Native forum, not necessarily as there was four or five years ago in the National Assembly, but truly a court, or an independent commission, or an independent and neutral body, in which Native people and Quebecers could sit together. That would be established jointly by the First Nations and Quebecers because we believe that currently there is no dialogue. There is no true fundamental dialogue between your people and ours.

All we have to do is think of the difficult events which took place this summer. I think that when there is no dialogue, we cannot talk about things which are dear to our hearts. A dialogue process must absolutely be started. An independent and neutral commission which would be jointly established by the First Nations and Québec, not necessarily within the framework of a parliamentary commission such as this, but truly with the consultation and participation of Native people, as partners.

Mr. Sirros: Could you give us an idea of who, on the Native side, and how we could sit around a table for it to be binding - that's the word in English.

Mr. McKenzie: It may be, it'll definitely be representatives: your people should appoint representatives, and ours will appoint representatives.

Mr. Sirros: From each of the 11 nations?

Mr. McKenzie: Of the Native nations, yes.

Mr. Sirros: And is it because we currently don't really have structures which could speak on behalf of each nation, with...

Mr. McKenzie: No, no, it's that each nation, whether it's the Inuit, Montagnais, Attikamek, Huron, Mohawk, Abenaki or Cree nation, could delegate appropriate representatives... and participate as equal partners with Quebecers on this Commission or this type of round-table organization or...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that all right, Mr. Sirros?

Mr. Sirros: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Is that O.K.? To you, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Simard, Gentlemen, good evening. I appreciated your fairly short, but somewhat dense brief. In the second paragraph, I think it was on the very first page, you said: "Québec is entering a decisive era in its history. We understand and we are in a good position to understand it, drawing a parallel between your struggles and ours and the legitimate positions of the Québec people. We think that Québec has all the tools it needs to ensure its future". And I think that you are in the midst of providing yourselves with your own to ensure your own future. I think that you are taking it for granted that Québec's assumption of sovereignty, which will lead to the establishment of a Québec constitution, is a good time for you to have your rights included in the Québec constitution in a definite manner and with a certain number of indispensable elements. Did I understand correctly? Because this is the right time, I know, because it isn't everyday...

Mr. McKenzie: We believe that...

Mrs. Blackburn: ...that a State establishes a constitution.

Mr. McKenzie: We believe that it's fairly normal for a distinct people to want to be sovereign. However, in Québec's case, this must not happen to the detriment of the rights of the First Nations. Therefore, there must be a prior recognition of the sovereignty of the First Nations for Québec's sovereignty program to have credibility.

Mrs. Blackburn: We share this opinion and you pointed it out very well in your brief in... That's why we believe that, from now on, in the manner of the Initiative of Mr. René Lévesque who, remember, had the National Assembly of Québec pass a 15-point resolution which established some of the bases for recognizing the society of the First Nations, the Native people. Did you have the opportunity to examine these 15 proposals, 15 points in the proposal, and is it a good basis? And have you also had - well, I know that you had it recently - the document which was passed on the weekend by the Conseil national of the Parti québécois, which provides for a social contract between the Québec nation and the Native nations to break this dependency on the Indian Act. Can you tell us if that would constitute a basis for an interesting discussion with a view to having your rights included in the Québec constitution?

Mr. McKenzie: It is in fact a basis, it's truly the basis. That is, what there is in the National Assembly resolution of 1985 is a

starting point. I think that even Mr. René Lévesque, in one of his speeches, when he made this motion in the Assembly, had said that it was a starting point. And I hope that it's a starting point because, in this resolution, this National Assembly resolution, not everything in it suits us with respect to our aspirations as a people. We must go from there with that as a starting point, and I think that, as regards the second document that you mentioned, that is, the one that you took... Parti québécois...

Mrs. Blackburn: The Conseil national.

Mr. McKenzie: Yes, that's it. Even that perhaps goes a bit farther than the resolution which was presented to the National Assembly. But I must tell you that it's also perhaps thanks to Native participation...

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes.

Mr. McKenzie: ...in that.

Mrs. Blackburn: Absolutely.

Mr. McKenzie: So, you see that when there is dialogue, there is a means of producing results.

Mrs. Blackburn: It must be said that there were many representatives of the First Nations who attended this exchange, this event, and I think that they rejoice in the opening of minds. One question. The fact that a sovereign Québec recognizes the right of the First Nations to autonomy, wouldn't that constitute a major asset for the First Nations of the other Canadian provinces in their negotiations with the federal government? We know that they have always stopped abruptly, the negotiations between the First Nations with the federal government. Could this precedent of including your rights in a Québec constitution constitute an asset for the First Nations of the other Canadian provinces?

Mr. McKenzie: Yes, that... You see, Mrs. Blackburn, we're talking about sovereignty. We've been talking about sovereignty for a very long time. And the road to sovereignty for the First Nations has been long. And we have talked about it often. We spent a lot of time in trying to change attitudes, in trying to make our aspirations understood, and all that. There have always been some results. And when there have been positive results, it has been positive for everybody, whether in the West or in the East; it's had positive impacts. I'm thinking of the declaration of Mr. Bob Rae, premier of Ontario... There again, there was a sort of awareness of the Native issue, Native aspirations.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, one last

short question.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Very short.

Mrs. Blackburn: If I understand correctly, your independent and neutral commission should be held before Québec writes its constitution.

Mr. McKenzie: Oh yes. I...

Mrs. Blackburn: Or is it a standing commission that you're talking about?

Mr. McKenzie: I...

Mrs. Blackburn: The equivalent of a court?

Mr. McKenzie: We believe that it should be standing.

Mrs. Blackburn: O.K.

Mr. McKenzie: And that it be established as soon as possible, because I think that we need it.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that all right? Mrs. Simard, Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Xavier, thank you, first of all, for having taken the trouble to present a brief and agreeing to come and discuss it with us this evening.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:07 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:09 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Come to order, please!

Ladies and Gentlemen, if you would return to your seats. We will continue our work.

Welcome, Mr. Paul André David.

Mr. Paul André David

Mr. David (Paul André): Good evening.

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

Mr. David: To begin with, I would like to thank you for receiving me. I would like to greet the people around this table. I have come here this evening as a citizen of Québec, nothing more. I also wanted to participate in this vast project of redefining the political and constitutional future of Québec, and put in my two cents, no more, no less. I also simply wanted to appear before the Commission, and present maybe a new element, an element which I believe to be important, namely, that of the role which the municipality could play, and it's

no doubt a result of being so conditioned by my work, that I speak to you about this, in an eventually sovereign Québec. Nevertheless, when we speak of sovereignty, there are important criteria which we absolutely must respect. Whether in regard to public finances, monetary stability, our economic achievements, all of us are protective of what we have and the whole process, I imagine, and this you know, because it has often been repeated to you, has to be carried out promptly and unequivocally.

Nevertheless, I feel that a sovereign government should maintain control over certain major policies, among others, economic policies and social policies, and to the government should be added another level of power, with mandates, namely, the famous municipal power. With the gouvernement du Québec, we are presently experiencing the result of 230 years of cohabitation, and you are the *raison d'être* for this existence. Today, the Commission must present demands, suggestions to the National Assembly, and I believe it's thoroughly important that the responsibilities incumbent upon us be responsibilities which respect the rules of efficacy and efficiency. For it's often easy to say that we would like to have a country, but we must also consider that that country must be built according to accepted standards and must also compete in the international arena with other countries.

On that note, then, I would say that we must, nevertheless, when we speak of sovereignty, take into account our public finances, see to it that they be very sound, also take into account that well-known monetary stability. We have often talked about whether to have a country with its own currency or one with common currency with Canada. As far as that's concerned, I am divided about whether stability could really exist. If the Bank of Canada is capable of playing its role of guaranteeing Québec access to a currency which would simply be as advantageous for it, I'd go along with that, but if we are ever not able to give ourselves these guarantees, it would be preferable to adopt a currency which would be ours.

Finally, like all my colleagues who have come before you today, I ask you to keep a close eye on Québec's position regarding its public servants, because it is critical. Almost 19% of our active population falls within the public service sector and it's important that we nevertheless guarantee a decent economic survival for it, and above all, for the Outaouais region. This is the gist of our brief.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. We will begin the question period with Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. David, let me thank you for the brief you have presented to us at the Commission. The concerns expressed in your brief are along the same lines, if you will, as those voiced in briefs we have received from all the other regions. The concerns are almost the same. Except that, in the other regions, they speak of decentralization, while you go much further than that, in terms of giving new powers to municipalities. Besides, your brief, if I'm not mistaken, is the only one that speaks of municipal reorganization and that says 1500 municipalities in Québec may be too many. Is it because... To give you an example, and you are undoubtedly familiar with it, Norway is comparable to Québec with its 4 600 000 inhabitants, but they only have 450 municipalities, believe it or not, compared to 1500 in Québec and 800 in Ontario. And these municipalities in Norway take on, with 19 regional county municipalities, the administration of hospitals, secondary schools, colleges, major roads.

When you speak of municipal reorganization in order to create entities capable of assuming new powers, is this where you're headed? And I'd like to know, what are these powers you'd like to grant the municipal reorganizations?

Mr. David: In fact, I think that the whole process of regional development that the gouvernement du Québec has initiated and implemented in 1979 through Bill 125 was a stopgap measure for the 1970 attempt which Minister Tessier dared to launch saying: We are going to regroup the municipalities, but through coercion. We found out that it didn't make sense and it didn't last for long. What I am saying, basically, to about 1500 municipalities is, in my humble opinion: you know that you have more than 1000 municipalities with less than 800 inhabitants in Québec. Therefore, this means that these are relatively small communities, which aren't necessarily able to provide themselves with all the economic and social levers to meet their own needs. We live in one of the disadvantaged regions, we are in the fourth group of RCM's in terms of poverty, and are currently experiencing that problem. Therefore, for us, it's important, at least for me, that we might regroup and allow municipalities to adopt new powers.

As it stands, the powers we receive will simply be the powers that the gouvernement du Québec is prepared to share. I say share because I think it would be interesting that it occur not from top to bottom, but from left to right, horizontally, in a partnership, and when we think of these powers, we immediately think, among other things, of the tertiary highways we are currently discussing. We are speaking of public security, we will eventually speak of health. We already know that Ontario, our neighbour to the right, has already given all these powers to its regional county municipalities, I imagine, in its own image.

Mrs. Hovington: O.K. But you are going even a little further, and I would like you to clarify your position. For example, on page 4 of your brief, you speak about transferring the right to modulate, always to the municipal level, even of entering it into a Québec constitution. And if I understand correctly, the right to modulate is the power to adapt to regional or municipal realities, in the context of your text, the policies issued by the central level which would be Québec City in that case. Then, a little further, you propose even the complete withdrawal of the State from the areas transferred to the municipal level. If I understand correctly, it's almost a creation of a federation within Québec itself. And if it's a new Québec federalism, what mechanisms are you going to suggest to avoid the duplications which everyone complains about and which you allude to elsewhere on page 4 of your brief?

Mr. David: Mrs. Hovington, you go a lot further than I do.

Mrs. Hovington: Well, maybe I have misinterpreted your brief, but that is what you say.

Mr. David: What I say basically, in terms of...

Mrs. Hovington: That the State must withdraw from the areas transferred to the municipal level.

Mr. David: What I mean is that basically we are for modalization, adapting programs to regional needs. The Gaspé doesn't necessarily have the same problems or same needs as the Abitibi, Estrie, or Outaouais regions. We agree on that. Secondly, it's also true that, currently, Québec is a country where citizens are heavily taxed, quote, unquote, and if we want to share, if we want sound administration marked by effectiveness and efficiency, it is important that the gouvernement du Québec withdraw from certain fields of taxation if it grants them.

I'll give you a very specific example. I'll give you, among others... Well, we speak of public security. If a police officer or the Sûreté du Québec costs us \$49.95 per capita in Québec, it would be appropriate, if we handle its management, that we also have this money in order to handle its administration, if we were going that far. So that means that the government couldn't continue to collect the \$49 from my taxes while asking me, at the municipal level, to go collect it too. What we mean is very simply: Give the power of legislation and grant with it the economic or financial power which should be, in my point of view, non-statutory and recurrent.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank

you, Mrs. Hovington. We are going on now to Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. David, good day and thank you. Well, to speak like our absent fellow commissioner, Mr. Ryan: Let's waste the next five minutes together. First, a first question, Mr. David. You say that "the abyss of Canadian public finances is enormous, 365 billion dollars" of debts. And "the sharing of this Canadian debt, I quote you, with Québec sovereignty, will have to be the subject of strict negotiations, as well as being a very good incentive for bringing Ottawa to sit at the table."

There are several people around this table who have often mentioned that English Canada would flee from us, would refuse to negotiate. What you say is that the scope of this federal debt is an incentive for the federal government to come to the bargaining table with Québec. It's therefore the federal government, according to you, who would come running after us.

Mr. David: As far as I'm concerned, in any case, it would be very interesting if we could leave the Canadian federation without having to share the \$365 billion debt. That would be excellent and I wish it for all of us here. It would be very interesting to not have this debt. Some say 25%. Is it really 25% or 23% which would revert to us? That's it. In that case, it would be easy to leave. But in fact, I think it's already been done, in 1904, when Norway and Sweden separated. Then, the means for bringing the two sides to the table was to say: Listen, either we leave, very simply on good terms, without paying the debt, or if you don't want us to leave, we'll give ourselves a constitution. Further, they had the brilliant idea of giving themselves paper currency. That was very interesting. And I imagine that if it was good in the beginning of the century, for attaining sovereignty, it's exactly the same thing which is going to happen in our case. And it's in the interest of the nine other provinces to see Québec pay its fair share.

Nevertheless, I believe it would be necessary to carefully calculate the assets and liabilities. Because, you know that in governmental accounting, consolidated funds of the province are enormous and extensive. You know that we don't write off the F-18's, we pay for them. They're ours. Therefore, it would be important that we have tight accounting, done by actuaries who would be capable of recording everything. And I am convinced that the federal government is already fully aware of this practice. And, you can bet on one thing, the federal government will not let any province leave without paying its dues.

Mr. Brassard: In other words, what you're

telling us, Mr. David, is that given Québec's sovereignty, before we have the time to dial Ottawa's telephone number, the phone's going to ring. It's them who are going to call us.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Voice: That's about it.

Mr. David: Clearly.

Mr. Brassard: Now, as far as the inclusion of the existence of municipalities in the Constitution is concerned, I must say that you go far in terms of constitutional clauses concerning municipalities. Don't you think that could be dangerous? Because in a constitution, obviously, and you know that's what we've seen with the Canadian Constitution, the amending formula is so complicated that it's hardly amendable, hardly changeable. That's normal. A constitutional amending formula is always more difficult than voting or amending a law, a simple statute. And you're not afraid that by making too many things incumbent upon the municipalities in the Constitution, that it may slow down or stop the normal evolution of things?

Mr. David: In the first place, the Constitution that we're going to write is going to be ours, with the pressure tactics or means for negotiation that we'll want for ourselves. Therefore, I imagine that, in the first place, we'll be able to create means that are simple and easily accessible. Secondly, if we really want to use the municipal sector to benefit or properly govern the *gouvernement du Québec*, I believe it would be essential that the municipalities really be part of the system such that... In a constitution, the advantage is that we can't go back. I'll quote an example we've just had. We had the 1980 agreement, which was the Act respecting municipal taxation. This act gave municipalities new powers and new means for financing themselves, although the power of taxation was withdrawn from municipalities in 1978-1979. This year, we have unilaterally created confusion by allowing school boards to find funding, in the rather considerable order of \$340 million from taxpayers' pockets. In our small municipalities, where we come from, this has meant for the RCM of Papineau roughly an additional \$150 000 taken directly from the taxpayer. If the *gouvernement du Québec* had recognized municipalities as being a means, economic levers and administrative levers integrated in its legislation, it would have been more difficult to act unilaterally like that without negotiating with all involved parties.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. I turn the floor over to Mr. Roger Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to acknowledge Mr. David whose remarks, of course, I find contain many points and concerns which I share. I would like, if I may, to try to expand upon this notion of constitutional inclusion of municipalities. To begin with, are we speaking of the municipality as we know it today, the 1500 or so municipalities, or are we speaking of other... Is it a more general form of recognition of the municipal institution? Or is it truly a recognition of the municipality as we know it, with its territorial boundaries, with which we associate, of course, a certain number of clearly defined jurisdictions and its own autonomous tax base? Could you please elaborate on that?

Mr. David: In the first place, I am... I would like to come back to Mrs. Hovington's question by saying: In fact, the number of municipalities must be dealt with first. And, in my view, we must have interesting incentives for the municipalities in order to tell them: Listen, 1500 may be too many. If we can propose means which are advantageous for the taxpaying citizens of Québec to move toward restructuring, that's the first question that must be dealt with. Once the question of number is resolved for all involved, the municipality and municipal power become, as far as I'm concerned, tributaries of new legislative mandates which would be enshrined in a constitution. But this also requires a process which would be, overall, much more demanding than simply paying lip service.

I would go so far as to make compulsory - and here people will probably stone me - I would go as far as making compulsory continuous training for those elected, mayors and councillors, as well as for public servants, government staff, given that in order to legislate or administer laws and regulations, it is very important that we do so according to accepted protocol. Today, what I notice is that many mayors, or many elected municipal officers in general, are doing their best, and have good judgment. It works, but there's quite a big difference between doing one's best and reading regulations. And it's important that everyone at least agree on the terms, language, and the process, therefore, in order to provide, if you want, some kind of common starting point.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): A brief question, very short.

Mr. Nicolet: A brief question. Mr. David, this issue of numbers of municipalities is a very real one, and I think that all those who work in the municipal sector are aware of this dimension. However, and you come from a region where the density of the population, the population is scattered over a huge territory... Isn't there a question of critical territory, which defines the

critical unity, the unity of democratic life? Because, basically our experience is diametrically opposed in our large urban centres, where we endeavour to recreate neighbourhood councils, in order to simply bring the process of democratic life to a level where the people will be comfortable.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): If you can answer quickly.

Mr. David: They go hand-in-hand. This means we're still able to keep, to retain these unities, but if we were able to give ourselves a larger scale municipal council, perhaps not in the style of the city of Gaspé, 17 miles long, but being nevertheless able to give ourselves municipalities where the administrator, or legislator, the one who has to play with public finances, has budgets sufficient to carry out large-scale savings. That's really my concern.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Nicolet. Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. David, I'm going to begin with a remark. In your brief, on page 6, in your enthusiasm for writing this brief, is it possible a word escaped you, because you say: "Already, the majority of financial groups, banks, Canadian and American brokerage firms have said that a sovereign Québec would be viable, indeed even more viable." I'm not sure that the word "majority" is the best word to use in this context. I'm not sure that it's the majority of all these institutions. But having said that, you answered Mr. Brassard a little earlier, that sovereignty should come about, and then if we could get away, and leave the debt to the rest of Canada, it would be ideal in that context. But it seems to me that it also goes somewhat against what you said in your brief given that I recall that you were consistently careful in your brief, and you'll tell me whether I am misinterpreting it.

You tell us on page 6: "Your Commission must make sure that certain assets be preserved." Well, "must make sure", that presumes that we're going to take care of it beforehand. A little further you say: "The best means must be found for restoring monetary stability." And you continue on page 7: "Quebecers are ready for a political and constitutional redefinition of Québec but they don't want to lose in the process". And you say a little further in the paragraph: "Continuity must be guaranteed." And you add finally: "The government must stop decisions as of now." That's in the last paragraph. That leads me to think that you are telling us: Be careful what measures you take in order to attain sovereignty. Make sure we don't trip on our way there. Be sure our vested interests are preserved, are

maintained, and that the methods we use to attain sovereignty are those which will keep us safe the whole way. Are you not, in fact, saying: Before declaring sovereignty or before taking any action leading toward it we should sit down and negotiate what we can in order to get security at the outset.

Mr. David: You really put words in my mouth.

Mr. Beaudry: Well, I'm reading your brief.

Mr. David: Ha, ha, ha! No, firstly, I have to say I'm consistent in the sense that basically, for me, this is important and the experience of 1980 showed us that we had to... And I think that as a Quebecer, just like you, that we have things and we learn from our experiences. We became aware, in 1980, that the process has been relatively difficult. It was a real witch hunt, and I want to tell you, you have, I think, partially correctly read the brief and you have understood me correctly, and this is to say: It would be unfortunate to repeat the process in 1990 and start again with the same old ideas that we had in 1980. We know that the experience of the Parti québécois from 1976 to 1985 has been decisive. Firstly, Québec has been just as profitable, if not more so in its practices, especially by the end of the recession. It's the province of Québec which better held itself together in 1982, but what's important is that our Quebecers, if we were to present a mock referendum to them where nothing was controlled, it's certain that if you ask me to choose between a confederation, superstructure style more or less defined, and sovereignty more or less defined, people are going to go for the lesser of two evils. So, I tell myself...

Mr. Beaudry: What's that, the lesser of two evils?

Mr. David: The lesser of two evils would be to say: Well, the one that's going to be most apt to support me, make me feel secure. And what I'm trying to say is: would it be possible to be sure beforehand... We know the experience, we lived it in 1980. Let's say now: Listen, there are questions which we want answered beforehand; we're going to give ourselves guarantees and we're going to go ahead. One thing's for sure, we know that 62% of Quebecers are ready for sovereignty and I believe that we can't deny this anymore. However, I think it's a move that has consequences. It's a long term move we're going to make and if we become sovereign, it's not for two weeks. Therefore, it's long term, and we must give ourselves every chance of success. And so it's in this sense that I spoke before you.

Mr. Beaudry: And to feel more safe...

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

Mr. Beaudry: ...before declaring.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. David, I would like to thank you for presenting your brief before this Commission on the future of Québec. Thank you. Let's dispense with applause.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:35 p.m.)

(Proceeding resumed at 8:37 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Ladies and Gentlemen, our last speaker for today, the Logemen'occupe group, represented by Mr. Bill Clennett.

Logemen'occupe

Mr. Clennett (Bill): Good evening.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Would you please introduce your colleagues, Mr. Clennett?

Mr. Clennett: O.K. Mr. Ostiguy is to my left; Christiane Bouchard to my right; and Denis Desjardins.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Good.

Mr. Clennett: I'd like to begin by welcoming members of the Commission to the Outaouais. The summary of our brief, which I will present, tries to deal with two questions. The first is the preliminary question, the national question, the basic question. On this question, Logemen'occupe has taken a position in favour of Québec's independence. This position is based on the fact that the sovereignty of a people, and in particular the Québec people, is a historical necessity. It's a universal need of all people and that has been demonstrated here, this evening, with representatives of the Native people who also want to be sovereign.

Having said that, history has shown that within the federal framework, Québec has not been able to assume its sovereignty. It's been a failure. The last confirmation seems to settle that once and for all. So, the burden of proof, for Logemen'occupe, if further proof is needed, is in the hands of those who still believe that Québec can assume its sovereignty as a people, as a nation, within a federation. We don't think so. This decision is a collective decision. The position of Logemen'occupe, its position on the national question, is not as an individual group, but as a representative of the people of Québec. We were a bit disappointed that some groups want to view, or deal with, this question in a

conditional way, such as Québec's economic and political elite. Sovereignty, perhaps, but within an economic stability of, we read, the status quo.

Other people from the region here also wanted to deal with the question conditionally. Change yes, sovereignty maybe, but job stability, status quo. We believe that it's as a people that we have to deal with this question and not as interest groups. And we feel that people who place conditions, or groups that place conditions on their answer to the basic question, the preliminary question, demonstrate a certain lack of solidarity with Québec as a whole. The future of Québec concerns everyone equally.

But once we've answered the preliminary question, the second is raised: What kind of society? If we say "yes" to sovereignty, then what kind of sovereignty? And that's the question of the blueprint for society. We have a problem talking about that before this Commission because, no offense to the people here, we find that the structure is much too limited to answer such an important question. The Commission's makeup, its organization, the time people had to speak, when you have to decide what kind of society you want... We feel a much broader debate is needed, and that's one of our recommendations. But, as a path to a broader reflection, we try to bring up some points and these points arise from our experience.

We are a group that stands up for housing rights and it's from there that our ideas on the blueprint for society are drawn. And in the Outaouais, like in many other regions of Québec, we note, we are confronted every day with major problems of impoverishment and a new phenomenon: ghettoization.

In this region, in terms of impoverishment, there is a very large increase in the number of families, households and individuals with serious housing problems. An increasing number of people are being evicted from their home — one tenant in every twenty per year in the region. There is also a problem of discrimination in trying to find a roof over your head. Since Bill 37 came into force, this year's reform of social aid, the number of people contacting us has increased, people on the point of being thrown out on the street; people with problems, perhaps already on the street, people for whom we are ill equipped to provide help or even represent them because they need a roof tomorrow or even yesterday.

We feel the causes of these problems are the increasingly precarious nature of jobs and an unequal distribution of wealth in society.

A second problem we've noticed is ghettoization, and I won't dwell on it. Many speakers before this Commission have done so. There's been a "dualization" of space here in Québec. That generates many problems with

quality of life, deterioration of neighbourhoods. We feel the economic choices we make are the cause of those problems. Unlimited economic growth, urban sprawl and speculation. That's what we see.

If we want to project that for a blueprint for society, towards which we should be headed based on our experience as...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I have to ask you for your conclusions, or to convey your message in the answers.

Mr. Clennett: Very good, and I'm coming to the conclusions. It's to relate this to a blueprint for society. When it's time to define the economic structures and establish economic links, Québec must maintain its independence in terms of social policy, which is currently in doubt. And, in terms of development within those choices, it must be sustainable development. That completes the presentation.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. We go first to Mrs. Pauline Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome you to our work. I remember Opération Logement-va-pu by your group, a group that's always been very involved in the Hull region.

Basically, what you say is interesting. Let's decide on our status and, obviously, let's discuss immediately, although I understand that that's it, what blueprint for society we want to adopt. Do you suggest a means for choosing the status of an independent Québec? Your brief has nothing to say on that score.

Mr. Clennett: Yes. It's true that we had to prepare this very quickly and we had to think about that question. We favour a referendum, a referendum that wouldn't be a blank page, one that would involve Québec society in a broader debate in which we could agree on a blueprint for society.

Mrs. Marois: So, without making it conditional, if I understand you, without making sovereignty conditional on a blueprint for society, you're saying it should be debated at the same time.

Mr. Clennett: No.

Mrs. Marois: No? I see. O.K.

Mr. Clennett: No. I'm saying we should have a referendum on a very simple question, such as: Are you for or against sovereignty? After the referendum, provided the response is "yes" and favourable, that involves no other commitment in the next stage, which is the

actual definition of a blueprint for society. That has to be done within a larger framework than what we have here this evening.

Mrs. Marois: I see. Yes. That's a very clear message, in fact, in your brief and in your remarks. I'll come back to another point in your document, and you touched on it briefly in your presentation at the beginning. On page 3 of your document, at the bottom, you say Québec has to keep its distance from continental economic integration. I understand what you fear will happen is that the finally, dominant economic model, the U.S. one, will be imposed on us as the social model. Is that what your remarks and what you've written mean?

Mr. Clennett: It's what we already see, right now. First, we don't believe Québec must live in isolation. I think that's impossible today. Having said that, since the free trade treaty, there have been changes, both in Québec and federally, in social policy, changes that have contributed to greater poverty. And we don't believe Québec should be associated with a process that will bind it socially and impoverish society and say: We can't do anything, because...

Mrs. Marois: Fine. Last question. Still on page 3, you mention individual rights and make an interesting comment on that, tied to the international scene, the international policies of an eventually independent or sovereign Québec. You say that an independent Québec must not only respect individual rights, it must also take their abuse into account in its relations with other nations. How do you determine that, abuses? And what influence could that then have on policy or our relations with other nations? How do you translate this statement in your document into concrete terms?

Mr. Clennett: O.K. I think we could have said we don't deal with regimes that violate human rights, but that's dangerous sometimes, because the result can "victimize" people who've already been "victimized". But we see that in international reports, today, there are abuses in many political systems, sometimes just related to the social inequities caused by unequal North-South economic relations. They're also caused by regimes that are trying to hold on and are propped up by us. Sometimes we're responsible because we are getting richer at the expense of poverty in the Third World. If we're concerned about these issues in Québec, we can't be insensitive when it happens elsewhere.

Mrs. Marois: That's certainly an interesting point for reflection to include in the debate on a sovereign Québec. Thank you for your testimony.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Mr. Libman, followed by Mr. Larose.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Clennett, I'll be very clear and very sincere. A lot of groups have come before this Commission, in favour of Québec's sovereignty. They repeat slogans, clichés, rhetoric that's very familiar to us. But they don't talk about how. So my question is very frank. How can Québec allow itself, how will it pay for independence, a rupture with Canada? You are concerned about the increase in poverty. How, in your opinion, does this major constitutional change affect typical citizens or families in the short term and in the long term?

Mr. Clennett: First, if you want to ask the question: Will Quebecers' social and economic living conditions, why not low-income persons, get better or worse in a sovereign Québec? We don't even see that as a question. It's not a question because we don't think Québec has any choice. Sovereignty is the only option left for Québec. And the final confirmation par excellence was the death of the Meech Lake Accord. So, we have to move forward in the process of independence. And we are confident of the capacity of the people of Québec, the Québec nation, to survive and agree on a new arrangement.

Mr. Libman: But you haven't actually answered my question. My question is: How, frankly, how can the typical family, in the short or long term, adapt to this major constitutional change? Obviously, there will be consequences. How? Can you tell me how? It's very important. How will that happen?

Mr. Clennett: Perhaps you should explain yourself on the consequences, because in my opinion, in the opinion of Logemen'ocupe and in the opinion of the people we're in contact with, it won't be difficult to adapt. We'll adapt very well. Finally, we'll be able to live without obstacles. We'll control our destiny. That's what the people of Québec have been hoping for for many years.

Mr. Libman: Finally, O.K. I'll move on to another topic. In your brief, you mention that Logemen'ocupe is of the opinion that the constitutional framework for a resolutely French and independent Québec must guarantee that the special status of the English-speaking community will be maintained. Exactly what does that mean? Some criteria are important to the English-speaking community. For instance, the "notwithstanding" clause, the commercial signs issue, the guarantee of social services, the guarantee of school boards. Are those areas important in your vision of things for Québec?

Mr. Clennett: I think it's very important that the English-speaking community in Québec has been here for a long time and, in the Canadian federal context, is the minority that receives the best treatment. Specifically, the controls we have in Québec, in the English-speaking community on schools and social services, these issues, it's important that they be maintained. As for the sign issue, on the other hand, finally, we won't have to deal with a Supreme Court that interprets freedom of expression as a right of commercial signs...

Mr. Libman: Mr. Clennett, that was the Québec Court of Appeal, and the Québec Superior Court. All these courts found that it was the suspension of an individual right. It's not just the Supreme Court, but also the Québec courts, interpreting the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms as well.

Mr. Clennett: That's not the view of Logemen'occupe.

Mr. Libman: What, the view... But the view...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

A voice: Bravo!

Mr. Libman: The views of witnesses have to correspond to reality.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now move on to Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Mr. Chairman. I turn to page 6. It deals with the Commission's approach, including some criticism. I realize the text was likely written before November 2. I don't know whether this is still your position. I think you're clearly concerned that the process be a democratic process. That assumes broad debate and assumes, very likely, that the people decide. I'd like you to tell me what your feeling is in relation to a democratic debate? Obviously, the Commission... A certain number of members have criticized its composition, but can't we say that, as far as how it works, hasn't it, up to now, sparked a degree of public debate? To the point where some people are working hard to try to discredit the Commission's work, precisely because it doesn't seem to be heading in exactly the same "tracks". Even, and there, Mr. Sirros, you can note what Mr. Ryan said this morning.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Larose: There are faster ways, he said, to form an idea. Obviously, but democracy means that you listen to people. Do you feel the Commission should continue its work to stimulate

public debate? Second question: because the real "game" will be played in the referendum, are you already concerned that the referendum decision also be a democratic decision? In other words, the question, perhaps I should direct it to my friend to my right rather than to you...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Larose: How many millions will Ottawa spend in the referendum debate? The quality of the democratic debate and the quality of the democratic decision, for an organization that's had it up to here, because we've known you for a long time, does that concern you?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Your question, please, Mr. Larose.

Mr. Clennett: I'll try to answer. One of the problems with the composition of the Commission is, ultimately, what do we do with the results? What will the question be? Will there be a referendum? What will it commit us to? As we see it, there has been a real debate from the beginning and we have to say that, in a sense, we've been pleasantly surprised. Having said that, if the Commission's effect is to bring Québec to a referendum, not only on a choice on sovereignty, but also on a choice of society, we'll conclude, finally, that the decision is the status quo without further discussion. Except that in an independent Québec, we'll have the impression that there hasn't been a debate to get to that point. But if the Commission proposes that a referendum be held, and I think there's movement in that direction, and it commits Québec to a broader debate afterwards, I think the Commission will have played a historic role for the future of Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that all? So, that completes... Thank you. Excuse me, Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams, you have the microphone.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks very much to Logemen'occupe for your brief. I read it attentively and you speak of a fairer, more environmental, more democratic society. I think those things are pretty important when we talk. I think our society needs groups like that. I'd also like to make a comment. You spoke of the Québec nation and I liked your definition because you include all Quebecers, women, men, Anglophones, Francophones and people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and that's pretty important for me.

Another remark. You drew a kind of parallel with the situation, the tensions here in the Outaouais, between Ottawa and Hull, a kind of parallel with what exists in the rest of

Canada. And I think we looked at those concerns when we examined our last report.

You've certainly dealt with the housing issue, and have said we need a lot more. There's lots to do. But I think, and I'd like to make a comment, that Hull is one of the cities, and perhaps I'm wrong here, one of the cities with the most subsidized housing units per capita in Québec. Perhaps you're in a bit of a special position with direct lines to Ottawa, and subsidies from Québec as well. Nothing prevents more from being done. That's not what I mean, but I think we've started here and we have to do much more in the future.

But in your brief, you've spoken on two main themes a little. You propose sovereignty as the first step. After that, you say you'd like to develop a blueprint for society. To my knowledge, when we speak of a new blueprint for society, of a constitution, and the constitution embodies the values of this blueprint for society, we do that before we go, before we decide on the structures we need. With that, I think you've protected, you've approached this question a bit backward. You've decided on the structures, then after that, you want to prepare a blueprint for society. I prefer the reverse. Do you have any comment on that?

Mr. Clennett: Yes, it's not the structure we want to decide ahead of time. What we want to decide from the outset is whether, yes or no, Québec will be sovereign and independent. I agree that there are very important links between the constitutional framework, when you talk about the skeleton and the components, and what that'll lead to when all is said and done. And by the way, our brief mentions this with regard to the relation between social policy and economic decisions.

But what we want decided in advance, is whether or not Québec wants to become fully sovereign through independence. This choice, a very simple decision, comes first. After that, we can discuss the constitution.

Mr. Williams: One more thing, do I have some time? Another thing you discuss, I think, is the *raison d'être* of your group that defends housing rights for persons of modest means in our society; you spoke of protection of rights a few times in the brief. Today, in the National Assembly, Mr. Rémillard had a few words to say on the difference between the Canadian Charter and the Québec Charter. You also mentioned problems with the Régie du logement. When we talk about the future, when we talk about how we could better protect rights, in somewhat the same sense as Mrs. Marois' question, what means do we need to better protect the kinds of people you have taken responsibility for, because, often, it seems to me that people forget them. It's all very nice to have charters and all that. What

means do we take? Regardless of the political structure, what can we do here in Québec?

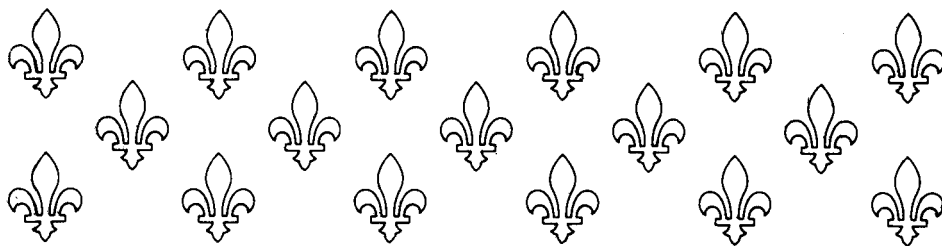
Mr. Clennett: I think in fact it's true what you say, we can have the best charters in the world, but if, when all's said and done, there are still abuses, it doesn't mean much. We feel it's necessary to have a fairer distribution of wealth and work, evils that are often the cause of poverty. Just to give you a little example to make this very concrete: in principle, there should be no discrimination against people seeking housing. But in fact, when you're not solvent, that doesn't count. So, you can be discriminated against when you're not solvent.

Mr. Williams: Thanks very much, and keep up the good work.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, Mr. Clennett, Mr. Desjardins, Mrs. Bouchard, Mr. Ostiguy, thank you for your remarks to help us in our work on the future of Québec. Thanks to all the members of the group Logemen'occupe.

This concludes our hearings today. Thanks to the people of Hull and the Outaouais for their warm welcome and I would now ask... This public session will become a working session after the nonmembers have left.

(End of sitting, 9:04 p.m.)



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

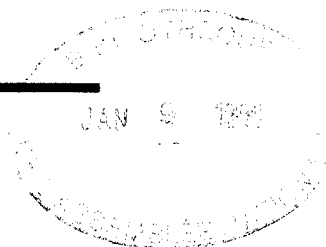
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Sherbrooke, Thursday, December 6, 1990

No 16

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Mrs. Rosette Côté

Mr. Louis Laberge

Mrs. Louise Bégin

Mrs. Carmen Juneau

Mr. Guy Bélanger

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Sherbrooke, Thursday, December 6, 1990

Hearings: Organizations and Individuals

(2:04 p.m.)

group and then present your brief.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May I remind you that the mandate of the Commission is to examine and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to formulate recommendations in that regard.

Today the sitting will be devoted to hearing the following groups or persons: first, the Groupe de femmes de l'Estrie; then, the Brome-Missisquoi Riding Association of the Equality Party, the Townshippers' Association, Mrs. Heather Keith-Ryan, the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke, the Centre pour femmes immigrantes de l'Estrie, the Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie, Mr. Robert B. Steele, the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke, the Students' Representative Council of Bishop's University, the Fédération québécoise anti-pauvreté and the Québec-Sherbrooke Presbytery of the United Church of Canada.

The selection of briefs to be heard caused some commotion in this region so I'd like to stress that briefs are selected by the Steering Committee, which is composed of representatives of the Government party, representatives of the Official Opposition party, one representative of the other members, and the two Co-chairmen. In all cases, briefs were selected by consensus, and there was no need to establish a majority or take a vote. I'd also like to remind you that the time allowed for a half-hour presentation is divided as follows: 5 minutes for presenting the brief, 5 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 5 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group, and 10 minutes for members registered with the Chair, each member having 5 minutes.

Minute of silence observed

Before beginning our work more formally, I wish to remind you that today, December 6, is the anniversary of a tragic event which marked the history of our society. I therefore ask you all to observe a minute of silence in memory of the 14 young women who were murdered at the École Polytechnique, to bear witness to our common hope of seeing the causes of such tragedies disappear.

Hearings

We'll now begin the sitting. The group we'll hear, I believe Mrs. Malavoy is the spokesperson. I therefore ask, Madam, that you introduce your

Groupe de femmes de l'Estrie

Mrs. Malavoy (Marie): Thank you. I'd like to introduce, on my left, Andrée Robert and Jacinthe Lambert; on my right, Rita Baillargeon, Lorraine Jobin and Manon-Ann Blanchard.

Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, on this day of December 6, allow me to begin by reminding us all of those who were killed at the École Polytechnique one year ago. This painful anniversary reinforces the idea that we must speak out on behalf of women's interests. The new Québec can't be built without us, without the protection of our rights and the values that guide us. We want the constitutional debate to also be a debate on the foundations of Québec society and we want men and women, in this society, to share equal status.

We are a group of women from different backgrounds. The only thing drawing us together is that women's interests will always shape the analyses we make and the action we take, and we believe that we represent women's interests, and therefore over half of the Québec population, for we make up the majority.

We ask that any constitutional change aim at both maintaining and promoting women's exercise of power in all spheres of life, private as well as public.

We feel that it's time, in our society, to review our customs, which, as Marilyn French says, represent our true values and we believe that we have to look for new models of life in society which are based more on cooperation than on competition, more on respect for differences than on standardization, more on sharing than on personal success. In this regard, our brief is inspired by a feminist vision.

In our brief, we take up two major themes. The first is that of physical integrity. First of all, with regard to physical integrity, we want to put abortion back into a context of health care. That's why we're asking that abortion not be criminalized and that health services for women be accessible in all regions of Québec.

As for the question of violence between men and women, a sad episode of which we remembered, unfortunately, just seconds ago, we want to attack the causes of this violence. It seems as if the current overlapping of jurisdictions in this field, between the various levels of government, is weighing down the process and leaving serious situations with no real treatment. Also, concerning the treatment of violence, we want criminal law to be rid of its sexist connotations. We think that when the Québec government takes over criminal law, this

will perhaps be its first task: ridding this law of all sexist connotations.

The second major theme that we take on in our brief is the financial autonomy of women. We look at it first from the viewpoint of employment opportunities. We have a number of questions about this and we take a number of positions. We are moving primarily towards a policy of full employment. We think that this type of policy will ensure a long-term vision and that only a government which accepts a policy of full employment will manage to meet the aspirations of women.

Still on the theme of employment opportunities, we talk about job training and we want a coherent job training policy to be elaborated. In the same way, we want the political will which began to express itself in terms of equal opportunity programs to go further and be accompanied by very concrete measures.

With regard to parental leave, we want more equitable measures for all women and, in concrete terms, we want salaried and independent female workers on maternity leave to receive 90% of their income.

Another issue is that of precautionary cessation of work, which doesn't give women the same rights, depending on whether they work for federal organizations or provincial organizations. We want the Québec government to give all pregnant or nursing Quebecers who work in Québec the right to precautionary cessation of work.

As far as child care services are concerned, we believe that they have to be more accessible and that Québec must repatriate the amounts currently paid by the federal government and use them in the best way possible.

In terms of pay equity, we want the work of women, who unfortunately still earn about 66% of what men do, to be recognized. We want this work to no longer be considered supplementary income or an extension of domestic tasks. We therefore want the question of wage equity to be put high up on the agenda.

We also take on another big issue, that of poverty and dependency. We come out in favour of a policy aimed at financial autonomy. We recommend that Québec show some creativity and adopt a policy of income security acceptable to everyone, directed as much as possible towards the attainment of financial autonomy, either through employment or through an adequate minimum income. In the same vein, we want the government to develop a more generous policy of financial aid to support children and to guarantee women a universal pension plan.

Finally, concerning immigrant women, we demand that reception facilities which enable them to integrate themselves as quickly as possible into Québec society be set up. And we demand that the rights of aboriginal women and

their children be respected.

In conclusion, we take on three issues which run through all those I've just listed rather quickly. First, we tackle the issue of financing women's groups. We're convinced that women's groups nicely complement government intervention and that these groups need adequate financing. We want to ensure that changes to Québec's constitutional status aren't likely to deprive these women's groups of vital support.

Another issue which is vital to women's affirmation of power is precisely that of their power and their representation. We therefore demand that all new political, judicial and other institutions make provision for equal representation of women and men. And we have another recommendation which is designed to revise the current electoral system in favour of proportional representation.

Finally, the last question we take up, which runs through all the others, is that of international agreements protecting the rights of women which Québec has entered into alongside Canada. We want to be sure that these international rights will continue to be respected.

As for the question which is proper to this Commission, we come out in favour of Québec sovereignty, because we think that it's the solution that could well give women and the interests they champion the best chances of finding a fair and adequate solution.

Finally, allow me to say that we'll be trying to guarantee that Québec follow a path that truly fits in with the concerns of women, for we are not one pressure group among others, we are over half of the Québec electorate.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. Before we move on to the question period, I believe Mr. Vallières would like to say a few words.

Mr. Vallières: Yes. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission as well as colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Estrie Government caucus and myself, I'm particularly pleased to welcome you all most cordially to Estrie and, to all the people who'll be presenting briefs, as well as to participants from here or elsewhere, I wish the best proceedings possible, I dare say the best work possible, within the challenges awaiting us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Vallières. We'll begin with questions from members. Mrs. Côté, who'll be followed by Mr. Dufour.
(2:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Côté: Yes, Mr. Chairman. On this December 6, I add my voice to that of all women to commemorate December 6. I have two questions. You've listed a set of rights which

must be recognized in the new blueprint Québec will have to adopt when it becomes sovereign, and you talk about entrenching women's rights in the constitution. Although we can't entrench ways of thinking, we can at least entrench certain rights. Which rights do you think it would be important to entrench, other than the right to equality for men and women? That's my first question. You also talk about reforming the electoral system to make it proportional. How do you see this? Because I'm not sure that just making it proportional can bring about equal representation for men and women, that there aren't other measures to consider. So, have you thought about this question?

Mrs. Malavoy: I'll start to respond; my colleagues are also here to complete my answers. I think that if one right seems fundamental to us, it's everything having to do with the right to work, along with everything that we've tried adding to it, if you like. The right to work, which therefore means we're championing a policy of full employment, the right to precautionary cessation of work for women who are nursing because it's a specific condition of this population, the right to child care services, rights which, in the end, help give women equal footing on the job market because we're convinced that the biggest problem women have is a problem of poverty and dependency and that, if a certain number of rights, or rather measures which confirm this right, don't come, women will continue to earn one third less than men, will continue to have precarious work, will continue to work part-time, etc. In short, then, I'd put the emphasis on everything having to do with work.

Mrs. Côté: And the right to physical and psychological integrity.

Mrs. Malavoy: We've made the right to physical and psychological integrity our second theme as being a sort of absolutely inalienable foundation.

Mrs. Lambert (Jacinthe): With regard to violence against women, what we're saying is that violence against women will never be eliminated if we don't think of a fair and viable economic level for women.

Mrs. Côté: And the electoral system?

Mrs. Malavoy: Mrs. Lorraine Jobin will answer this question.

Mrs. Jobin (Lorraine): At the present time, this question... Of course we could've considered a women's party. It seems more important to us to join groups or parties which champion social rights, which champion greater social justice,

and I think that, in this vein, we should encourage alliances with other parties instead. Now, as far as parties are concerned, our main criticism of the major parties is that very few women reach positions of power, of leadership. Therefore, we're proposing the proportional system instead, or one that would enable small parties to perhaps stand a better chance of being represented. Then, women's demands would stand a better chance of being taken to levels of leadership.

Mrs. Côté: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour was mistakenly included on this list. Mr. Laberge will go next, followed by Mr. Poissant. Mr. Laberge. Mr. Dufour passed because he was put on the wrong list. You therefore have the floor, Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies, when reading your brief, I saw something very familiar because it contained the demands we've been making at the FTQ for quite some time already. I fully agree that, to settle the problem of pay equity and the right to work, it takes a government with the political courage to give us a policy of full employment. And I agree with you that it would be easier to achieve a policy of full employment if Québec had all the powers and repatriated all the powers. You are no doubt aware that an organization chaired by Mr. Claude Béland, the Forum on employment, came up with this type of recommendation.

Things become somewhat new and refreshing when you talk about immigrant women. Your region went through an experience which gave some very tangible results; do you know of any other experiments like this which took place elsewhere?

Mrs. Malavoy: Listen, on that subject I'd like to respond that immigrant women are themselves going to come and present a brief, and that they'll be in a better position than us to talk about their own realities. And I'd rather let them speak for themselves, if you don't mind.

Mr. Laberge: OK. Then, I'll save this question for them.

Mrs. Malavoy: But I'm pleased to learn that you found something refreshing in our brief.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): No other questions, Mr. Laberge?

Mr. Laberge: No, I have another question. It's very obvious that as long as we have an unemployment rate of 10%, that the number of jobs for which we can try to make representations and obtain equity, these will

always be precarious, part-time jobs in areas which aren't as well paid.

Are you aware that during the last round of negotiations in the public sector, something quite interesting happened and that, for the first time, in the job evaluation scale, the experience of women at home as mothers, therefore as teachers, as launderers, in the case of women who do the wash, as... in jobs which they have in the public sector, it served to, it gave them points for acquiring a higher classification? It was the first time such a thing was recognized. And Lord knows that, it seems to me that someone who's worked, I don't know, 10 or 15 years doing this, knows it really well. It should have been recognized before.

So I'm very pleased with your brief. I endorse it wholeheartedly. My question: Would you be very disappointed if we did things in stages? In other words, we, at the FTQ in any case, didn't want to put everything, all demands, in our brief, saying: Let's go for it, let's take all the means at our disposal, everything we need to do something. And, of course, we're doing it, we're not doing it for the fun of making a constitutional change, but indeed to equip ourselves with a policy of full employment, etc.

Mrs. Baillargeon (Rita): So, what I understand is that you don't have a vision specifically for women, and you do have a global vision on full employment, is that right?

Mr. Laberge: No, but really it's the best way to achieve it at the same time for women, for our equity programs and all the rest.

Mrs. Baillargeon: Oh yes. It's obvious to us that the way to women's financial autonomy is through employment. And if we want women to have access to employment, there must be employment, and therefore that calls for a vision of society based on a philosophy of full employment. And in addition to this there're also programs which are going to ensure that when there is employment, women will be able to have access to it, because they'll have had adequate training. And, in fact, I find it interesting that we're talking about recognizing experience because a great number of women experience downtime, and this downtime isn't valued, while on the other hand, this downtime is essential for the survival of Québec society.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: I'm sorry, I didn't give my name this...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ah! So you too were the victim of a mistake at the

beginning of the sitting. Pardon me, Mr. Poissant. We'll now move on to questions from the Government representative, Mrs. Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now it's my turn to welcome you all to our Commission. I read your document and it is excellent. You define the problems of today's woman clearly. You even break new ground compared to other women's groups we've heard. You break new ground in particular when you talk about training programs for judges faced with the violence women can suffer in life. And your brief is the first to state this. You approach your document from two sides: the physical integrity of women and their financial autonomy. At this stage, you'll allow me to say that obviously not everything has been done in terms of financial autonomy, but I think we can say that, in the past few years, a lot has been done.

Think, in particular, of child care services, at least the position paper of Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay who intends to introduce 60 000 new places in day-care centres in the next seven years. There's also the birth premium, things which have been done, which are concrete and which, in terms of financial autonomy, are a step in the right direction. Except that you say that women aren't involved enough in public and parapublic financial institutions. And you talk about a new electoral system in which you favour proportional representation. My question is the following: how do you think proportional representation is going to help women take their places in political institutions? Because Mrs. Côté touched on the matter but your answer didn't entirely satisfy me and that's sort of why I've returned to the attack and I'd like...

Mrs. Malavoy: Very well. I'll ask the same person to try to satisfy your curiosity. Lorraine?

Mrs. Jobin: Well, it's certain that... If I review, in particular, the Parti québécois program of a few years ago, the PQ had, in its policies, the proportional system. Once in power, it didn't seem to want to push it forward. We think that in small parties we'll stand a better chance of having our spokesperson closer to the groups which want changes. I think that, for us, it's the only way to succeed, not by defending, in particular, a party of women only, but instead by standing up with other groups which want these changes, which are demanding social rights, social justice. I think that it's our only alternative: to be there, to be present and to have our spokesperson.
(2:30 p.m.)

Mrs. Bégin: If you don't mind, when you broached this subject, I identified with it. Let's take an example: the Chaudière-Appalaches region. I'm from the Chaudière-Appalaches

region, where there are eight ridings. There'll be one list; each political party, from what I understand, will have one list, eight candidates each. If 60% of the region favours one political party, you'll get 60% of the candidates, but who's going to assure you that there're at least four women among the eight candidates? I don't think the problem is on the level of representation. I can tell you, as a party, I think that political parties have difficulty finding women. And that's the problem. I don't think, and I'd like you to correct me on this, that the problem is on the level of the electoral system, it's more of a basic problem. It's that women, for economic reasons, I think, for family reasons, have difficulty making a name for themselves.

I don't think, and I want to hear your thoughts on this, that the problem is on the level of the system as such, but rather more on a basic level because women are very often the main wage earners in a family and don't have... Perhaps day-care centres aren't sufficiently developed yet, although we've made many efforts to develop them on a provincial level to enable women to realize their full potential. I don't see - I'll be frank with you, this is sort of why I wanted to come back to this - how a different electoral system could favour women in terms of political institutions. In terms of public and parapublic organizations, the law can do this, but in terms of politics as such, I don't believe so.

Mrs. Malavoy: Two people are ready to answer...

Mrs. Bégin: Yes.

Mrs. Malavoy: ...Lorraine, perhaps you could continue for a short time, and then Andrée could speak too.

Mrs. Jobin: I agree with you when you say that there have been some changes in attitude, I'm really with you on that. There's also a need for training, a need for women to get educated, to take power, women, themselves. I'm not saying that we're always excluded because men exclude us. I'm saying that there's a problem somewhere and that it has to be looked at along the lines of a change in mentality, but also with regard to a legal way of getting ourselves represented in leadership positions.

Mrs. Robert (Andrée): I'd complete this simply by saying that there're few women who also identify with the current major parties, and that women, through the blueprint for society we're presenting, will identify with smaller parties and possibly parties which will soon emerge, where values will be more closely tied to the type of society we desire. So, at that

time, under proportional representation, even though these are small parties, these women, if they have 10% to 20% of the vote within a region, could have one seat and identify with the values that they've advocated up to now.

Mrs. Bégin: But I hope that you don't favour...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is up, Mrs. Bégin. We'll now move on to the representative of the Official Opposition, Mrs. Juneau.

Mrs. Juneau: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome both of you, Messrs. Co-chairmen, and members of the Commission, to the beautiful region of Estrie. In the hearts of those of this region, as in the hearts of all Quebecers, we're keenly aware of the importance of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. We're convinced, here in Estrie as elsewhere in Québec, that this Commission is an historic moment for Québec and for each and every one of us.

The brief which we just heard is a good example of the determination and will to further the cause of women, not only here in Estrie but throughout Québec, and you've very clearly demonstrated it by exposing the problems experienced by women.

Mr. Chairman, I'd also like to tell you that my political party, our leader, Mr. Parizeau, appointed three women and three men to this Commission. Therefore, women are well represented as far as our political party is concerned.

You have, within your brief, some good elements for building our blueprint for society. Assuming that the referendum receives a yes vote, if there is one, of course, what methods do you see for introducing the process that will follow?

Mrs. Malavoy: Oh! That's a big question. I thought that it was your job, as a member of the Commission, to answer this. We can perhaps try to give you the main lines, but let's just say we've basically agreed that what's important is to tell you that, in view of all the women's rights and interests we're championing, we think that Québec has to repatriate powers and define itself in the event of sovereignty-association.

What exactly is going to happen afterwards? You talk about a referendum stage which many seem to accept straightaway as confirmation of what's happening and what people are thinking in Québec right now. When you say, what's going to happen afterwards? You're talking about the mechanisms themselves which will enable us to set up, for example, the things we've been talking about here. I can perhaps begin to respond, but I'd like my

colleagues to complete what I have to say. In nearly all the issues which we've taken on rather superficially, in view of the somewhat rapid context we're doomed to here, but in nearly all these issues, we'd be able to fill in a form and say, for example, for this question, a law ensuring these things must be passed.

Let's take, for example, a minor thing, like the right to precautionary cessation of work. At the moment, we know that there're organizations which can't allow this because it's not in the law. It's not in a law, for both the federal and the provincial governments. There are concrete things like this which could be changed. We have the feeling that, at the legislative level, in many issues, there are conclusions that could be retained so that several of the themes we're discussing here could be taken further.

There are much larger questions and we're aware of this. When we talk about a policy of full employment, it's not like talking about child care services. These have been put on equal footing somewhat, but the policy of full employment, in fact, is more a vision of society which also assumes a comprehensive economic vision, and, consequently, a policy of full employment. There're things which would be more accessible to women. But other things are much more precise, in terms of job training, in terms of employment opportunities and wage equity. It seems to us that there are laws, concrete regulations or measures which could provide a framework for what could be done for women.

Mrs. Juneau: If I understand correctly, women want to be closer to the governments and take part in extremely important measures which are valuable for the advancement of women, in the fields you've mentioned in your brief.

Mrs. Malavoy: Yes. You could put it that way. We'd like to be more present and have a greater voice in the context of these decisions.

Mrs. Juneau: In a sovereign Québec, I imagine that you'd be interested in getting more involved in the process... much more than we currently are.

Mrs. Malavoy: It would mean that, for certain questions, we'd have the advantage of having someone to talk to. I'll take an example from the brief - I didn't get a chance to talk about it earlier - the example of pornography, where three levels of government intervene. You know that this is a very important issue for a number of women's groups. It's not a secondary matter, it refers to the entire public image of women in society, and not only the public image, but also some very private images. To deal with pornography, we must submit certain things to

the federal government; others, to the provincial and yet others, to the municipal government. The more people you have to talk to, the more complicated it is and the less chance there is that an issue makes any real progress.

Mrs. Juneau: And the big question: in your opinion, should the referendum take place within the short term? When would be the best time to hold the referendum in Québec?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The time is up, Madam, so you must give a short answer.

Mrs. Juneau: A short answer.

A voice: A short answer. Quickly.

Mrs. Malavoy: If I can give a short answer, I'd say that women like to strike the iron while it's hot.

Mrs. Juneau: Thank you.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Voices: Bravo!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I didn't have a chance to give my preamble on applause. May I remind you that because this Commission is an open Parliamentary Commission, the people here are, in spirit, in the galleries of Parliament, where the rules have long prohibited applauding the debates held below. As a result, I ask the audience not to applaud. This rule we've adopted is self-evident, and it would be a good idea to stick to it. I also remind you, without wishing to abuse it, that the Chairman has full authority to have the hall cleared, should the rules not be observed.

That said, thank you to the Groupe de femmes de l'Estrie, women of spirit from Estrie. Thank you, Mrs. Malavoy, Mrs. Blanchard, Mrs. Jobin, Mrs. Baillargeon, Mrs. Lambert and Mrs. Robert. Please leave the table now, for the next group must sit there, and it's the Brome-Missisquoi Riding Association of the Equality Party. We now have the Brome-Missisquoi Riding Association of the Equality Party. Mr. Sheltus, I believe, is the spokesperson for the group. Please introduce your colleagues and then take five minutes to present the basic points of your brief.

The Brome-Missisquoi Riding Association of the Equality Party

Mr. Sheltus (Ashley): Mr. Chairman, I represent the Equality Party in the riding of Brome-Missisquoi. On my right, Mr. Graham Neil, who is a professor at McGill University and our

candidate in the last election. On my left, Mr. Ken Tannahill, a teacher at Massey-Vanier comprehensive school, and on my far left, Mr. Lawrence Moreau, a businessman from Cowansville.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Très bien, allez-y.

Mr. Sheltus: If I may, I'll begin with a very brief description of the method we used to sound out the opinions of our party members. We held a think tank in May. We had a general meeting in June at which between 50 to 60 people discussed ideas, after which we consulted the Party Executive, members and others in the riding.

My five-minute presentation will be in English because, unfortunately, we didn't have time to do a good translation. After the presentation, we will be pleased to answer your questions in English or in French.

Nous croyons que les citoyens de Brome-Missisquoi peuvent servir d'exemple à l'ensemble du Canada pour la façon de s'entendre avec leurs voisins. Ce n'est pas une technique que nous avons élaborée ou étudiée. Nous sommes simplement animés d'un esprit de collaboration et d'une amitié qui ont grandi au cours de 200 ans de cohabitation. Nous avons un profond respect de l'opinion des autres et de leurs droits à les faire valoir. Il se peut qu'il y ait certains de nos amis, dont quelques-uns dans la communauté francophone, qui soient en désaccord avec certains passages de notre mémoire, mais ils n'en défendent pas moins notre droit d'expliquer nos convictions et même de nous battre pour elles.

Dans Brome-Missisquoi, nous utilisons les deux langues pour communiquer, indépendamment de la langue maternelle de l'interlocuteur. Chaque personne utilise les mots qui transmettent le mieux ses idées, qu'il s'agisse de termes anglais ou de termes français. Nous venons ici, animés de cet esprit de tolérance, pour présenter des idées qui peuvent être sujets de controverse, mais dont nos voisins conviennent que nous avons le droit de les soumettre.

Comme notre parti, nous estimons que le fédéralisme fonctionne, qu'il a été bon pour le Québec et qu'il le demeurera encore. Nous refusons d'être des compteurs qui ne vérifient que la ligne du bas; si le total favorise le Québec, ils en concluent alors que le fédéralisme est bon pour l'immédiat. Nous rejetons également ceux qui prétendent que, comme le Québec n'est plus une province défavorisée, il est temps de se séparer. Il y a de bonnes raisons en faveur de la séparation, et il y en a de bonnes en faveur du fédéralisme. Et ceux qui ne recherchent que des motifs purement financiers nous prouvent, du moins à nous, qu'ils n'ont pas les aptitudes pour diriger parce que ce sont de simples comptables.

Les deux idées, un Canada d'un océan à l'autre et un Québec indépendant, sont des rêves qui ont inspiré et inspireront toujours hommes et femmes. J'aimerais encore mieux dire à un grand poète: "Votre poème est très intéressant", que d'employer les mots de "fédéralisme rentable". À notre avis, la poussée du séparatisme au Québec tient à ce qu'il y a trop de poètes du côté séparatiste et trop de comptables du côté fédéraliste.

(2:45 p.m.)

Le fédéralisme peut-il changer pour convenir au Québec? Le fédéralisme est un processus en constante évolution ou un processus de changement perpétuel. Nous ne demandons pas si un Québec séparé est économiquement viable. Nous laissons cette question à ceux qui se creuseront la tête pour trouver de meilleures raisons pour défendre leurs opinions. Notre mémoire expose nos inquiétudes, pas seulement sur un État indépendant théorique, mais sur un Québec qui pourrait devenir inhospitalier. Nous ne vous demandons pas d'être d'accord avec nous; tout ce que nous vous demandons, c'est de reconnaître qu'il y a là matière à préoccupation.

Les membres de la Commission doivent bien savoir que, peu importe leur recommandation, tout changement devra être négocié. En tant que Québécois, nous espérons que le processus sera fructueux. Mais nous ne sommes pas sûrs qu'il en sera ainsi si certains participants persistent à insulter le Canada anglais.

À écouter ceux qui prônent la séparation ou une certaine forme de souveraineté, force nous est d'en déduire que, pour eux, l'humeur du Canada anglais n'est d'aucun intérêt. Nous insistons pour que même un débat sur la manière de créer une nouvelle nation se fasse avec réserve. Nous voudrions dire à ces orateurs que le Canada anglais est à l'écoute, mais qu'il commence à écouter de façon sélective, ne s'arrêtant qu'aux propos à l'appui de ses préjugés. Notre mémoire tente de montrer ce qu'il pourrait en coûter au Québec, question à aborder bientôt.

Si les Canadiens ont le sentiment qu'un nouvel accommodement avec le Québec pourrait compromettre la survie de leur pays, aucun élu n'ira dans ce sens. Et je suis certain que M. Peterson, ex-premier ministre de l'Ontario, le confirmerait. La bonne volonté des Canadiens et la survie du Canada sont des facteurs qui devraient intéresser chaque Québécois qui recherche un changement constitutionnel majeur.

Il y en a qui disent que ce serait absurde pour le Canada, par exemple, si le Québec devait se séparer, absurde donc pour le reste du Canada de commencer à boycotter les produits d'un Québec indépendant. Ce sont les mêmes qui ont également déclaré que c'était absolument absurde pour des millions de Nord-Américains de boycotter le raisin de Californie pour permettre à des travailleurs mexicains immigrants de faire

quelques dollars de plus. Dès qu'un leader a surgi, le Senior Chavez, et qu'il a réussi à irriter les gens contre les producteurs, le boycottage a fonctionné. Malheureusement, avec l'esprit qui règne aujourd'hui, tout ce qu'il faut aux forces anti-Québec à l'extérieur du Québec, c'est un leader articulé.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Le temps est presque écoulé, pourriez-vous passer à la conclusion?

Mr. Sheilus: Oui. À la suite des débats et des consultations, notre association désire formuler trois affirmations: la culture française est mieux protégée à l'intérieur du Canada qu'à l'extérieur, et le système fédéral que nous avons vaut la peine d'être sauvegardé; les participants au débat ménagent la sensibilité de leurs adversaires et n'oublient jamais que les ennemis qu'ils se font aujourd'hui pourraient bien se trouver en face d'eux dans quelque conférence constitutionnelle; et finalement, advenant la séparation, la nécessité pour le Québec de demeurer allié avec le Canada et pour le Canada de demeurer un pays uni géographiquement doit être prise en considération sous une forme quelconque de concession territoriale du Québec au Canada. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Merci. We now turn to questions from the Government party. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. I read your brief very carefully and I'm a little shocked. And I found it hard to contain this shock because you make statements... Anyway, I'll try to contain it and attempt to understand the intentions behind the words. You say things in your brief that I'm getting tired of hearing. Images of the FLQ, where you say that the FLQ murders show just how far unbalanced individuals will go when encouraged by a permissive silence... Who in our society was permissive back then? I personally don't recall having been so and I don't think our leaders were either. Quite the contrary. The acts of the FLQ at that time probably wounded and shocked me more than you, and I condemned them as much as you did. Believe me, they hurt me personally, because they touched my pride as a Quebecer.

In another place you say: That being said, it's also true that French Québec doesn't understand English Canada. The two groups react differently to identical signals. Flag burning, for example. French Québec is often not aware of the quiet but strong nationalistic feelings Canadians have for their country. They don't understand the emotional impact on Brockville. Well, when I saw the people of Brockville using my flag as a doormat, I didn't like it. It made

me sick. But I also saw Quebecers on Saint Jean Baptiste Day rip up the Canadian flag, and I didn't like that any better. These are attacks on symbols, on things we're proud of that should be respected. It's no more acceptable on one side than it is on the other. You're illustrating very clearly the lack of understanding that can exist on both sides. For every image of fear and aggression you produce, I would counter perhaps with the image of Saint Jean Baptiste, the day after the failure of Meech Lake. An estimated 60 000 to 70 000 Quebecers marched in the streets and demonstrated in a remarkably peaceful manner. That was their reaction to the failure of Meech that made them sick, that made us sick, that was seen as a rejection, as a lack of understanding about our distinct society and of what we wished for. And this reaction was very calm and marked by an enormous pride, and I think this is the message we want to give to the rest of Canada, this capacity we have to live through things, to accept them and come to terms with them, and react with strength and pride. That's what being a Quebecer means. In your brief, you propose a very centralized Canada. I'd like to ask you a couple of short questions about that. Of all the demands Québec has made to the federal government in the last 30 years, how many do you think were legitimate?

Mr. Sheilus: I didn't hear the precise question, Sir. Would you please repeat it?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll take it again slowly. In the last 30 years, depuis 1960 au Québec, combien de demandes tout à fait légitimes le gouvernement du Québec a-t-il formulées à Ottawa? Combien en avez-vous jugé de légitimes de la part du Québec?

Mr. Sheilus: That's hard. But I feel that every request made by a democratically elected government is legitimate. Usually, perhaps as in union and company dealings, the union demands an increase of \$2 per hour and the company offers \$0.50 per hour. The two sides are entitled to their demands. Then they negotiate and arrive at an increase of perhaps \$1. Every province has the right to demand certain powers from Ottawa; that's normal. The government is elected to protect the rights and interests of its citizens, and if Québec or another province asks for control, say, of tourism, why not? For me, all Québec's requests to Ottawa... Perhaps Mr. Tannahill has another view.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Briefly, Sir.

Mr. Tannahill (Ken): Thank you. Just one small point. If you're putting that question to us as you would to an accountant, we cannot

answer, but, as Mr. Sheltus said, and it's very clear, any question, any demand made to the federal government is legitimate.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I accept your answer. If I may, Mr. Chairman...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): If I may, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes. We're off to a bad start this afternoon by allowing additional time, but Sherbrooke is a nice place.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): How many more times do we Quebecers have to be told no to our legitimate demands before we finally get the message?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn to questions from the Official Opposition party. Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Well, Mr. Chairman, since I only read the English version and I just received the French version, I hope my questions won't be out of place. First of all, I would like to ask you... But I just got it, it's not your fault, I just got it.

Mr. Sheltus: You had a French copy before your closed-door meeting.

Mr. Chevette: Well, I didn't.

Mr. Sheltus: You and everyone on the Commission...

Mr. Chevette: OK, I understand.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...they don't necessarily have copies, but you've got them already, we just got them.

Mr. Chevette: Mr. Chairman, your question, my first question. You say on page... that... anyway, on our vision of independence. There's no page number, it begins with: "Our vision of independence". In your first sentence you say that a good part of the economic rhetoric maintains that an independent Québec will always make good economic decisions, avoiding the bad ones now being made by Canada. You don't think that if we could at least make the decisions, we wouldn't blame others, we'd have only ourselves to blame? We could develop ourselves as we see fit.

Mr. Sheltus: I hope I understand the drift

of your question, but it just means that the MBAs, the economists, don't have a... In English their profession is called the dismal science because it isn't noted for its good decisions. In the current debate, we speak of having the power to control all our finances... OK. But if you have a union with the Canadians, and I'm no economist, I don't know the methods...

Mr. Chevette: Do you believe that Québec is competent, with enough trained people to be able to properly administer Quebecers' taxes?

Mr. Sheltus: OK, Mr. Tannahill.

Mr. Tannahill: There's no question about it. I think the only point we were trying to make is, perhaps, that on the one hand, we're a little uneasy, and on the other hand, we're not economists, but it's obvious that a structure that does business with another sector of a continent will find it more difficult to do business if there is no longer any government connecting the sectors. It's not at all a question of Québec's competence. We're all proud to be Quebecers.

Mr. Chevette: Then do you believe we also have the capacity? If we have the competence, and you recognize this, do you believe we have the capacity to administer ourselves, all of our affairs.

Mr. Tannahill: There's no question about it, certainly.

Mr. Chevette: Do you agree we should?

Mr. Tannahill: Except that I think our current situation is more effective, as I said earlier.

Mr. Sheltus: Right now, Sir, I think that I said that the Québec government experts and the Canadian government experts have the same right to make the same mistakes...

Mr. Chevette: Do we consider ourselves smart enough, and think that we could learn by experience to avoid the mistakes of the past? I would also like to ask you a question: Do you recognize the right of Quebecers to decide their own future?

Mr. Sheltus: Yes, yes.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you.

Mr. Sheltus: As we clearly stated in our brief. But I want to emphasize that it's necessary for Québec to have the right. Québec had the right to its future. But as Mr. Pablo Casals said, it's not nice to step on your neighbour's toes. Canada also has rights, Québec

has the right to determine its own future, but not completely, if Québec's independence results in the destruction of Canada.
(3:00 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now continue with questions from the Commission members. Mr. Hogue, who will be followed by Mr. Ouellet.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I will not comment on your report, your presentation, your brief. I'll go back in time a little to the referendum that produced more noes than yeses in Québec. There were also some promises, maybe a lot of them. Then there was the repatriation of the Constitution in which Québec couldn't be present for the final signatures. There was 1984. There was the failure of Meech and the Equality Party was against the accord and the demands that Québec regarded as minimum. So, starting from this quick background sketch and with two sentences from your text where you say that you have a view of history that appears to be, etc., you know what I'm referring to? And your last line where you recite MacLellan...

Mr. Sheltus: What page are you on?

Mr. Hogue: Page 2, the first page right at the beginning where you say that in Brome-Missisquoi you have a view of history. Fine. And you define yourselves as... And you say that you suspect from the rest of Canada... Do you have a better view? You say you're in a better position. That's what I read and at the end you finish with the words "mutual respect and love". From this, basing myself on these two statements, I wonder how the Equality Party can contribute to the rebuilding or repairing of bridges that have already been burned? I'm not looking back at the past, but what contribution can the Equality Party make to the rebuilding or repairing of bridges, when it goes without saying that some of them have already been burned?

Mr. Neil (Graham): J'aimerais répondre à cette question, si c'est possible. I think there are several things we can do and I think that the dangers we highlighted in our brief were there to show the things that we think have caused problems in the past, and that are still causing problems today. We can't answer... Nous ne pouvons répondre au nom du Parti Égalité dans son ensemble, parce que nous ne représentons pas le Parti Égalité, mais simplement une association de comté. Et ce que nous voulons faire ressortir, ce sont les dangers du processus actuel qui semblent causer un grand nombre de problèmes dans notre milieu. Brome-Missisquoi...

Mr. Hogue: Wait a minute. I read your

brief. I told you I didn't want to comment on it. So when I say I don't want to comment on it, I would prefer that you not comment on it either. I don't want to know what's in your brief. I would like you to answer in the name of the Brome-Missisquoi Riding Association. What do you, being as you said in a privileged position...

Mr. Neil: Je pense que...

Mr. Hogue: What is it that you are able to do for...

Mr. Neil: Je...

Mr. Hogue: ...tomorrow, after that, build bridges or repair the burned ones...

Mr. Neil: We are trying to...

Mr. Hogue: ...but no "motherhood statements" now, and I don't mean that pejoratively.

Mr. Neil: No, no, no...

Mr. Hogue: The facts.

Mr. Neil: Ce que je crois que nous essayons d'accomplir, c'est d'unir les gens plutôt que de les diviser. Des Anglais et des Français, peu importe à quel groupe ils appartiennent, essayer de les amener à travailler ensemble comme groupe de personnes prêtes à défendre leurs droits individuels, pour le fédéralisme, pour des questions fondamentales comme celles-là, amener les gens à travailler ensemble plutôt que de s'évertuer à souligner nos divergences et les raisons pour lesquelles nous devrions être distincts, bref trouver au contraire entre nous des points communs. Et c'est tout le sens de ce mémoire. Nous essayons de vous montrer ce qui se fait, ce qui s'est fait ou qui continue de se faire dans Brome-Missisquoi. Ce que nous proposons, c'est que si nous pouvions faire davantage ce genre de choses, nous ne serions pas tant préoccupés de ce que le Québec n'a pas retiré du système fédéral ni, non plus, de ce que le Canada dit du Québec. C'est de cette façon que nous pouvons travailler ensemble, que nous pouvons être heureux et créer un milieu agréable, où il fait bon vivre.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Ouellet?

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Gentlemen. I read your preliminary version and in it, on page 3, you said that you were going to examine the geographic problems that would arise in the event of Québec's separation from Canada. Then I received the final version. I tried to find this examination you told us you were making, and I

didn't find it except in the conclusions, on page 15, where you say that, as a principle, if Québec ever separates, that Canada retain a strip of land south of the St. Lawrence to link Ontario and New Brunswick.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Ouellet: Why do you make this request? What basis have you for such a request?

Mr. Sheltus: Because, as I said a few minutes ago, a free, associated or completely Canadian Québec must have good neighbours in Ontario and in Canada. One of the Premiers, I think it was the Premier of New Brunswick, said a couple of months ago that if Québec separated completely, totally, the maritime provinces would have to have discussions with the Americans on union with the United States. If the Maritimes become American, not Canadian, with Newfoundland and the others, Canada will lose its access to European markets. There would be no east coast. There are also separatist parties in the West today. They're just a small group right now, not a big force in Canadian politics, but should the country start to break up, all the regional groups are going to harden their attitudes and positions. And it's possible. I'm not saying it's a sure thing, but it's possible, if Québec separates completely, to divide the country up, and it's possible that the country would break up. For me, that would be a tragedy and I'm suggesting the idea of a land corridor in order to protect my country, and also to protect my province, Québec.

Mr. Ouellet: Have you something you'd like to say?

Mr. Tannahill: Yes, if I might add something on this topic. One thing we'd have to say, that would be very clear, is that this is the last option, that we must see to it that Canada continues to exist and isn't divided like Pakistan and Bangladesh, and it can't function with a road between Ontario and New Brunswick. It's not practical. There must be a corridor, something that can function. And maybe Canada will insist on this. Maybe this will be one of the demands so that Canada can continue to exist. Frankly, my reaction the first time I heard this idea was to laugh too. It's impossible. But, on the other hand, to maintain peace, maybe we'll find ourselves in this situation. When this idea was presented to our think tank and our idea forums in June of last year, a lot of people didn't find it very funny.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, this about uses up your time, but I think you still have 30 seconds, Mr. Ouellet. Do you want to use them?

Mr. Tannahill: Please, I would like to just thank my fellow members who made such a fine effort in speaking French in deference to all those listening to their presentation. Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This ends the allotted time for this presentation. Thank you, Mr. Neil, Mr. Sheltus, Mr. Tannahill, Mr. Moreau. Merci d'avoir présenté ce mémoire à notre commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:05 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:12 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Order, please!

We're waiting for Townshippers' Association. The group will be introduced by Mrs. Goodfellow. Madam.

Townshippers' Association

Mrs. Goodfellow (Marjorie): Good afternoon. Merci, M. le Président. Laissez-moi vous présenter mes collègues. À ma droite, John Castle, membre de l'Association des Townshippers. Il habite à Magog. À côté de lui, Marisa Tessier, vice-présidente. Elle habite à Sherbrooke. Susan Mastine est la directrice exécutive. Elle habite à Kingsey Falls. À ma gauche, Karl Kuepper, qui est le secrétaire. Il habite à Lennoxville. Della Goodsell est une ancienne présidente, membre du comité exécutif, et elle habite à Beebe. Quant à moi, je m'appelle Marjorie Goodfellow, comme vous l'avez dit, et j'habite à Sherbrooke.

Nous sommes reconnaissants de l'occasion qui nous est fournie de nous présenter devant cette Commission. Je tiens à exprimer mes regrets que Peter Turner, qui habite à Dunham, ait été dans l'impossibilité de nous accompagner aujourd'hui.

There are 51 000 English-speaking residents in the Eastern Townships, representing 10% of the total population of the region. Here, the relations between the French and English language groups remain cordial. Nowadays, the linguistic tensions in the other parts of the province seem very far removed from the people as they go about their daily tasks. Neighbours and co-workers meet socially and help each other out in times of trouble, regardless of language.

In spite of the atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect that emanates from the community, English-speaking Quebecers have experienced pressures from provincial government legislation and policies that seem to aim at promotion of the French language and culture at the expense of English language and culture. On

many occasions, Townshippers' Association has suggested ways to foster French language and culture using positive means that do not restrict the freedom of other languages and cultures. These include creative use of the Radio-Québec network and increased funding of municipal and school libraries, and giving better support to writers, publishers and filmmakers, and I could go on.

We feel that such an approach ties in with what we consider the government's responsibility for the encouragement of the French language and culture. In this way restrictive legislation affecting the language of signs, road signs, and movies, along with other such measures, could be eliminated. This in turn would reassure the Anglophone community about its place in Québec society.

It is important that we tell you about the results of several community meetings involving 150 people from the region. These results are not included in our brief because most of the meetings were held after November 2. The community meetings stressed the following needs: to continue and improve efforts to ensure that English-speaking Quebecers are bilingual; to abolish the "notwithstanding" clause; to promote English-language institutions in areas such as the health and social services network, education and culture; to promote the English division of government departments, and health and social services; to enshrine minority rights and individual rights in a revised constitution; to create better access to jobs in the public service for Anglophones; to have bilingual road signs as an aid to public security. The discussions were thoughtful and constructive. We're happy to be able to tell you about them.

Coming back to our brief, you can see that Townshippers' Association has examined several constitutional options. The Association's Board of Directors is recommending the one it favours: a new constitutional accord. We define this as an agreement that shows generosity to all the constituent elements of the country, and one that is based on freedom. Every level of government must preserve and promote the elements that contribute to the uniqueness of Canada as a bilingual and bicultural nation. It is essential that we make generous provisions to meet the aspirations of the aboriginal peoples. If we apply this formula and if Canadians are consulted to a meaningful extent, Townshippers' Association believes that we will successfully meet the constitutional challenge. Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Merci. Vous avez respecté de justesse la limite de cinq minutes. We now continue with questions from the representative of the Official Opposition party, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I

would first of all like to make a comment, then I'll have three questions for you. To begin, I read your brief and you are concerned about the quality of health services, and you're also concerned about schools. I would like to give you a few statistics for Estrie, because I had them pulled out before I came here.

In Estrie, by virtue of Bills 142 and 101, there are nine hospitals in the region that must provide services in English, and six CLSCs must provide services in English. There must also be six reception centres or residential and rehabilitation centres and one CSS which, according to Québec law, must provide services in English. If we look at the percentages in Québec, we find that 31% of the hospitals, 57% of the CLSCs, 21% of the residential and rehabilitation centres, and 64% of the CSSs must provide English services when requested by those claiming English as their mother tongue.

As for the schools, there are 11 elementary schools, two high schools, at least one cégep, and one university for about 3 500 students in the Estrie region.

My question is the following: Have you compared the quality of services in Québec with those for the minorities in the other provinces? I'll ask you my three questions, then you can answer them because five minutes is a short time.

My second question. On page 14 of your brief you say that from an economic standpoint, in the event that Québec separates, it would have to assume a part of the national debt while also funding services in the province previously paid for by the federal government. And you go on: Linguistically, the French language and culture would be more vulnerable without Canada as a buffer. I'm going to ask you two short questions about that paragraph. Do you feel that Canada is paying for our services here with other Canadians' money or isn't it the money Quebecers paid to Ottawa that is coming back to us?

And the last question: Are you really serious when you say that you think Canada helps us in French language matters?

Mrs. Goodfellow: To answer your last question, yes, I'm very serious because I've been involved in the area of official languages programs for several years. I know that the federal government spends quite an amount in this area, not only here in Québec for the Anglophone minority, but also outside Québec for the Francophone minorities. I think this money is well spent and I think it represents a boost for Francophones outside Québec.

Your second question. C'était à propos d'un temporisateur, n'est-ce pas? La zone temporisatrice pour...

Mr. Chevette: The buffer zone for French.

You said that linguistically, the French language and culture would be more vulnerable without Canada. I asked you whether you were really serious.

Mrs. Goodfellow: Yes, I'm also serious about that. It's very clear whenever I meet representatives of the Francophones outside Québec that they're receiving both services and money from the federal government and that they're using them to good purpose in their communities. It's obvious that the services received by these Francophone minorities across Canada vary from province to province. New Brunswick and Ontario are good examples; the other provinces are less good and there is a challenge to be met.

Mr. Chevette: You're aware, Madam, that barely five Canadian provinces provide limited services to their minorities, and here again, it's with the "where numbers allow... justify". Are you aware of this?

Mrs. Goodfellow: Yes, I'm aware. I'm not here to defend government programs, I would only like to say that ce n'est pas une bonne idée de tout réduire à un plus petit commun dénominateur. Il est préférable d'essayer d'atteindre un niveau supérieur pour tout le monde. Je n'arrive pas à voir comment les francophones à l'extérieur du Québec pourraient profiter du fait que nous, les anglophones, ne recevions pas de bons services. Je ne peux pas voir comment les comparaisons peuvent être bonnes dans ce cas-ci. Nous devrions tous tenter de mieux servir les groupes linguistiques minoritaires.

Mr. Chevette: If I...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We continue now with questions from the other members. I have several requests. The first three are Mr. Libman, Mr. Dufour and Mr. Duceppe. Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I warmly welcome the presence of Townshippers' Association today. In fact, I became a member of this organization not long ago.

Ma question aujourd'hui est... C'est-à-dire, avant d'en arriver à ma question, j'aimerais faire état d'un engagement de l'Association des Townshippers, non seulement envers la communauté anglophone de la région, mais aussi l'engagement de l'Association à travailler, avec la majorité, à créer une compréhension mutuelle ainsi que son engagement ferme envers le Québec et le Canada. Je crois que ce point doit être mentionné, que notre organisation a été très fidèle à ses engagements depuis longtemps.

Ma question est la suivante: l'une des clés

de la réalisation de l'harmonie linguistique ou de la paix linguistique au Québec consiste à établir cette subtile démarcation entre, d'une part, les aspirations collectives pour la protection et la promotion de la langue de la majorité française, qui est une minorité en Amérique du Nord, et la protection des droits individuels, d'autre part. Et vous apportez un point très intéressant à la page 4 de votre mémoire lorsque vous dites que votre association a proposé des façons de protéger la langue et la culture francophones en ayant recours à des moyens positifs qui ne restreignent pas les libertés des autres langues et cultures. Je crois que c'est un point très important à souligner.

Alors, ma question porte sur le fait que plusieurs groupes qui se sont présentés devant cette commission, qu'ils prèchent la souveraineté ou un fédéralisme renouvelé, ont mentionné l'importance de la minorité anglophone à l'intérieur du Québec renouvelé, peu importe de quel renouvellement il pourra s'agir. Ils sont très rarement disposés à concéder quelques-uns des intérêts légitimes de la communauté anglophone, qu'il s'agisse de garanties en matière de soins médicaux, de garanties visant les commissions scolaires, ou de la présence d'une clause "nonobstant". Alors, qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire, d'après vous, pour établir ce dialogue? Comment faire mieux entendre le point que vous apportez dans votre mémoire à la page 4, comment le réaliser et comment amorcer un dialogue approprié au lieu d'un monologue?

Mrs. Goodfellow: Je suis heureuse que vous l'ayez souligné, parce que c'est une façon de l'entendre. Il y en a qui suivent ces délibérations à la télévision et qui savent que nous avons proposé ces moyens auprès du gouvernement depuis un certain nombre d'années. L'une des choses que j'ai le plus regrettées, c'est le démantèlement du réseau de Radio-Québec, parce que non seulement c'était un moyen de conserver la langue et la culture de la majorité francophone de la province, mais aussi un moyen pour les francophones d'entendre parler de l'existence et de la réalité vécues par la minorité anglophone. À Sherbrooke, on a télévisé plusieurs émissions portant sur la minorité anglophone ici. Je crois que c'est un moyen de participer au dialogue et de contribuer à une meilleure compréhension.

Mr. Libman: I have one more question. Last question, Mr. Chairman. Il y a un autre point qui a été mentionné dans certains autres mémoires présentés par des groupes anglophones: actuellement, l'article 23.1 a) de notre Charte canadienne des droits et libertés permet l'éducation dans la langue de la minorité aux personnes dont la langue maternelle est l'anglais. Mais au Québec, l'éducation en anglais n'est accessible qu'à ceux dont les parents ont reçu

leur éducation, au Canada, en anglais. Alors, en vertu d'une loi de l'Assemblée nationale, l'Assemblée nationale pourrait opter pour cette clause, ce qui signifierait que les immigrants au Québec, venant par exemple des États-Unis ou d'Angleterre, pourraient faire leurs études en anglais au Québec. À l'heure actuelle, cela représente environ 10 000 étudiants, soit à peine 1% du secteur français, mais 10 à 15% du secteur anglais, dont on aurait grand besoin. Estimez-vous valable la recommandation que pourrait faire cette Commission à l'Assemblée nationale d'opter pour l'article 23.1 a) de la Charte, afin d'augmenter le nombre d'inscriptions dans les écoles anglaises, en baisse depuis un certain temps?

Mrs. Goodfellow: Nous avons toujours maintenu que l'école anglaise doit être accessible aux personnes de langue anglaise, peu importe leur pays d'origine. Ce point fait l'objet de plusieurs mémoires que nous avons présentés sur l'éducation.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now continue with Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank the Townshippers' Association for its brief and its thoughts. I have two questions, one on the subject of the division of power, and the other on the "notwithstanding" clause, two issues you deal with in your brief. I only have the English version. I'll do a literal translation. You say at one point that the division of power between the federal and provincial governments is a delicate matter that must be addressed. You're aware of the position I represent. We're not for the status quo and we're not for independence either. I'll ask you the following question: In any possible compromise between the two stands being currently floated in Québec, can you name me five powers you feel should be completely controlled by Québec?

Mr. Kuepper (Karl): We can perhaps make a start. Certainly all the powers related to culture must be under Québec's control. I'm sure too that immigration is another, in a secondary sense perhaps. There are probably others we'd have to discuss, but...

Mr. Dufour: You surely agree to the complete repatriation of matters related to manpower?

Mr. Kuepper: You'd have to explain to me exactly what the consequences of that would be. But there are Francophone majority "concerns" to be considered, I believe.

Mrs. Goodfellow: Déjà, le gouvernement

fédéral se retire de plusieurs programmes, au profit du gouvernement provincial, et j'estime qu'il est sage d'éviter un dédoublement d'efforts. (3:30 p.m.)

Mr. Dufour: Perhaps it would be interesting, continuing in this same vein, if you would identify some of these powers that Québec should, anyway — I didn't say "could" — should recover that would let us fall between these two extremes we seem to have. In any event, I would personally be glad to hear them. Second question, on page 16, you dwell on the "notwithstanding" clause, and here you go much further than you did here today. You say that one condition de base doit être la révocation de la clause "nonobstant" dans la Constitution canadienne. A basic condition must be the revoking of the "notwithstanding" clause in the Canadian Constitution. I can understand that Anglophones weren't in agreement with the use of the "notwithstanding" clause in Québec in the case of Bill 178. Was that bill important enough to justify use of the "notwithstanding" clause or not? We could debate it, but it's over and done now. But you go much further. You're asking that the "notwithstanding" clause be simply removed from the Canadian Constitution. I'd like to understand because, for a lot of people, this clause, which Québec invoked wrongly or rightly, is a real security clause. We'd like to hear your justification for this proposal.

Mrs. Goodfellow: One of our members justified it in what I thought was a remarkable way. He told us that God is the only one having a just and equitable right to a "notwithstanding" clause. We must protect individual freedoms. Sometimes there's justification for the use of the "notwithstanding" clause, for example, services for the disabled. I think the government will be able to meet the challenge of finding another means of providing fair and just services for these people.

Mr. Duceppe: But don't you agree...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, Mr. Duceppe.

Mr. Duceppe: I must thank you for your participation. I think it's important for the Anglophone minority to take part in these discussions. In your brief you reject the status quo, independence, and what you call loose federalism. You talk about a new constitutional agreement; for my part, I talk about the constitution of a sovereign Québec. It doesn't matter whether it's a new agreement or a sovereign Québec. I'd like to know whether the rights of the Anglophone minority should, in your view, be enshrined in such an agreement, somewhat as the aboriginal peoples, a group of aboriginals, demanded yesterday for the First

Nations. So, I'm asking you the question: With respect to the rights of the Anglophone minority in the areas of social services, schools, and language, do you think they should be enshrined in a sovereign Québec's constitution or in a new Canadian constitutional agreement?

Mrs. Goodfellow: If I had a choice, I'd prefer a new Canadian federal constitution, but I also say that we are very prepared to accept such entrenchment in a future independent Québec and to accept it wholeheartedly, but we don't agree with independence as an option. That's not our view.

Mr. Duceppe: If I understand what you said, you agree that the collective rights of the Anglophone minority should be enshrined. From that I deduce that you would agree that the collective rights of the Francophone majority should be enshrined.

Mrs. Goodfellow: But I don't interpret these things as collective rights. They are services for people. A constitution should speak of certain things, but individual rights must also be protected.

Mr. Duceppe: I agree, but when I ask the question as to whether the collective rights of the Anglophone minority should be enshrined in the constitution, you answer yes. Therefore it seems to me we're dealing with collective rights, is that not so?

Mrs. Goodfellow: I answered yes because I thought you would have a generous vision for a minority in a Québec constitution.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now continue with questions from the representative of the Government party, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Mr. Chairman, tout d'abord je tiens à vous remercier d'avoir accepté de témoigner aujourd'hui. J'ai lu votre mémoire attentivement et, en fait, avec grand intérêt. Je crois que vous avez fait état d'éléments très importants que nous devrions avoir à l'esprit lorsque nous voulons discuter de l'avenir constitutionnel du Québec. Vous mentionnez votre position face à l'Accord du lac Meech, à la page 8 de votre mémoire, et vous expliquez bien franchement, je dois le dire, pourquoi vous vous opposiez alors à l'Accord du lac Meech; je tiens à exprimer ma haute considération pour le travail de votre Association, pour avoir amélioré les relations entre francophones et anglophones dans les Cantons-de-l'Est. Je sais que vous prenez grand intérêt à l'expansion sociale, culturelle et économique des Cantons-de-l'Est, et lorsque vous dites dans votre mémoire que c'est chez vous, je

pense que vous êtes vraiment chez vous. Vous êtes ici, et vous êtes chez vous. Je peux comprendre cela très bien.

Vous... you reject the status quo, you also reject independence, you seem to be proposing a new agreement on Confederation, you refer to principles that are very important to me, such as respect for basic rights and freedoms. You would like to reform the Senate; I believe we should abolish it now, instead. I can tell you that it would probably be easier and more effective. But aside from this, you make some very interesting points. I don't agree with you on all of them, but they're interesting.

My question is this: We asked for the five extremely reasonable conditions. You yourselves, your group, you were against this. You have your reasons and I respect the reasons you gave, but now you want to remake a confederation and therefore you propose a new agreement. How could we explain to Quebecers in any realistic way that we could negotiate such an agreement, a new agreement for a confederation with the rest of Canada?

Mrs. Goodfellow: I think that it's possible to go through another process, with a great deal of consultation with people across Canada, preparing people and individual opinions beforehand. We've talked about Confederation for several years. La conférence sur la Confédération de demain est l'une de celles à laquelle je me rappelle avoir pris part. We have several opinion papers that could be valuable for study groups across Canada.

I think the Meech Lake process was too elitist. All the... tout le travail a été laissé aux chefs politiques. Le public s'est senti écarté du processus. Je crois que si on doit tenter, d'une manière plus sincère et meilleure d'en arriver à une nouvelle confédération, le processus doit être beaucoup plus populaire. Les gens doivent être mêlés à ce processus. Leur cœur doit être engagé dans le processus. À ce moment-là, on ne devrait pas retrouver la rancœur qu'on a connue à l'occasion de l'accord du lac Meech, mais il devrait régner un esprit de collaboration d'un bout à l'autre du pays, et je ne crois pas être too idealistic.

Mr. Rémillard: You propose abolition of the "notwithstanding" clause. But you know that it wasn't Québec that wanted the "notwithstanding" clause.

Mrs. Goodfellow: Yes, I know that.

Mr. Rémillard: You know that. We weren't the ones who asked for it.

Mrs. Goodfellow: Yes, I know.

Mr. Rémillard: It was the Western

provinces, and it was Mr. Trudeau who put it in the constitution. Once it had been done, were you as frank in telling Mr. Trudeau that you didn't want that clause as you were with us just now about other matters?

Mrs. Goodfellow: I wasn't sitting in front of Mr. Trudeau the way I am here.

Mr. Rémillard: Was his process elitist too?

Mrs. Goodfellow: You must remember that with the Canadian Constitution of 1982 we changed our mode of government a great deal. Before then, it was a... c'était une situation de système parlementaire, with the Constitution of 1982, we acquired a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Cette charte a modifié considérablement le mode de gouvernement. À ce moment-là, nous avons graduellement laissé le système parlementaire pour faire participer davantage la population aux décisions. Je crois que depuis les 8 ans qu'elle existe, c'est-à-dire depuis 1982, on s'attend à plus que la participation par suite de l'effort de 1982.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That...

Mrs. Goodfellow: J'aimerais simplement permettre à Mme Goodsell de prendre la parole, car elle voudrait ajouter quelque chose.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Allez-y, je vous en prie.

Mrs. Goodsell (Della): J'aimerais simplement dire que je rends hommage à cette commission pour avoir mis sur pied un processus que j'aimerais voir se maintenir, passés les quelques mois ou les quelques semaines que dureront les délibérations. C'est un processus que j'aimerais voir d'un bout à l'autre du Canada et je dois vous avouer que je suis une idéaliste, peut-être oui, mais j'aime le Québec et j'aime le Canada. Je crois que tout cet exercice pourrait se répéter partout au Canada et donner de très bons résultats. Je crois que les Canadiens en viendraient à comprendre beaucoup mieux les Québécois et, de notre côté, nous les comprendrions beaucoup mieux. Il ne faudrait pas oublier qu'il s'agit d'une faible population par rapport au Canada et à un vaste territoire. Si nous pouvions seulement avoir l'esprit ouvert, les uns et les autres, et poursuivre ce dialogue. Je remarque que M. Gérin est dans la salle. Je lui ai déjà proposé cela il y a quelque temps. Je l'ai proposé à chaque homme politique fédéral à qui j'ai pu m'adresser, et je la présente ici. Nous avons besoin de prolonger davantage le dialogue. Le Québec en vaut la peine, le Canada en vaut la peine, et nous en valons la peine en tant qu'êtres humains, nous qui devrions entretenir les plus hautes aspirations possibles pour tous les habitants du

Canada, peu importe leur origine. Merci.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ceci termine cette présentation. Je crois que nous devrions vous remercier tout particulièrement, Mme Goodfellow, pour avoir soulevé le fait qu'on n'a pas assez souvent mentionné dans notre débat que 1982 signifiait en quelque sorte la fin du régime parlementaire. Pas tout à fait, mais nous nous sommes dirigés vers un système apparenté davantage à celui des États-Unis. De toute façon, merci, M. Castle, Mme Tessier, Mme Mastine, Mme Goodsell, M. Kuepper et Mme Goodfellow, et merci à l'Association pour avoir présenté ce mémoire à notre commission.

Mrs. Goodfellow: Merci à vous.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Auriez-vous maintenant l'obligeance de vous retirer de la table pour permettre au prochain groupe de se présenter?

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:40 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:44 p.m.)

Mrs. Heather Keith Ryan

Mrs. Ryan (Heather Keith): Merci, M. Bélanger. J'aimerais vous présenter deux de mes cinq enfants, qui m'accompagnent aujourd'hui. Je crois bien, vous en conviendrez, que j'ai fait ma part pour hausser le taux de natalité au Québec. Je crois que c'est maintenant à vous de faire en sorte qu'ils restent ici au Québec.

I am a Quebecer whose mother tongue is English but whose ancestors include the Seigneur of Trois-Pistoles. I have made and continue to make efforts to integrate into Québec society. My children have studied in French primary and secondary schools. I have chaired the school committee. I have been sitting on the municipal council for the past seven years. I was a candidate in the provincial elections in September 1989, as an independent. Despite all this, my English origin is often seen as a black mark, a perpetual fault in my lineage.

This committee was formed shortly after the death of Meech Lake, an event which leaves me with mixed feelings. I think that, even if the Accord had been adopted and Québec reintegrated into the Canadian fold, this debate would still be vital. The Canadian Constitution, as such or amended, gives rights with one hand and takes them back with the other through the famous "notwithstanding" clause.

Canada is a tremendous country, not perfect but providing all of us with a comfortable standard of living. It is the envy of other nations for many reasons, including its regard for minorities and its linguistic duality. Despite a relatively low population, Canada

enjoys a prestigious status on the international scene. If Québec declares itself a sovereign State, I think that neither Canada nor Québec will be able to go on playing such an important role. In light of the changes taking place in Europe and the Communist Bloc, our actions in Québec are more indicative of our concern with the past than with the future. Outright sovereignty, sovereignty-association, independence or any other label we care to use will not settle the major part of the problems facing Quebecers. Because of the emotional crisis surrounding linguistic and constitutional issues, we have too long disregarded the important issues common to all North Americans. Too much time has been spent in philosophical debates, with the result that language has become the new religion of Québec. Granted, it is essential to ensure the future of the French language. It is equally important to concentrate on a strong economy, but questions abound: What do we do about the social contract, what do we do for the people here, for neglected and battered children, for the poor, for the elderly, for the aboriginal peoples, for the immigrants, for Anglophones, for women? Today, on the anniversary of the tragic event at the Polytechnique, how can you ignore the social obligations of this distinct society?

Since the death of Meech Lake, I keep hearing references to English Canada, which leads one to assume that Québec and, by extension, all Quebecers, are French-speaking, and that the rest of Canada is exclusively English-speaking. This is not true. Neither Québec nor Canada is a monolithic society.

I am a Quebecer. My mother tongue is English. I am Catholic. Yes, there is such a species. I speak French. I am a woman. I watch "Les filles de Caleb". I have even been a member of a caisse populaire since 1967. But I am not recognized as a Quebecer. I am not willing to change my name or deny my heritage to be recognized by the majority.

Montréal author Hugh MacLennan died a few weeks ago. His best-known work in Québec is "Two solitudes", "Deux solitudes". Le titre de ce livre est tiré d'une citation qu'on retrouve en épigraphe. Il s'agit d'un message très positif sur lequel nous ferions bien de réfléchir: "Love consists in this, that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other". So, "gens du pays, c'est à notre tour de nous laisser parler d'amour", all of us here in Canada. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Ryan. Mr. Libman will ask the first question.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Ryan, in your brief, you refer to your roots. Vous dites, j'ai de profondes racines ici. C'est chez moi. I think this is important, Mr. Chairman. We should realize that Anglophones in

Québec feel like Quebecers. We are indeed surrounded by a vast sea of Anglophones and we represent a mere 2% of a North American population of 250 million people. But we should not lose sight of the fact that Québec Anglophones feel like Quebecers. Our roots are not in Texas, our roots are not in Toronto, they are here in Québec, and the vast majority of Anglophones who live in Québec want to stay in Québec, no matter what happens. This is something I wanted to point out because I think it's very important.

My question is as follows. In the second page of your brief, you say: "À mon avis, la langue et la culture françaises ont fait plus de progrès durant les vingt dernières années que durant tout le siècle précédent. Je pense qu'on peut attribuer ce raffermissement de position à plusieurs facteurs, dont la place du Québec au sein de la fédération canadienne n'est pas le moindre".

J'aimerais en entendre davantage sur cette question. Pourriez-vous nous éclairer un peu à ce sujet?

Mrs. Ryan: Le fait que je sois ici aujourd'hui et que j'aie présenté mon mémoire en français confirme cet état de fait. Je peux vous assurer qu'il y a 25 ans, nous autres anglophones n'aurions pas hésité à le présenter en anglais uniquement.

I am sorry I was unable - I didn't have the means - to translate it and send it in time. As an individual, I am very happy to be here.

I look around me, and I appreciate the fact that we can discuss the future of Québec together; this shows that we have made a lot of progress. I hope we will continue to make progress and to move in a positive direction. There is no need to use negative measures to promote French; it can be promoted through positive measures. My children attended French schools and I can tell you that there are deficiencies in French schools when it comes to promoting French, but I know, it seems to me... If you look at the number of Anglophones here, our percentage, our power is continually diminishing. This is why I can say that the French language is doing much better than it was 20 years ago.

Mr. Libman: There has been a lot of discussion recently at this Commission on the possibility of drawing up a Québec constitution, whether it be in the context of a sovereign Québec or a renewed federation. If there were a Québec constitution in a new federation, such as exists in the United States, as a matter of fact, where each State has its own constitution, what rights for the Anglophone community should be incorporated in this Québec constitution? Are there any specific rights?

Mrs. Ryan: The Association which preceded

me spoke of individual freedoms, an important issue. I think it is very difficult to see into the future, but I feel that Quebecers are open-minded enough, that we will find some way to protect the individual and individual rights, this is something I leave to... But I want to work with you, gens du pays, on this constitution. I want to participate in the process.

Mr. Libman: Do you see certain other things...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think the time is almost up, Mr. Libman, could you keep it short?

Mr. Libman: On the question of health and social services, do you see it as... Do you have any recommendations?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If we go on about it, we'll run out of time. Go ahead, Mr. Libman, quickly.

Mr. Libman: My last question, then: Do you believe that health and social services rights should be entrenched in a Québec constitution?

Mrs. Ryan: Probably.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's go on to Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Ryan, I read your brief attentively, that was easy since it isn't very long, and I must tell you that I greatly deplore some of the things you have had to go through, such as when someone ask you whether you feel at home in Québec, and you say yes, and when you ask them whether they consider you a Quebecer, they say no. If it's any consolation, in my life, I've had occasion to travel all over Canada. Sometimes, I was told to "speak white". Depending on how big the guy was, the argument was short or long. But, these are extremes. Unfortunately, there are hotheads everywhere. Personally, I believe that the vast majority wants an open-minded Québec, a Québec open to the world.

Are you aware, Mrs. Ryan, that everyone here seems to fall into one of two groups. The first agrees that the status quo no longer exists, that it's a thing of the past. The second agrees that outright independence is something nobody wants. What people want is sovereignty, with an association, of course, but sovereignty first and foremost. Are you aware of that?

Mrs. Ryan: Yes, but I find it quite difficult to understand all these expressions. I have not delved into the term deeply enough to grasp it fully. Furthermore, I think there is a lot of confusion everywhere on the meaning of

sovereignty-association. I have no idea of all the ramifications...

Mr. Laberge: Ultimately, to repatriate all powers to Québec while at the same time keeping ties with others.

Mrs. Ryan: OK. Allow me to go back to what I heard earlier, when you mentioned that homemakers would be credited with employment time. With five children, I have obviously spent time at home and I would appreciate a step in that direction.

Mr. Laberge: One last thing, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, we had another brief talking about building a sort of corridor through Québec as a mutual link. I don't know if this passageway will be fastened by skyhooks, but some corridor... Just when the Berlin wall has come down, there are people who suggest such an absurd idea. I don't imagine you believe in such a corridor?

Mrs. Ryan: Personally, I want to spend the rest of my days here. If I were 75 years old and approaching death and had to be hospitalized, I would hope that someone there would speak to me in my language.

Mr. Laberge: Of course.

Mrs. Ryan: I think these are important things for anyone living in Québec. What I don't like is the snickering, the innuendoes that you hear everywhere about the Anglophone community. Moreover, I think the media also have a responsibility in all this. As for the famous Bill 178, it sent a loud and clear message to Anglophones that their language was worse than pornography on public signs. These are things that should be corrected.

Mr. Laberge: But, Mrs. Ryan, do you truly believe that the signs issue is one of fundamental rights? In every country in the world I can think of, there has been legislation to prohibit pornography, to prohibit hate propaganda, but... my God! aren't you being hypersensitive on this issue?

Mrs. Ryan: Two courts in the Province of Québec have said that it is a fundamental right. Even the Supreme Court of Canada said so. I would think that, when three courts consider this a fundamental right, it is a fundamental right.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's go on to Mr. Rémillard, the Government Party representative.
(4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Rémillard: Mme Ryan, premièrement

J'aimerais vous souhaiter la bienvenue à cette commission, ainsi qu'à votre fille et à votre fils. J'ai été impressionné par votre mémoire, et par sa sincérité. Quand vous dites: J'ai de profondes racines ici, je m'y considère chez moi, it is easy to see that you mean it from the bottom of your heart. Being on this Commission has given me the opportunity to learn every day, from people like you who come and testify before us. I am particularly happy to welcome you because you are expressing views that are certainly shared by other Quebecers, whether one shares them or not, and you are expressing them here before this Commission. I am particularly touched that you are here with your daughter and son. It is a particularly eloquent testimony, for which I thank you.

Mrs. Ryan, Meech was an attempt – and I can tell you that it was a very sincere attempt – at having the Canadian duality recognized. With Meech, for the first time, there was a legal recognition of Anglophones in Québec, and of Francophones outside Québec. And you know what happened to Meech. Meech was not killed by Mr. Wells or Mr. Filmon alone, it was the majority of Canadians who said no. Do you believe that we can go back and succeed? Has anything changed in the past few months that would now give us a chance of success?

Mrs. Ryan: When people say that English Canada rejected Québec, I think this is untrue. I think there were faults in the Meech Lake Accord. The "notwithstanding" clause was seen as a fault by the Anglophone community. One suggestion I heard, and I think it's a good suggestion, was to restrict the "notwithstanding" clause to a period of six months. On the other hand, in a way I'm glad that Meech failed because if Québec had accepted and signed the Accord, there would still be an undercurrent that would force the debate we're having now. Furthermore, I think it is important to hold this debate, openly, in public, with all of Québec participating. I am happy to have been chosen to present the brief because, as an Anglophone, I find it important for my community and the people in the community to be heard. It was vital to have this debate.

Mr. Rémillard: Mrs. Ryan, I am touched by your answer because, earlier, the Townshippers Association, and yourself, told me that you were against Meech because you were against the "notwithstanding" clause, even though the "notwithstanding" clause is not in Meech, it was Mr. Trudeau who, in 1982, put it in his Constitution, that's what's causing us the problems we have now. The "notwithstanding" clause is not Québec, Mrs. Ryan.

Mrs. Ryan: I know.

Mr. Rémillard: The "notwithstanding" clause is Mr. Trudeau's handiwork, in his 1982 Constitution. Don't tell me you were against Meech on that account.

Mrs. Ryan: No, Meech didn't affect the "notwithstanding" clause. If Meech had amended the "notwithstanding" clause, I would have supported it, but since it didn't...

Mr. Rémillard: Are you telling me that if Meech had corrected the mistakes made in 1982 by Mr. Trudeau, you would have been more sensitive to the issue?

Mrs. Ryan: If there had been no "withstanding" clause giving the power to any government in Canada, be it provincial or federal, to take away certain rights, including the second right enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms – I don't think that it was a good thing to have it in our Constitution. This is why I have conflicting feelings. It would have been good to have Québec among the signatories. But then we would not be having this debate. I think the debate is important.

Mr. Rémillard: But what is the option, what do you suggest now? You have your children with you. You tell us that this is your home. According to you, where do we go from here? Realistically speaking.

Mrs. Ryan: As I said earlier, if a Québec constitution is to be developed, I want to be sure that the powers here... And I must mention, since I am a woman, I feel that I have just as much power as Anglophones; as an Anglophone and a woman, I feel a little left out. But when and if you prepare a constitution for Québec, I want you to consider the minorities as an integral part of the process.

Mr. Rémillard: Merci, Mrs. Ryan.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Brassard, of the Official Opposition, will be next.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mrs. Ryan. Along the same lines as the Minister's statements just now, I must tell you that we do not consider the "notwithstanding" clause to be a mistake. It is practically the only interesting element in the forceful Trudeau takeover of 1982 because... I beg your pardon? I'll speak louder for Mr. Laberge.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge's courtesy has been noted. Please continue.

Mr. Brassard: Very well. But I must say that if there is anything that enabled us to ensure the protection of French and the provisions of Bill 101 in Québec, it is the "notwithstanding" clause. To be sure, it wasn't the reason Trudeau introduced it. He was giving way to pressure from the Western provinces. It was the Western provinces that wanted the "notwithstanding" clause. The reason I say this is because Mr. Rémillard's statements seem a bit ambiguous. He seems to say that this is a legacy of 1982 and that the "notwithstanding" clause is a mistake... That it was the last thing we needed. I'd like to remind him of speeches made in the Assembly, which were very clear, very firm, and unambiguously in favour of the "notwithstanding" clause. I think we should be clear. I don't know whether he's trying to win support in the Anglophone community in preparation for certain events, I can't say, but...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: That said, Mrs. Ryan...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would suggest you get to the question, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: I agree with you and I'm glad to hear you say that you're a Quebecer; all of us in the Party are fully in agreement, even though I know that you don't want to see a sovereign Québec; we fully agree with protecting and guaranteeing the historical rights of the English community, even to the point of incorporating them into the Constitution. However, I would like you to tell me, what specific historical rights of the English community should be enshrined in a Québec constitution, regardless of Québec's status, sovereign or otherwise?

Mrs. Ryan: To me, having our own schools is very important. As all studies have shown, schools are the heart of a community. I think our schools also have a duty to give courses in French, to ensure that our graduates are bilingual and prepared to work here in Québec. I think it is important to have certain rights in social services. The English community, despite what many people think, is not a wealthy community. There was a time when a part of the community was rich, just as a part of the French community was rich. My father, for instance, worked for the railroads, he was not at the head of a multinational or anything like that. This is why it is important that the less privileged be provided with services, so that they may feel at home in Québec; there is a lot of work to be done in that area. I am not qualified... I am not a constitutionalist, so I can't tell you any more, these are a couple of

things that came to my mind.

Mr. Brassard: I can assure you that none of us would have any problem with that. More than that, I can assure you that, in the right to education you would be granted... I see no problem with integrating that into a sovereign Québec constitution; you would no longer have the expression "where numbers warrant" as you do now with the Canadian Constitution with regard to Francophone minorities outside Québec. You would have full rights to English-language education, such as you have already - you must admit that you do have them - but we are willing to guarantee these rights in a sovereign Québec constitution. So you can see that Quebecers, even in a sovereign Québec, welcome the English community and want Anglophones to remain in Québec and feel that they are part of the Québec community.

Mrs. Ryan: But promises are promises.

Mr. Brassard: But the facts are there.

Mrs. Ryan: And promises are not always kept.

Mr. Brassard: The facts are there, Mrs. Ryan. The facts are there.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): On that note, this presentation has come to a close. Without wishing to enter into a discussion on the finer points of this debate, Mr. Brassard, I take it that Mr. Rémillard meant that if we had had the opportunity to have things like that, that he wasn't talking about the author of the "notwithstanding" clause, which he attributed to Mr. Trudeau, but that he didn't protest either, if I understood correctly. I'm only adding this by way of an explanation.

Thank you, Mrs. Ryan, for presenting this very interesting brief and for being here with members of your family.

I'd like to ask the members of the Commission to clear the centre of the floor, so that the next group can join us at the table, and we will proceed without wasting too much time. Next up we have a group from Université de Sherbrooke, the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:12 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:13 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Kindly go back to your seats, thank you. Before proceeding with this presentation of the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat, I would like to read a short communiqué that we issued a few minutes ago on

the issue of forums with aboriginal groups.

Hearing of aboriginal groups

The communiqué reads as follows: At its meeting of November 30, the Steering Committee of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec decided to hear, as part of the public hearings, all aboriginal groups that have sent a brief, prior to organizing a forum on aboriginal groups and constitutional future.

I should point out that the schedule for the period from December 11, 1990 to January 23, 1991, adopted by the Commission at its working sitting of December 5, in Hull, does not provide for holding such a forum. However, the Steering Committee will review this question after hearing all the aboriginal groups that have submitted briefs to the Commission. That's all for this message, let's go back to the business at hand.

We will now hear from the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat, from the Université de Sherbrooke. Mr. Larrivée, I believe, will act as spokesman and introduce his colleagues. The group will then have five minutes to present its brief.

Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke

Mr. Larrivée (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you have gathered by reading our brief, it is divided into various sections, and it is a pleasure for me to introduce the people who worked on it. To the far left, Mr. Éric Martel, who is responsible for the section on cooperatives; Mr. Patrice Langevin, who was in charge of the section on the economy; to my immediate left, Mr. Grégoire Leclerc, vice-president, external affairs, of REMDUS, who prepared the section on education, research and development. To the far right, Mr. Jean-François Comeau, author of the section on the environment; on my right, Mr. Pierre Bénéard, vice-president, internal affairs, at REMDUS, who prepared the section on aboriginal peoples and also worked on the section dealing with education, research and development. My name is Pierre Larrivée, I am president of REMDUS, and I worked on the section dealing with the constitutional status and the legal aspects of the issue.

So, Messrs. Co-chairmen, members of the Commission, Quebecers, it is with great pride that we, the graduate students of Université de Sherbrooke, stand here before you to discuss our future in the Québec of tomorrow. We are aware of the role we have to play and consider it essential that student groups participate in this process. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Commission for this opportunity to express our views. The brief before you is the

result of intensive reflection and democratic consultation.

Each of the associations representing the various master's and doctorate programs of the Université de Sherbrooke has contributed its viewpoints through its executive. As a result, our discussion forum encompasses many disciplines. The graduate students from the humanities, pure sciences, social sciences, applied sciences and health sciences all see the issue from different angles but all their conclusions converge on the same objective, the same project: Québec sovereignty.

Our idea of sovereignty for Québec consists in the National Assembly having the exclusive power to legislate, levy taxes and sign international treaties. Sovereignty will enable Québec to work effectively towards attaining the objectives of Quebecers. In our brief, we did not dwell on the history of Canadian federalism since most of you have been participants in this history; we believe that this task is incumbent upon other participants. Our focus is on the dissatisfaction of Quebecers with the current federal system. We don't want to go back to endless constitutional quarrels. What we propose is a positive sovereignty.

We believe in the socioeconomic strength of a sovereign Québec. Throughout the brief, we propose a blueprint for society based on principles that respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual as well as those of communities. This blueprint for society expresses the priorities of the graduate students at Université de Sherbrooke. We believe that a redefined constitutional status of Québec must include a reexamination of the various segments of Québec society. Our group includes one resource person for each section of the brief. These are the people I introduced before my presentation, and I would like to thank them for their participation. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Mrs. Linda Trudel and Mr. André-Claude Veillette, as well as the work of all the associations that participated in preparing this brief.

We, students, are often told that we represent an important part of tomorrow's society. This, then, is what the leaders of tomorrow are asking you today. We know that you will play an important role in history. We even envy you for sitting in these chairs today, but please, make sure that we will not have to sit in the same chairs 20 years from now. It is up to you to enable us to build our Québec, the Québec of tomorrow.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's go on to the question period. Mr. Vallières, the government party representative, will be first.

Mr. Vallières: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Larrivée, I'd like to congratulate you, and the

people here with you, on your brief. Your statements give rise to a few questions. First of all, since you mention that Québec sovereignty is necessarily tied in with the economy, perhaps I could ask you, as a first question, whether you have looked at the way the federal deficit could be shared in the Québec republic you propose in your document.

Mr. Langevin (Patrice): We know that Québec accounts for 25% of the population of Canada. It would be logical for Québec to pay 25% of the current federal deficit. But these are technical questions. What we focused on primarily was how to attain sovereignty in Québec. I think it's clear that we're ready to pay our share and negotiate this share with the rest of Canada.

Mr. Vallières: Roughly along the same lines, I'd like you to give me a few details that are not found in your brief. As you know, many experts have publicly expressed their preference for a monetary union, even in a sovereign Québec. What particular advantages do you see in having a Québec currency, such as you propose in your brief?

Mr. Langevin: When we speak of an optimal solution, politically and economically, in a political sense as well, we could control, and determine, among other things, the interest rate. This is the optimal solution. That's how it must be viewed. But that doesn't mean we must adopt an attitude of nihilism, destroy everything and start again from scratch, because creating a currency would take time, of course. In that sense, sharing a currency with the rest of Canada is a practical, not to say pragmatic, solution.

Such a sharing of power would only be complete if Quebecers had a voice at the central Bank of Canada. This too is a technicality. I'm not saying it's not important, but it's one of the ways we can go about it.

Mr. Vallières: I'd like to leave the subject of technicalities and go on to another point in your brief which does not, in any way, deal with the process leading to Québec's complete autonomy, or the consequences of this option. Do you, for example, believe that a referendum would be useful to clarify this type of issue? And, why doesn't your brief deal with the process leading to independence?

Mr. Larrivée: As I mentioned earlier, the primary objective of our brief was to state our views on the constitutional status of Québec and, secondly, to propose a blueprint for society.

It is quite obvious, when you read the brief all the way through, that there are problems to be solved, that problems will not be solved

overnight, that's obvious.

If you look at page 11 of our brief, in the conclusions, at the end, REMDUS also recommends that the Commission propose to the government a decision-making formula that will enable all Quebecers to have a say in their future, through a referendum. As far as we're concerned, in terms of the process leading to sovereignty as such, we are against an election-cum-referendum. Our referendum formula consists in consulting all Quebecers, by means of a clear question, namely: What do Quebecers want with regard to their constitutional future?

Mr. Vallières: Among other things, you propose creating a government level that would act as an intermediary between the National Assembly and municipal officials. Would this be an elected or appointed government?

Mr. Bénard (Pierre): In that section we didn't want to speak on behalf of aboriginal peoples. In our example, we considered the possibility of governments run by aboriginal groups, but without being paternalistic and negotiating on their behalf.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The next question period goes to Mrs. Blackburn, the Official Opposition representative.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, good afternoon. I must admit that when I saw you come in, I thought to myself that I would have liked to see women among you, although I appreciated your brief and read it more than once. It is quite interesting, and I was reassured when you said that there was in fact a woman who had participated in your discussions and in the preparation of the brief.

Your message is clear. You are asking the Commission not to start all over again or to try to start all over again redefining a new Québec, and you state that you are contemplating a number of ways to achieve sovereignty. Among these, you mention education as being the most important and I am entirely in agreement with you. The best way to become sovereign is to acquire knowledge; that begins with personal autonomy, followed by autonomy as a people. But a people can have no more autonomy than its individuals have, this is a vital point. Mr. Lévesque had something to say on that subject, something which it might be useful to remember. He stated that Québec cannot be truly sovereign unless it places priority on excellence. This is why I share your concerns, your views and your recommendations on the major part of your brief, particularly in education, research and development.

You say that students and researchers are the monks of the 21st century. This, of course, is a reference to your living conditions, which

are not particularly... In other words, you're not rolling in money. But you also know that, at present, because of the overlapping that exists between the federal and provincial governments, Québec's share in matters of research and development – the annual shortfall is between \$280 000 000 and \$300 000 000, which we would have if we had support that was proportional to our population. This borders on the catastrophic.

On that score, I have a question that I'd like you to elaborate on. On page 4 of your brief, you mention standardization of master's and doctorate degrees. I must say this leaves me perplexed. Would it be desirable to standardize master's and doctorate degrees at a time when, throughout the world, academic freedom and university autonomy have been recognized, so as to give specific qualities to the training of students? What leads you to the conclusion that there should be such a standardization?

Mr. Bénéard: This is a point, in our education section, that was part of our preliminary brief, the one which we wrote before submitting it for consultation to all our associations. The associations then gave their opinions. It was a very controversial point.

Mrs. Blackburn: OK. So this is not something that was retained.

Mr. Bénéard: No, it was not retained.

Mrs. Blackburn: Very well. Yes?

Mr. Larrivée: I'd like to add, Mrs. Blackburn, by way of information, that if you don't see any female candidate here at this table, it isn't because of lack of effort on our part. Even in our association, at the moment, in the executive of the graduates' association, there is no female candidate, but we're doing our best.

Mrs. Blackburn: In fact, that's what I meant to say earlier; it's too bad that there are no women interested in this type of issue, that's the conclusion I came to when I saw that there weren't any.

A brief question. You state that a sovereign State is the same as sovereignty, basically. Very well. In your brief, you suggest being able to sign international treaties, particularly in economic matters. Apart from the Free Trade Agreement – in fact, this is automatically renewed with the succession of states – you wish for continuity but, in the normal course of things, there will be continuity. Do you think that it is possible to have associations, economic associations, with the rest of Canada? Many people are sceptical on that point. How do you feel about it?

Mr. Langevin: Personally, I believe in the

economic theory of comparative advantages. Québec has one, the rest of Canada has one, so do the Americans, and Mexico will have one. We are seeing the formation of economic blocs. This is an economic and a social reality. The EEC is doing it, and I think it would be desirable for a sovereign Québec and the rest of English Canada, along with other partners, to arrive at this type of solution eventually.

Mrs. Blackburn: But do you see any reasons that would prevent Canada from negotiating such agreements with Québec?

Mr. Langevin: Personally, no, I see no reason to prevent this from happening. On the contrary, I can see compelling reasons for this type of agreement. We know that Canada is a common market. It works more or less because of political disparities. That's one thing. As for the economy, there is a question of profitability and efficiency of the system. This is something else again. I believe that a sovereign Québec could help us achieve this objective and lead to a collaboration with the rest of Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's go on to questions from the members. I have several requests for questions. I think we have time for three or four, maybe more if they're short. Let's begin with Mr. Hogue, followed by Mr. Poissant and Mrs. Drouin.
(4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You spoke of economic theories. Let's take an example that you're familiar with, diminishing returns. Let me ask you briefly: What do you mean by a sovereign State? My second question refers to page 6, second and third paragraphs. I'd like you to comment on the second and third paragraphs, where Québec should use the advantage of its size and strength within the international economy. This is a major point in your position, which is interesting. But on page 6, you also say that it is not in the economic interest of a Québec nation to go against, etc., economic blocs, and at the same time you retreat and base your position on blocs. In other words, you go outside the Canadian reality to form a bloc that would be called Québec, and despite your pullback, you still claim the need for blocs.

Mr. Larrivée: Yes. To answer your first question, to clarify things, let's say that for us, sovereignty or a sovereign State or independence all mean the same. In other words, Québec becomes a sovereign country, as defined in international law.

Mr. Hogue: A sovereign State.

Mr. Larrivée: That's what I'm saying. For us, a sovereign State and sovereignty mean the

same in our brief. Is that clear? As for this pullback you mention, before giving the floor to Patrice let me say that, for us, there is no question, when we mention sovereignty, of taking a chainsaw to cut Québec off and carry it out into the Atlantic. This is not the point. It is quite obvious that, in terms of territory, Québec remains in the same place. Except that, with sovereignty, Québec can decide on its own economy, its economic practices, and that way, naturally, it has the power to make agreements with its economic neighbours. I'll let Patrice tell you more about that.

Mr. Langevin: You said that Québec must rely on its size and its strength. Of course, in the sense that... Look at the ECU of the EEC, that's the currency over there; the country that has the highest GNP, the strongest economy, has a larger percentage. This is how Québec should look at it. We can't just go and decide unilaterally: Here it is, that's what we've decided. Let's rely on our size and strength, because we're confident of this size and this strength. We have confidence in Quebecers.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's go on to Mr. Poissant, followed by Mrs. Drouin.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I read your brief, on the subject of cooperatives, you can imagine my surprise, gentlemen, at seeing that 40 years ago, as a student, I was dealing with the same thing. The cooperative system in Québec and in Canada must be rethought. And when you tell us, Mr. Larrivée, that you hope not to have to come back here in 20 years, I would say that I hope you will come back here in 20 years, because we haven't done everything we wanted to do.

That said, you have raised interesting points in your report. I'd like to see things done your way. However, when you look at a guy like me, who is now in the university of life and who has learned many things since the days of the cooperative system I used to teach... you too might realize that it's not as easy as it seems. In your brief, on page 6, you say that it would be absurd not to observe the Free Trade Agreement. It may be hard for you to imagine, gentlemen, but even if we wanted to observe it, if our neighbours say no, it is not up to us to decide. We can't just go and say: The Free Trade Agreement applies in a sovereign State. It's not that simple.

But the most important point you raise is that of control of the Bank of Canada. This is where I wonder, do you mean... No, the Central Bank, I'm sorry. Does anyone need reminding that there is no way to control the Bank of Canada? If we're talking about a Québec bank,

we'll have to talk about Québec currency. And if you talk about Québec currency, you'll remember the headlines earlier this year, Merrill Lynch was saying that, if Québec separated, it might, it wouldn't stop... If you don't mind, I'll just read it: According to the largest American brokerage firm, Merrill Lynch, the credit rating of a sovereign Québec would be little different from the current rating of the province. Newspapers had a field day, that helped a lot. However, I did my homework. Were we talking about a common currency or a Québec currency? I had the answer yesterday; Merrill Lynch told me that, in my report, it was obvious that I assumed there would be a monetary union. All this to say that there is a problem. My question is: How do you propose to control the Bank of Canada or the Central Bank or the Central Bank of Québec?

Mr. Langevin: There is no denying that we must go along with the economic situation, which is not controlled by Québec, this is a world situation. We're talking about the globalization of markets, etc. When we speak of control, it has more to do with a presence, a type of power of veto at the Central Bank, at the Bank of Canada, in the sense that we know very well that interest rates have gone up because of an overheated economy in Ontario. And it is the other regions of Canada, the other provinces, that pay the price. This does not necessarily reflect the economic reality of these provinces, Québec among them. Obviously, you can't have two, three interest rates, but we could look at a possible channel... What we are proposing is a kind of plan. But it's not carved in stone, what we suggest is that certain people, delegates from Québec, or others, be at the Bank of Canada to defend the interests of Québec.

Mr. Poissant: Mr. Chairman, the things that gravitate around this issue... There are already two representatives of the Bank of Canada, from Québec and from Ontario, and one for each of the other provinces. God knows they're not making a great success of it. There is only one solution left, that's to have a veto. But how can we even think that the rest of Canada will grant us a veto at the Central Bank?

Mr. Langevin: Look, the rest of Canada... I think it is to their advantage to negotiate with Québec, this too would be part of the negotiations. I can't answer that question at the moment because of the logistics involved, but as I said earlier, it is a plan and it might be an avenue to explore. It may not be the only one. There may be other even more efficient solutions, but what is clear is that we want Québec to have its say.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs.

Drouin, followed by Mr. Turgeon.

Mrs. Drouin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today, we are receiving a group of university students and, since the beginning of the afternoon, we have been reminded a few times about a tragic event. So, if you'll allow me, as a representative of the education sector, as a woman and mother of a young woman studying engineering, at the Université de Sherbrooke, I'd like to say that I am very much in sympathy with all those who, today, are marking the anniversary of a very painful event. That said, I'd like to congratulate you on your brief. It was very well done. It is quite complete and deals with many subjects. I'd like to go back to the topic of education, of course. On page 4, in the solutions you propose, you ask questions about the future of cegeps. I don't know if... You tell us that it has become relevant to review their impact on post-secondary studies as a whole. This should also take into account the advantages and the potentially negative consequences of cegeps on universities. Could you elaborate a little on that?

Mr. Bérard: This has been the subject of a lively discussion at REMDUS. Some people think that cegeps... This is a system that doesn't exist in Ontario, for example. Because there are no cegeps in Ontario the equivalent of a cegep education takes place in part at the secondary level and in part as a fourth-year general education, usually at the university level. The fact that these students are integrated into the universities, first of all, increases the student population to a significant degree and necessarily requires a larger teaching staff. So, some students think that, perhaps... One solution to increase the number of graduates at the master's and doctoral levels might be to contemplate a reorganization of cegeps along similar lines. But I must confess that this question is a very controversial one at REMDUS, because many students like the cegep a great deal. Cegeps have been a much appreciated feature of the education system, unique to Québec, and these students find that going to cegep has enriched their personal lives; cegeps also represent educational accessibility because, as you know, there's no tuition. So, since there is no real consensus on this issue, we agreed to request a study to determine the impact of cegeps on the university network and how it affects the accessibility of education, and to see whether we could come up with something that would be helpful to universities. Or to see whether the impact... Ultimately, if we can keep the current system, the impact is not very significant. These are questions we are asking; we don't have the answers, but we'd like to.

Mrs. Drouin: You haven't looked at the

advantages for students of eliminating the cegep?

Mr. Bérard: There might be some advantages for graduate students but we're not sure. In the current system, there are advantages for students. They told us so, they appreciated the cegep experience in their personal development. So...

Mr. Drouin: To eliminate it would therefore...

Mr. Bérard: Integrate it or eliminate it, we don't know. What we'd like to have is the answer to our questions on that subject.

Mrs. Drouin: OK. Thank you. That's all.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you very much. You are very articulate people. You have done excellent work. Very nice. I have no problem with your option but something is conspicuously absent from your arguments for sovereignty: culture. There is no cultural dimension at all. This worries me, especially since you rightly claim that you are an important part of tomorrow's Québec elite. There may be some future ministers among you. There may even be a future prime minister among you. You know that, today, we deplore the fact that our leaders have not understood that 1% of the budget dedicated to culture is a decent minimum in a society like ours. The cuts that were made yesterday in an institution like the CBC, and the way they were made, is truly barbaric. What I'd like to know, is what, in the sovereign Québec you propose, in your Québec, your cultural concerns will be?

Mr. Leclerc (Grégoire): Culture is a big word. We looked at culture as an integral part of our society, not as something separate. For us, a graduate is someone who has studied either pure or applied sciences, humanities or philosophy. These people, in every respect, are the actors of tomorrow; in philosophy, for example, we need people who will succeed in developing an economically viable Québec. So it's not just the - how would I put it - artistic side, there is another dimension... This way, culture is included in every step of the decision-making process. This is why we did not treat it as a distinct aspect.

Mr. Turgeon: The only place where you mention it, is in relation to the management of the flora and fauna, so...

Mr. Leclerc (Grégoire): Yes, well...

Mr. Larrivée: If I may say so, it is obvious, Mr. Turgeon, that, for us, Québec culture is an integral part of what is fundamental to Quebecers. In every field and in every area of study, it is of paramount importance that, in a sovereign Québec, Québec culture be promoted at every level, in the arts, in education, and in research. It is also obvious to us that, if we want to make French the official language, it is not simply a question of protecting the language, it is also a question of protecting the source of the people, and culture, through the French language, is part of the roots of Quebecers. It is obvious to us that culture must have an important place. All the more so since Québec is a cultural minority in North America, not only when it comes to the French language. It is not just our language that makes us fundamentally distinct...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larrivée, I believe we have exhausted our time. You don't seem convinced when you speak to Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Turgeon: That's what I wanted to hear you say.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This is all the time we have for this presentation. Thank you... I had a real stumper for your future representative at the Bank of Canada, but we don't have time. I'll keep it for some other time. Thank you, Mr. Comeau, Mr. Bénard, Mr. Larrivée, Mr. Leclerc, Mr. Langevin, Mr. Martel and thank you to all of you of the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat. Please clear the centre of the table as soon as you can to make way for the representatives of the Centre pour femmes immigrantes de l'Estrie, who are now invited to take their seats.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:45 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:49 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Please take your seats. The hearings will continue with presentations from the Centre pour femmes immigrantes de l'Estrie. Mrs. Bassaletti will introduce the two people with her, before presenting the central points of the group's brief in a five-minute presentation. Mrs. Bassaletti, you have the floor.

Centre pour femmes immigrantes de l'Estrie

Mrs. Bassaletti (Teresa): Let me first say that I am happy to be here with you, because this issue is very close to our hearts. Shedding some light on the many things that immigrant women suffer from. Unfortunately, our group has

just been divided, because someone in the Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration has just offered our legal counsel a job with the Sherbrooke Chamber of Commerce. So it's funny that after so many years without work, he's now working for the cause of immigrant women; he's just been given an opportunity. Now, before I present my brief, I find it quite bad. Thank you!

In any case, I will read what I have to say to you today. Please excuse my accent: I was married in Chile, and I try to speak French, and English too.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Then, benvenuto en Canada, Madam, and please proceed. First be so kind as to introduce your colleagues to the members of the Commission.

Mrs. Bassaletti: All right. On my right is Aida Assouri from Lebanon, member of the board of directors; on my left Nutan Kalevar, who is of Hindu origin and also a member of the board; then we have Tchier Fairouch from Algeria, a member of the Centre pour femmes immigrantes; and finally Maître Méhu, who, I'm afraid, would not have wanted me to announce that in public.

I will speak especially of the ill-judged remarks about the place of minorities in the professions and political institutions of the Québec of tomorrow. On April 30, 1981, the Parti québécois government changed the name of the Ministère de l'Immigration du Québec to the Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration, as stated by Gérard Godin, the minister in charge of the portfolio at the time, when he presented the official policy on cultural communities entitled "Autant de façons d'être Québécois". This two-fold decision confirmed, if any confirmation was needed, the Québec government's new awareness of the cultural diversity of our society and of the demands created by this reality. For the Québec government, the wish to affirm the French language has always been accompanied by a recognition of the multifaceted nature of our cultural heritage. Can everyone understand me?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, yes, that's fine.

Mrs. Bassaletti: Thank you. The current government - here I am referring only to the Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration - seems to have taken responsibility for the highlights of this action plan, which gave rise, as we know, to the Conseil des communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration. We cannot but support the principle of a society that is open to respect for others and dialogue between cultures. But in order to be credible, this concept must give rise to policies and programs centred on the real needs of cultural

communities. It must also be part of the creation of a pluralistic society, one that allows each group to contribute to the development of Québec at a time when the French-speaking majority is opening up to the world, and when ethnic communities are showing more interest in the language and culture of the majority. Only under these conditions can there be a convergence of the efforts of all citizens of Québec to realize our collective cultural projects and determine our political and constitutional future together.

We regret that the creation of this Commission excluded both the aboriginal population and the ethno-cultural and racial communities of Québec. Anglophones, too, were excluded... Union leaders, who, through commentators on Québec politics, strangely call to mind the conditions under which the Meech Lake constitutional compromise was reached. Despite efforts to have the interests of groups other than the two founding nations as well as the specific concerns of women included in the Accord, the provisions of this text remained unchanged. Not until an Amerindian MP from Manitoba vetoed the ratification of the Accord were the demands of the First Nations of Canada taken seriously in debates on the future of the country. It seems that despite all the ups and downs experienced by the Accord from its acceptance by the first ministers at that time up to the failure of Meech Lake on June 23, the lesson still has not been learned. To justify the absence of ethnic minorities such as the aboriginal peoples, the Québec government argued that we were only a minority. But it must be admitted that artists do not constitute a large majority in Québec either, and furthermore everyone knows that some artists are federalists while others are separatists. So we don't buy that argument.

There can be no doubt that several important issues dealt with by the Commission are of extreme consequence to aboriginal peoples and ethnic communities. In particular with regard to our own organization, immigrant women are directly affected by issues of immigration, language learning and vocational training — areas over which Québec wants exclusive jurisdiction. Women are often at a great disadvantage in terms of French language learning and integration in the job market. We even know that immigrant women are under-represented when they have to work in factories. In fact, 22% of immigrant women, as opposed to less than 6% of Québec women, work in factories, the garment industry and so on. These are problems which involve constitutional issues and which directly concern immigrant women, and their minority status should not deprive them of their right to participate in debates on the political future of Québec, the province in which they have chosen to settle for the long term.

To conclude, we would like to stress that immigrant women are faced with two problems. The first is that as women their rights are not well recognized and they must struggle along with other women to become full citizens. The second is that immigrant women come from a society that is different from that of their adopted country. Although many immigrant women have little education and speak neither French nor English, they have a vitality and creative potential that they rarely have a chance to exploit fully.

The Centre pour femmes immigrantes is the only community organization concerned with the integration and socio-economic promotion of immigrant women. Its clientele comprises women from some sixty countries. It is therefore in a position to identify the problems and, from experience, recognize the particular needs of immigrant women living in the Eastern Townships region. As such, it should have an adequate forum and resources to accomplish its mission. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. Let us proceed with questions, starting with the representative of the Official Opposition, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, ladies. First of all, I would like to reassure you. You speak excellent French and I don't think anyone here failed to understand every word of your speech, which by the way was excellent. You describe the situation of Francophones... of immigrant women in the region, and also in your brief (but not in your speech) you describe a program to integrate immigrant women into the job market, which is especially interesting. I would like to dwell on a few points in your brief. You say that for the government it is not simply a matter of adopting the policy of Mr. Godin, who, in his document entitled "Autant de façons d'être Québécois", says: "The present government must obtain the means to back up its policies, and this concept, in order to be credible, must give rise to policies and programs centred on the real needs of cultural communities." But, as you are familiar with the matter, you know that despite all the efforts of the present government to sign the Québec-Canada agreement that would have allowed the Québec government, specifically the Ministère de l'Immigration, to recover the funds needed to implement an immigration policy, this has still not been done. And this is particularly due, as you note, to the overlapping jurisdiction over immigration and vocational training.

Despite all that, I think it should be acknowledged that yesterday or the day before, the Minister of Immigration tabled a policy that I find very interesting. But you know, it means \$30 million more in expenditures for Québec, if

Canada continues not to sign the agreement. And you know that the only reason the agreement has not been signed today — I have this from Conservative MPs who are well placed to know about it — is simply that Mr. Mulroney is waiting for another province to sign it, so as not to give the impression he is favouring Québec, which I find regrettable indeed. But at the same time, this imposes a heavy penalty on Québec. (5:00 p.m.)

I would like you to tell me something, because at the very beginning of your brief you say you do not want to state any opinion on the question of status. But since it has a major impact on control over immigration policies and programs, do you think Québec should have full powers over immigration, vocational training and income security?

Mrs. Bassaletti: If I understand you correctly, you are making me choose between two husbands: one in a red suit and one in a blue suit.

Mrs. Blackburn: Ha!

Mrs. Bassaletti: I would choose the husband who will respect my rights, and who will allow all my children to be well fed, whether their hair is straight or curly.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes.

Mrs. Bassaletti: The red-suited husband is Ottawa and the blue-suited one is Québec. So for us, the most important question is what place the ethnic minorities will have. Whatever the constitution, and whether Québec is sovereign or a member of Confederation, for us the important thing is what our place will be.

Mrs. Blackburn: But does the idea of Québec's sovereignty, with the policies — for example the policy tabled yesterday, which I must admit appears to be a good one — does this idea frighten you?

Mrs. Bassaletti: Listen, I have nothing against good policies. The only problem is, they never get implemented in reality. I've been an immigrant for 15 years, and if I can give you my observation about policies, they remind me of those houses that have been designed to look like a million dollars, to use an expression.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes.

Mrs. Bassaletti: Except when you look closely, the house has no door for going in and out. Because when they promise immigrants access to employment, access to housing and so on, well I don't see any timetables, and for me timetables are very important for getting in and

out.

Furthermore, if I continue with the house idea, I think the house is floating in the air, because there are 63 women's groups in Québec, and we are women but we weren't even consulted.

Mrs. Blackburn: You are quite right, there are problems. Just take the COFI, there's over a six-month wait, in Montréal there are waiting lists of 500 people just to learn French. You know, there are some total aberrations, some things that are completely unacceptable in terms of immigration.

But do you admit that the double jurisdiction, which prevents Québec from making its own decisions about immigration and creating its own programs, dependent as it is on federal subsidies, that this creates problems for program implementation? Regardless, because you're wearing red and I'm in black...

Mrs. Bassaletti: I could say something, yes. All right. I wore red because I like the colour, it's the colour of love. I like the colour blue because it's the colour of the sky.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

A voice: We've already heard that one.

Mrs. Bassaletti: I sincerely believe that what immigrant women have had in the way of collective action for job integration was precisely the vocational integration project in which we were the prime operator, and it was the first time in the history of Sherbrooke that ten immigrant women belonging to visible minorities and having incomes of less than \$6 000 a year were able to get in, and those women are now integrating. It's not just a question of language. It's a question of having a chance to prove one's worth and become autonomous.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now have questions from the members. Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Ladies. I refer to page 6 of your brief, where you mention the difficulties you encounter, and I would like to read just one sentence. "We also found that, except for COFI and SANC, which are dedicated to the adaptation of New Quebecers, none of the organizations covered in our survey gave consideration to the specific situation of immigrant women in the Eastern Townships, either for program admission or for training activities."

I believe this statement contains two elements. First, of course, you point out the inadequacies of existing programs, but what

appears to me more serious is your report of inadequacies in the reception of immigrants in the region. Given that the reception of immigrant families in the regions is a very important matter for Québec, I was wondering how you think the reception programs and structures should be changed to facilitate reception. And as a corollary, if you will, should the municipalities or local level play a greater role?

Mrs. Bassaletti: Of course. This is very important. I think that if you went to China and found yourself... Say you're in China and you're looking for a job and an apartment, and there are no other Quebecers around to help you. I think it's obvious that if there are shortcomings, it's because the ethnic minorities of the region are not around. So to remedy the situation, I would insist that reception should really be reception, a job should really be a job, language should really be language... Ethnic minorities must be allowed to participate in discussion of the problems, because nobody is more familiar with a problem than the person experiencing it, and nobody can defend an issue better than the person who is completely involved in it.

Mr. Nicolet: You speak of problems, but I would like to offer you some solutions. Would it in fact be conceivable or desirable to extend all functions relating to the reception and support of new immigrants to the local level?

Mrs. Bassaletti: Listen, I don't sign the cheques, but if I did, I wouldn't sign a blank one. There are many conditions to be met because, as I said, everything is there on paper, we have the Canadian Charter and the Québec Charter, but before the principle of human rights and freedoms can become a reality for us, someone has to make a commitment to enforce these principles.

Mr. Nicolet: Do I have some time left?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have a minute and some...

Mr. Nicolet: Madam, I am not speaking in terms of principles, I am simply talking about mechanisms for very immediate implementation, in the field. Who can help you?

Mrs. Bassaletti: I think that when you are part of a family, you have a father and a mother. It's the responsibility of both to take care of you. It's not a single-parent family.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's hear from Mr. Liberatore.

Mr. Liberatore: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, Madam, I'm the son of an immigrant. My mother is an immigrant – or was, because she is no longer with us. You are very young, so I can say I realize that it takes a lot of courage to present a brief such as yours.

I must also tell you that my mother, like you, believed that the only way she could succeed was by integrating. Even more, she pushed me too to integrate, saying, "You're living among Quebecers, among Canadians, so you must learn to live with them, you must learn to know and respect them, and demand the same respect from them." I tried to do that as best I could, and I can tell you that you are absolutely right. The way to succeed here is by recognizing the values of others and by integrating in whatever way you see fit.

My question is as follows: what can we, as Quebecers and Canadians, do to help you integrate and prepare the way for your children so that they too can integrate and have access to the job opportunities that all Quebecers and Canadians want?

Mrs. Bassaletti: I think that one sign of my willingness to integrate is that my mother tongue is Spanish, and here I am trying to speak to you in French. This is proof of integration. Another sign is that for seven years I have worked for an organization that started out with only \$5 000 a year in grants and we offered service from 9 to 5. I think this is another way of integrating.

Our organization has done a bit of research. We created a vocational integration project for immigrant women. This is more proof of our desire to integrate. The only thing we ask of you is to recognize us as a distinct group that is part of your family, and to give us the possibility of a representative of ethnic minorities who could play more of a role in integration but not assimilation.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I would just like to say that the description in your document of the employment program for beneficiaries is very well done. But I would add that this program was funded by Employment and Immigration Canada, which is also very good.

Second, I'd like to say that many of the concerns in your brief were partly solved by the statement of principle made by Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay this week, notably in terms of integration. The whole statement focuses on integration, and I think it provides a partial solution to some of your problems. My question is as follows: wearing your blue suit and looking at the red suit of Ottawa, what power would you wish for tomorrow – one or two powers – in order to feel really comfortable in Canadian

society?

Mrs. Bassaletti: What powers? I don't think we are very ambitious, because all we want is a distribution of powers and jurisdictions relating to immigration. That's all.

Mr. Dufour: But more specifically, when you represent your group and you experience some of the problems you describe, what powers does Québec not have which, if it had them, would resolve the difficulties you point out?

Mrs. Bassaletti: Well, it's up to Québec to negotiate for Québec and it's up to Canada to negotiate for Canada. I'm here telling you that as a minority group, we need to be listened to by both sides. I tell you he's the one. I'll take the husband who will guarantee the rights of all my children. So I can't enter into an unconditional marriage. But I still have... I've matured a little, you see?

Mr. Dufour: You are very able and I understand that, at present, you are not so badly off.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Dufour: I would like, if I have the time, Mr. Chairman, to ask you...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...time, please.

Mr. Dufour: ...and it falls in with Mr. Nicolet's question. We still have the impression that it is the major centres, Montréal and Québec City, that attract immigrants. We try to send them to the regions and they come back almost automatically. What can we do to keep them in the regions?

Mrs. Bassaletti: Excellent question, because we know that here in Sherbrooke, immigration is a long-term, progressive and irreversible process. That is to say, if we want regionalization, as you say, to be true regionalization, there have to be policies to go along with it. Because it doesn't do any good for an immigrant to come and collect welfare in Sherbrooke rather than in Montréal. So we need policies to guarantee access to employment. And we are ready to work with anyone, as long as we can be in control of defining the problem, conducting market studies, finding out where the shortages are, and also seeing how immigrant women can integrate into Québec society, not passively but actively.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll

proceed now with questions from the representative for the Government, Mrs. Madeleine Bélanger.

Mrs. Bélanger: Permit me to welcome you here and to congratulate you on your brief, which by the way is very pertinent. Throughout the tour of this Commission, the exodus from the regions has been much talked about, and the Townships region has not been spared this exodus. We've also heard a lot about the importance of attracting immigrants to the regions and the possibility of their participating in the development of Québec society and the French language. In fact, many women's groups have put forth similar recommendations. Your comments this afternoon fit in well with what we have heard so far.

As you express it so well on page 4 of your brief, it is quite obvious that the integration of immigrant women into the region's labour force is the best way towards the adaptation and integration of new immigrants. This said, I would like you to take the time to explain how women experience the reality of sponsorship, which often makes them dependent on their husband or brother for years. How do you experience this dependence on a spouse or other person who sponsors your arrival in Québec?

(5:15)

Mrs. Bassaletti: I think your question is right on the mark because I myself was sponsored. When my husband and I immigrated, he was the sponsor and I came along in his pocket. I think it's a sexist law that makes women dependent on men. But at the same time, it's a law that enables a lot of women to immigrate when they are faced with racial problems, political persecution or other difficulties. Because you know, lack of education is a problem for women all over this planet. Now governments have their quotas to fill, and the more education or diplomas you have, the better your chances, even if the diplomas are not valid here. So for women who have never even had access to education or job training, let alone politics, sponsorship is a way of immigrating. I think it could be changed from sponsorship by the husband to sponsorship by the wife. But actually I'm not for either one, perhaps it could be shortened so women don't have to wait ten years before they can breathe a little, because I was able to... OK. It's mine now, but I had to wait ten years and for those ten years you have to be very good, otherwise you get deported.

Mrs. Drouin: I understand that it's not very pleasant to be dependent for ten years, but do you know of any ways of putting an end to this ten-year dependency once you've immigrated to Canada?

Mrs. Bassaletti: There are definite solutions.

The first would be to have ethnic minorities represented in matters of immigration. Because once immigrants are present at high levels and low, there will be more awareness and it will be easier to make the system work to our advantage. Do you understand?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Come, Madam, I thought you had already finished. The time allotted for your presentation is over. But if you wish to wrap up, please go ahead.

Mrs. Bassaletti: I would have liked to give my Québec and Canadian colleagues a chance to speak.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go ahead, please.

Mrs. Fairouch (Tchier): I am here first of all as a woman, second as an immigrant woman, and third as a woman who wishes to integrate but has not been given a chance by Québec society. Despite my education, which has always been a handicap for immigrants but not for me, and despite the fact that language is not at all a handicap for me - I speak French and English - despite all that, the only job I've found in Québec has been full-time job-hunting. It's been three years... I might add that I have a Master's degree and yet, as I said, the only job I've found has been full-time job-hunting. Any job, as long as it's honest and in accordance with my values. Thank you.

Mrs. Bassaletti: I think that, in conclusion, there is one recommendation to make, if you are willing. We aren't very ambitious, there's just one: that immigrant women be represented in all matters concerning immigration. Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Ladies, for your presentation. And special thanks for the last point you brought up. If you're in a permanent state of job-seeking, Madam, this was a good forum in which to say so. I hope it succeeds. Thank you, Ladies, and please, members of the Commission, please be orderly enough to wait on the side rather than blocking the table, so the next group can come and sit down. Please, Ladies, keep on that side, including Mrs. Blackburn, please take them a little farther away.

Our Commission members are a very disorderly group.

I would ask the Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie to come and take their places at the table immediately, please. Then Mr. Alain Hébert-Croteau will introduce his group and will have five minutes in which to present the highlights of the brief.

Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie

Mr. Hébert-Croteau (Alain): Well, good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. There were supposed to be other people, other members of the Coopérative who were supposed to be here with us, but since they are students, they have unfortunately been delayed, as it is the end of term. However, I would like to introduce a member of the Coopérative, Joël Hébert-Croteau.

The Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie was founded on March 31, 1990 by a group of 11 persons, aged between 16 and 30. Its goal is to provide young people with permanent or part-time jobs. The Coopérative creates jobs for about sixty distributors spread all over Sherbrooke and the region. It is currently preparing other projects in the areas of inserts, recycling and driving schools. The young people of the Coopérative are generally not interested in federal politics because they consider it to be far removed from their concerns. Sectors which serve young people, such as education, health and social affairs, fall within provincial jurisdiction. Sectors under federal jurisdiction which are aimed at young people, such as work and unemployment insurance, do not seem to be well adapted to our needs. Therefore, members of our Coopérative are in favour of a sovereign Québec, completely in charge of its own legislation and agreements with other countries. In this brief, we intend to put forward the reasons that have led us to reject the status quo and Canadian neo-federalism and to submit recommendations which will allow all Quebecers to realize their full potential within the framework of the new Québec constitution.

We say no to Canadian federalism! When we created this workers' cooperative, we were aware of the fact that this approach was specific to our needs both as young "Estriens", and as Quebecers. The values that we have tried to incorporate into our cooperative come from our past, our culture, our own forms of development. We could not count on help from the federal government in setting up our cooperative; rather we got help from two Québec institutions: the Syndicat de l'enseignement de l'Estrie, which provided much-needed funds, and the Coopérative de développement de l'Estrie, which provided us with technical and organizational support. By bringing in the GST, the federal government is seriously compromising the stability of our young cooperative. We won a contract to deliver weeklies because of the competitive prices we could offer. With the tax on services, costs will rise. Once again, the new unemployment insurance regulations work against young people. Due to the precarious nature of jobs, young people are the first to be laid off when there is a recession, a restructuring, or a lack of work. They barely have time to quality for

unemployment insurance benefits, especially since the qualification period for benefits has been increased while the number of weeks during which benefits can be collected has been reduced.

The federal deficit is growing by \$30 billion a year. This is frightening. We do not wish to remain within a confederation run by a majority of people of another culture. We consider that the costs of a two-tier administration are excessive, the laws administered by a two-tier system are unfair and inefficient, and the federal government's constant interference in areas of Québec jurisdiction is intolerable.

Located right on the U.S. border, Estrie has to maintain important relations — in quality and in quantity — with our southern neighbour. In the current climate, with Free Trade between Québec and the United States gradually taking root, adequate protective measures must be put in place to improve this desirable, yet unequal, relationship. We are concerned about the repercussions that these relations, over which we have no control, will have on our economy, our language and our culture. The government of Canada will always tend to sacrifice the aspirations of its minority to the well-being of the majority.

We say yes to a sovereign Québec! Québec will have to take into account the opinion of its young people, those who will be the citizens of tomorrow, in reaching a decision on its political and constitutional future. Québec has never really benefited from being part of Canada. After three centuries of disagreements that have never been settled, after the humiliating failure of the Meech Lake Accord, we find it difficult to see any reasons why we should remain within Canada.

We are especially convinced, in the light of the example of prestigious institutions such as Merrill Lynch, the Canadian C.D. Howe Institute, the Mouvement Desjardins, that we can easily evolve and progress as an independent people, because we have our own territory and a well-established culture, because we have excellent relations with our neighbours and with the rest of the world.

In order for the priorities of young Quebecers to be included within a sovereign Québec State, we recommend the following measures: That Québec create its own constitution and that it repatriate all powers and all jurisdictions in all areas, including the power to enter into agreements with other countries. That a sovereign Québec be concerned with creating measures that will develop a feeling of pride among Quebecers through improvement of the teaching of Québec history, creation of a national anthem and institution of the ceremony of raising the flag. That the Québec government invest the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse and its chairman with effective and significant

powers that allow it to intervene in all sectors related to the life and needs of young people. That Québec adopt a work policy based on wealth...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Could you please speed up the reading, perhaps by sticking to the chapter headings and the various recommendations, because we are going to be way over the time limit?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: All right. Well, basically, that is it. It is an interactive search among the sectors, a policy of adequate protection against Free Trade. Obviously protection of the environment, and this protection should be entrenched in the constitution, and finally, that we should promote, that we should implement measures to encourage the creation of workers' cooperatives. Finally, the members of the cooperative are insisting that young people must participate in creating the new institution to be adopted by Québec.

Sovereign Québec is our country. We must build it together.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will immediately go on to questions from the members. Mr. Beaudry, to be followed by Mr. Libman, and Mr. Liberator.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have studied your brief, which I think is very articulate and interesting. There are things in it that indicate that you are not satisfied with the current situation. Young people do not seem to be recognized, they do not have sufficient power. And to that effect, you say on page 7 of your brief that the Québec government should give the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse and its chairman effective and significant powers. What do you mean by that? What type of powers would you like to see given to the chairman of the Conseil?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes, well at present, the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse is conspicuous by its absence. It is practically never seen. It was set up, but it is practically invisible. And it can also be seen that recently many important decisions have been taken regarding the day-to-day life of young people, the increase in tuition fees and many other decisions. Therefore, we would like the chairman to have the power to actually take action. I do not mean to say that we do not have the technicalities of that, but that he should be able to really take action, he should have a platform from which he can take action, or, I would say, express the opinions of young people. And he should be able to have a real influence on the present decision-makers.

Mr. Beaudry: Which he does not have at the

present time.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: At present, I think he does not.

Mr. Beaudry: There is another point which I find particularly interesting. It is the point where you talk about Free Trade. Briefs have been presented before now, some of which indicated that in the context of a sovereign Québec, which you advocate, the current Free Trade agreement between Canada and the United States should be renewed. And others say it may have to be renegotiated. You, in your text, you say Québec should quickly establish a policy of adequate protection in the treaty, within the framework of Free Trade. I would like to hear your opinion on that. What do you mean by an adequate protection policy?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: That is, establishing... you see, since the United States certainly has a very large population while Québec has only 6 million, it is obvious that Free Trade in itself is not automatically beneficial. I mean that it is not true that the Americans will be there; they will not penetrate our market. They will certainly try to penetrate our market, to invade us with their products. Therefore, I think measures should be taken to help Quebecers export to the United States, to help young companies export to the United States, to help market their products. It is very important, or else I really believe we will be crushed by the Americans. And we should help structures like ours, which are original, and I would say to make sure that they are not crushed, swept away by the wave, we should protect them on those aspects.

Mr. Beaudry: Don't you think that if we adopt such a protectionist policy, the United States could do exactly the same thing, and say: Well, we are not going to import your goods because you are preventing ours from entering your market?
(5.30 p.m.)

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: No, it is not necessarily a protectionist policy. It is a matter of adopting a certain number of measures aimed at ensuring expansion. On the contrary they are not protectionist measures, they are measures to enable people to adapt to the new situation. But it has to be done or else, if things are left as they are at present, we don't imagine that Free Trade will be all that beneficial.

Mr. Beaudry: In other words, you think that the current Free Trade Agreement is not beneficial to Québec, it is also not beneficial to Canada since the agreement was signed with Canada. You are recommending that the Free Trade Agreement be finally renegotiated within

the context of a sovereign Québec, since you are not satisfied with it?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: No, I would not say that I am not satisfied with the Free Trade Agreement. I believe that Free Trade is essential and I do not think that Free Trade with the Americans can be renegotiated. It is certainly an enormous pact, which is immense. But I think that a sovereign government can certainly, and Americans do not hesitate to do it in their own country, award subsidies or help them indirectly. The Québec government can certainly take the initiative to help the economic partners of Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, let us now move on to Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you Mr. Chairman. You say no to federalism for certain reasons that really are not quite accurate. First, in your brief you say, disenchanted by the federalist adventure, a sovereign Québec is necessary to improve the lot of Quebecers and favour the advancement of young people. I think the last 30 years have shown that we can grow within the federal system. Second, you say that confederation has always been disadvantageous to Québec. Third, you say that the Canadian government will always tend to sacrifice its minority for the well-being of its majority. I think this also is completely incorrect. At the end you say that French culture and language and the powers of a people are under serious attack by the Anglophone media and culture. I think this is also incorrect. But you should...

If you can say "no" to federalism, you should also be able to acknowledge some advantages of federalism. The Canadian federation gives us the opportunity to participate in a wide range of resources and wealth; the economic stability we enjoy is due to the diversity of the regions that make up our federation; there is better protection for minorities and also one thing that has been underestimated before this Commission is the fact that all the economic links that are sought through sovereignty-association already exist within the Canadian federation.

To conclude, I will get to the question. It seems to me that you want sovereignty and unfortunately you are trying to justify the failure of federalism with clichés that are not completely accurate. Therefore, in your concept of an independent Québec, in your blueprint for a sovereign Québec, do you recommend the creation of customhouses, a Québec post office, armed forces, a Québec currency and also a Québec passport? Do you advocate the creation of these five institutions?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: You have to

understand, we are not at that stage yet. Our approach has essentially been to take a close look at federalism, particularly the present federal government, it's especially the federal government because the rest of Canada, well, they will take care of themselves. Currently, at present, the federal government seems to us like a ball and chain. We have been dragging along this ball and chain but it has always been holding us back. But we have not examined Québec sovereignty yet, should we have an army? Should we have a common market? We would rather leave that to the specialists, to those who will decide whether in the current situation, we need these various sectors. But we have not elaborated any particular plan.

Mr. Libman: In conclusion, can you admit today that during the last 30 years, Québec society has made incredible progress while still within the federal system?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes, but it was certainly not due to the federal system.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Please, we would remind you of our little speech concerning applause. In theory, you are in the gallery of the National Assembly and you are not allowed to applaud. Thank you.

Mr. Libman: Are you willing to say that the federal system has not contributed to the growth of Québec over the last 30 years?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: At present, it is standing in the way of that growth.

Mr. Libman: OK. Let us leave it at that.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry, Mr. Libman, but your time is really up now. Let us go on to Mr... Well perhaps a short answer, yes, of course. A short answer to the last short question you asked.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Well, it's... Obviously, I cannot go into the details, but we really have the impression that at present, the federal system has become something that constantly slows us down, that Quebecers cannot progress at their own rate.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Liberatore?

Mr. Liberatore: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, I must congratulate you for this truly exceptional report. I see an extraordinary dynamism in the pages of this report. I can see that you will essentially be the businessmen of

the future, the people who will probably guarantee my pension. So I read this carefully, but I still find some contradictions in the report which are a little unsettling. On the one hand, you are very aggressive and would like to take this all the way and on the other hand, you would like to hold back and be protected. Well then, my question is the following – and I am thinking about my father who was probably pretty clear-sighted and who used to say to me: You are going to learn French because you will deal in French with Francophones and you are going to learn English because you will also do good business in English with Anglophones.

He wasn't wrong. Isn't this duality, this division, just what, to a certain extent, makes it possible for us to grow? In your opinion, do you think you will be more successful if you open your horizons to a changing world, to a world that is becoming smaller each day, a world that is becoming more and more accessible to business, in Québec, in Canada, in the United States and also in Europe and in Asia? Or do you believe that your future will be more extraordinary if you approach things in a more limited fashion, with the government to protect you, to guarantee you a job, to help you protect your little job, because exports will be hampered and productivity will be hampered? How do you see your future?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Well, I think the government... that is, the fact that the government offers us job guarantees and all that, I think that was tried during the past few years and although it has not been a failure, it has not been a resounding success either. We have seen that the unemployment rate among young people is still very high, and that since the 1980 recession they have often been unemployed. Therefore, it is evident that the current formula does not favour them; they definitely are not the winners. They are wasting their time and the more time goes by, the more it seems that the precarious nature of jobs for young people is a reality and an everyday fact. Therefore, we must encourage people to change their mind-set and take control of their own destinies. Essentially, the message is that people should not wait for others to do things for them, but rather they should do things for their own benefit, for themselves. And in this way, I think there will be great economic and cultural prosperity.

Mr. Liberatore: In other words, what you are saying is: I want to succeed and, in order to succeed, I must be able to adapt to others, negotiate with others, reach agreements with others. This is how I will be able to succeed, taking into account the fact that the government is not perfect, because it is run by human beings. And since you are still young, you will be able to change these things in the future, to

ensure that the possibilities of success are open to every citizen. So, don't you think the chances of success are greater in an open environment than in the type of closed perfectionist environment you advocate in your report?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: What I am saying is that young people want to develop. They want to maintain a certain standard of living. The current standard of living among young people seems to be going downhill. But this does not mean that we should sacrifice our culture either. When you talk of horizons, it does not necessarily mean that we should weigh everything and say that we will adapt, we will negotiate. Obviously, we will have to adapt and negotiate. And when I talked about measures, I meant measures that will ensure that the culture is maintained. But it does not mean that we should become wrapped up in ourselves, either.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now a question from the representative of the Government party, Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you for being here with us today and congratulations for the work you are doing in the cooperative field. Like speakers before me, I have also read your brief. When I read certain parts of it, I said to myself, to borrow the words used yesterday by our friend, Mr. Laberge, this is full of ketchup. I totally agreed with you on other parts which I will point out to you. In any case, I will come back to that a little later.

I agree with all that you say when you talk about the environment, when you talk about young people taking part in drafting a new constitution, when you talk about the values that led you to create this cooperative, your past, your culture. It is wonderful. However, when I got to whole chapters, and I quote a sentence: Confederation... And I am not trying to defend Confederation; I am quoting you because the country we are going to try to build will not be based on clichés. We will all have to be very objective, and I have tried to instill this in my children, just as my father tried to instill it in me. And if I can convince you this evening that, in the months to come, objectivity will be very important, and that it is not by throwing clichés around that we will be able to accomplish something positive...

Having said this, when you say, for instance, that Confederation has always been disadvantageous to Québec, I think that is full of ketchup! When you mention Free Trade - listen to this carefully, this one - the federal government always tends to sacrifice its minority, talking about Free Trade, it is difficult to take this seriously since the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in Québec were both in favour of Free Trade. When you see this, you

say to yourself, these are clichés that don't hold up.

Having said this, I think that, on the whole, your brief is very valid and you deserve to be commended for being here today. Thank you for coming. I must admit that I am impressed with your presentation.

On page 8 of your brief, you talk of an environmental charter to be included in the future constitution of Québec. I would like you to tell me a little more about this.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Well, essentially, almost all young people are now aware of the importance of the environment. They are conscious of the fact that if they want to sustain their current standard of living, they cannot afford to ignore the environment. Therefore, basically, we have taken up this theme which almost every young person is now concerned about; and now it is important to consider the environment to be as fundamental as the economy or culture, because the environment is being destroyed at such a rate, and sometimes one would say with such a hands-off attitude, that it has become frightening. Therefore, these principles should simply be included in the constitution and they will allow...

Mr. Benoit: How far would you go with this environmental charter?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Well, it is obvious that this rapid and massive degradation of the environment has to be stopped. Certainly this systematic destruction is a cause for concern. When you look at it over a period of ten years, the number of animal species, the number of types of ecosystems disappearing within such a short time, it becomes clear that we cannot possibly leave things the way they are. A certain number of general principles will have to be set up in which it is clearly stated that the environment is of primary importance, that it must be protected, and, that it must be given priority in the event of a conflict between economic and environmental interests that could be catastrophic for the environment.

Mr. Benoit: One last question. You also say that the new constitution will have to be fair to everyone. What are the rights that you think the constitution must have in order to be fair to young people? What do you suggest? We are all going to participate in drafting the constitution. In your document you even ask to take part in the drafting. There will be a young people's symposium. The co-chairmen announced this week that there will be a young people's symposium. What would you like to see in the constitution for young people?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Well, basically, young

people do not constitute a separate class from the rest of society. They are an integral part of society. We are asking older people to at least consult young people before reaching any decisions. They should be consulted rather than be taken for granted before any decision is made that directly affects them.

Therefore, before a decision is made, we should find out if it directly affects the young, if it takes away advantages they had before; we should consult with them to grasp the real impact that the decision is likely to have on them.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go on to the representative from the Official Opposition, Mr. Robert Paré, for his questions.

Mr. Paré: Robert is my brother.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Robert? It is your turn to speak, Roger Paré, and not your father's.

Mr. Paré: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome you here and I must say that, by being here this afternoon, you represent two major forces in Québec, two very important forces: First, young people and second, the cooperative movement.

You know, many people have mentioned that we are observing the very sad anniversary of what happened on this date last year in Montréal. But there is also a happy event that we can celebrate today, namely, the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the Mouvement Desjardins and cooperatives. It can be seen that it is not only an important movement, but that, after ninety years it has also become the most important institution in Québec. Thus, I must say that you represent a very important force here today. And I commend you for stating the direction taken by your cooperative, as a company, as an institution. You mentioned recycling and a driving school, things which are very topical, so topical that last night's debate at the National Assembly, which will continue today, probably, dealt with cooperatives, among other things. Therefore, you are very topical.

Since there is not much time, I would like to proceed, very quickly, on two points: first, cooperatives, and then jobs, because according to your report it is a major concern for you. You come back... And you are not the only ones, I must admit, I find this interesting, you are the second youth group to appear before this Commission today. Before you, there was the Regroupement des étudiantes et étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke. There was even a particular section on cooperatives in what they were saying. I think, therefore, that you young people have

that substance and that kind of Québec culture in regard to development. You do not beat about the bush, you go straight to the point. You reject federalism - I will come back to that in my second question - you propose sovereignty for yourselves, given the importance of the cooperative movement in Québec today, and you would like to develop it in terms of job creation. What role do you see cooperatives playing in a sovereign Québec? Will they be a pillar as important as the private sector, the public sector, to which another fundamental pillar, the cooperative sector, would be added?
(5.45 p.m.)

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes. The cooperative sector really seems to me to have a great future indeed in... Obviously, the Mouvement Desjardins is a case in point. I think this institution is continuing to grow in importance. We even see that the Mouvement Desjardins is now trying to develop cooperatives in areas other than those where cooperatives have always existed, such as milk processing, and the Coopérative des travailleurs agricoles. The Mouvement Desjardins is now trying to create links with other sectors developed elsewhere. And I think that, indeed, in a sovereign Québec, many cooperatives will be developed in all sectors: the service sector, the manufacturing sector, and that even these cooperatives will probably also be able to export to the United States.

The Coopérative de travail des jeunes - I do not think there are many in Québec, I am not really aware of any others - is an attempt to develop cooperatives in Québec, and to fill the gaps that are often somewhat ignored by traditional private enterprise.

Mr. Paré: My second question. In your brief you mention that the federal government is far removed from the concerns of young people and, in addition, that it has slowed down development in the past, and, now, it is standing in the way of Québec's economic development. I must say that I do not necessarily share the opinion of some people who spoke before me, in saying that in such a large country where, at some point, decisions must be based on the needs and characteristics of each region, from time to time, because of the size and the differences in the needs of the various regions of Canada... From time to time, not only would the development needs of a particular region lead to decisions that go completely against the needs of another region... The best example is what happened during the past months and years: a policy which is designed to slow down the overheated Toronto economy when, in Montréal, poverty is becoming entrenched, with a third of the population considered to be poor, according to the statistics.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Are

you getting to the question, Mr. Paré?

Mr. Paré: Yes. I am getting there. During past years, many people from all walks of life have come together to formulate a genuine global policy on employment: full employment in Québec. People are still working on it, except that, unfortunately, its implementation seems unlikely due to the fact that all the tools are not available. Do you think...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): While you are getting there, Mr. Paré, could you get there more quickly?

Mr. Paré: Not partially... Do you think that it is possible, today, given the current system, to have a full employment policy in Québec?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: A full employment policy has in fact been a favourite topic for quite a long time and people have had difficulty defining what it really means. I would simply say, in regard to a full employment policy, since it concerns many participants – education, of course, the government and many others – I would suggest that initiatives such as the Coopérative de travail des jeunes should be given a greater role. These are alternative forms which, when huge government programs which are cumbersome and often lack flexibility are not working, by and large allow people to take charge of their own destinies, and encourage them to do so. Money is extremely scarce when someone is trying to start a cooperative. For example, it is extremely difficult to obtain funds with which to create a permanent one. The programs are not set up to meet such needs, etc. So, if you want to establish a new form of development and create jobs... it would be a small part of the general employment policy in Québec. It is very difficult. So, I just want to say that Québec politics should leave more room for creative forms.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Hébert-Croteau. Despite your young age, you have handled all these questions very well. Thanks also to the person with you, and the Commission is very pleased to have been able to read the brief of the Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie. I would now ask you to please leave your seat to Mr. Robert Steele, whom we are now going to hear.

M. Steele, vous avez envoyé votre mémoire en anglais. Je suppose que vous préféreriez intervenir en anglais, mais peut-être préféreriez le faire en français?

Mr. Steele (Robert B.): Oui. Je remercie la Commission pour la courtoisie avec laquelle elle a accueilli mon mémoire et pour me permettre de faire ma présentation en anglais.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Allez-y. Vous avez cinq minutes pour présenter votre mémoire, après quoi vous répondrez aux questions.

Mr. Robert B. Steele

Mr. Steele: Merci beaucoup, monsieur. Je n'ai pas d'allocation toute prête comme les autres. Je me contenterai de formuler quelques commentaires, qui sont plutôt de nature générale. Je tiens à m'excuser pour la longueur de mon mémoire. C'est comme si on explorait un nouveau pays. Et j'aurais facilement pu en écrire 500 pages de plus, mais je devais me limiter. Pour le bénéfice de l'auditoire, mon rapport s'intitule: "Designing a new constitution for Québec", la conception d'une nouvelle constitution pour le Québec.

Dans mon mémoire, je décris ma conception d'une nouvelle structure gouvernementale qui pourrait s'appliquer à pratiquement tout nouveau système politique. Elle ne repose donc sur aucune idéologie ni sur aucun parti politique. Je ne représente pas le point de vue fédéral ni le point de vue de la souveraineté. Il s'agit d'un concept qui pourrait s'appliquer fondamentalement à toute option future au Québec, à l'exception de celle du statu quo. C'est que, bien entendu, dans le statu quo, la constitution du Québec fait partie de la constitution canadienne. Elle figure aux articles 58 à 87 de l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord britannique de 1867. Ou plutôt, on l'appelle maintenant Loi constitutionnelle du Canada?

Par conséquent, ce que j'expose ne serait pas acceptable pour un statu quo; cependant, je crois qu'il y a quatre options politiques fondamentales pour l'avenir du Québec. Je peux les résumer brièvement: le statu quo, des pouvoirs accrus, comme ceux que l'Accord du lac Meech aurait conférés, la troisième serait la souveraineté-association et la quatrième, l'indépendance. Et la constitution que j'ai proposée ne serait pas acceptable avec l'option de statu quo, elle serait acceptable avec celle de pouvoirs accrus ainsi qu'avec celles de souveraineté-association et d'indépendance.

J'aimerais ajouter quelque chose à ce mémoire. Essentiellement, dans tout ce que je rapporte, vous pouvez remarquer à la page 10 que j'ai établi une structure. Ce ne serait qu'une partie de la constitution. J'aimerais emprunter la terminologie qui s'applique à la Loi constitutionnelle du Canada de 1982 concernant les annexes; s'il pouvait être classé de cette façon, le rapport serait l'annexe B, soit la structure de gouvernement. L'annexe A serait la déclaration d'indépendance du Québec et s'appliquerait à l'option indépendance. Les autres annexes sont: C, la Charte québécoise des droits et libertés, qui existe déjà; D, le partage des pouvoirs entre les gouvernements fédéral, provincial et municipal; E, la loi électorale et les élections en

général, et j'en ai fait mention dans la colonne "jour de scrutin" du rapport; F, le processus d'amendement de la constitution et tous les amendements; G, les articles de la Confédération portant sur les différentes nations autochtones.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Vous venez d'épuiser les cinq minutes à votre disposition. Puis-je avoir la conclusion?

Mr. Steele: Non. Je crois que c'est ma conclusion.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): D'accord. Nous commencerons alors la période de questions. Le premier intervenant est le représentant du parti gouvernemental, Mme Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: Me serait-il possible de parler français? Croyez-vous...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Certainement.

Mrs. Pelchat: Comme c'est un domaine très spécialisé, je crains de ne pouvoir employer les bons termes. Quoi qu'il en soit, corrigez-moi si je fais erreur. Tout d'abord, j'aimerais vous remercier d'avoir accepté de vous présenter ici. J'ai lu votre mémoire, même s'il est assez long comme vous le dites; voici ma première question: lorsque je lisais votre mémoire, je me demandais si vous croyiez que le problème auquel nous sommes confrontés à l'heure actuelle au Canada et au Québec découle du système politique comme système institutionnel au lieu de notre système fédéraliste, ou vous savez... Voilà ma première question.

Mr. Steele: Le problème, le véritable problème, c'est que la constitution fédérale est un joyeux mélange et c'est la confusion totale; on ne sait pas comment la modifier, et on ne s'entend pas sur les amendements à y apporter. C'est en fait l'impasse totale. Personne n'y peut rien. Bien sûr, M. Mulroney a récemment proposé que nous étudions le processus d'amendement, mais c'est sans espoir. Et, comme je l'ai dit dans mes remarques préliminaires, la constitution du Québec est contenue dans la constitution canadienne.

Mrs. Pelchat: Mais, M. Steele, ce que je veux savoir, je crois que le problème actuel n'est pas, certainement, vous avez raison, la formule d'amendement; la constitution, à l'heure actuelle, nous cause des problèmes. Mais je ne suis pas sûre que ce soit à cause du système parlementaire ou du système électoral. Je crois que nous avons plus de problèmes au Québec à voir notre place à l'heure actuelle, notre place dans le système fédératif. Ce n'est pas particulièrement le système parlementaire. Êtes-vous d'accord

avec moi?

Mr. Steele: Alors, ce qui vous intéresse davantage, ce n'est pas tant la mécanique que les apparences, je pense.

Mrs. Pelchat: Exactement.

Mr. Steele: Oui, c'est tout à fait vrai, parce que je crois que la rédaction d'une nouvelle constitution pour le Québec permettrait aux Québécois de se voir comme uniques au Canada, particulièrement si elle s'oriente vers un système républicain, comme je l'ai proposé. Ce serait en fait une amorce de révolution, une révolution tranquille, où les gens voient leur pays de façon tout à fait différente. Et c'est ce qui est si remarquable à propos de votre commission, c'est qu'elle est le seul espoir, à mon avis, qu'ont le Québec et le Canada de réaliser toute forme de changement politique, ou de changement constitutionnel.

(6:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Pelchat: Vu le manque de temps, je dois vous poser une seule autre question. Croyez-vous que votre proposition serait meilleure dans une fédération ou pour le Québec dans un système souverain...

Mr. Steele: Oui, la question se ramène à un système fédéral opposé à un système souverain. Comme je l'ai dit, il y a quatre options et je ne crois pas que la souveraineté-association serait très facile à réaliser, parce que vous n'obtiendriez pas la collaboration des autres provinces. Il serait probablement plus facile, en fait, de devenir indépendant. Et je préfère utiliser les mots "indépendant, indépendance absolue" parce que c'est clair.

(6:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Pelchat: Votre modèle sera-t-il... conviendra-t-il à l'indépendance?

Mr. Steele: Il conviendrait à n'importe laquelle des trois options que j'ai mentionnées, notamment les pouvoirs accrus, ou la souveraineté-association, ou l'indépendance absolue. Il conviendrait tout à fait à l'une ou l'autre des trois options.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Juneau.

Mrs. Juneau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As my English is so poor that you would have difficulty translating, you will allow me to ask questions in French.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The problem is between you and Mr. Steele, Madam, if there is any.

Mrs. Juneau: I hope that you will

understand. At any rate, I cannot do the translation.

Mr. Steele: I can speak French a little but for complex subjects, perhaps, we need a translator.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would suggest, Mrs. Juneau, that you ask your questions a little more slowly and Mr. Steele could answer you not too fast in English and we will get along fine.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Steele: Yes, OK. Thank you.

Mrs. Juneau: That is a very good arrangement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You say in your brief that participatory democracy mechanisms, such as referendums, must be established. That is, you recognize the relevance and the usefulness...

A voice: Yes.

Mrs. Juneau: ...of the referendum as a democratic tool. Do you recognize, at this time, the right of the Québec people to self-determination, notably by way of referendum?

Mr. Steele: Yes, absolutely. Je devrais peut-être poursuivre en anglais. Oui. La seule façon de pouvoir élargir cette constitution serait pour nous de tenir un référendum.

We must have a referendum to have the constitution. For independence, yes, absolutely, we need a referendum to have independence, in my opinion. The Canadian Constitution does not say anything concerning referendums.

Il n'y a rien dans la Loi constitutionnelle au sujet des référendums. Il en est question ailleurs.

Referendums are outside our constitution at present. But, in my opinion, the power of the people seems absolute.

Ils sont au-dessus de toute loi, ou juge, ou avocat, ou quoi que ce soit. C'est un processus absolu. Un processus tel que personne ne pourrait rejeter une décision référendaire.

Mrs. Juneau: At the present time, do you recognize that the people of Québec have a right to self-determination?

Mr. Steele: Yes, absolutely.

Mrs. Juneau: You recognize this?

Mr. Steele: Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Juneau: That will be all, Mr. Chairman. I thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. We go on to Mr. Libman. Vous avez le choix de la langue, M. Libman.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Il se fait tard, je deviens malicieux.

A voice: J'espère. J'espère.

Mr. Libman: Mr. Steele has suggested...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

A voice: That is a good one.

Mr. Steele: Je peux comprendre votre accent anglais, M. Libman.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Libman: D'accord. Vous recommandez dans votre mémoire une constitution pour le Québec, quel que soit le statut constitutionnel que choisira le Québec, que ce soit la souveraineté, un fédéralisme renouvelé, ou quoi que ce soit d'autre, comme aux États-Unis, où plusieurs États ont leur propre constitution à l'intérieur du cadre fédéral du pays. En fait, l'alle des jeunes de notre parti formulait cette même recommandation, et j'espère vraiment qu'ils se présenteront devant cette commission et recommanderont également une constitution pour le Québec, mais à l'intérieur du cadre fédéral. Leur position, c'est que la constitution du Québec doit être compatible avec la constitution canadienne et y être subordonnée. Alors, voici ma question: comment voyez-vous cette compatibilité?... Dans les domaines où il peut y avoir contradiction, existant côte à côte avec la constitution canadienne? Si, en fait, le Québec décide d'opter pour une constitution québécoise, mais dans le cadre de la fédération canadienne, comment voyez-vous cette dualité? Les domaines de conflit... Comment pouvez-vous voir les deux cas coexister?

Mr. Steele: Eh bien, comme je l'ai exposé dans cette structure, vous pouvez voir immédiatement que le Québec deviendrait une république et que cela ne serait pas compatible, à première vue, avec le système monarchique actuellement en place dans le système fédéral. Mais fondamentalement, la nouvelle constitution québécoise serait strictement interne et le seul problème qui surgirait serait celui du bureau du lieutenant-gouverneur, qui, selon moi, devrait être fusionné avec celui du premier ministre: le même bureau de chef d'État élu et chef du gouvernement, le président de l'État. Et c'est là réellement la seule contradiction qui existe avec la constitution actuelle en raison de l'article 41

a). Voilà pourquoi vous auriez à tenir un référendum pour outrepasser l'article 41 a).

Mr. Libman: Et que penser d'un recours judiciaire ultime? Serait-il sujet à la Cour suprême du Canada où y aurait-il une Cour suprême mise sur pied pour le Québec?

Mr. Steele: Je pourrais facilement envisager une Cour suprême pour le Québec, mais la possibilité de recourir à la Cour suprême du Canada dépendrait entièrement de l'option que choisirait le Québec, soit le statu quo, soit des pouvoirs accrus, etc.

Mr. Libman: Recommanderiez-vous l'élimination de tout lien avec la monarchie?

Mr. Steele: Absolument, complètement. Et il en serait de même pour les autres provinces du Canada et pour le gouvernement fédéral.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, this ends our afternoon sessions. I thank you, Mr. Steele, for this presentation. The session is now adjourned and we will resume at 7:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:07 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:33 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If the Commission members would please take their seats. We resume our work by welcoming the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke. If you will please introduce the group and then present the essential points of your brief in five minutes, please.

Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke

Mr. Anctil (Jacques): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I am pleased to introduce to you on my far right, Mrs. Louise Renaud, professor of law, on my right, Mr. Claude Charbonneau, professor of psychology, on my far left, Mr. Bernard Colin, professor of statistics and on my left, Mr. Jean Goulet, professor of computer science.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, on November 1, 1990, the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke delivered their preliminary brief to the secretary of the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. We thank the Commission for having agreed to hear us on the basis of the commitments made in this brief. We have undertaken, Mr. Chairman, Commission members, by means of a process by which we have attempted to place above any political partisanship, to reveal to the Commission the

particular vision of the university community of our region as to their future and to determine what should be the most appropriate structures for allowing universities to fully assume their roles in educating the citizens of tomorrow.

We wanted all our members to examine the role presently played by the federal government using the mechanisms of transfer payments to the provinces and the short and long term effects of its gradual withdrawal. We also wanted each of our members to ask himself or herself, as would any citizen who had the best interests of his group at heart, about certain areas of life in society, namely politics, the economy, and the cultural, social and religious spheres.

The results of developing our questionnaire do not unfortunately accord with all our desires and we have had to be more modest than planned in our efforts. We have nevertheless remained faithful to our desire for impartiality and we have concentrated our questions on aspects which, under the circumstances, seemed to us most likely to interest the Commission. In our preliminary brief, we remind the Commission that our objectives may perhaps not lead to an impressive consensus, nor to the establishment of a common denominator. As we wrote, this remains the task of the Commission. Through our procedure, we seek rather to assemble all essential data which could assist the Commission members to better understand what our group of professors demand from their provincial government and the support that our members can obtain for it in the present situation.

The Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke includes professors, both men and women, from very diverse disciplines. The committee responsible for developing the questionnaire decided to ask them about the financing of research, the economic domain and the social and cultural domains. The written consultation that was then conducted included several questions. These questions were preceded by a discussion of the problems affecting each area. The response of the professors to the questionnaire was quite spontaneous. Without any reminder, more than 65% of those contacted returned the questionnaire, duly completed.

Following analysis of the responses received from its members, the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke hopes that the Parliamentary Commission, when it begins writing the report which it will submit to the speaker of the National Assembly and which it will make public, will take into consideration the following: First, with respect to the social and cultural areas, the great majority of the members of the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke consider that for the future of Québec society, it is important that Québec exercise exclusive control over its policies with respect to immigration, communications, language, manpower and the environment. Second, with

respect to the economic domain, the great majority of the members of the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke consider that, for the economic development of Québec, most commercial, monetary and fiscal policies should be Québec's responsibility.

With respect to the financing of research, the great majority of the members of the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke consider that, in their fields of research, Québec is at a disadvantage in relation to certain other provinces in regard to the funding provided by federal organizations.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. We go first to a representative from the Official Opposition, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madam, Gentlemen, for having agreed to come and appear before the Commission. This is an interesting brief, the more so since you have taken great care and you have considered it useful to consult your members and to question them on a certain number of subjects. These are, obviously, the subjects that my questions will deal with. I hope to ask as many as possible. But I will do so very rapidly.

With respect to, for example, the financing of research, you come to the conclusion that Québec is at a disadvantage compared with the other provinces in the distribution of federal research funds. First, how do you explain such a situation? Do you have an explanation? First of all, is it real, because your members say that they believe, that is, they consider that this is true. But is it a real situation and how do you explain it?

Mr. Anctil: Mr. Charbonneau will reply to this question.

Mr. Charbonneau (Claude): You ask if it is real. The figures that have already been presented to you in other briefs - and that are in the public domain - reveal that, indeed, Québec universities are not obtaining their share of federal subsidies, of federal aid to research in certain areas, especially the areas of the natural sciences and engineering and of research contracts.

I think that, when the professors in our group, our members, consider that in their fields, they are not receiving their share, it is probable that most of those who give this reply are telling the truth and reporting on a real factual situation.

With respect to the explanation, it seems generally that several factors may be involved. Historically, research has taken longer to develop in certain sectors in Québec. Certain natural science and engineering research infrastructures are less developed in our

universities than in other Canadian universities; this hinders the obtaining of research contracts. It hinders the recruiting of young researchers, it hinders... It prevents us from attracting the best researchers on the market. I think that different reasons explain why subsidies are less... federal aid is less abundant in Québec universities.

Mr. Brassard: In your first two subjects, you have questions which attempt to ask your members whether a certain number of powers and jurisdictions should be repatriated or recovered, brought back to Québec: in cultural matters, for example, communications, language, manpower, environment. The same thing too for commercial, monetary and fiscal policies and, curiously, for research. You ask them if they consider themselves disadvantaged, but you do not ask them if this jurisdiction or this area should be managed exclusively by Québec. Why?

Mr. Charbonneau: We did ask them. We had one question that said: For the development of university research in Québec, do you believe it preferable that the financing of research remain a responsibility shared by the provincial and federal governments or do you believe it preferable for Québec to assume sole responsibility? Thus, the question has been asked, I think, in a quite clear fashion. The response is much less clear. Only 54% of the respondents consider that responsibility for the development of research in Québec should belong exclusively to Québec. There are several hypotheses which could explain this, if you ask me to explain it. I presume that you do?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: Yes. Indeed.

Mr. Charbonneau: So, if you ask me to explain it...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, then this is Mr. Brassard's last question.

Mr. Brassard: You are taking the words right out of my mouth, Mr. Charbonneau. Go ahead.

Mr. Charbonneau: Obviously, these hypotheses commit no one but myself. We can think that university professors, for some years, for almost ten years now, have been victims of budget cuts that have put them in sometimes difficult working situations. And it is probable, in my judgment, that a number fear that if research financing was solely Québec's responsibility, the total envelope of funds available for research could decrease and, therefore, financing for university research could be less abundant than now, from all

sources.

(7:45 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go on to Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My questions will be in line with those of the questioner who preceded me. I have arrived at the same result because when you say, in certain places, that this has been a very large majority in research, you simply came to a majority. And I count 63% and you have just told us 54%. And the question is the following: what have been the changes in research, if there have been any, coming from the federal government, shall we say, over the past 10 years? Do you have these figures?

Mr. Charbonneau: I think that the Conférence des recteurs et principaux des universités du Québec has submitted a brief in which these figures are given. I could actually search in my files and find them. Roughly speaking, I think that in certain areas, particularly in biomedical sciences and in social sciences or the humanities, Québec's share has been growing over the past years, whereas it has levelled off in the area of the natural sciences and engineering, with respect to grants from NSERC. In the area of research contracts, I think that financing has been decreasing and that Québec's share has been reduced almost by half in recent years.

Mr. Poissant: How does this compare with other universities outside of Québec, let's say? Has the contribution also been decreasing elsewhere?

Mr. Charbonneau: While our share of research contracts, it seems, fell from 20% to 10%, Ontario's share rose from 40% to 47%, or something like that. I am giving you these figures from memory.

Mr. Poissant: I think that I agree with you. So, there is a rather large gap at this level. What was your own reaction, you people in the university, especially speaking of research, when the Institut Pasteur decided to do its research entirely in English, while we, in our culture here, would wish to defend the French fact in North America, and when an institute as important as the Pasteur decides to do its research entirely in English?

Mr. Anctil: Mr. Chairman, in reply to Mr. Poissant's question, I want to make it very clear that we are here not as the executive of the Syndicat des professeurs, nor as the Syndicat council or an organization of the board. We are here to provide testimony on consultation which we have carried out among our members on very

specific points. I could ask my colleague, a specialist in statistics, whether the consultation that we have conducted allows us to reply to this question.

Mr. Poissant: You did not ask your members this question?

Mr. Anctil: No, we definitively did not ask our members this question. I notice, looking at the briefs that people have in their hands, that some do not seem to have the little red label here, which is the final brief. You have it, so that is fine. You see there that this question was definitively not included.

Mr. Poissant: No, but that is because...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...The other ones with the red labels, you could send them to the secretary and the chairman, this could possibly be useful to us.

Mr. Anctil: But, Mr. Chairman, I remember, we did it on time.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I don't doubt it, but the copy I have does not have a label.

Mr. Anctil: We sent 100 copies...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I withdraw what I said. My colleague Mr. Campeau has one with a red label. There's no problem.

Mr. Anctil: Thank you.

Mr. Poissant: Just one small detail, I was wondering if there were not even another one with another label because mine says 63%, you said 65% just now. We all have the right to change and grow, obviously.

Mr. Anctil: There are always professors who reply after the compilation period.

Mr. Poissant: There is one word that attracted my attention in your brief. Yours is the only one of the briefs that mentions it. Obviously, you do not speak... to reply to the questions, but you speak in certain areas – and this, this pleased me to a certain point – the area of life in society, namely politics, the economy, and the cultural, the social and – I underlined it in red three times – the religious sphere. We have not heard much about moral values here in the briefs. Much about culture, much about the economy, but the rest is not very important. With the new constitution, they should probably all be dealt with but the rest does not count. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I understood that you had had your answer. We now go on to Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You say in your brief that you wanted to place yourselves above any political partisanship and I think that this does you honour, it is very fine, but you do not take a position, obviously, on one side or the other. Is this because you consider that taking a position for one option is to be partisan, politically speaking, to begin? Second, in your questions, you have tiptoed around. So much that we wonder why you didn't clearly ask the question: Are you for or against sovereignty, as a lot of other groups have done? These are my first two questions and I will have a third if we have time.

Mr. Ancil: I think, Mr. Turgeon, that each of us at the table could reply to this question. We studied it and it was on purpose that we did not ask it. And we hope to convince you that we were right not to ask it. We each have an explanation. Perhaps first, Mrs. Renaud, who worked on the questionnaire, could explain. I reserve the right myself to reply too, if the Chair still has time, but we should perhaps also leave Mr. Colin a chance to draw conclusions.

Mr. Turgeon: ...

Mrs. Renaud (Louise L.): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. I would like to take advantage of the opportunity given me to perhaps offer you the particular vision of the professors with respect to these objectives and the method that we used to conduct this consultation. I repeat consultation. We did not want to conduct a survey; it was indeed a neutral and objective consultation. We met, all the members of the committee, to decide on a formula, a vision that seemed to us best under the circumstances, considering the amount of time available to us. Just a few weeks. Two to three weeks and finally, I think that a metaphor could perhaps make it easier to understand quickly, not to take too much time, what we had in mind when we organized this consultation.

If we look at the political and constitutional future of Québec as being a long and important trip, we have to decide about two possibilities: the destination, and also a means of transport. The destination, I think that you have found it in the results. And it is just this qualification of the result that leads me to tell you that it is indeed a destination. This evokes big, beautiful dreams. It evokes a potential of ideas rather easy to imagine. But when it is the means of transport, it is exactly the opposite that takes place before our eyes and we have given it a great deal of thought. All the members of the committee have reflected on the

possibility of asking our members about a much more complex means of transport that involves a very different mechanism, mental structure, and body of thought. And to the extent that we understand that it is very complex to choose this means of transport, because it evokes the fears that we may have, the frustrations, the needs... Finally, if you will allow me to continue with my metaphor, I can mention to you, for example, an ocean liner...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But you will have to get somewhere because we're going to use up all of Mr. Turgeon's time.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Renaud: Yes, I am simply telling you that there are many more considerations in the mechanism of the choice of the means of transport. And I think that once we obtain the destination, it is more important to set the destination before even speaking of means of transport. I think at that point there is another step to take, and we will have to get there some day. But we have opted, within the short time allowed to us, to really check whether we all wanted to go to the same place.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'll go on to another order of questions, since time is up. But the next questions may allow you to give the answers you would have been able to give to the previous ones, we never know.

Mr. Turgeon: As an observation, Mr. Chairman, I could spend my whole life wanting to go to Paris, but if I never want to consider the question of whether I'll take a plane or a boat, I'll stay in the same place. I won't move.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): And if you choose the boat, you have a chance of not going very often.

Mrs. Renaud: But this does not prevent... the... Mr. Turgeon.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, this said, we go on to Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to heartily congratulate you on the quality of this short brief. You have positioned it very well, it seems to me, and you have decided to stay within your parameters. I find this extremely satisfactory. Without opening a debate, just to reuse the brief of my colleague the psychologist, in 1988-1989, Québec \$713 million, and Ontario, setting aside, naturally, the National Capital, \$787 million, but I do not want to get into this. What is important in my eyes is the comment that the provinces that are more

developed with respect to research receive a larger share. And I think that in this phrase you want to tell us that Québec is on the rise with respect to research development and it is one of the provinces that receive what they should receive.

But I would like, Mr. Chairman, to ask a question of another order. The effort that Québec has undertaken throws light on certain psychological factors, both individual and in group dynamics – and we have not looked at this often, to date, and this is perhaps an ideal opportunity – which are advantages and disadvantages as to the positions that Quebecers should take. Would you agree to comment on this question?

Mr. Charbonneau: You are speaking of group dynamics.

Mr. Hogue: Yes, both individual and group, in this process towards more autonomy, more control, more recognition, more pride, etc. There are surely advantages, there are surely disadvantages and it could be useful to hear some comments on your part.

Mr. Charbonneau: Well look, we could go on for a long time on that, between psychologists...

Mr. Hogue: Yes.

Mr. Charbonneau: ...I am sure.

Mr. Hogue: No, no. Don't... only a few comments.

Mr. Charbonneau: One comment. We are in a society that is individualistic and it is sure that control and autonomy are very important values. So, for me, it is clear that any action that consists in pursuing greater autonomy, greater control is self-actualizing in our society.

Mr. Hogue: So there, you are talking about advantage, development and self-actualization and...

Mr. Charbonneau: Yes, you are the one who is talking about it.

Mr. Hogue: ...are there at the same time, because there is always another side to the coin, are there at the same time some disadvantages?

Mr. Anctil: Mr. Hogue, would you have any objection if, to come back to our questionnaire, we gave the floor to Mr. Colin who could perhaps throw some light on this and further attain the end we proposed?

Mr. Hogue: Of course not.

Mr. Anctil: Thank you.

Mr. Colin (Bernard): Mr. Chairman, Commission members. In a few words, I am going to indicate the results of the analysis of this consultation. We used well-tested statistical methods and I will of course skip over the technical details to get to the essential. As the questionnaire shows, we had considered three areas that affected us particularly as university professors, that is, the financing of research, the economic area and the sociocultural area.

In the light of the results, we can point out one thing, that is, for Université de Sherbrooke professors in general, there are essentially two preponderant areas, that is, the financing of research and the sociocultural area. And perhaps this can provide part of a response to Mr. Hogue, by saying that Université de Sherbrooke professors are far from being strangers to group dynamics, because if we can imagine that the area of research is something essentially individual, with respect to sociocultural variables, it should be noted, and our analysis shows, that professors, for example, who favour a repatriation of research financing to Québec, also favour a repatriation of responsibilities with respect to manpower, communications, immigration, language and the environment. So, I think that what is fundamental and what is very interesting in this study is to show this link and the close association that professors make between the area of research and the area of sociocultural variables. They do not, however, ignore the economic domain but I would say that, and once again the analysis shows this, among economic variables, essentially there are two groups.

There are variables which I would qualify as individual, that is, if you have the questionnaire before you, the variables related to fighting inflation, supporting the Canadian dollar, which are individual variables in the sense that they affect more specifically the wallets of these members of our community; and then you have the variables that are distinguished from the above, free trade and the GST, which are seen as, quote, more social variables, that is those whose short and medium term effects are probably less easily "apprehendable". So, essentially, I hope that I have been sufficiently clear on the subject and if you desire details, I will be pleased to reply.

(8:00 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Then we now go on to the representative from the Government party, Mr. Hamel.

Mr. Hamel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You will understand, Mr. Chairman, that as the member for Sherbrooke, it is with great pleasure that I have noted that your Commission, that you are co-chairing, that the Commission, I say,

is holding its hearings here. So, since Sherbrooke is the capital of Estrie, we are all very proud. This being said, I am also very happy that a second group from the Université de Sherbrooke can appear this evening. This afternoon, we heard a group of graduate students and this evening, we welcome the Syndicat des professeurs. I think that your contribution to our work exemplifies the university character of our region. And I also congratulate you for the idea of holding such broad consultation among all your members.

Now, you were saying just now, Mr. Ancil... Well, you provided testimony, but I would like also to have a little opinion, here, if you will allow me. I dwell more on the conclusion, or the result of your consultation, on page 9, which concerns the economic domain. And perhaps to attempt to define a little what the idea of independence can represent, in a world very different today from what it was 100 or 200 years ago, I would like to read to you an excerpt from the brief of the Association des économistes québécois, who said this – and then I would like to have your opinion on it – so I quote, dear friends, "It is clear that the modern State disposes only of shared power. On the day after the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, the development of a North American economic space, the role of external trade, the weight of the multinational corporations, the importance of capital flows are all factors that limit not only fiscal and monetary policies, but also the framework of regulation and industrial and commercial policies." Are you in agreement with this opinion from the Association des économistes?

Mr. Ancil: Mr. Hamel, before replying to your question, I would like to take a few minutes to reply a little in debits or credits. This depends on where we stand in relation to accounting...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go on as if you were replying to Mr. Hamel, and say what you have to say. This will require a linking sentence. But do not forget the answer to his question, however.

Mr. Ancil: Absolutely. Mr. Hamel, you have worked at the Université de Sherbrooke, we were happy to have you as a colleague, and Université de Sherbrooke professors are specialists. Each is a specialist in his domain. The Commission will hear them as individuals; the Commission has even heard some as chairmen of organizations throughout the province. When we decided to consult our members, we had the choice between either sticking our necks out and producing a 500-page brief – you know how it is with specialists – or arriving at something essential, arriving at something, at a consensus.

On this, I do not want to suggest anything to the Commission, but there is one thing certain: if we want to arrive at a consensus on anything, compromise is necessary. Certain matters must be targeted and clarified. And the objective that we pursued – and I admit to you that as president of the Syndicat des professeurs I was very proud of the very considerable participation of my members – and at that point, if we were able to attain this result, it is because we made choices. It is because we wanted to target certain questions. The question you are asking me, and I answer: It is absolutely obvious that, among my members, I will find some who will be in agreement, and I will also find others who will not be in agreement, because there is a department of economics at the Université de Sherbrooke. And I think that you will agree with me that this is a question on which opinion can be divided.

Mr. Hamel: All right. That is a university answer.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This comes from a colleague. So, we can let you appreciate it.

Mr. Hamel: The question also lent itself, I admit.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It remains for me to thank the...

Mr. Hamel: Ah! It is already over!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well!

Mr. Hamel: Ah! Well, there.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ah! Well, you have a...

Mr. Hamel: Ah! No, very well. All right.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): A little one. It is still early.

Mr. Hamel: No, no. All right. Well, what do you think of the idea of a continental political association for Québec?

Mr. Ancil: ...on behalf of the professors and I have no mandate to reply to this question.

Mr. Hamel: So, you do not want to take a stand personally, if I understand.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, I thank you, the representatives... not representatives, because you have said that you do not

represent, but anyway, those who, as members of the Syndicat des professeurs de l'Université de Sherbrooke, had the great idea of conducting a survey and of communicating the results to us. Thank you. Thank you for your presentation. Thank you, Mrs. Renaud, Mr. Goulet, Mr. Charbonneau, Mr. Colin and you, Mr. Ancil.

I would ask you now, before you are bombarded with congratulations, to free the table so that the next group may replace you.

We now welcome the Students' Representative Council of Bishop's University. Mr. Barbeau will introduce the group, then you will have five minutes to present the essential points of your brief. Mr. Barbeau.

Students' Representative Council of Bishop's University

Mr. Barbeau (Pierre): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Commission for being so kind as to hear the Students' Representative Council of Bishop's University this evening. I am also happy to be accompanied by Mrs. Elaine Paquin, Mr. Patrick Lacroix, Mrs. Meredith Cudney, and Mr. Vincent de Grandpré. I would also like to emphasize that it's the first experience with a parliamentary commission for all of us.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We all have something in common. It's our first experience too.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Barbeau: The points of particular interest that we are going to present to you this evening concern education. Bishop's University was founded in 1843. Since its founding, the university has maintained the vocation of offering a liberal education. It's a small university with a very diverse student population. We have students from all across Canada and from 25 different countries.

Nous aimerions nous adresser à vous, ce soir, en français et en anglais, dans un effort particulier pour représenter les étudiants de l'Université Bishop. S'il y a des membres de la Commission qui sont intéressés, je dispose d'une version anglaise de notre mémoire. So without any delay, we will present the following recommendations.

Mrs. Paquin (Élaine): This is our first recommendation: that Québec encourage an atmosphere that welcomes students and professors from all the Canadian provinces and from elsewhere in the world, as well as students from Québec who want to do their undergraduate university studies in English in Québec. We believe that, if Québec is to offer the best possible education to its students, that is, if it

wishes to continue to produce businesspeople, scientists and artists who are well informed about international, national and provincial affairs, Québec should increase the interaction or at least preserve the contact that students have with the outside world. These links are of incalculable value both for the students and for Québec.

Mr. de Grandpré (Vincent): J'ai quitté la résidence, l'an dernier, et je me suis installé à Lennoxville. Ce qu'il y a d'intéressant, c'est que sur les quatre personnes avec qui j'ai vécu, l'une vient de Colombie-Britannique, une autre de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et une autre du Connecticut. À Bishop, nous croyons que l'ouverture d'esprit est extrêmement précieuse et c'est ce que nous voulons favoriser. Cette qualité d'éducation, nous voulons la rendre accessible. Nous voulons la rendre accessible à des gens comme moi, qui viennent du Québec et qui peuvent communiquer avec ces gens pour apprendre l'anglais ou tout simplement pour s'instruire, mais aussi à ceux à l'extérieur du Canada, à l'extérieur de la province, à ceux de partout dans le monde.

Nous aimerions parler des frais de scolarité, naturellement. En voici un exemple. Un étudiant se présente à moi, il vient de l'Ontario et il me dit: la Commission peut-elle recommander que je paie des frais internationaux parce que je fréquente votre école? Nous lui avons dit: non, ce n'est pas ce que nous voulons, nous voulons garder l'instruction aussi libérale et aussi ouverte que possible. Nous parlons également des équivalences entre les programmes. Nous voulons nous assurer que, même au niveau étudiant, nous pouvons aller étudier ailleurs et que les gens peuvent venir dans cette province et y rester. Nous voulons être certains, également, que nous pouvons garder tous ces enseignants, à Bishop, qui viennent en fait de toutes les parties du Canada, et même d'Europe et des États-Unis.

Mr. Chairman, that's the reason we say that education at the university level in Québec should maintain its accessibility and its high quality. What we mean by accessibility is both the financial factor and having the same standards as other Canadian universities, and even universities elsewhere in North America and worldwide.

Mr. Lacroix (Patrick): The third recommendation reads as follows: That whatever the recommendations made by this Commission, the population in general be clearly informed about the options offered Québec and about the costs and benefits associated with these options. This is to prevent an atmosphere of insecurity from arising. In this recommendation, we ask for the assurance that all the options will be clearly defined and explained, thereby showing the population the costs and benefits of each

option. By explaining these options, the actors from the government scene will clarify the various choices offered the people of Québec.

Mrs. Cudney (Meredith): To conclude, the Québec educational experience demonstrated by the students of Bishop's University is truly unique. We hope that the Québec of tomorrow will promote and encourage students from all over Canada to continue their education in this province. Cette diversité et cette expérience positive d'apprentissage que nous partageons sont la clé du succès de nos études libérales dans le domaine artistique. Nous voulons voir cette ouverture se développer et connaître du succès au Québec. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now go on to questions from members of the Commission: Mr. Dufour, who will be followed by Mr. Nicolet and Mr. Duceppe. Mr. Dufour. (8:15 p.m.)

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank the Bishop's students for their brief. I would like to point out that it's somewhat different from what we heard this afternoon with your colleagues from another university. They were perhaps somewhat more optimistic than you are. But I must say that I have probably been won over more by your brief. I have two questions. They aren't questions. I would like you to comment further on two excerpts from your brief. You're concerned as much about the professors as about the students, which does you honour. On page 3, you say that major political changes in Québec could lead to the development of unfavourable living conditions for Anglophone professors. Among them are some of the best qualified professors in Canada. The possibility that they would gradually be eliminated from the ranks of the teaching profession in Québec would have a very negative effect on the quality of education offered students in the province. I would like to hear it in your words.

Mr. de Grandpré: I would first like to say that we aren't here to speak on behalf of the professors of Bishop's University. But one of the best things about Bishop's is that there is fairly intensive contact with the professors. So it's something we are sensitive to, a professor joining the university or leaving it. We have small classes, the professors live in Lennoxville, we know them very well, we see them outside of classes.

Unfavourable living conditions, let's just say that the term may in fact be somewhat strong, but I can tell you that... For example, I had an economics professor last year who did his studies in Canada but who unfortunately was Irish. In light of the oversupply of professors, and everything, this is someone who was looking

for a job here, in the province, in Canada. And evidently, because of administrative measures, he was told, listen, if we can't find someone equivalent here, fine, you're welcome to teach here. But under other circumstances, other inquiries will be made beforehand. It's the sort of question that worries us a bit. We want to keep the kind of multicultural aspect that Bishop's has, and we are concerned that administrative measures, for instance related to immigration, might prevent...

Mr. Dufour: But you're afraid they will leave. You say "gradually eliminate".

Mr. de Grandpré: More that they would leave than that they would be eliminated. What was perhaps meant by that was that we are clearly faced with people... Bishop's University is an institution, it has been said, that goes beyond the borders of the province of Québec. People need to be informed and in particular there is a need to create a favourable atmosphere. We still need to show that we are open and welcoming, and political changes shouldn't give the impression that we have become less so. That is our message.

Mr. Dufour: OK. Now, I would like to bring you back to your own ground, it's easier. On page 8, you have a reference to students, as follows. Students from outside Québec who want to pursue their studies in our universities make an important contribution to the province. Keeping students from other provinces away by making major political and constitutional changes would not be in Québec's best interest. You believe that constitutional changes could keep students from other provinces away?

Mr. Barbeau: If I might answer your question... First, I would just like to say that we sent two versions of our brief and I think you have the original one, the preliminary one, if you will. I just realized it, excuse me.

Mr. Dufour: I'm sorry, it's marked "final version".

Mr. de Grandpré: We sent you a brief...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Just to clarify, I think there were two final versions, because mine is marked "final version" and stamped "definitive" underneath, so that's probably the source of the problem.

Mr. Dufour: Let's say, at the time you wrote this one, what were you thinking of?

Mr. Barbeau: The point I'm trying to make, whether it's the first or second brief, is that in the translation of the first brief we had some

problems, and the points from the first brief that you have quoted twice come out sounding somewhat more serious than was our intention. What we believe is that it's important, in particular for a university like Bishop's, that students, whether from the province of Québec and the rest of Canada, or from outside the country as it exists at present, be given the chance to come and study at an institution like Bishop's University. We think that certain changes, as Mr. de Grandpré previously stressed, that perhaps some changes, not drastic ones, but serious ones – not serious either – but anyway, certain political changes could create a situation where students from outside...

Mr. Dufour: Mr. Chairman, I conclude by saying...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You won't conclude; time is already up and I would like to get through three more people, if possible, fairly quickly. Mr. Nicolet, Mr. Duceppe, and Mr. Larose.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following the example of my colleague, Mr. Dufour, I would like to refer to your text and ask you to elaborate on two quotations that I'm going to read you. On page 2, right at the beginning, you say: "On behalf of the students of Bishop's University, we believe that education should be added to the list of objectives of the Commission, since it is a subject of vital importance." Do you see therein the connotation of a blueprint for society, or is it more that you think there is a blueprint for society that needs to be elaborated and developed? That is the first question. The second, and I am referring to page 4 of your text, second paragraph, which reads: "In addition, it is likely that a problem will arise regarding equivalency between Québec universities and universities in other provinces." I would like to ask you to explain why you come to that conclusion, when in fact someone just now made a reference to the Conférence des recteurs des universités du Québec, who came here and told us that in general, very broadly speaking, Québec universities had established direct relations with equivalent institutions, both Canadian and American, and that university relations were completely apolitical.

Mr. Barbeau: To answer the first question, you're asking me whether it's a blueprint for society, if it should be a blueprint for society that Québec should undertake, if I understand correctly, or if you wish...

Mr. Nicolet: Essentially, there are two areas of concern I think this Commission has. The first, of course, directly involves the constitutional future of Québec and at that

point, I could ask you whether you're talking about education in a possible future constitutional framework for the province of Québec, or is it more that you're addressing the broader concept of a vision of a future Québec that we should build together?

Mr. Barbeau: I believe that our argument is based on our university, on the situation in which it exists. As students of Bishop's University, we find that what we experience every day in meeting students from different sectors and cultures is extremely valuable to us. If you asked me whether that should be a vision for Québec as such, I would return to the point that was spoken of just now, that certainly Québec ought to offer, or if you will, maintain a certain open atmosphere that will encourage cultural exchange between Québec and the rest of the world.

Mr. de Grandpré: Since the question of equivalency has come up, I can say that no, it isn't so. I mean this is not pure speculation, because I can tell you that there are, from experience, because I tried to have credits transferred... There are a thousand and one administrative dodges to prevent transfer of credits to make it less attractive for someone from elsewhere to come here or for someone from here to go elsewhere. And if we haven't closely examined the specific rules that exist, it's because they often aren't written down. It's necessary to find the exact courses that correspond from one university to another. It's more purely from the administrative point of view than from the point of view on paper. I think there is still a lot of work to be done on that side.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Duceppe.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Chairman, basically two questions. I was vice-president of the Union générale des étudiants du Québec in 1967, and I negotiated course equivalents for Québec, and I completely fail to understand in what way a change of constitutional status in Québec could lead to problems with recognition of credits by other universities, whether in the United States, Canada, or Europe. And I would really like to explain this to you. And the other point: you state that development... that major political changes in Québec could lead to unfavourable living conditions for Anglophone professors. And that I would like to have you explain to me. It seems to me to be a pretty serious statement, and I imagine that you're capable of supporting this type of statement with reasons, with proof. So I'd like to hear them.

Mr. de Grandpré: I can address the question

of course equivalents, certainly. Within the province, obviously...

Mr. Duceppe: ...address the question...

Mr. de Grandpré: Excuse me?

Mr. Duceppe: What did you say you could do?

Mr. de Grandpré: Address the question of equivalency.

Mr. Duceppe: ...you answer the question.

Mr. de Grandpré: Answer the question, excuse me, Sir.

Mr. Duceppe: Thank you.

Mr. de Grandpré: Regarding the question of equivalency, as I said, it's basically to have certain... I have talked to people about the question. They are essentially administrative procedures, because it's necessary to find courses that work from one province to another. I think that studying the technical question isn't in accordance with the general spirit of our brief, which is trying to talk about an open atmosphere. As for unfavourable practices, I think that the best thing we have to say is what led to the third recommendation in our brief. We are in contact with people from everywhere, from all over Canada, who need to be informed, who need to know what Québec wants, and at what price, and up to what point. For them, such insecurity isn't a good thing.

It isn't good, and we feel that in the context of the liberal education we offer, we're talking about it because the goal of Bishop's is to provide... to put people in contact with students from all over.

Mr. Duceppe: Yes, but you're not answering the question; you assert that unfavourable conditions would develop. And to the first question on equivalency, you say that these are administrative problems. And I agree. But you still say that a change in constitutional status would cause these problems to become practically insoluble.

Mr. de Grandpré: We certainly don't want such problems to arise.

Mr. Duceppe: But you're saying that they are already arising.

Mr. de Grandpré: In some cases, no. In some cases where it's already coming up, we are afraid that problems could arise. And we just want to say that when a commission like this one is to make its recommendations, and we ask

them to take this mobility of students into account, we think it's very, very beneficial for the province, as well as for us.

Mr. Lacroix: Once again, I am not sure whether you have the first brief that was sent out, or the definitive version, because like us, it reads, we say: "Major political changes in Québec could lead to the development of unfavourable living conditions for Anglophone professors." That's it, that's our...

Mr. Duceppe: That's what I have.

Mr. Lacroix: OK. But, like us, you're speaking... It can be looked at in two ways, sort of: are they going to get out, or an opening up? Like us, if Québec is badly viewed internationally, we are still just speculating about that, but...

Mr. Duceppe: You assert that. You assert it.

Mr. Lacroix: It could... It could lead to it. Is that an assertion?

Mr. Duceppe: Of course it is. It's a hypothesis, that goes without saying.

A voice: ...a hypothesis.

Mr. Lacroix: A hypothesis. A number of scenarios can result...

Mr. Duceppe: Can you explain this hypothesis to me?

Mr. Barbeau: If I could... I think I would like to address the question.

A voice: Answer the question.

Mr. Barbeau: I am sure... Answer the question... I am sure there are many people who are aware that at present, Canada is having a lot of trouble keeping the majority. Or else, how should I put it, there are many Anglophone professors in the country, in the province too, who have a tendency to go and teach in other countries, under different conditions. And we, being students in an English university, it's important for us to know that our professors, who obviously are teaching us in English, will be and will stay in the province of Québec. And all we mean is that we hope that the Commission will take into account, when it makes its recommendations... And that the situation, if you like, will be maintained so that these professors will feel at ease, if you like, educating students like us at Bishop's University.
(8:30 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's obvious that the presence on Québec soil of three major institutions, McGill, Concordia, and Bishop's, is a very important asset for our Francophone society in North America. It's clear that as a society, we invest a great deal in those institutions. On an average, it amounts to \$10 000 per student. The students from outside who come and benefit from these facilities, I think that it's a natural contribution as an adult society. We must acquiesce to it, just as we expect a similar service to be granted us by other provinces and other countries... Conversely, we must realize that the Anglophones in the country have more chance to come to Québec and study in their own language than Francophones have to go outside this province and study in their own language. So I think that when you propose that in a sovereign Québec - you don't use the term, but let's say that we are going to discuss the question using only this hypothesis, which has been in the air for quite a while now - we should maintain the fees, which are, by the way, the lowest in Canada, it seems to me that we should expect at the very least to be able to negotiate reciprocal agreements. That is, it's completely thinkable that Ontarians who want to come to our universities could pay the same fees as Québec residents' fees, and our Francophones going to Ontario, although proportionally fewer, could pay residents' fees too, but under some pretext that escapes me, it could be agreed not to treat each other on an equal basis. So that's what I want you to explain to me.

Mr. Barbeau: Mr. Larose, you're looking at the fact that the province of Québec has three Anglophone institutions within its territory. I completely agree with you. It's an advantage for the province in general as well as for students who, if you will, want to study in English. What advantage is there to studying in English? It's near my home, and then too, it's an advantage for the province of Québec to have students from outside coming to study in Québec, because those students, for the time they are studying here, which is about three or four years, you state that the government pays \$10 000 per student...

Mr. Larose: Between \$9 000 and \$10 000 per year per university student...

Mr. Barbeau: ...to...

Mr. Larose: ...so someone who does a bachelor's degree, that's \$30 000, someone who does a doctorate, you can figure that it's up to \$65 000.

Mr. Barbeau: That's right.

Mr. de Grandpré: Mr. Larose? If I could answer your question. It's a question I asked the vice-rector, administration, at Bishop's, about what were... whether there were agreements, at this point, between students in each of the provinces... and it seems that at this point, the agreements are simply agreements between ministries. He seemed to be saying that first, they are transfers of funds for higher education. It's extremely complicated in Canada. It's a subject we don't want to get into, but still, for the moment, it's completely reciprocal, I think even according to CREPUQ's statistics, it's completely above board. As for knowing whether there would be any means of negotiating reciprocal agreements, again, I wouldn't want to speak on behalf of the representatives of our administration, but as for us, what we want is to allow this mobility of students. That's all.

Mr. Barbeau: May I add one last thing to that, Mr. Larose? What I was telling you just now was that at Bishop's University, which is one of the universities that receives the least money from the Québec government, we estimate about \$6 000 per full-time student equivalent. And if I take an article that appeared in the *Tribune* - I think it was in September - it's estimated that a student from outside contributes about \$10 000 per year to the economy, during the time he is studying. So in other words, it's advantageous...

Mr. Larose: Yes.

Mr. Barbeau: ...during their studies. And in the long term, so to speak, if I want to use the term "relations", "P.R.", if you like, a university like Bishop's brings in people from outside, who come to Québec, who come to understand Québec after three or four years, who have had the experience of living in Québec, who have made friends and acquaintances in the province of Québec, and they go home, and that can only work to the advantage of the university and also of the province in general.

Mr. Larose: ...I just want to stress that I would not want an impression to be created that students who come and study here from outside come as a gesture of charity...

Mr. Barbeau: No.

Mr. Larose: ...they come here to receive some benefit and we contribute to that benefit. All I am saying is that I would like reciprocity to exist, and in mature countries which respect each other, there must certainly be a means of having an agreement that ensures that there isn't a fence around each country. Instead there is free circulation.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to a representative of the Government party, Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Barbeau and your team, thank you for being here this evening. We have been together for five weeks now, all of us on the Commission, and I liked your brief very much. I liked it because it showed extraordinary openmindedness. You represent an institution, you're proud of it, you have come here to tell us that this institution was founded in 1843, that your students come from 20 different countries, that your professors come from 25 different countries. It's an openness that Québec will have, and to look at you, we have it already.

You also tell us that the education that you receive in that institution is a liberal education – you can understand that we like to hear that, on this side of the table – based on human development, and that too is very good, and I am going to read you a passage along the same lines as what you said. We received this brief this morning. This morning, we were given the brief by your rector, which he will not be able to present. I will take the liberty of quoting a passage from it along the same lines as what you have been saying: "The university asks the Commission to declare itself unequivocally in favour of a society that will remain open to both people and ideas not only from our continent but from the whole world."

It does us good to hear messages like these, when Québec stands at a crossroads, when we realize that we will never be an island, that we will never be alone, and that there will be people throughout the world watching us, judging us, and even wanting to help us.

I'm going to ask my first question. In your conclusions, you recommend, in your third conclusion, that whatever this Commission does, the population in general must be clearly informed, etc., about what will be done in Québec. To you, just what does "clearly informed" mean? It means that if we were to have a referendum, it would have to take many years. It means that advertising would have to be bought to explain the different options. What does "clearly informed" mean for students at Bishop's?

Mr. Lacroix: No, what we want, in accordance with what has been said to date in our brief, is for it to be open and for everyone to have a chance to find out on what... We aren't taking a stand on whether it should be by referendum or whether it should be... We can't speculate on it. It will be our leaders in the government who will decide that, and the Commission is going to present a resolution that will give that kind of help to our government leaders, but we want to be sure that the two sides, or the multitude of options that are going

to be debated, I imagine, in the future, concerning the future of Québec – because there aren't just two, when all is said and done, there are a number – we want to be sure that people are deciding about something they know about, and moreover, if people know what they are talking about, they will be much more involved, not in the governmental process, but in their future and the place they are going to have in the various solutions that the government contributes.

Mr. Benoit: The students from these 25 countries, what do they say when you tell them that Québec, which is the country with the 11th highest standard of living in the world, could decide to become autonomous, could become sovereign, independent? What do these people from these 25 countries say? Are they glad, do they anticipate problems? What is the reaction of these people from outside our province?

Mr. Barbeau: As can obviously be seen in the brief presented to the Commission, a number of people made a point of it just now; there clearly is concern, worry, if you will. And all that, if you perhaps want to go back to the point Mr. Lacroix mentioned just now, it's that if you want students to come from inside or outside the country, we want to know exactly what will happen, to define the terms exactly, in other words, honestly, what can be expected afterwards? I think this feeling is shared by most students at Bishop's University who come to study in Québec, and I would like to mention this point in passing, that they come to study in Québec of their own free will. No one tells them to come here. Those students obviously made the choice, consciously made the choice to come here to the province, and the same thing applies to students from the province who decide to study in Anglophone institutions. And I also think that all that put together can only be to the advantage of the province of Québec in the long term.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we will go on to a representative of the Official Opposition, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. I should tell you at the start that it's not my way to be condescending; I've always felt that it was a form of looking down on young people. Your brief was unfortunately not very rigorous. It's more emotional, based more on perceptions than on sound information. I must say I find that unfortunate. You take as your point of departure a questionnaire that was distributed among your colleagues, and you draw a certain number of conclusions that lead you to believe that information doesn't circulate very well in your

surroundings. There are certain things that must be said because you can't just allow some things to make the rounds without correcting the information.

I should also tell you that you will probably have a chance to exchange views with many young Quebecers at a forum that is supposed to be organized by the Commission and that in the ordinary course of events will be held next January 21 and 22. That will perhaps allow you to temper your assertions somewhat.

I'll take a few of them. You say you're afraid of the effects that constitutional changes may have on the quality of education, its cost, and access to education. First, the quality of education. You say in your brief that education is under the jurisdiction of Québec, that is, under provincial jurisdiction, and you're happy with the quality of your education. I see no reason why that would change. Second, the cost of education. Policies regarding transfer payments, which is what financing of programs by Ottawa is called... During the past ten years, Ottawa cut transfer payments for higher education by \$2 billion. Québec took on this burden and obviously there was an increase in the cost of education.

But as for access to education, I share your concern. I believe that we should keep the fees for education as low as possible. I think that those things needed to be said.

In regard to the fears arising about equivalency and the possibility of going from one university to another, the quality of a university consists in the originality of its program, its curriculum. You know something about that, your program is, I think – and this is what was told to me there – unique in Québec, particularly interesting, original, and unique. That has never prevented you from doing a master's degree in other universities, as far as I know. So I don't see what these fears are based on.

And you talk about the difference in educational systems. Listen, I'm really having trouble following you again. You're talking about the flight of foreign students who come to Québec to study. Listen, Québec – let's say it right away, it's important that this sort of stuff not be spread around – is an open country, it is a welcoming, receptive, and extremely tolerant country. We have been supporting students from Ontario at your institution for many years. Do you understand? And you even say it yourselves. They come to Québec because it costs less. Well, you know what that means. Between the \$1 200 they pay currently, because it wasn't even \$1 200, it was \$700, \$570, if my memory serves me, and the \$6 000 it costs us and the \$2 500 they would pay in your institution, do you realize that makes \$2 000 of funding that Québec provides for Ontario students? Then, for you not to call that openmindedness! I find it rather sad

that you're not more rigorous about it. So I say...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You probably want to wind up with a question.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes, probably, Mr. Chairman. But I feel they're young and we can't allow ourselves to condescend to them because they are young. It wouldn't be doing them a service.

I do have a question. You say the students who come here go back home to their province having acquired a number of benefits and good qualities... I certainly hope so, if they do three years of study here. But don't you think that it would be more important, as least as important – let's not say "more", because I appreciate the system of higher education in Québec – extremely important that there be genuine policies to welcome Francophone students from outside Québec, since in their particular case, there is no university elsewhere except the University of Ottawa and the other one, Laurentian in Toronto? There aren't any more than that. Don't you think that instead we should try to have a policy to support Francophones outside Québec?

Mr. de Grandpré: I don't think instead, but I do think in addition. I think that, on a number of points... You spoke, among other things, about information, and I think you're absolutely right about the question of information. You say that you don't believe that information circulates at Bishop's. Well, you know, we did consult many people for this and talked a lot about it. And yes, we realized that the information isn't all there. Moreover, that is the essence of our third recommendation.

It's also the reason, by the way, that I think that Bishop's University is a dynamic university which, during these years, is really in the process of opening up to the province through movements like the commerce games and the links with other universities. There is a very, very dynamic High Fac club and many outside activities that take place on the campus, in fact. I think your point about information is completely correct. You also mentioned, during your... You spoke of the flight of capital from Québec...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. de Grandpré, I wouldn't want to prevent you from giving as full an answer as possible, but since we have already gone over the time, try to be concise.

Mr. de Grandpré: Certainly, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mrs. Blackburn, reception structures should be worked out in the other provinces to allow Québec students to go to other provinces. Still,

in the province, we also want it to become open. Thank you.

Mrs. Blackburn: You're right too.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Unfortunately time is up. Representatives from the Students' Representative Council of Bishop's University, thank you for presenting your brief. Thank you, Mr. Lacroix, Mrs. Cudney, Mrs. Paquin, Mr. de Grandpré and Mr. Barbeau. I would ask you to relinquish your place to those who will be replacing you, the Fédération québécoise anti-pauvreté.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:45 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:48 p.m.)

Fédération québécoise anti-pauvreté

Mr. Tremblay (Robert): Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, the Fédération québécoise anti-pauvreté and its 16 regional divisions are pleased to submit the results of a thought process involving thousands of their members who, over the past 15 years, have experienced poverty and misery and tried to find solutions to these conditions. But beyond statistics, poverty in Québec, which leads to misery and decay, is a social reality that our organization and its regional divisions have been facing for years. Whereas 5 or 10 years ago it was a question of poverty, today it's increasingly a question of misery. And it's becoming more and more difficult for the poor to escape from it.

The document we're presenting wasn't conceived as a function of the debate about the political and constitutional future of Québec, but is the result of our observations of the failure of traditional solutions to combat poverty. We believe they would also fail in an independent Québec, because they would perpetuate dependence on a government that provided selective programs.

The current opinion polls on Québec sovereignty are almost unanimous, so the first part of the process the Commission has undertaken is almost complete. Our brief, therefore, deals with the blueprint for the society we want Québec to become. We feel Quebecers expect their parliamentarians to have a more profound impact and take more comprehensive action. The people of Québec expect this process to yield results that they can get enthusiastic about and policies that will lead to greater social justice. The people expect a blueprint for a new society. It's on this level of discussion that we're presenting to you our brief on the IUGAI, or the indexed, universal, guaranteed, adequate income.

Accompanying our brief is a manifesto

entitled "Pour que disparaisse la misère au Québec", which contains details on the application of the IUGAI and the philosophy behind it. Application of the IUGAI would be a concrete effect of the economic sovereignty of Quebecers and the gouvernement du Québec. It's easy to apply, simple to implement and simplistic at first glance but realistic and appropriate according to our calculations. It's a mechanism for financing the government and equitably redistributing wealth that will enable Quebecers to contribute, according to their means, to the creation of a new Québec. As for political sovereignty for Québec, we feel it's only logical that it be complete. The IUGAI is based on determination to take individual responsibility and achieve personal independence, which is dictating the path that our country will take.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Could I ask you to speed up your presentation a little, Mr. Tremblay, because we've almost used up the allotted time.

Mr. Tremblay: I have one page left.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go ahead.

Mr. Tremblay: Our view is that this new Québec should be based on the abolition of any form of tax and tax evasion, abolition of the various income supplements now in effect, introduction of a general 10% consumption tax on all goods and services sold, and introduction of a 1% tax on corporate revenues. Together these two measures would give the government more than \$68 billion a year and would enable it to eliminate the deficit, govern adequately and introduce an indexed, universal, guaranteed, adequate income that would provide a weekly income for all Quebecers from cradle to grave, regardless of their family or work situation. Our goal, which is to eradicate misery and reduce poverty, implies non-partisan, political action. We would work with any political party or any coalition that wanted to include the IUGAI in its program. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, to eradicate misery from Québec, we would be tempted to suggest that the Commission, which may well conclude its work with a recommendation that the government hold a referendum, ask the following question: Are you in favour of a sovereign Québec in which all citizens have an indexed, universal, guaranteed, adequate income, or are you not? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll start the questions with a Government party representative. Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr.

Tremblay, I'd like to thank you for contributing to our work and at the same time having presented what I consider a very original brief. You understand, you say in your brief that for all practical purposes Québec's political and constitutional status has been settled because the opinion polls and virtual unanimity about sovereignty have already settled that problem. What we have to do now is get going on defining what this sovereign Québec will be. So you're arguing for the establishment of the famous IUGAI, which is an indexed weekly income paid regularly for life to all individuals, regardless of their situation, their job or family situation. And you say it would start at \$50 up to the age of six and go as high as \$150 for people 18 and over. So my first question is this: Could you explain what its effect would be on someone's incentive to work or motivation to stay in school?

Mr. Le Clerc (Roger): If you don't mind, I'll answer that. Someone's incentive to work... You're taking for granted that the only way of giving someone an incentive to work is to offer money. But we believe people are active, and we prefer to talk about an activity policy rather than an employment policy. We take for granted that individuals, no matter what their situation, even if they're outside the conventional job market, like more than 20% of the population right now in Québec, are still active people. We think the amount they'd be paid, which all in all wouldn't be enough for a good quality of life, but would be enough for a reasonable quality, would on the contrary encourage people who are now excluded from the job market and are prevented by various social programs, either welfare or unemployment insurance, people in effect prevented from taking part in job creation or working part-time.

We feel that the introduction of the IUGAI would change things for the 20% of the population excluded from the job market and would make them productive in a dignified fashion in areas it would be up to them to determine. As for the incentive to go to school, I'd like to point out that right now many students have to quit school because they can't afford it. If the IUGAI were introduced, not only would these students have a regular, adequate income but they wouldn't be in debt when they finished school and they'd start off in life much better equipped.

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, but knowing in advance that the maximum amount they could have is about \$150 for life, do you think that would really encourage them to stay in school?

Mr. Le Clerc: The \$150 for life would be given to any individual living in Québec, but it's the basic amount we'd like to give people to

enable them to earn more. If you read further in the brief, our main point is financing the government with a consumption tax. We live in a capitalist system, and far be it from us to change it — on the contrary. If the government were financed by a consumption tax, it would be a sure thing. The more I spent, the greater its income would be. And the \$150 given to each citizen of Québec would be anything but a gold mine. I would be very surprised if people depended on it alone.

Mr. Maciocia: Does this mean you're in favour of the GST?

Mr. Le Clerc: In principle we're in favour of the idea of the GST. We think the way it's being applied right now is stupid because it's not universal, because it's being added to an income-tax system that's completely unbalanced and completely out of whack, so that in effect the way it's applied in Canada takes money out of the pocket of people who are already overtaxed. But if the GST — because that's what we're proposing — if it were applied the way we propose it, along with the IUGAI, the GST would be a godsend.
(9:00 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to questions from a representative of the Official Opposition, Roger Paré.

Mr. Paré: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I'd like to welcome you to the Commission. I think it's very important that you're here representing a large number of people, the poorest people in our society, who aren't organized and don't belong to a group, but are quite numerous throughout Québec.

Clearly that's important, because if we want to create a country, or if we want to change our structures or constitution, we must never forget that we're doing it for the people, and that in our society there are hundreds of thousands of people who are poorer or worse off than we are. Now you tell us they live in conditions of misery. When we look at reports from the Commission des affaires sociales, "Deux Québec dans un", we realize that misery is unfortunately on the increase in Québec. Just think of how people are leaving the regions — and the members of the Commission have heard quite a bit about it as they've toured the regions — just think of the homeless.

Your brief goes quite far. You give a lot of figures, including figures on the effects and impacts of underemployment and privation. What does it cost the government and what does it cost individuals? Because, in effect, we're demoralizing a lot of people, and you say, and you're right — because in any case I think we all pretty much agree — Québec is a very rich country, yet there are more and more poor

people, and the people who are poor are getting poorer. This is a very serious problem, and we absolutely have to take it into account here. If it's true, and I think it is, the political decisions we make and the way we structure our society have certain effects; they'll either ensure a better sharing of the wealth, or they'll ensure that the rich people in Québec get richer and the poor get poorer.

So we absolutely have to make decisions. You said in your brief, which I read twice... I found it very interesting, among other things where you say: We have to draw up a blueprint for a society. By no means does this mean a political structure; we have to draw up a blueprint for a society, and then you say, in sharing the wealth, let's not leave out 1.5 million Quebecers.

The question I want to ask you... There's a problem. The problem is people who don't have jobs or income, so they're living in misery. But if they worked, they wouldn't be living in misery or, in any case, it would be less pronounced, if they had wages, if they had a decent wage.

We say that when someone is sick, what we have to do is get rid of the disease. We can give the person medicine, but we can also try to get rid of the disease. If the disease is underemployment, and you talk about it in your report, you talk about two things, full employment and then a little farther on, you also refer to regional-development measures. If we developed the regions, because Québec consists first and foremost of regions, and if we give ourselves a full-employment structure, it takes determination and money. Probably with full employment we could eliminate at source what puts people in conditions of misery.

Do you think that with the existing system we could create a good regional-development program and, as a society, adopt a full-employment policy?

Mr. Le Clerc: Ten years ago in 1982, I'm sorry, eight years ago, we were working with other sociologists and other people in the field of social work on establishing a full-employment policy for Québec. I myself travelled all around Québec promoting a full-employment policy. Eight years later, we're still waiting for the results. Eight years later, there are more and more poor people. Three years ago there were 3 000 homeless people in Montréal. Today the number is estimated at 15 000. And it's not because the government doesn't put money into it. When we say in our document: The system for sharing the wealth has failed, that's our rationale.

This thought process has led us to conclude that there's been a fundamental failure of government funding. The IUGAI isn't a flash of inspiration. It's the result of the will to eradicate misery. And it's erroneous to maintain, in our society, in 1990, that the only possible

source of income, over the short or medium term, is a job. Québec is a rich country. Québec gets richer every year. Québec's gross domestic product has been increasing in each of the last 13 years, except just recently when it dropped slightly. But Québec has more and more poor people. Thirty percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and let me tell you 30% below the poverty line... There are people living at half the poverty line. The social costs of poverty in Québec, at the Forum pour l'emploi, held in Montréal about a year and a half ago, the industrialists, the companies themselves estimated the cost of 10% unemployment in Québec to be \$38 billion a year. This hasn't changed. If the IUGAI came into effect, it would cost Québec \$32 billion. We think it's time for some preventive medicine...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to...

Mr. Le Clerc: ...Instead of curative medicine.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...the questions from the members. Mrs. Côté, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I think the message you're giving us is important, because we can't pretend we haven't got it, since you represent a large number of groups from all over Québec. I think the fact that you show us the fraying of the social fabric and emphasize certain disturbing figures, especially the social pathology that stems from the misery in our society, we have to listen to it. And we can't forget about it after we've decided what kind of constitutional status we want for Québec.

The second message I get, which we must also keep in mind - I don't belong to any political party so I can say it - is that we'll need an income-security policy. But when I read your proposals, apart from the fact that I think you're right when you say we have to have the courage to innovate, I wondered why you disregarded the whole principle of the progressive structure of income tax. Because it seems to me - I'm not a tax specialist, I'm not an economist, but I'm asking the question - that it's an established principle. Perhaps it would have been better to look at lowering the tax rate while keeping the progressive structure and ensuring that, as you say, we collect taxes from corporations, and so on. I'm curious because I've rarely seen that principle in the most innovative sources, in the newest research.

Mr. Tremblay: The principle of higher income tax for people who make a lot of money and lower tax for people who make less money is badly distorted because of exemptions. Today we

have so many exemptions of all kinds that the intention of the law is distorted. If you want to keep on...

Mr. Le Clerc: In fact we believe that financing the government by a consumption tax would even things out. The person who earned \$50 000 a year and spent \$40 000 would pay a tax of \$4 000, whereas the person who earned \$20 000 and spent \$20 000 would pay \$2 000 in tax. To our way of thinking, the tax alone would be unacceptable, in our value system, if it weren't combined with the indexed, universal, guaranteed, adequate income. In fact, what we — and the figures in our study prove it — what we conclude is that if the IUGAI were applied, for any family group — and I'm using not the word "family" but family group — income would be doubled or more. The 10% tax would mean I'd pay \$1 on a \$10 meal, which is fine. But the person who bought a \$100 dinner would pay \$10. And it would be shared. Because the tax would be applicable to all goods purchased, no one would escape from it. The problem with the tax system isn't the variation in rates, it's the tax exemptions I can take advantage of if I have the means. If I can buy a QSSP and an RRSP, I'll pay less income tax and I'll be on easy street when I retire. I've got no objection to that, but when you're poor, you don't buy QSSPs and RRSPs and you pay income tax.

Mrs. Côté: Excuse me, but there's... Have you looked at the possibility of tax reform? Because, for example, there's the solidarity movement in Québec, and the group in Montréal. There's been a whole body of research into real reform of the tax system, which contravenes what you said about tax evasion, and groups that also experience misery from day to day are pretty unanimous about it.

Mr. Le Clerc: I personally have been in social work for 20 years. Robert has a bit more seniority than me. To try for reform of the tax system in Québec would be a long, bitter struggle that would involve such fierce trench warfare that we couldn't do it. We've gone so far as to establish calculations, and it's been hard because we're not tax experts and we don't have the funds to hire any, but we prefer to try something innovative for ourselves, not only something that ensures equal sharing of wealth, but also conveys a measure of dignity, and respect for individuals, and makes everyone, especially women, makes everyone self-sufficient enough to cope with life's problems.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Larose.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your conclusion, you specifically talk about the

abolition of a number of income-supplement measures now in effect. Which of these measures would you like to see abolished?

Mr. Le Clerc: The much-vaunted income-security program that we'd like to see disappear and even fade from memory is welfare, and we'd also like to see the disappearance of unemployment insurance, the disappearance of student loans and grants, the disappearance of family allowances and the disappearance of income supplements for the elderly.

Mr. Beaudry: Old-age pensions too.

Mr. Le Clerc: The Québec Pension Plan would stay because it's a private plan that employees and employers pay for. We feel that unemployment insurance should be abolished because employers can offer these services.

Mr. Beaudry: You don't have to tell me why, you've listed them for me.

Mr. Le Clerc: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: In the next conclusion you also say: Introduction of a general 10% consumption tax. In your brief, at one point, you say: a 1% tax on corporate revenues.

Mr. Le Clerc: That's right.

Mr. Beaudry: Take a company that loses \$10 million a year because its operations are scaled down because, I don't know, the market is soft, or... Does it pay the tax just the same, because it's based on revenues and not on profits?

Mr. Le Clerc: That's right.

Mr. Beaudry: That's it.

Mr. Le Clerc: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: Automatically you'll put the company into bankruptcy. It already can't pay the tax.

Mr. Le Clerc: First, there would be no more unemployment insurance, no more welfare, so the employer doesn't have to contribute...

Mr. Beaudry: No, but I'm not saying...

Mr. Le Clerc: I'm explaining why it would still have the money to pay the 1%.

Mr. Beaudry: But I'm saying that it doesn't have it. I'm assuming that it doesn't make any money. Taking into account the fact that it doesn't pay for unemployment insurance or any social programs, it doesn't pay for anything, but

it's still losing money.

Mr. Le Clerc: Well then, yes, it'll close down. But it's not the 1% tax that'll close it, it's the \$10-million deficit.

Mr. Beaudry: And during a recession, how do you index the guaranteed salaries that the people get, when companies are in a recession, when your volume is down because your sales are down, assuming that you're still selling, but you, your guaranteed income is indexed, according to your report. So the guaranteed income goes up every year...

Mr. Le Clerc: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: ...even when you're in a recession and your profits are dropping every year or every month. What do you do to offset that?

Mr. Le Clerc: I'd be glad to answer if you'd let me.

Mr. Beaudry: OK.

Mr. Le Clerc: First, we have to say that the government's revenues will be indexed, because the government's revenues are based on a consumption tax, which goes up with the rate of inflation. And that can be tracked from week to week. During a recession, you know, recessions stem much more from the fact that you don't have any money to consume with. You don't have any money to buy things. Imagine the impact if, on Monday morning, you redistributed \$32 billion and put it in the pockets of people who have no money. Imagine the impact on job creation in Québec. Without a doubt, over the short term, the impact would be so great we wouldn't have enough people in the work force. So there would be less danger of a recession...

Mr. Beaudry: There would be no danger according to you.

Mr. Le Clerc: ...if the danger wasn't eliminated, it would be diminished.

Mr. Beaudry: I've got one short last question, because it affects me personally. You say in your report: Companies would pay 1%, and you include professionals too, whereas other individuals wouldn't have to pay. Why individuals, since they're not companies as such?

Mr. Le Clerc: Self-employed people. When we talk about professionals, we're talking about... well... lawyers, notaries, etc., who are like small businesses.

Mr. Beaudry: I'd like to congratulate you on

one comment in your report. You said in your report that many people were guilty of tax evasion, but you didn't point a finger at lawyers and I think you were right.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larose. We've already gone over the allotted time a bit, so please be quick.
(9:15 p.m.)

Mr. Larose: Yes, well, first I'm very pleased that we have a short brief that's only a few pages long and has such a lot of good stuff in it. You could talk about this until the cows come home, but as I was saying to my friend Hogue just now, raising the GST from 7% to 10%... The senators had better go out and buy sleeping bags. It's only at seven, and they're in an uproar.

I'd like to go back to the full-employment policy. It does exist, a full-employment policy. Not here, unfortunately, but in societies where they've tackled the problem systematically. They've managed to get one, and during the most serious economic crises when they've had an unemployment rate of 2.5%, it's been a complete mess. It seems to me that we shouldn't quit, just because we haven't succeeded, because I tend to disagree with you when... I was going to say the meaning of existence... It's not true people will like having an income without the opportunity to do something productive. I mean there are several ways of producing, but this blueprint for a society, in my opinion, our goal has to be to enable people to accomplish something and develop through some productive activity. This activity is called work, so I think we have to try to find a mechanism. I admit I still haven't evaluated yours, your mechanism for an adequate decent income, but we'll always have the challenge of ensuring people can develop through work. I don't know whether we agree on that.

Mr. Le Clerc: Completely, and I hope everyone understood that we're far from being in disagreement with a full-employment policy. We've worked on it, we still believe in it and we want a government that has the political courage to introduce it, but in the meantime we have 30% of the population below the poverty line. The question we're asking tonight is: In the Québec of the future, will it still be 30%? It doesn't matter what level of government provides the cheque that destroys me socially, because of all the stigma attached to it. The effect is the same. Mrs. Côté was talking about social pathology. I think the costs of this social pathology merit considerable discussion.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Le Clerc, but that's all the

time we have for your presentation. I have to say that your concept of a new tax and income system to combat poverty would in my opinion profit - pardon the expression - but it would first profit the rich because if you eliminate... The way you propose to eliminate income tax, if your system had been in effect for the past 10 years, I wouldn't be here tonight. I'd be lying on a beach somewhere, because I'd have accumulated a king's ransom by not paying income tax, because the system would've had me paying only 10%. So I don't want to cast doubt on your calculations, but I think we have to keep in mind that there's no easy solution. There's an extremely interesting solution that may lead to something quite worthwhile, if we keep on discussing figures and alternatives but, as it stands, there's one small aspect that would have worked in my favour rather than in favour of those who need it, which I don't think is your goal. So...

Mr. Le Clerc: You'd be on a beach...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mind you, the Commission might be all the better for it. But that's not the point I was trying to make.

Mr. Le Clerc: No. You'd be on a beach but that would be fine with us because the 30% of Quebecers who are impoverished would be able to eat, and we've got nothing against beaches.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, I'm all for that. No, I've got no objection to that part of it, quite the contrary. But we still wouldn't have been able to get there because of the other aspect. But that's of little consequence. We have to stop now, since we've already gone over the allotted time. Thank you for your presentation, and if you would now let the Québec-Sherbrooke Presbytery of The United Church of Canada take your place. We'll now be hearing from the Québec-Sherbrooke Presbytery of The United Church of Canada. I believe Mr. Sadler is the spokesman for the group. The floor is yours. Please introduce your colleagues and take five minutes to give a brief summary of your presentation.

Québec-Sherbrooke Presbytery of The United Church of Canada

Mr. Sadler (Martyn): Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, I'd like to introduce the other members of my group. With me are David Munn, past chairman of the Presbytery, who is retired and lives in Brome; Vivianne Galanis, who is a full-time volunteer worker here in Sherbrooke, especially with immigrants; and Ken Johns, an engineer from North Hatley. I'm the United Church Minister here in Sherbrooke

and the current chairman of the Presbytery.

Notre mémoire est très bref. Nous voulons vous demander de ne pas oublier, alors que nous tendons vers de nouvelles formes de constitution, la participation de tous les Québécois, les pauvres, les Premières Nations, les immigrants, tous les marginaux; nous estimons que la qualité d'une société est plus importante que les structures. Aucune structure, par exemple, ne résoudra les problèmes de disparités régionales ou d'intégration des immigrants.

En quelques mots, nous acceptons que des changements se produisent et nous espérons, par-dessus tout, voir le processus qui nous mènera à une nouvelle constitution, et que cette constitution elle-même soit destinée à encourager la pleine participation de tous dans la société. Et maintenant, pour une présentation un peu plus importante, je passe le micro à Ken Johns.

Mr. Johns (Ken): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. As with several groups, tonight you have yet another version of our brief. I hope you'll look at the version of December 6, which you've supposedly received. On the first page, which bears the number 2, we've tried to emphasize, through the geographical description of the Presbytery, that most of our people are Anglophones, living as a minority throughout our area. Although they're fairly well integrated into the present-day realities of society, many of them are worried and concerned about their future here.

We also wanted to draw your attention to certain positions taken by our Church, of which the first on our list is very important: Our Church has recognized the right to self-determination of people in Canada without prejudging the eventual structure and constitutional result, and without infringing on the rights of minorities. You have two other traditional positions on social services, the government's responsibilities toward the poor and the role of the government in the world. I have the original version of this statement on self-determination, if you'd like to see it. On the second page, that is page 3, we say that, whatever propositions are put forward regarding the future political structures to serve Québec, the following priorities must be emphasized and respected.

First, our political leaders must make a new commitment to ensure full participation of all Quebecers, including aboriginal peoples, allophones and Anglophones, in the process of change, so that together we might shape a common future in which succeeding generations of all communities will feel at home. Thus we're talking primarily about the process. We feel that the Commission must not only recommend a destination for Québec, but perhaps also tell us how to get there. And we insist on striving for the highest possible degree of democracy and

perhaps even proceeding slowly so everyone can get involved, so we can recruit as many people as possible for the process. Getting people involved, in other words Anglophones, our parishioners, aboriginal peoples and allophones. I'd like to point out that Mrs. Galanis, who is here tonight, has considerable expertise and a vision of how new Quebecers can be integrated.

Our second point involves certain constitutional guarantees for the collective rights of the English-speaking community, in order to promote its continued presence and development, especially in those regions of Québec where it has deep and historic roots. And we've tried, without purporting to have any special expertise, to see whether there isn't a perspective that will get us out of the impasse of the conflict between collective rights and individual rights. And if the collective rights of Anglophones could first be defined by legal specialists and then included in a constitution, that would be very reassuring for many people and would perhaps slow or even reverse the current exodus of people from our community, especially young people.

You can also see that concerns 3 and 4, in particular regarding the most disadvantaged members of our society and especially for a Québec - I think we all agree about this - a Québec that doesn't close in on itself, but is a player on the world scene and continues to be a player.

We conclude with an appeal for communication and trust between the partners outside Québec. And we've taken the liberty of asking our people to pray for you, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. I don't know whether it's an accident, Mr. Chairman. I don't know whether it's because we ended with a short blessing that you put us last tonight, but it's quite appropriate.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Oh! That would prove the powers of the Lord, who's thinking of us all. Now we'll begin with questions from the representative of the Official Opposition, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Usually when I hear such good words, I say to myself, those are the words of church people. And in your case, it's no joke, these are really the words of church people. I read your short brief very carefully, a brief that doesn't opt for one political option or another, and which in my opinion tries to convey a message - this is how I interpret it - that we should be careful about the individual rights that you recognize, or that you want to see recognized in the constitution, be it a Canadian or Québec constitution, depending on the option that we'll choose together for the Québec of tomorrow. But there's a sentence in your brief on page 2. You

say: The right to self-determination of people in Canada. I think I have the version of December sixth, so I suppose it's the right one. Number one. You talk about the Church's recognition of the right to self-determination of people in Canada, without prejudging the eventual structure, etc. Does this mean you recognize this right to self-determination for the people of Québec? For which other peoples do you recognize this right?

Mr. Sadler: Dans une certaine mesure, ce que vous avez est un condensé. Si je pouvais lire la phrase originale, cela pourrait aider: "That the right should be clearly accepted for either of Canada's two major racial and linguistic units to dissociate from each other." We're talking about the Francophone and Anglophone communities. C'est que, lorsqu'elle a adopté cette motion, l'Église pensait très nettement aux anglophones et aux francophones. À ce moment-là, elle ne pensait pas aux autochtones des autres groupes.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you. My second question: I'd like you to explain a lot more precisely the constitutional guarantees you'd like for the Anglophone community of Québec. (9:30 p.m.)

Mr. Johns: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're clearly outside our field of expertise, and I'll admit it right away. So we're not 100% sure about this, but if you ask me what we're hearing from our people, what they're saying, what we've started to define, we're talking about a rather new idea for our community, which places a great deal of emphasis on the concept of individual rights. We're starting to define ourselves as a community within the people of Québec, and it's clear that people are talking about education, social services, administrative control of these things, access to justice, and contact with the government in their own language. And we're wondering, if the collective rights of an Anglophone minority within Québec were defined in the new constitution, we could refer to them in future regarding certain matters related to the survival of the community. We're talking about a community that represents 4% of the population in certain regions, but has been there for two centuries in some cases and maybe...

Mr. Chevette: Could you explain this to me because it's been bothering me since the beginning of the Commission. When we talk about the collective rights of Quebecers that should have been enshrined in the Canadian Constitution, the Anglophone communities, the Anglophone groups that have appeared before us have all objected to our having the "notwithstanding clause", for example, or almost all of them, to defend our collective linguistic rights. But when it comes to defending their

rights, they ask that they be enshrined in the Québec constitution. I'd like to ask you why, if they can do it vis-à-vis Québec, why can't we do it vis-à-vis Canada?

Mr. Johns: Maybe because we're a minority that's really starting to identify itself as a minority and starting to want things from the majority in Québec. Maybe you've taught us a thing or two.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to Mr. Hogue, followed by Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Hogue: I'd like to thank you for your brief and clarify something before going any farther. The French text refers to The United Church of Canada and its Québec-Sherbrooke Presbytery. But you're speaking on behalf of the Québec-Sherbrooke Presbytery of The United Church of Canada.

Mr. Johns: Yes, solely on its behalf.

Mr. Hogue: All right. It's "à l'intérieur" de l'Église Unie du Canada. Fine. Thank you. Would you elaborate or comment on two questions? Do you think that instead of talking about individual rights we might also start emphasizing individual duties and collective duties as a group — you more specifically? And my second question: In addition to making, too often in my opinion, "motherhood statements", if you'll pardon the expression, could you, since you're from a well-identified group, give us some practical advice about the reconciliation we seem to need?

Mr. Johns: I think it's clear to us, and it's clear in the brief. If you read the brief, yes, we have to start talking about collective rights and individual rights, but we mustn't leave out individual rights...

Mr. Hogue: Duties too.

Mr. Johns: Yes, duties. That could be an extremely worthwhile avenue to explore.

Mr. Hogue: The second question?

Mrs. Galanis (Vivianne): Are you talking about ways of achieving reconciliation?

Mr. Hogue: Quel conseil auriez-vous à donner? Mais des conseils précis, pas seulement des recommandations maternelles.

Mrs. Galanis: So the different groups can live together.

Mr. Hogue: You know, it's easy to talk about pride and unity, but maybe it's preferable to talk about individual differences instead of

talking about unity. Each of us here is talking about these differences. One day we're going to have to accept them.

Mrs. Galanis: That reminds me of something Mrs. Blackburn said earlier tonight. She talked about an open society. To me, that's the essential thing, that the minorities living in Québec right now, be they allophones, Anglophones or aboriginal peoples, feel they're living the reality of a new society. A society that doesn't impose certain rules of behaviour, rules about customs or language to 100%, but has an open outlook. As you were told earlier, I work a great deal with immigrants, who obviously eventually have to learn French and try to live here in French, but without forgetting that they always bring with them, at least the generation that immigrates, a cultural legacy that can't be denied. A legacy of customs and standards of behaviour, and the host society, old-stock Québécois, must remind themselves that society will change because of the newcomers. So, instead of trying to integrate these people, we should try for a sort of mutual adjustment in order to achieve, we might say, a new society, but recognizing that these people cannot change. Even if they want to live here, they want to live in French, but because they're not old-stock Francophones, not old-stock Québécois, society will change because of the impact of their arrival, and, in the sense of Anglophones, the case of Anglophones, what they've experienced.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Hogue: Just one second.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That's all. One second?

Mr. Dufour: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'd like to see that.

Mr. Hogue: You've given us a blessing, pouvez-vous diffuser la bonne nouvelle?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two questions. The first concerns the concept of proceeding slowly, which you used just now when you explained your first priority. All the highly nationalistic groups that have appeared before us say the referendum, with their particular question, must be held as soon as possible. In a rather wise gesture on your part, you said just now, no, people really have to become conversant with the meaning of the terms, the

issues, etc. And you said we should proceed slowly. Could I hear a little more about that?

Mr. Johns: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think consensus is something precious to us. It has no price. If we had to wait, if the nationalists have to wait two more years for independence or if we have to take four more years to draw up the blueprint for our society, if we end that four-year period all together, having made compromises, and so on, and having built something that belongs to us, then we think it's worth the trouble, rather than rushing things and, for example, holding a referendum with a question people don't understand...

Mr. Dufour: Thank you.

Mr. Johns: That's all.

Mr. Dufour: I very much appreciate your urging us to proceed cautiously. At the bottom of page 3, you say you're going to contact the First Ministers of Canada to explain a number of things. Could I ask you, exactly what message will you be giving Mr. Wells and Mr. Filmon?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Sadler: Il nous serait très difficile...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Sadler: ...d'écrire de manière charitable à tous les premiers ministres, mais nous essaierons certainement d'adresser une lettre commune qui exprimera notre engagement envers le Québec et qui appellera à une plus grande attention envers les minorités, particulièrement les minorités francophones à l'intérieur de leurs provinces.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larose. We're almost into the Chairman's time.

Mr. Larose: Thank you for your generosity.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): My usual generosity.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Larose: I'd like to go back to what Mr. Hogue was saying about collective and individual rights, a topic that has been discussed quite a lot since the beginning of the Commission. I'm pleased to hear from a group that recognizes that if we're not protected by duly recognized collective rights, individual rights will be threatened. And that reminds me, another group of Anglophones - it was in the Montérégie - told us one of the characteristics of Canadian society always was, up till 1982,

implicit recognition of the collective rights of its various components. But the introduction of the charter of individual rights, which is an import from the United States, has supplanted the Canadian character of this society and today, I'd say, has simply supplanted Canadian society. What they said to us was: For pity's sake, recognize collective rights so that in Québec at least we can be Canadian in that sense. Do collective rights remain the right of minorities, in the era of Canadians, now the era of Francophones, but with all these components?

Mr. Johns: It's certainly true that for us the concept, almost culturally influenced as we are by our Anglo-Saxon background since the American concept was imported, the very concept of collective rights is difficult for us. But it's starting to gain ground. I personally agree with your analysis. As a Church, it's very difficult to...

Mr. Larose: Maybe we have less time to protect them than Mr. Dufour thinks.

Mr. Johns: I'm on a slippery slope there.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, for the Government party, Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too read your brief with a great deal of interest, and what I especially retained is that like the majority of the other briefs we've received so far - more than a hundred I think - in any case, which looked at things from the political and constitutional standpoint, and tried to talk about rights, powers, sharing, etc., you decided to put the discussion on a higher level, in other words the level of the ethical relationship between two communities, and I think it's the level on which a large portion of the discussion should be taking place in any case. And in that sense I thank you, not only for elevating the quality of our work, but for placing the discussion on a higher plane. I'm always rather afraid, as my colleague Mr. Larose was saying just now, to see rights enshrined in a constitution or a charter. Since the advent of charters, lawyers have been making a fortune, but we've had all sorts of problems, for example. When we settle a right somewhere, part of a community's right, there's always something that pops up somewhere else and gives rise to another, and it gets quite complicated.

A few years ago the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court said that the concept of the charter had to be rethought, because the way certain aspects of the charter were being interpreted was leading to abuses and excesses.

So I'm always concerned when an ethical problem is included in a law. To me the best proof is the abortion issue. And in the case of abortion, it's even worse. To make it conform to our standards, to make it a federal matter, we put it in the Criminal Code, because if it were in the Civil Code, it wouldn't be under federal jurisdiction; it would be under provincial jurisdiction. So that's why they put it in the Criminal Code.

Fundamentally nothing has been settled by that debate, which recurs with absolutely incredible frequency. Why? Because it's a problem involving values, it's a problem involving ethics and it concerns individuals. It's difficult to legislate collectively on the values each individual must hold.

The question I'd like to ask you... it doesn't take the same tack at all as the recommendations you make. I'll take your recommendations about recognizing the rights of each person. But in terms of values, how do we convey the message so that people actually live it and we don't have to depend on charters to live together as a society, but instead that the message be integrated into our values, that it become a beacon for our society? Do you think it's utopian to think that way?

Mr. Johns: No, it isn't utopian. At the Church, we're used to talking about the kingdom of heaven, and I don't think we're far off when...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): But not in politics. People who've talked about it have got in trouble.

Mr. Johns: Clearly it's a problem of education, but it's a problem because we all share, regardless of our personal option... It seems to me that extreme language, it's time we finished with all that. Real communication, mutual respect, appealing to these concepts has served us well here for centuries. And we have to emphasize the very high quality of life we have in Québec, the democratic life and the privileges we all share. I think it's pretty fundamental. The things you're referring to aren't foreign to Québec culture. I think we have to draw on them and remind everyone that they're there and they've been there for a long time.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): If Mr. Poissant were here, he'd say to you: Why don't we do this more? Why isn't this type of language more important to us? I'm pushing my dream, my utopia or my religious approach, I don't know.

Mr. Johns: I'd like to tell a short anecdote, Mr. Chairman. In Hatley, south of here, we have a village of fewer than 500 people. There's also

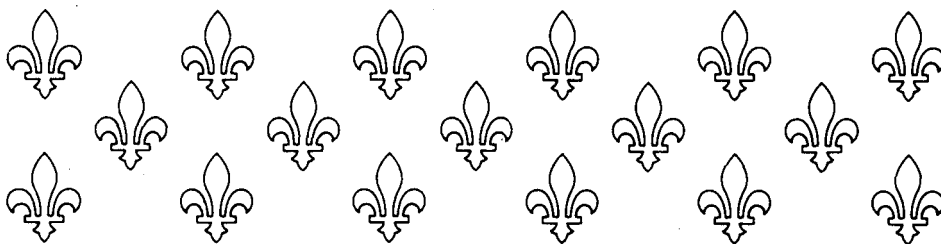
Kingscroft, 10 kilometres away, with fewer than 500 people. There's a large Catholic church there. At our small United Church, we decided after the Meech Lake disaster that we had to talk to one another, so we simply went to the Francophone Catholic parish and said: Listen, let's do something, anything together, because things are going badly and we're not talking to one another. Well, the people were delighted. Those people are coming to Hatley Sunday morning to attend our service. Ecumenism, for church people, is one of the ways and it works beautifully. If we could do that with curling clubs and any other organizations, it seems to me that's what's missing and it would be fun.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I'd like to conclude with your short prayer at the end when you say: Que Dieu vous bénisse! It'll make some people smile, because I'm not known for my religious fervor, but I think that in all sincerity when we talk about values, it seems to me that, often at the Commission we forget that level, and that's perhaps the level that's most important. Mrs. Blackburn often quotes a saying attributed to René Lévesque: If Québec becomes sovereign, it'll have to make an excellent job of it. I say that excellence will be measured in values; that's what will make it different. But I'll stop now.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would just like to thank the representatives of The United Church for having given an almost ecumenical and even an almost ecclesiastical tone to the last questions. Thank you for your excellent presentation. This concludes our meeting for today.

I'd like to remind the members of the steering committee that there will be a meeting tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. in the Rivière-Coaticook room. The sitting is now adjourned.

(End of sitting, 9:48 p.m.)



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

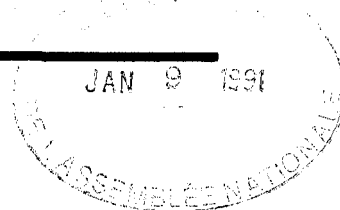
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Sherbrooke, Friday, December 7, 1990

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Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant

Mr. Gérald Larose

Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington

Mrs. Carmen Juneau

Mr. Robert Benoit

Mrs. Monique Gagnon-Tremblay

Mr. Guy Chevette

Mr. Jacques Brassard

Mr. Serge Deschamps

Mr. Liguori Liberatore

Mr. Roger Nicolet

Mr. Ghislain Dufour

Mr. Robert Libman

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Mrs. Pauline Marois

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue

Mr. Cosmo Maciocia

Mr. Roger Paré

* Mr. Roger Charlebois, Mouvement estrien pour le français

* Mr. Rodrigue Larose, idem

* Mr. Peter Riordon, Québec Farmers' Association

* Mr. Angus MacKennon, idem

* Mr. Steve Gruber, idem

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* Mr. Gilles Roy, idem

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* Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Sherbrooke, Friday, December 7, 1990

Hearings: Organizations

(9:32 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If the members of the Commission would be so kind as to take their seats, we are going to begin in a few moments. I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May 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 that regard.

Today the sitting will be devoted to hearing the following organizations and persons: The Mouvement estrien pour le français, the Québec Farmers' Association, a group of dissident members of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Sherbrooke, and the Association Québec-Libre Estrie. May I also remind you that for a 30-minute presentation, the time allowed is divided as follows: five minutes for the Chair, five minutes for the Government parliamentary group, five minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group, 10 minutes for members who have registered with the Chair, each member having a maximum of five minutes, and five minutes to present the brief.

Before giving the floor to the group we have before us, one of our members, Mr. Serge Turgeon, has asked for a few moments to speak to you about a recent event. Mr. Turgeon.

Tribute to Mr. Jean Duceppe

Mr. Serge Turgeon

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was with heartfelt grief that we learned, this past night, that death had taken a man who, through his craft but above all his character as an artist, as a true creator, had held in his arms the dreams, the joys and the sorrows of those he recognized as a people. Our friend and comrade Jean Duceppe is no longer with us. He died last night at hôpital Saint-Luc in Montréal. He was the father of seven children, including our colleague Gilles Duceppe, who has been sitting on this Commission with us for several days.

The whole of Québec is in mourning today. We are grieving for one of our finest, greatest, truest sons, who never let us down. Jean Duceppe will remain forever present, immortal, in the hearts and imaginations of Quebecers, for he was, for each and every one of us, the Québec hero incarnate.

Role after role, it was for him that our greatest dramatists wrote some of their finest plays. Jean Duceppe had become a hero, and for

some, dare I add, that anti-hero who embodied more often than not those victims whose conscience and determination alone make them larger than life. Just think of all the works written for him by Gratien Gélinas, Marcel Dubé, Françoise Loranger, Mla Ridez, and so many others. Québec has identified with Jean Duceppe who remained till the end the man of great battles, major struggles. His immense talent as an actor, his innate gift for communication, made him an extraordinary bearer of joy and enthusiasm. When Jean Duceppe laughed, it was because it was funny, and he made us laugh with him. When he wept, he was not a man to hide, and he did not hide his tears. His sorrow became our sorrow and we were overwhelmed by his infinite sadness.

What Jean Duceppe was on the stage, he was in life: generous, restless, a profoundly human being, and passionately and reasonably a Quebecer. He was and will remain an inspiration for many of us. His public was the whole of Québec. He was a committed man and artist, let us not be afraid to say a political man in the most noble sense of the word; Jean Duceppe could have come before the Commission as an expert, of course, but he would have done so mainly as a witness, a witness of and an actor in a movement that started from as far away as we were, to bring us as close as we are. That is the inheritance that he has left us and that we will always find in our memory of his big blue eyes that betrayed his audacity and his keen intelligence, as well as his fears and his irresistible zest for life.

Permit me, as I close, Mr. Chairman, to remind his wife Helen, his "Anglaise" as he called her, and his children, Gilles, Claude, Pierre, Louise, Monique and Anne, and especially his grandchildren, that, as was so well expressed by the poet we played together, there is no country without grandfathers. Jean Duceppe is not entirely dead. He lives on in the most valuable legacy he has left us: the pride we have developed and shared. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Turgeon. The members of the Commission extend their sympathy and condolences to Gilles Duceppe.

Hearings

Now we shall hear the Mouvement estrien pour le français. The group is headed by Mr. Roger Charlebois, who will introduce the people with him and then take five minutes to present the essential points of his brief. Mr. Charlebois.

Mouvement estrien pour le français

Mr. Charlebois (Roger): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. It is an honour and an immense pleasure for our group to be able to appear before you. We thank you for this. We have, the Mouvement estrien pour le français... I'll explain a bit, it is not just a social club. We have among us, in addition to many individual members, a number of groups, a few of them represented here. On my left is Mr. Jacques Laplante, president of the Conseil des travailleurs et travailleuses de l'Estrie, FTQ, Mr. Gérard Messier, president of the Syndicat de l'enseignement de l'Estrie; Rodrigue Larose, I believe he has a relative here, who represents the Mouvement souverain. And on my right, André Goulet and Jeannine Manseau, both teachers; I myself am a professor at the Université de Sherbrooke.

Mr. Chairman, our intention, as we wrote our brief, was to get to the bottom of the reason why we always found ourselves, and still do today, in the same old mess. We shall not review the background this morning. We wish instead to justify, find a rationale for our option through an argument that I will describe as spatiodemographic. For about a century, from the birth of Confederation in 1867, Canadian policy was based on the principle of two founding peoples and linguistic and cultural duality: Anglophone and Francophone. But, from the moment the Trudeau government came to power in 1968, this concept of duality, as a political category, gradually fell into decline, to the benefit of the multicultural model. Let me explain.

A population shift took place as follows. First, there were fewer Francophones outside Québec; they represent 5% of Canadians. Second, there are fewer Anglophones in Québec; they represent 9.2% of Quebecers. This is the equivalent of ethnic concentrations, Francophone Québec and English Canada. Third, we can add the emergence of a significant allophone component, now 30% of Canadians, concentrated mainly outside Québec. Fourth, can we again, in this portrait of Canada, disregard the new importance of the aboriginal peoples? This shift from the bicultural model to the multicultural model makes the policy of full bilingualism instituted by the federal government more and more utopian, in the light of the new ethnic polarizations. Even though the federal government is quite aware of the shift, it nevertheless continues to perpetuate the official tradition of Canada-wide bilingualism. A case in point was Bill C-72, the latest, voted in 1988 under Brian Mulroney, which follows in a straight line from its predecessor, "nihil novi", which might be translated freely as nothing ever really changes.

Here we take advantage of the opportunity to repeat how strongly we contest this type of intrusion by the federal government, which undermines the linguistic policy of Québec by means of the power to spend that it takes upon itself. This is illustrated by a number of examples here in the Estrie region. It is in this new context, of a territorial division between Francophone Québec and English Canada, that most Francophones, after long living as the failures of this model of Canada-wide bilingualism, are now turning to a new model defined first and foremost with reference to Québec. Québec is now considered a privileged space, identified with the Francophone culture as the dominant ethnic element.

Of course, these new demographic factors cannot explain, by themselves, the age-old conflicts of Francophone Québec with the rest of the Anglophones of Canada, but they form a new reality which political definitions of Canadian space can no longer ignore. If we in Québec do not take them into account today, that is, at the time of the exercise we are undertaking, sooner or later major adjustments will have to be expected, and we must not be taken in this time.

In fact, the problem faced by the Canadian State, of which we form a part, is not so unusual. It is a question of managing differences, or how to enable ethnic and cultural pluralism to cohabit in the same sociopolitical space. Observation of the political upheavals of recent years, or even the past few months, on the international scene, shows us examples of pluriethnic political societies that must resign themselves to, I mean realign themselves with, but resign themselves to would be just as good, with references other than a common past and in particular a uniform culture.

To round out the picture, we feel it would be ill-advised not to clarify the type of relationship we still wish to maintain with the 17% of Quebecers who are non-Francophone. The concept that best reflects the reality and present trends in Québec is that of integration in pluralism.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Charlebois, our time is almost up. Perhaps you might move on to your conclusion.

Mr. Charlebois: We hope that experience, in a word, what we want... We submit these four demands on which there can be no compromise, and which we wish to see enshrined in a new constitution.

First, French is the official language of the State of Québec, and the common language of Québec society.

Second, the State of Québec is the sole manager of language policy in its territory.

Third, the primary, the unique purpose of any effort made in regard to language in Québec

by the public powers at every level is the francization of Québec.

And, fourth, the State of Québec is the guarantor of the linguistic security of the minorities in its territory.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Charlebois. We now go on to questions by members of the Commission. Mr. Beaudry, who will be followed by Mr. Poissant and Mr. Larose.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read your brief with interest. There are some questions that disturb me a bit and I refer in particular to page 8 of your brief where you say, with respect to judicial power... And I would like you to give me a few explanations in that regard. You say that in the struggle between the two political powers, a new power, judicial this time, has been added, which increases the power imbalance between the federal and Québec governments. And this is what is important. When repatriating the Constitution and entrenching the Charter of Rights, the Ottawa powers, our compatriots Trudeau and Chrétien in the lead, reinforced judicial power to the detriment of the supremacy of Parliament. That's what it's all about. Politicians can now wash their hands and say, "Dura lex, sed lex", or the law is the law.

And in the second paragraph you add that, obviously, as soon as the Québec government adopts the measures which, in its opinion, are necessary to protect this distinctive character, the Anglophone minority will have recourse to the courts.

That makes me think that you were against the fact, when the Constitution was repatriated, of entrenching the Canadian Charter of Rights in the Constitution. That had the effect of giving the Charter primacy and people who could use it went to Court, and Parliament lost its supremacy. Should I understand from this that, in the context of a new Québec constitution, you would be against the incorporation into that constitution of the Charter of human rights and freedoms as it is known, or as amended or reinforced, so that the minorities in Québec could no longer have recourse to that Charter, because it would not be entrenched in the constitution? It would become nothing more nor less than an ordinary law that could be amended. I say this because several groups that have come before the Commission so far have insisted that the Charter of rights and freedoms should be entrenched in the constitution. You seem to say exactly the opposite in your brief. I would like to hear what you have to say on the matter.

(9:45 a.m.)

Mr. Charlebois: In fact your question is: Should it be entrenched in the constitution or should it simply be enacted by law? That's

your...

Mr. Beaudry: That is the first question. But the fact of entrenching it, as you know, gives greater power, greater security, particularly for minorities. You seem to blame the federal government for entrenching the Charter of Rights, because individuals can have recourse to it and therefore the laws of Parliament no longer have supremacy.

Mr. Charlebois: Well, look, it is sort of what has been demonstrated since we have had the entrenchment of rights and freedoms in the Canadian Constitution. As soon as anyone wishes to contest a Québec law, well, he announces the fact to the Supreme Court and off he goes. And then, since the Supreme Court, well, I said it in the brief, since the judicial power often gives priority not to the majority in Québec, but to the English minority, well what happens is that we're always left with nothing. That is how Bill 101 has been dismembered. But the political power has nothing to say. You go to the Supreme Court. In fact, Mr. Mazankowski himself burst out one day and said... When someone in the RCMP wanted to wear a turban instead of the helmet worn by officers, well he obtained permission to wear the hat of his choice. Precisely, the freedom of individuals... and it was the Supreme Court that granted this. In fact, Mr. Mazankowski declared that Members of Parliament no longer have a say, it is the Supreme Court that makes decisions.

Mr. Beaudry: So, what you are saying, in fact, is that you are against incorporating in a new Québec constitution the Charter of human rights and freedoms we have here, in Québec. That is what you conclude. You did not understand a thing. That is what you are saying.

Mr. Charlebois: I didn't understand a thing about what?

Mr. Beaudry: No, I understood you perfectly.

Mr. Charlebois: Oh, good.

Mr. Beaudry: I didn't say that you, yourself, did not understand a thing. I say we understood each other perfectly. Ha, ha, ha!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Charlebois: What I want to say is that we must not be held captive. Because everyone wants to put his two cents' worth into the constitution to safeguard his own freedom. But I wonder whether, in that case, well, we are going to protect our freedoms or all imprison one another in a constitution in which everything is

made more rigid, instead of more flexible.

Mr. Beaudry: There is another... I have taken note of your comment...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think you have used up your time, Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: I've finished.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now Mr. Poissant has the floor.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I congratulate you on taking a stand to strengthen the position of French. However, I would like to quote you a few cases, because when we want to speak about French, it is a language of communication. We would like to have the support of the larger family, "La Francophonie", and especially of France.

I shall quote you a few facts. The President of IBM International, a Frenchman, came to Montréal a few years ago. His entire speech was in English. A little later, the President of the Régie de l'électricité de France came to Montréal and spoke in very bad English. This year we met 42 pulp and paper industry presidents in Montréal, and there were French, English, Swedes, and Norwegians. We were 42 in all in Montréal and decided to have simultaneous interpretation. The only person who spoke in French was the one you have in front of you now. The French spoke not a single word of French. It was a sorry spectacle. I went to represent a company that publishes Québec books in France. It's interesting. We want our books to have a wider market. Through Québec House in Paris, I met with the large publishing houses. They told me, Poissant, we have so many French books that, unfortunately, we cannot take any Québec books. Once in a while, they would market one because that would do no harm. They must have a little bit of publicity. And recently, the Institut Pasteur decided to conduct its research in English.

I think your brief is good, and I wonder whether, in the final analysis, you would not have been the right person to go present that brief to Mr. Rocard, because if we make an effort to speak French and we do not have the support of France, you know you and I will have an excessively tough time of it. That is why, I think, that the question arises more in that field, to ask them to please come and help us.

I ask you. How can we manage, a small nation like ourselves, in an immense ocean of Anglophones, to fight on if France does not come to our aid?

Mr. Charlebois: Ah! Mr. Poissant, I still remember the allegory of your piano, you know.

Mr. Poissant: So, you were there, then.

Mr. Charlebois: You know, when a piano is out of tune and, even though it is tuned, it is still off key, what do you do? I remember. At home, my father bought a new piano one fine day... In the case you mention, I am in full agreement. I too have been in France, I went to study in France for two years, and the Parisians were astonished not to hear me speak with the same accent as they. But they quickly forgave me, for they said, "You speak English very well; that is your language!" They did not know that here in Québec, that in Canada, because Québec, there was... No, they didn't know much. They knew something about Canada, but Canada was an English-speaking country. If this is the image we projected in France, which must be the country closest to us, that we are a country of Anglophones, is any good work being done by our houses, which have been set up there to represent us? Do they say: Look there are French-speakers in our country. I can understand that with 25% of the population we don't have much say in our Canadian houses. How do they represent us, how do they say that we speak French here? That is why we want to be represented. We want to represent ourselves. Then, when French and German people come here, after visiting a Québec house in Germany or Scandinavia, well, they will have been informed that we speak French here and not English. That is my answer, Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Mr. Charlebois... If you will allow me, Mr. Chairman, I...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think you have also used up your time, Mr. Poissant. Now we'll go on to Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose (Gérald): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a little correction. You say the Institut Pasteur conducts its research only in English. I would like to specify that it produces, publishes its research only in an English version, which is slightly different. It is a question of market. I think we know very well what the limits of a market are for a small country like ours.

Please refer to page 10 of your brief. What interests me is the process. "If it depends only on ourselves, we believe that the time has come when Quebecers will be the only decision-makers". In your opinion, is the choice Québec has to make of any concern to Canada, in a certain way, or is it only Quebecers who should deal with that decision?

Mr. Charlebois: Well, I would perhaps like you to clarify your question, but I'll answer you as I understand it, Mr. Larose. Of course, on the one hand, in the first part of your question, it

is Canada's business, but I do not think it concerns them enough for them to stir themselves yet. From that point of view, our option, the only one that remains, is that, we must bestir ourselves, and in the direction that suits us. And we don't have to ask anyone's permission. The self-determination of a people, that, there is no need... I have heard here at the Commission and I agree, no one has given, no people has given a small nation or another people its freedom. It must be taken. And freedom, we take it. An adolescent, in his own home, at a given moment, will take the freedom he needs to realize his potential. Parents are often over-protective. The child... We have seen that, we certainly have, in our development. We have had to take certain liberties and we did not have to ask. In my opinion, the person who asks is a coward.

Mr. Larose (Gérald): Is this decision conditional on the behaviour Canada may adopt toward us?

Mr. Charlebois: You have in mind, for example?

Mr. Larose (Gérald): Well, do we have to negotiate the decision with Canada? Do we...?

Mr. Charlebois: There is no question of that. Look. Don't ask me to negotiate. When do you want to go and negotiate? We have to go and negotiate with a power! You won't want to mimic another type of negotiation! For goodness sakes! But we have to have the powers...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We have now used up the time for questions from members and we'll move on to a question from the Government group. Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Charlebois and your team, I thank you on behalf of the Government for coming and presenting your brief this morning. I found it interesting, but before getting into it, permit me to make a few clarifications, corrections.

You said that... or you asked the question, in fact: What work could be done by Québec houses abroad to make it known that Québec is French-speaking? I can tell you that Québec houses abroad do very fine work. I had the opportunity to represent, to be head of a mission in 1984, at the time of the 1534-1984 festivities, and I toured France. And I can tell you that the French know very well that in Québec we speak French. I do not think the problem lies there. The problem lies, if you will allow me, Mr. Charlebois, I think there may be a certain snobism on the part of some French-speakers in speaking English. And when you go to take your flight at Charles-de-Gaulle or Roissy, on

your right in an immense field, and it was still there this winter, you see a huge sign announcing an industrial park in the terms "Commercial Park". That is in France, near Paris. I think there is a bit of snobbery. It is not a question of lack of work, for our Québec delegations, in Paris, London or in any other country, do excellent work.

And now, Mr. Charlebois, I would like to talk to you a little about your brief, which seems to be centred on linguistic problems, that's for sure. You almost bring the reader to the conclusion that without a complete recovery of powers in matters of language, education and immigration, Québec is rushing towards suicide. I would like to point out that the current political and constitutional situation in Québec has lasted since 1867 and we are still very much alive in Québec. So, I might ask you why you overdramatize things by talking about Québec committing suicide? I should like to hear what you have to say on the matter. And on page 8 of your brief as well. You write in huge characters that we must have full francization. I would like to ask, how is that to be expressed in public signs? When it comes to rights to education, in the field of health, how will it be expressed? In other words, what constitutional guarantees are you prepared to give the Anglophone minority in Québec?

Mr. Charlebois: You have several questions.

Mrs. Hovington: Yes, because our time is short. Perhaps your answers will be long. And since the time of the answers is counted in our question time, I'd just as soon ask you them all. (10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Charlebois: To start with, I'm going to answer the ones I remember, the beginning. You say that our Québec houses do fine work. That is not the problem. I did not have the time to specify that. I know, for I know people who have already been at the Québec House in Paris, that their work is excellent. Perhaps Mr. Poissant, I don't know, who is somewhat older, has known other generations when Québec... It was not so long ago that Québec set up...

Mrs. Hovington: He is still travelling, nevertheless!

Mr. Charlebois: Now, for the question of suicide. Well! You have had a Mr. Charles Castonguay come and tell you that time is of the essence. You want me to develop all the statistics that show just how pressing things are, that we are rushing towards suicide because of a combination of factors, in particular, the excessively low birthrate we have in Québec. Before that, when we had 20 children, 10 children per family, there was no question... Allophone immigration that went to the English

side, that did not bother us. But today, with the percentage of anglicization, in fact, of our immigration, we cannot with 1.6%, that we say...

Mrs. Hovington: Since the birth allowance policy was established, the birthrate has risen from 1.2% to 1.6% in Québec.

Mr. Charlebois: I may be able to correct you on that, Madam MNA...

Mrs. Hovington: It is not yet enough, but it is a step in the right direction, Sir...

Mr. Charlebois: Listen, I'm going to tell you, it makes me laugh, when I read in the paper and I hear you speak...

Mrs. Hovington: It's Statistics Canada that says so, Mr. Charlebois.

Mr. Charlebois: Yes, but what I hear you saying is that it's due to the Liberal policy of Québec.

Mrs. Hovington: It's Statistics Canada that says so, thanks to the policy of the Bourassa government.

Mr. Charlebois: Statistics Canada, for me, I can also dispute that. But go see the little ladies and ask them if the money Québec gives them for having a child...

Mrs. Hovington: Perhaps it did not hurt, Mr. Charlebois. But let's not get started on that this morning. I would like you to answer my questions.

Mr. Charlebois: It didn't stimulate you, either, eh?

Mrs. Hovington: I would still like you to answer my questions, Mr. Charlebois.

Mr. Charlebois: Which of your questions had we got to?

Mrs. Hovington: I would like you to answer: What constitutional guarantees are you prepared to give the Anglophone minority? Because you said that we must have full francization. I want to know, how is that to be expressed in public signs, in rights to education, in the field of health? How do you treat our Anglophone minority in Québec in that event?

Mr. Charlebois: In the event that we...

Mrs. Hovington: You said that we must have full francization.

Mr. Charlebois: Yes, we must have full

francization. Listen, I think it is a tradition in Québec that our Anglophone minority is well treated. Why would we change? We recognize the rights of the Anglophone minorities to their own educational institutions in Québec, from elementary school to university.

Mrs. Hovington: ...so... that treatment of our Anglophone minority within the Constitution?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That uses up the time for this set of questions. Now we go on to a representative of the Official Opposition party. Mrs. Juneau.

Mrs. Juneau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In answer to Mrs. Hovington, the French, since they are the majority and autonomous, are not much disturbed by signs posted in English, except that we in Québec are a minority, in a sea of Anglophones and we are not, at the moment, separated from Canada, on the one hand. And, on the other hand, in your recommendations you say: The primary, the unique purpose of any effort made in regard to language in Québec by the public powers at every level is the francization of Québec. Don't you believe that for new arrivals, refugees, immigrants, it would be advisable to give a clear message when they choose the land of Québec as their country of adoption? And what do you think we could do in that regard to improve the situation?

Mr. Charlebois: Well, I say we must have a clear message, and the posting of signs contributes to that, the posting of outdoor signs, as well as the attitudes of our people. Then, our institutions must also participate in the effort we can make, that we want all the people who come here to become French-speakers. I say there are two types of citizens in Québec. There is the citizen in law, who pays taxes of various kinds, who meets legal requirements, who can claim all the rights granted to citizens, period, that's it. After that, he goes about his business. An Anglophone, an Allophone can do that, there are also Francophones who can do that. But there are also citizens whom I would call the real citizens. They are the ones who do more than become involved, that is the word that came to me, they integrate into the Francophone community, into the majority community, who integrate into the common way of life we are developing here, in a country. If I went to China, I would not want to establish a ghetto, go on about my business, have my little institutions and build a wall around myself. Here in Québec, I would like people to understand that they must integrate first. This does not mean merely getting involved, getting involved, for instance, with a baseball club, paying \$10 000 000 for it and then going off with

\$100 000 000. Some might get involved in that way, but they don't really give a damn about anything. It's easy not to give a damn, but integrating is something else again...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would prefer that you stuck to the subject, Mr. Charlebois.

Mr. Charlebois: But to integrate... These are examples I'm giving, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, but you give examples that are a bit too personal, in my opinion. I would ask you to continue.

Mr. Charlebois: Thank you. I want people to understand that when they come to our country, they must integrate. What does integrate mean? It's a big word, but Slavson Old, in his book, says: To integrate means to lose your identity to some extent, it means losing something of yourself temporarily, to reach out to another, to identify with another. Temporarily, integration is like that, it does not mean assimilation. To assimilate means to lose everything. The French Canadian never wanted to assimilate. I understand Anglophones not wanting to assimilate, being afraid to assimilate, at present. But I would ask them to integrate into the community, to understand what is going on here, to participate in the life of the community, and not to isolate themselves within their own institutions.

Mrs. Juneau: Another brief we haven't been able to hear at these proceedings, but which I read attentively, which was presented by the Vivre le français committee of the École Le Triolet de Sherbrooke, says: The Vivre le français committee calls sovereignty that which gives full powers to officially declare the Québec territory Francophone, and, consequently, to establish schools based on language rather than on religion. How would you, yourself, see that?

Mr. Charlebois: Listen, I didn't understand your question; I am being disturbed by two members of the Commission who keep talking to each other. I didn't understand.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Charlebois, I think you have every right to listen to the questions and respond to them without being disturbed, but the Commission has been at work for some time now, and we haven't yet had this kind of problem. Would you repeat the question, Mrs. Juneau?

Mrs. Juneau: Yes. In a brief I read, but which was not presented here, the Vivre le français committee of the École Le Triolet call

sovereignty that which gives full powers to officially declare the Québec territory Francophone, and, consequently, to establish schools based on language rather than on religion. I would like to know how you feel about this.

Mr. Charlebois: I don't know if... Rodrigue, could you answer that?

Mr. Larose (Rodrigue): It stands to reason, I think, that once it recovers all its powers, Québec will be a Francophone territory, and it goes without saying that the institutions functioning on that territory will also be Francophone, and this will be acknowledged by everyone, especially by allophones, who, once they set foot in Québec, will not have to wonder as to the nature of schools in Québec. And that may prevent the problems we've encountered and still encounter in the Montréal region. It will be one of the first effects. A second will be to sensitize the school administrators to the nature of the school they have charge of. At the present time, it is often believed that French is taken for granted in the schools, but it's not as true as all that if you look at the daily goings-on in the schools.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, thank you. Thank you, Gentlemen from the Mouvement estrien pour le français, for submitting a brief to the Commission, for the presentation and for answering the questions. Our thanks to Mrs. Manseau, Mr. Messier, Mr. Laplante, Mr. Goulet, Mr. Larose and to you, too, Mr. Charlebois. I would ask you now to vacate the premises so that we can carry on with the next presentation.

We now welcome the Québec Farmers' Association. Mr. Grapes is spokesperson for the group.

M. Riordon (Peter): Non.

Le Président (M. Michel Bélanger): Non. Monsieur...

M. Riordon: Riordon

Le Président (M. Michel Bélanger): Vous avez la parole. Si vous voulez bien présenter vos collègues puis faire votre exposé.

Québec Farmers' Association

Mr. Riordon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In our group this morning, we have, on your right and my left, Mr. Angus McKennon, a young farmer; Mr. Warren Grapes, past president of the Québec Farmers' Association; I am Peter Riordon, the president; on the other side is Steve Gruber, general secretary of our organization; and

Jeannie Neveu, director of the Québec Farmers' Association.
(10:15 a.m.)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. We are happy to have the opportunity to present our point of view on behalf of the Québec Farmers' Association. To introduce the Québec Farmers' Association, it is a provincial association of volunteer Anglophones from family farms. We have 10 branches throughout the province, from Pontiac to Gaspé. Our main objectives are to provide information and create educational opportunities for farmers representing our organization with the government or other organizations, and to promote the social and economic development of our rural communities. As you might have read in our brief, and may I add that an erratum has been distributed, and I hope everyone received it because the error is a technical one, and I want to leave you with the correction. It's on page 12, I believe, and has been distributed. I hope everyone has a copy. Our association's major concerns with respect to the future of Québec are the future prospects of the agricultural sector, and the existence of the rural Anglophone community. You have no doubt taken note of our support for renewed federalism within Canada, in which Québec would remain a full-fledged partner. During these few minutes, I would like to underline two questions with respect to our position. The first is the currently widespread opinion, in some circles, that if English Canada cannot accept Québec's conditions for Meech Lake, how can we hope for renewed federalism?

Here, I would like to be very clear, and point out that this rather simplistic argument doesn't correspond to the facts. More than 80% of the participants in the Meech Lake discussions accepted the Accord. How then can we consider this debate as a mass rejection? This is truly incomprehensible to anyone who followed the proceedings. Secondly, most of those who rejected the Meech Lake Accord were not blind to Québec's needs, but rather objected to the methods used by the governments to obtain their agreement, or objected to what was left out of the Accord, particularly aboriginal rights, women's rights and minority rights.

In no instance could we discern complete rejection per se of Québec's constitutional rights. When we consider the matter from this point of view, coupled with Prime Minister Mulroney's recent call for renewed federalism, we believe it is possible to meet Québec's need to be heard and to receive the consideration it deserves from the other provinces in any future constitutional discussions.

The second point we would like to consider today is, even if we were ready to accept a lower standard of living as a price for Québec independence, what would we really gain, from a constitutional point of view, by independence or

sovereignty-association, that Québec does not already possess, or could not ask for and realistically obtain through negotiation in renewed federalism? First, we would ask Quebecers to consider the sovereign powers it now has under section 92 of the Act of Confederation of 1867. There are over 15 key areas in which Québec has decision-making powers, and they include health, justice and education.

We have had taxation powers and control over our lands and resources since 1867. We have the power to write and amend our own provincial constitution, and to borrow money as we need it. Québec can administer and sell its public properties, including the trees and forests growing on its land. Québec can establish and maintain its own social and health care institutions. All municipal institutions in Québec fall under provincial jurisdiction. Québec is responsible for the exchange of properties and other civil matters. We have our own courts and judges, as well as the responsibility for imposing fines and penalties to enforce our provincial laws.

This represents only a few examples in which Québec enjoys complete sovereignty under the present federal system. Perhaps we might wish to make some constitutional adjustments, to control other areas of jurisdiction such as the environment or immigration, for example, but let's be realistic. Even in an independent State, we would still have to sit with our neighbours and negotiate these different points, presuming that Québec still wants to sell its energy to Vermont or Ontario, or be able to travel freely outside Québec. We are opposed to a declaration of independence to obtain all powers because of the economic and social costs.

From the point of view of agriculture, we can clearly see that the independence and sovereignty-association options would demand great sacrifices from many of our agricultural producers. A large part of our dairy sector now receives substantial benefits. In fact, it is dependent on guaranteed markets provided for Québec by the rest of Canada, thanks to Canadian system for managing supplies.

I might add, even to think for a minute that we could hold on to our present market share within the present system by negotiating, should Québec declare itself independent, is really not very realistic. Other agricultural producers, like the poultry farmers, for example, also receive comparable benefits as a result of their present status in Canada.

Finally, regardless of the constitutional future of Québec, we want to make the members of the Commission aware of two concerns which are critical to our community. The Anglophone agricultural producers of Québec and their rural communities have contributed to the development of Québec, and have been pioneers in many rural

regions of our province over several generations.

During this period, we have set up, through our own efforts, many of our own health and social services which are vital in maintaining our communities. Jurisdiction over these institutions is now in the hands of the Québec government. Nevertheless, we sincerely hope that, regardless of which level of government is responsible, it will see to it that the necessary funds are still provided for English-language services, and will consider it an obligation to provide these services.

In the same way...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This is about all the time we have for your presentation. You may continue a bit longer.

Mr. Riordon: In the same way, we are ready to listen to the concerns of Québec Francophones with regard to their schools. We, also, are concerned about this matter for our own community, and ask that, regardless of the future status of Québec, the Anglophone communities be able to preserve their constitutional guarantees, and their right to keep and have access to an equitable share of funding for the purpose of maintaining their school system under direct, local control.

Messrs. Co-chairmen, we are proud to be Quebecers, and very proud to be Canadians. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, since it involves a presentation which can last up to an hour, the question times are 10 minutes for each of the two parliamentary groups, 25 minutes for the members, with a maximum of five minutes each, as usual, and we begin with the Government party. First, Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman of the Québec Farmers' Association, if you have no objection, I will begin with the youngest member of your team; I will ask him a few personal questions. I want to understand what agriculture has meant for Anglophones in Québec, the sociological dimension.

Mr. McKennon, do you work on a farm at the moment, or do you work with the Anglophone Farmers' Association?

Mr. McKennon (Angus): I live on a farm in Coaticook.

Mr. Benoit: In the introduction of your document, you tell us that the Anglophone farmers here, inherited the farms from their ancestors. In your case, has your family been on this farm for many generations?

Mr. McKennon: Yes, I am the sixth

generation.

Mr. Benoit: So, many McKennons before you worked that farm.

Mr. McKennon: Yes, many.

Mr. Benoit: In the introduction, in Chapter B, you talk about the future of Québec agriculture for Anglophone families... Can you tell me about that? What does it mean to be a young, sixth generation farmer on the McKennon farm, how does he see the future in Québec, as an Anglophone farmer? How do you see it?

Mr. McKennon: In general, the future of agriculture is the same for the Anglophone as for the Francophone. What concerns me, when it comes to Anglophone issues, is the future of our language in the context of a French Québec. As far as colleagues my own age in my region are concerned, we are few; I can think of three or four. Before, there were 20 or 30. As for my future in agriculture, as long as I have constitutional guarantees for my culture in a future Québec, I am confident that my farm will prosper.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you. I'll come back to you, Mr. President. Mr. President, a recent poll published by the Union des producteurs agricoles indicated that 80% of farmers think that Québec is penalized by federal agricultural policies. In your brief, when you speak of dairy products and poultry, you say just about the opposite. I don't have a farm, and I don't know much about agriculture; on the other hand, I do represent a fair number of farmers in my riding, and I would like to understand where the truth really lies in this debate between the Francophone farmers' point of view and yours. Do we gain or do we lose if Québec becomes sovereign?

Mr. Riordon: We all know that the population of Québec represents about 25% or 26% of the population of Canada. In the dairy sector, Québec has 48% of the Canadian market for processing milk, that is milk used to make butter, ice cream, cheese, etc. Now there are other provinces, such as British Columbia, the Maritimes and other Western provinces which would very much like to have a larger share of the dairy products market for their agricultural producers. You can readily understand that we have a 20% bigger slice of the Canadian market than we should have, given our population. (10:30 a.m.)

I have good connections with producers outside Québec. It's probably easier for me because I speak English fluently. I travel outside the province a little and I am in contact with the people from the federal marketing board for dairy products. I assure you, without a doubt,

that if Québec separates, maybe even before it separates, if the rest of Canada sees it coming, the other provinces will pull out of the cooperative marketing system for dairy products, and Québec will lose a market worth close to \$450 000 000 in dairy products. It will hit us hard in the pocketbook. Today, we are losing perhaps 100 or so dairy farmers a year, even with the present market conditions. I can tell you in all sincerity that, without the slightest doubt, if dairy farmers in the Province of Québec were to lose those markets, it would spell disaster for them.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I will ask Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay...

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I speak to you, Mr. President, I would like to... you will allow me set the record straight with regard to immigration, because I would not want the myth that Allophones assimilate with Anglophones to be perpetuated. Whereas in 1951, 50% of our immigrants, of newcomers, knew French, according to the last census of 1986, 70% of newcomers knew French, which is an increase of 20%. And I would like to emphasize that the use of the French language is a very reliable measure, certainly, of one's ability to integrate into the society of the majority. However, it is not the only measure. Employment is also an important measure, full participation in the political, economic, social and cultural life of Québec. And when it comes to... the ultimate degree of integration is integration into political life. And I am happy to note, in fact, that we have Quebecers of other origins sitting with us today, which points to very successful integration.

So, on reading your brief, I wanted to mention what I had observed. You say that you are concerned about the negative impact of severing constitutional ties between Québec and Canada. Do you believe the Canadian federal system could be renewed in such a way as to take Québec's aspirations into account? And how do you envisage negotiations being resumed between our province and the rest of Canada, when they said no to Québec's minimal demands last summer?

Mr. Riordon: You ask if we could begin again, and how we could reopen talks on constitutional amendments in favour of Québec's needs. As we said before, I am convinced it's possible. Possible, because I think we may have learned something from the attempts we've made so far. We all know that the procedures used in the Meech Lake debate were unacceptable to a great number of people in Canada. Everything

was done behind closed doors. The people were almost totally left out. Eleven persons hidden behind closed doors decided to adopt something. Had it been more of an open debate, it would perhaps have made Canadians more confident about the possibility of amending the Constitution. We had questions on the meaning of certain points in the Meech Lake Accord. It wasn't clear.

We even heard Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Bourassa say that a certain clause said two different things. Is that the way to write a constitution? In my opinion, no. Everyone must understand clearly what is meant and what is implied. A constitution is a very important document. And, for me, a constitution is a document which controls the power of government for the benefit of its citizens. It's a document for citizens; it's not a government document, even if the leaders of government, perhaps, must take the lead in preparing it. But it has to be discussed. The people must support and uphold what is being done.

Another point. I believe that, in the rest of Canada, there was not only misunderstanding of what was going on in Québec, and why, but there was also some doubt as to Québec's sincerity. I think that today, the situation has changed considerably. There is no question the Anglophone majority in the rest of Canada now understands very well that there is a feeling of dissatisfaction in Québec vis-à-vis Canada, and that change must come. And I am convinced that there is a place today for courageous politicians who would reopen the debate. It would take courage, because we've painted ourselves into a corner, and, to some extent, we will have to walk on fresh paint.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We carry on now with questions from the Official Opposition group, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I will begin with a few comments. First of all, I wish to refute President Riordon's allegation that Meech was accepted by 80% of the participants in the debate. Immediately after Meech, scientifically conducted polls were carried out in English Canada, and 82% of Canadian citizens literally rejected the Meech Lake Accord. The blame was put on Mr. Harper and Mr. Wells, but Mr. Rémillard, himself, at least 20 times during this Commission, affirmed that there was out-and-out rejection of Meech in English Canada, and that it was the people who rejected it, basically. So, I don't go along with its being said that it was accepted. It's not true.

Secondly, you stress the importance of keeping your social and health care services, and with good reason; but as of next January, there will be \$1 200 000 000 in federal cutbacks in the health care sector. I hope you won't say it's

Québec's fault if ever services in Québec are affected. I would also like to say... I find it very odd that you mix agreements duly concluded between producers, marketing agreements, you mix these in with the constitutional status, and your constitutional argument amounts to thinly veiled economic blackmail vis-à-vis the Québec producers. It's almost blatant blackmail, economic blackmail, which is in keeping, for that matter, with the reaction expected.

In your brief, you put the emphasis on one element of the agricultural system, the supply management agencies. I was expecting you to broach the subject of federal government agricultural policies in a much more comprehensive way, notably, the massive support Ottawa has been giving to Western grain farmers since 1984. Since 1984, Mr. Mulroney's government has paid over \$17 000 000 000 to Western grain producers, financed in large part by our income taxes, since we pay at least 25% of all of it, and that by increasing special assistance programs to improve production and help producers, while Québec producers received \$1 500 000 000 for the same period, at the rate of approximately \$250 000 000 a year, whereas Québec gives about \$350 000 000 a year to the agricultural sector.

We represent about 25% of the population. We represent about 16% of Canada's total production, and we receive 7% of the subsidies from Ottawa. I would like to know if you support the UPA, the Union des producteurs agricoles québécois, which says that the federal government agricultural policies are completely iniquitous. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Riordon: What you say about Western grain markets, certainly the international market has been lopsided for some years now, and that's why there have been so many problems at the GATT discussions in Brussels, only just recently, this week, in fact. Export subsidies for agricultural products must be lowered everywhere in the world, because the taxpayer, agriculture or no agriculture, can no longer afford huge subsidies such as we've had to date, very recently, for the export of grains and cereals especially. What is happening on the international grain market has nothing to do with the Ottawa-Québec issue, it's an issue to be addressed by GATT, and I am very happy to confirm that Mr. Jacques Proulx, president of the Union des producteurs agricoles, which is our organization as well, represented us in Brussels and supported the GATT position on trade in agricultural products. We want to keep the system for managing supply and we want to decrease export subsidies. We don't disagree with Mr. Proulx on that issue.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Mr. President, if I understand you correctly, in the event of Québec's becoming a sovereign State, you tell us that it would be in Canada's interests to break up the agricultural products market, to split it, to divide it in two, in such a way that the Québec export of agricultural products, particularly in the dairy and poultry sectors, where we have more than we need for ourselves, that those exports would be... that the Canadian market would be closed to those exports. When you say there is a danger, there is a threat that we would lose a large part of the milk quotas, in particular, that the Canadian market would then be closed to our agricultural products, are you aware that there is another side to this, which is that the Québec market would close to Canadian agricultural products as well. There are Canadian agricultural products which are also sold on the Québec market. Ontario fruits and vegetables, Western beef, Western grain. We supply barely 20% of our own beef. Where does the rest come from? It comes from the West. We are a market for Canadian agricultural products as well.

What you are saying is, if Québec becomes sovereign, and the Canadian market closes, closes to Québec products, it will do us a great deal of harm, that's obvious. But you realize that, to counteract that, Canadian producers will also be hurt because the Québec market will close to Canadian products too. Don't you think that, ultimately, good sense, good economic sense on both sides dictates that, in the event of Québec's becoming a country, a sovereign State, the trade in agricultural products should continue as it is now, and agreements, programs for supply management which have been commonly agreed to, should be maintained as well? What you are saying is that everything will be completely disrupted because Québec becomes sovereign, and that Quebecers and Canadians both, in joyous, masochistic fashion, will do each other great harm.
(10:45 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Brassard, there is little time left for the answer. Go ahead.

Mr. Riordon: Fine, you're talking about apples and oranges. The dairy market is controlled by a supply management system, and there is great inequality from the point of view of the producers outside Québec. I'm certain it would change, there is no doubt, absolutely no doubt. As far as beef is concerned, and grain, it's an open market. Those with the best prices will make the sale.

I give the floor to Mr. Gruber.

Mr. Gruber (Steve): Votre question présuppose que l'on nous demanderait d'établir une entente avec le Canada, entente qui serait profitable aux deux parties. Une telle entente

suppose que nous avons des échanges qui s'équilibrent, ce qui n'est pas le cas. Les agriculteurs du Québec perdraient un marché garanti que lui assure le régime fédéral actuel. Les marchés dont vous avez fait mention, celui du boeuf et les autres, sont soumis au jeu de la libre entreprise. Les producteurs de l'Alberta ne le savent que trop bien, si vous êtes au courant de ce qui se passe dans ce domaine. N'ayant pas de marché garanti au Québec, ils se tournent vers le Japon et les États-Unis pour vendre leurs produits, sachant bien qu'ils ne pourront plus, peut-être au cours des dix prochaines années, vendre au Québec autant que par le passé. Nous sommes... L'indépendance ferait perdre aux producteurs québécois le marché garanti actuel sans assurance de quoi que ce soit en retour.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So time has run out for this question period. We carry on with questions from the members. Mr. Deslongchamps, who is substituting for Mr. Proulx, who will be followed by Mr. Libérateur and Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Deschamps: Mr. Deschamps, Deschamps.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Why did I write Deslongchamps. It was an agricultural name... I was carried away. I'm sorry.

Mr. Deschamps: I forgive you. Deschamps is even more agricultural.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, but it was long...

Mr. Deschamps: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had prepared several questions. I find your brief interesting. Mr. Chevette asked a question on the iniquity of federal transfer payments. I would have liked a more explicit reply to this question. Obviously, you have not answered the question. I won't dwell on the subject any longer, given that a document signed by the Québec government, by the Coopérative fédérée and by the UPA, in 1988, clearly demonstrated that federal transfer payments to Québec, for agriculture, were grossly unfair during the 1980s. I will stop there.

I want to reply to... and then ask you a question relating to your assessment of the disaster, and that is the word you used with regard to the dairy industry, in the event of sovereignty. You know that the UPA conference held in Québec City just ended yesterday. Of the 441 delegates present, the great majority of producers accepted the resolution proposing that Québec become a sovereign nation; there were only three negative votes. Of these 441 delegates, over three quarters are dairy farmers. And despite that, the farmers chose this path. Is... You are no doubt familiar with the GATT

provisions. You know that rules exist with respect to supply management systems which permit a country with a supply management system to apply border controls. This is what Canada has implemented vis-à-vis foreign imports, for milk, poultry and eggs. And with these border controls, we can manage supplies and maintain reasonable prices.

If Québec becomes sovereign, it will also have the right to take advantage of the GATT provisions and establish customs quotas. So will Canada vis-à-vis the supply management systems. So, the regulatory systems must be relative to imports over the previous five years. So Québec would have a guaranteed market in Canada, based on its exports over the previous five years.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Deschamps, you really should allow a little time for the answer. Would you kindly get to the question.

Mr. Deschamps: I apologize, Mr. Chairman. I understood that it wouldn't be easy to ask a question which would elicit an enlightened answer on the subject. I would like to know what your reaction is to this situation. Did you take this into account in your assessment, which said that it might spell disaster for the dairy industry?

Mr. Riordon: If I can answer without taking too much time. First, with regard to the resolution which was carried by the UPA yesterday, or the day before, you may have forgotten to mention that there was an amendment which was accepted, if I understood correctly, that this was the position of the members as long as there was no fiscal or economic penalty. In my opinion, it was quite an important amendment. Secondly, you speak of acquired rights between countries. Québec is not a country at the moment, at least, not as far as international law is concerned, and I have no confidence whatsoever that this acquired right between countries will be recognized over the issue of the dairy market in Canada. You know as well as I, Mr. Deschamps, that British Columbia has already pulled out of the national marketing program for milk, and they were persuaded to come back in, only after long and hard negotiations and other... the French word escapes me... but they received other benefits. They're still not happy, and they aren't the only ones. Someone asked if the Canadian government would drop its milk marketing program. No, the government wouldn't, but the agricultural producers and their milk marketing federations across Canada would pull out, and pull out very fast.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We

carry on now with questions from Mr. Liberatore. I would remind you that, even if the question period is fairly long, we have many speakers. If possible, get to the question as quickly as possible so that there is time for answers.

Mr. Liberatore: I had occasion to read your brief, and I must admit that, through your brief, and through your answers, you confirm what you say very clearly: that Anglophone and Francophone farmers in Québec have always enjoyed good relations, and that, unfortunately, you, like the rest of our citizens, are being subjected to this dilemma, this futile, political debate which leads nowhere. I would also like to say that, fortunately, as long as we still have reasonable people who do real things, the complementary aspect of Québec and Canada can work. And you go a very, very long way. You say: We are ready to adapt to a new Québec, one which respects Francophones. My question is the following: How far are you ready to go to support those claims, so as to prevent what we know divorce brings: anguish for the mother, anguish for the father, anguish for the child, without considering the financial price to be paid? So, can you tell us how far you are ready to go to prevent what could be a catastrophe, because we don't have any proof today that separation is financially and humanly possible without constructive dialogue?

Mr. Riordon: I want to say two things to begin with. First, you spoke of differences between Anglophones and Francophones, and I must say that, almost without exception, in my opinion, our members have very, very good relations with their Francophone neighbours, very cooperative relations. They work together. They talk together. They visit each other. They are good friends. There is no problem between our Anglophone members and our Francophone neighbours. It's a problem at the philosophical, political level, at a level very distant from our farms. Anyhow, that's how we see it in the area.

The other point I want to make is that I have no doubt Québec could survive as an independent State. There are many countries in the world with a smaller population than Québec. Québec is rich in resources. It's a very progressive society that could survive. I have no doubt about that. Could we survive just as well as part of Canada? There, I see a difference. In my opinion, being part of a Canada "A mari usque ad mare" offers us a lot from an economic point of view, and I think, from an emotional point of view as well. I don't know if that answers...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall now proceed with a question from Mr. Nicolet, followed by Mr. Dufour and Mr. Libman.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A certain misunderstanding and certain contradictions seem to be developing this morning; perhaps we should clarify them. Allow me to do so as a preamble to my question, since I believe that certain things should be replaced. My neighbour at this table, who attended the conference as general secretary of the UPA, has handed me the amended resolution that was presented and to which Mr. Chairman was referring. That resolution stated that the general conference of the UPA asks the confederation to work actively and without political partisanship on the forging of a sovereign Québec, and to involve all the structures of the Union; to make sure that the Charter of Rights is enshrined in Québec's constitution, including a specific article on equality for men and women; to make sure that agriculture in Québec develops smoothly on the basis of four mainstays, namely, etc.

Therefore, I hope you'll excuse me, but since I am not directly involved in agriculture, I would like to make an observation, from a different perspective, to the effect that you basically share the same preoccupations as your Francophone counterparts. In your brief, and I'm getting to my question, you also touch on the problem of decentralization as an important element in making the Anglophone community in Québec feel secure. There again, I would like to stress that this concern is widely shared by many Quebecers. In this perspective, could you elaborate? You have spoken of decentralizing school affairs, but is it for the entire future administration of the institutions that are important to the Anglophone community (I'm thinking of health services)? For you, is decentralization an important element in this society that we must build, no matter what the constitutional future of Québec is? And, secondly, I'd like... Finally, I shall let you answer this question and, if I still have a bit of time, I shall return to the second part of my question.

(11:00 a.m.)

Mr. Riordon: Well, if I understand you correctly, what you are asking about the institutions in our Anglophone community, the life of our Anglophone communities depends surely on the existence of certain institutions that are available to our members, who are perhaps less capable of expressing themselves in French than I am. That means, in particular, the educational and health institutions; and then, so that those institutions are truly valid for our community, they must surely be controlled to a certain extent by our community. The know-how of these institutions, particularly the schools, must be adapted to Anglophones.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think I'm going to cut you short, Mr. Nicolet. We have so little time, and I would like to hear

as many people as possible, with your permission. May I carry on? Thank you.

Mr. Nicolet: ...the Chair.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It was hard to refuse, wasn't it? Mr. Dufour, followed by Mr. Libman and Mr. Ouellet.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should like to thank the Association for submitting its brief. We can attempt to discredit some of your figures, but the fact remains that it is a brief that describes certain benefits of federalism, and you are experiencing these benefits of federalism. Of course, those who do not share your thesis can question some of your figures.

For my part, I accept them. I won't return to the matter of poultry and dairy products that Mr. Benoit spoke to us about at the beginning. I would merely like to add, and that seems much less questionable to me, another argument that you bring up on page 7. When you say, for example, that, in the area of regional industrial development programs, Industry, Science and Technology Canada granted 20 subsidies in 1988-1989, and 18 were granted to firms in Québec, that seems an excessively high percentage to me; and I don't think, to say the least, that those figures can be questioned.

You told us, as have a number of other groups, for all practical purposes like all the groups, that a sovereign Québec would be viable. I doubt that anyone would contest that. Except that we have a concern that goes far beyond that. We want to maintain our standard of living, and I think that all Quebecers also want to improve it. It's not just a matter of maintaining it; it's because we all have expectations in that regard.

On page 8 of your brief, you say in the summary that if you no longer had subsidies, comparable programs, federal quotas and measures of assistance would be difficult to obtain from Québec if she were entirely alone. Therefore, that supposes that, even if it is viable, maintaining the present standard of living that you enjoy today would be difficult. I would like to hear you express your views more fully on that point.

Mr. Riordon: I believe, Mr. Dufour, that it is perhaps you, yourself, who are bringing to the fore figures showing that the net benefit to Québec comes from Ottawa. If we take all the transfers from Québec taxes to Ottawa, and the funds that come back to us, we are on the benefit side in Québec. I believe that, even if the figures are perhaps lower today than they were a few years ago, we are still on the benefit side. And I can see no means, no situation in which we would be able to find

benefits without that net transfer from Ottawa which is supported by Canadians outside Québec. That is clear enough for me.

Mr. Dufour: What you are saying is that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, we are a bit pressed for time. You haven't used up all your five minutes, but almost. Will you give me the remaining 30 seconds for the next person?

Mr. Dufour: Oh, certainly, with pleasure.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Fine. Mr. Libman, followed by Mr. Ouellet.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, I greatly appreciated your analysis of the Meech Lake fiasco. Also, a distinction must always be drawn between the final version of Meech and the five minimal conditions, but all those who opposed Meech, even the most adamant, agreed to the five initial conditions and, in the end, what killed Meech was the interpretation of the clause on the distinct society and its potential impact on the Charter of Rights. We have to realize that. Indeed, the initial conditions of the Liberal Party of Québec were the recognition of Québec as a distinct society to be in a preamble where there could be no impact on the Charter. Therefore, it is very important to stress the differences between the five minimal conditions and Meech. And I am going to ask Mr. Chevette, afterwards, to give me the survey he read; I've seen that survey, and nowhere did I see that figure of 82%, so I'm going to ask him for it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Do you have a question for... I'm sorry, but!

Mr. Libman: Yes. My question is as follows: Vous nous avez parlé des conséquences économiques négatives de l'indépendance du Québec. Je suis d'accord avec vous et je crois que vous faites preuve de courage en venant nous dire sincèrement que les conséquences économiques d'un Québec indépendant vous inquiètent; il y bien d'autres organismes qui devraient aussi avoir le courage d'exprimer leurs inquiétudes à ce sujet. Mais, au lieu de nous étendre sur certains de ces risques, pourriez-vous, vous ou une autre personne, nous parler des avantages que la fédération canadienne a apportés à votre industrie au cours des 123 dernières années?

Mr. Gruber: Il serait malheureux que vous ne voyiez dans notre exposé qu'un plaidoyer contre l'indépendance. Nous préférons considérer les institutions et les règlements, auxquels nous

avons fait référence, à l'intérieur de la gestion des approvisionnement. Et quel peut être l'effet positif du fédéralisme sans le système fédéral et sans la possibilité de négocier des avantages pour le Québec. L'agriculture québécoise ne serait pas devenue ce qu'elle est aujourd'hui. Nous ne disons pas que tout cela serait perdu. Notre approche peut vous paraître négative sans doute parce que, au départ, nous voyons le fédéralisme d'un bon oeil.

Mr. Libman: Bon. Vous dites aussi que si le réseau scolaire du Québec devait se composer de commissions scolaires linguistiques plutôt que confessionnelles, vous demanderiez des garanties constitutionnelles à cet égard. Est-ce que je vous ai bien compris?

Mr. Gruber: Nous demanderons des garanties constitutionnelles bien précises quel que soit le système scolaire dans notre circonscription, peu importe l'assise scolaire ou l'assise constitutionnelle du gouvernement.

Mr. Libman: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like to congratulate you on your brief, which has shed light, in my opinion very importantly, on the situation of Québec agriculture, which has a specialty that everyone recognizes in the dairy business, both for fluid and for milk used for manufacturing purposes. And, in particular in the realm of industrial milk, my statement is the same as Mr. Benoit's, who was speaking earlier about the importance of the fact that 48% of all industrial milk in Canada comes from the province of Québec.

I would like you to elaborate a bit, not on what that represents as annual revenue, that major share of the market, but on the other aspect, that is, the value of those milk quotas, because they do have a value, those quotas? What does that represent? I think you speak a bit about it in your brief, but these are figures that the public listening to us hasn't had a chance to read, and I think they should be given that opportunity.

Mr. Riordon: The milk production quota costs farm producers somewhere in the vicinity of \$360 per litre per day to produce. That is for fluid. For milk used for manufacturing, the formula is slightly more complex, because it is based on the percentage of fat. It isn't too far from being equal. At any rate, let's mention \$360 because it's easier to understand. I ask you; I ask anyone; what will happen to the value of that quota if Québec milk producers lose the 20%

market for milk in Canada, which represents the surplus of self-sufficiency in Québec? That represents the retirement fund for most dairy farmers. And it's another viewpoint on the disaster in the dairy industry in Québec. I can tell you that the number of dairy producers would fall hard, and fast, if we were to cut our ties with Canada.

Mr. Ouellet: On page 6, you say that dairy farms in Québec alone hold a quota value of more than \$2 000 000 000. That means that, on today's market, because it's a quota market as you explained earlier to Mr. Brassard, which is very different from the free market for commodities such as vegetables, meat, etc. But that controlled market, obviously, has a value because it is controlled within Canada. And, obviously, if you were to lose that market, the value of the quotas would no longer be the same. How great a loss would that represent?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): One last answer, Mr. Riordon.

Mr. Riordon: Fine. I don't have the figures at hand for that question, but it would be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Then you are not necessarily confirming Mr. Ouellet's figure, but you are saying that it is a large figure.

Mr. Ouellet: The present value is \$2 billion. Now...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, the value. Because asking for an evaluation of quotas, quickly like that, it doesn't give Mr. Riordon enough time.

Mr. Ouellet: ...well, obviously, if the quotas lose value, they will no longer be worth 2 000 000 000. How much will they be worth?

Mr. Riordon: OK. I can say that, after calculating that in my head, we would certainly lose \$400 000 000. That can be looked at more closely but, for a preliminary estimate, that's about it.

Mr. Ouellet: Perhaps we should look into that, eh?

Mr. Riordon: Perhaps.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Good. This marks the end of the time we have for this brief. I should like to thank the Québec Farmers' Association, Mr. Riordon, Mr. Gruber, Mrs. Neveu, Mr. Grapes and Mr. MacKennon for this brief. Merci pour cette présentation que vous

avez faite à la Commission.

I should now like to call on Mr. Bertrand Nadeau, Mr. Sylvain Harper, Mr. Marc Nadeau and Mr. Christian Hébert-Croteau to come to the table.

(11:15 a.m.)

We shall now hear from Mr. Nadeau, Mr. Harper... I haven't quite... I'm sorry, I haven't checked with you who the dissident members of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Sherbrooke are. Since their brief is identified in this way, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Sherbrooke has asked us to please note that it is not a brief that represents the views of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Sherbrooke, that only, of course, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Sherbrooke can use its name; but these are members who have submitted a personal brief, identifying themselves as dissident members of that organization. Mr. Nadeau, will you present your fellow members?

Mr. Nadeau (Marc): This is Mr. Hébert-Croteau.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Croteau.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau (Christian): That is correct.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go on, please.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Gentlemen of the Commission...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): First introduce your two colleagues, then...

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: That's coming.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Please begin.

Dissident members of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Sherbrooke

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Gentlemen of the Commission, although the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste of the diocese of Sherbrooke has been in existence since September 1939, it separated from the Fédération national in 1969, when the Mouvement national des Québécois declared itself in favour of Québec independence. We are three young dissident members of the Sherbrooke SSJB. Allow me to make the introductions: to my right, Marc Nadeau, who is 16 years old and in Secondary V; to my left, Sylvain Harper, who is 17 and in his first year of cegep; and myself, Christian Hébert-Croteau. I'm 16 years old and in Secondary V.

We joined the Sherbrooke SSJB because its

main objective was the protection and development of French-Canadian traditions, institutions and language. Late last September, the members of the Sherbrooke diocesan council decided to present a brief to the Parliamentary Commission, and we agreed with this decision. Mr. Gilles Geoffroy, a notary from Danville, was elected president in charge of writing the brief and 12 people were appointed to assist him, including the three of us here today, on account of our keen interest in Québec's future. Most of the committee members declared themselves in favour of a brief with a decidedly nationalist slant. When it was presented last October 31, it was rejected by 12 of the 15 diocesan-council members present, without previously consulting the 15 000 members. With the support of the director, Bertrand Nadeau, who immediately resigned, we decided to make this brief, for which we had worked so hard, our own. Here it is.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): May I remind you that your entire presentation must not exceed five minutes, including the time you have just taken. Go ahead.

Mr. Nadeau: Throughout their short history, Francophone Quebecers have had to resist English Canada's determination to assimilate them. They soon realized that their rights were being continually eroded. Through laws, agreements and unilateral discussions, the federal government has constantly taken over powers from Québec. During the Québec referendum of 1980, Ottawa promised Quebecers their rightful place in the Confederation. However, this promise was broken when the Canadian Constitution was patriated without the participation of Québec. The failure of Meech shows that the Anglophone majority refuses to recognize the distinctive character of Québec, even when its demands are minimal. We have stopped believing the lies of the federal government, which is Anglophone for the most part. We want to recover all our jurisdictions and powers. We want to build a country that reflects our way of thinking. We must act quickly, because our strength is being eroded daily and we are in danger of being assimilated.

We're convinced that, when this Commission is over, there will be a consensus that Québec should be independent. We recommend that a referendum with a simple question on sovereignty be organized as soon as possible.

We aren't specialists in economics. Nevertheless, we believe that a sovereign Québec would be best equipped to defend its own interests. We also believe that we're no less intelligent than others and that we have excellent economists and specialists in all fields who would be able to run our country very well.

The family is no longer what it used to be

in Québec. There are fewer marriages, fewer children, more divorces, and more single-parent families. However, we are in favour of immigration only if immigrants can become integrated into the population of Québec and become Francophone. Immigration should help support Québec democracy, solely in relation to the needs of Québec. Compared to other regions, the Eastern Townships is more prone to Americanization, along its borders with the United States. It is more likely to lose its identity. We're convinced that a sovereign Québec alone is capable of safeguarding the family, which is the cornerstone of Québec society.

After the refusal of Meech Lake, after two years of fruitless efforts, we believe that the rest of Canada will never understand or support the people of Québec. We enjoy the tremendous advantage of having a clearly defined territory and our own culture, which, in fact, has the most members in Canada. According to our history books, Francophones are more numerous than any other ethnic group, including peoples of British origin.

Mr. Harper (Sylvain): To enable Québec to become rapidly independent, we recommend that the government immediately recover all powers related to the family, immigration and, especially, taxation and that it grant families much more generous family allowances. When we're parents, we want to be sure that having children doesn't necessarily lead to poverty and hardship, that all the expenses related to educating and looking after children are not borne by parents alone. Québec society as a whole benefits from the important contribution made by the birth of children. Québec's day care services should be accessible to all parents. A sovereign Québec should set up services and aid organizations that will allow young Québec families to grow and have the children they desire: assistance in the areas of housing, transportation and leisure; and services for families, couples and children experiencing difficulty. Only a sovereign Québec can adequately protect the Québec family in a territory where the language of work and education is French, in an America with a population 50 times the size of our own.

In conclusion, we would like to ask this Commission to ensure that young people participate in drawing up the Québec constitution. We love Québec. We ask you to take the necessary steps to hand our language, culture and institutions down to us in their entirety. But you must act quickly. We will help you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will begin with the questions from a representative of the Official Opposition, Mrs.

Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to these hearings. In view of your age, I would certainly like to emphasize your courage and daring. It gives us confidence in the future. You say in your brief that we must act quickly. You repeated this in your presentation and spoke, in particular, about culture, language and the family. I will start with culture and language. How do you think plans for sovereignty would help protect or promote the development of our culture and language in our territory?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: With Québec independence as a blueprint for society, we will be able to recover all our powers and, thereby, manage our language and culture ourselves. We will be able to invest money or whatever in our priorities, namely, language, which is one priority, and culture, to protect ourselves. This, basically, is why we should recover our rights.

Mrs. Marois: Since you talked about the family, I would like to perhaps go back, before asking you a question, to a comment often made at this table, in particular, to information often given at this table on the fertility rate of Québec women in 1989. People say that birth rate policies, namely, the allowance granted for a third child, have boosted the fertility rate. In my opinion, we shouldn't make figures say what they don't really say, since the higher birth rate is due to the birth of a first child and it will only be in a few years from now, when we see whether couples are actually having a third child, that we'll know whether this policy has led to an increase in the birth rate and, therefore, in the number of families having a third child. I think it's important to clarify this point.

In your brief, you talk about a blueprint for society that focuses largely on the family. What essential powers or basic elements do you think should constitute this new blueprint for society, and how would the powers recovered from Ottawa make it easier to implement this project in a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: OK. We think that the family is the cornerstone of society and that, by recovering certain powers such as those related to the family, we could easily implement this project. We would be able to take concrete measures to manage the family, in a manner that reflects our way of thinking. Since Canada administers affairs globally, and considers, above all, the Anglophone majority in Canada, its programs aren't adapted to us; they're not designed for us. In reality, we're different. In our case, therefore, it's impossible for these programs to be effective. Consequently, if we recovered these powers, we would be able to

manage the family in our own way, in a way that reflects our way of thinking. This is why it's very important to recover these powers.

Mrs. Marois: You're 16 years old, you're 17 years old. You attend one of the various educational institutions and take part in leisure activities. Do you have the impression, regardless of your background, where you study, and what you participate in, that you, who are young people yourselves, represent the viewpoint of young people to a certain extent?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes. I have the impression that we resemble them. Moreover, that's what's so important. Yes, I really have the impression that we resemble them.

Mrs. Marois: That you... Yes, go ahead.

Mr. Nadeau: Yes, that's correct. As my colleague just said, we definitely come from milieus that, as you say, might be different. But I think that many young people are in favour of independence, because we're the ones who will run this country in the future. Therefore, we're... We want to take part in building it, since it will be ours. And this, in a sense, is why a very large majority of young people advocate independence. To have a country of their own and be able to govern their country themselves.

Mrs. Marois: OK. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Marois. We will now hear the questions from the members: Mr. Libman, Mr. Hogue, Mr. Nicolet, Mr. Beaudry. If we work quickly, we'll be able to hear all four.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I read certain things in this brief, such as "...Anglophones' animosity towards the Québec minority..." or "...Anglophones have never regarded Francophones as one of the founding peoples, but rather as immigrants, a conquered people. A defeated people..." When I read, "...a country in our own image...", or I read, "...the homogeneous and important minority that constitutes the people of Québec...", I feel a bit insulted, Mr. Chairman, as an Anglophone Quebecer. But when I read the following sentence on page 4: "An effort is being made to promote multiculturalism because it weakens the identity of Francophones in Québec..." I would like to ask you a question. Do you really believe that there's a conspiracy to promote multiculturalism, precisely because it will weaken the identity of Francophone Quebecers in Québec? And if so, who's responsible for this?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: There's some truth in

this. And the federal government is definitely responsible. In addition, the immigrants it chooses aren't right for Québec. The criteria it uses for choosing immigrants aren't appropriate for Québec. It makes the right choices for Canada. This is good for Canada, but it's not good for us. Because the criteria it uses to make these choices aren't designed for us. We're different from the rest of Canada and they will have to realize that. We're different, we're another country.

Mr. Libman: The Minister of Immigration is here with us. I'm obliged to ask my question again. Do you really believe that multiculturalism is aimed at weakening the identity of Francophone Quebecers? Is this what you really believe?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: It does so to a certain extent. We're definitely being weakened. If people aren't like us, this will certainly undermine our identity.

Mr. Libman: Secondly, what do you think will happen to Francophones outside Québec if, eventually, Québec becomes independent? Do you think that Francophones outside Québec would inevitably be assimilated if Québec becomes independent from the rest of Canada?

Mr. Nadeau: First, Mr. Chairman, I would like to remind those present of your statement to the effect that you found it a bit "unfair" to say that Quebecers were not regarded as one of the founding peoples of Canada. I don't know if you remember... I don't know if you're aware that Mr. Durham, Lord Durham, described us as a people without a culture in the report he drafted following the rebellion of 1837; he also said that turning us into Anglophones was an act of charity. Therefore, I must say that we...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): May I remind the audience that the rules we've adopted here are such that it's as though we were in the National Assembly, and that, in the gallery of the National Assembly, applauding isn't allowed. I would therefore like to ask you to act as if you were in the National Assembly and to refrain from applauding. May I also remind you that, when in doubt, we evacuate the Assembly, which, of course, we would never want to do here. So, please don't applaud. Go ahead. Your question, Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: OK. Just one last thing... On page 5, you talk about a referendum with a specific question, and the question you suggest is: "Are you for or against a sovereign Québec?" As far as I'm concerned, if I say yes, I'm for

and against Québec sovereignty, and if I say no, I'm neither for nor against it. Would you please explain what you mean by this?

Mr. Nadeau: I'd just like to say... In short, what you mean is that you think a simple question would not be specific enough for a referendum. Is that what you're trying to say? We might not be constitutionalists but, I mean, I would like to know exactly what you mean by that.

Mr. Libman: Here you say... your specific question: Are you for or against Québec sovereignty? Well, if the question asks for a yes or no answer, if I say yes, that means I'm for and against, and if I say no, I'm neither for nor against. So if you try to find...

A voice: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Mr. Libman, you're answering by...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I just told the audience that they should behave as if they were in the gallery of the National Assembly. And I insist. Is that clear? Now would you please answer the question?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: You answer by... Are you for or against? It's simple. You tick off for or against.

Mr. Libman: So, it won't be yes, no. It'll be for, against. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Since your time is up, we will go on to Mr. Hogue's questions. He will be followed by Mr. Nicolet and Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Hogue: Earlier in your presentation, you said, without quoting you exactly: We're convinced that there will be a referendum after the Commission and that people will vote for sovereignty. We also find the following statement on page 5 of your first text: A majority of voices will have to be obtained. Supposing that a majority of voices isn't obtained and that people don't vote for sovereignty, what are you three going to do? Will you form another alliance, start over with another group or will you accept the vote of the majority and the fact that you are members of this society?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Personally, I'd be surprised if the vote were...

Mr. Hogue: No, but I'm suggesting this hypothesis. Would you please answer on the basis of this hypothesis?
(11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: OK. If by chance, if unfortunately - I'd still be very surprised - a minority of voices were obtained, we would be obliged to accept the vote. I don't see what else we could do.

Mr. Hogue: On page 2 of your brief, you elaborate on certain points concerning the very important question of the family in Québec, which, as far as you're concerned, is jeopardized by demography, etc. And on reading your observations and recommendations, it can be concluded that your approach involves family planning to a certain extent. Is that correct?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes, of course. We want to draw up a plan. A plan must be devised to help the family.

Mr. Hogue: Therefore, there would be a certain amount of family planning in a French Québec?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: In a sovereign French Québec.

Mr. Hogue: And if minorities like the ones I'm familiar with, if minorities have lots of children - minorities, that is, groups in Québec, like those in Outremont, who have lots of children - what are we going to do with those families? Will they be involved in family planning?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Of course; we'll try to include them.

Mr. Hogue: On page 4, under the heading "Independence", you mention the jurisdictions and powers that should be recovered, and you say: Quebecers have been having it out with one another for more than 200 years. Do you mean that they've reached some sort of compromise, or have understood one another, tolerated one another? Do you mean that they've compromised or that they've surrendered certain principles?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: We've compromised and also tolerated one another. In short, we've done both.

Mr. Hogue: And you've decided, with the society of which you were a member, not to make any more compromises?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: That's right. As student members, we're starting to get really tired of being taken advantage of.

Mr. Hogue: OK. And my last question, Mr. Chairman, concerns the last paragraph on page 4: We should make a clean sweep, etc.; we're united by our values and way of thinking. Is that what

you said?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: That's correct.

Mr. Hogue: Are you talking about the values of four people or the values of all Québec citizens?

Mr. Nadeau: What I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, is that I think these four people have expressed these values. However, I think that once Québec has achieved sovereignty, we'll consult people, find out what their values are, find out what they want and what they want from this country, because this country will belong to all Quebecers. There's no doubt that we four represent part of the population, but we will consult the population about all the future values of this country.

Mr. Hogue: If the values weren't exactly...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Excuse me, Mr. Hogue...

Mr. Hogue: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): To all intents and purposes, we've already used up our time. But I would still like to give two other members a chance to speak. Mr. Nicolet, and then Mr. Beaudry. Although I can allow you some latitude, I suggest you be brief.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, rapidly... You talk about regional powers on page 6 of your text. I presume you're talking about administrative regions.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Those regions or regions... Looking at types of regions. If a region is good for agriculture, these powers would be related to agriculture. It all depends on the type of region.

Mr. Nicolet: But are you talking about a Québec divided into 16 large regions or are you talking about smaller regions?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: I'm not a specialist in this field, but we would have to look at the...

Mr. Nadeau: Excuse me, but, to elaborate on my colleague's idea, I think that... Listen, there's no doubt that Québec is made up of 16 main regions, certainly the most beautiful regions in the world. Listen, I think there would still be room for 16 administrative regions in a sovereign Québec and that we could easily manage with 16 regions. If we're able to manage with them now and can get them to sit down together and discuss various issues, I think that we'll also be able to do so once Québec has achieved

sovereignty.

Mr. Nicolet: Would this mean creating a regional government with... that would be elected and have the power to levy taxes, etc.?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: No, no, it wouldn't mean that.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Mr. Chairman. First, one comment. On page 5 of your report, you seem to criticize the Prime Minister of Québec for having revealed his position with regard to Québec's constitutional future. You're no doubt aware that the Parti québécois, in its brief and through its members, has declared itself in favour of sovereignty and stated that, regardless of the option or recommendations proposed by the Commission, it would not change its position, that it would still favour sovereignty. I see that you say in a sentence on page 5: We hope that, in presenting their report, the members of the Commission will be able to rise above any form of partisanship or personal interest. For the third time in a brief recommending sovereignty, I interpret this as a request that the Parti québécois be objective in its negotiations and analysis of the various briefs.

However, my question concerns page 9 of your brief, where you talk about an ongoing committee. You say that, before independence is achieved and once the Commission has completed its mandate, a committee should be set up to study all the possible implications of separation from the rest of Canada. Despite the fact that you advocate Québec sovereignty, does this mean that you're asking the Commission, before any measures are taken and a referendum is held - because your next sentence is as follows: to allow the population to obtain the necessary information and form an enlightened opinion in the event of a referendum - are you recommending that, before the Commission calls for a referendum, if this is what the Commission decides to do, that another approach should be taken, that another study, that other information should be given to the people of Québec?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: When we are independent, when independence has been declared, and this standing committee examines the questions that have been left in abeyance, such as the national debt, how will it be divided, how...

Mr. Beaudry: But, do you declare independence before asking...

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: ...the people if they want independence?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: No, we hold a referendum, then we declare independence.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, but you mention informing the people before the referendum.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes, but it will not be the standing committee that does that. The standing committee is going to examine the results of a split, what it will obtain, how the national debt will be divided. Questions such as those.

Mr. Beaudry: Before the referendum.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Before, during and after.

Mr. Beaudry: But you are supposing there will be a referendum, before the referendum.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Could you repeat the question?

Mr. Beaudry: I don't know if the chairman will give me the... You say in...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But, briefly.

Mr. Beaudry: Pardon?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Briefly.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, you suggest in your conclusion that a committee be in place before the referendum to inform the people...

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: ...of the consequences, the possible implications of a split with the rest of Canada. If I understand your conclusion correctly, you are saying: Even if you recommend holding a referendum, don't hold that referendum until the population has been well informed of all the consequences that a split with Canada could entail. Is that what you are telling us?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Beaudry: Well. That's fine.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Certainly no risks should be taken.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We

will now move on to the final speaker, a representative of the Government party, Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the benefit of those watching us on television all over Québec, it might be appropriate to say that Sherbrooke's Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, which I know well, is part of a group of five regional societies, and, unlike Montréal's society, for example, it has not chosen the same political option as its namesakes in other parts of Québec. Therefore, today's brief was presented by dissidents of Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste from Sherbrooke.

I would like to first thank you, of course, for bringing your point of view to the attention of the Commission members, and also, I congratulate you for having the courage to publicly express a position that differs from that of the organization which you belong to.

As regards the contents of your brief, I must say that the general attitude it evokes worries me a little. I will explain what I mean. Here, I would like to illustrate my remarks from two angles. The first is the bond with the rest of Canada, the second, if I have time, is immigration.

On page 4 of your brief, you state, and I quote: "We should make a clean sweep of everything that unites us with the rest of Canada, to enable us to construct a country in our image, according to our conception and our values". What do you mean by "a clean sweep of everything that unites us with the rest of Canada"? Don't you think that, in the framework of the new status Québec chooses to appropriate, whatever this is, it would be in Québec's interest, in this era of interdependence, to maintain close relations with Canada, especially economic ones, for example?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Yes. Perhaps "clean sweep" is a strong expression. In fact, we thought that there should be agreements which, from an economic viewpoint, could maybe resemble free trade. There could be agreements on currency. Furthermore, this would be in the interest of both parties, I imagine. "Clean sweep" may be a strong expression, still we will have agreements, as all countries do. The EEC has agreements, and we make them too.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: Yes. And perhaps just now, to set things straight, you said that the federal government chooses its immigrants according to Canada's needs, not according to Québec's. Now, I am quite sure that you are not entirely familiar with Québec's selection techniques. I would refer you to page 26 of the policy statement I made recently and point out that, by virtue of the Cullen-Couture agreement, which has been signed with Québec, Québec

selects, among other things, the category of its independent immigrants according to its needs. But Québec also has a humanitarian role to play, and it wants to play this role in relation to refugees. There are also certain Quebecers, who are members of the cultural communities, and want to bring their families over from various countries.

However, on page 7 of your brief, you state that immigration should only serve as a supplement to Québec's demographic foundation, and, in your presentation this morning, you seemed to be going even a little further. You did not mention two factors, you mentioned only one. So, don't you think, for example, that we also have a humanitarian role to play vis-à-vis the most destitute people of the earth, the victims of war, without considering the language spoken by these people in distress?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: I am humanitarian. We certainly could not bring all of South Africa over. I am humanitarian, but one should not be too humanitarian either.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: But don't you think, too, that immigration can and should contribute not only to demographic recovery, but also to economic prosperity, to the durability of the French fact, because immigration can also be useful in maintaining the French fact, as well as making Québec more open to the world.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: From what I could understand, you are asking us if, in our blueprint, we would like to achieve somewhat of an international openness, rather than becoming more focused on the French-language countries, in terms of our economy. Is this what you wanted to point out?
(11:45 a.m.)

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: From your brief, I have the impression that the only use for immigration, or practically the only one, is demographic recovery, whereas immigration is known to serve several purposes. It can be useful for the endurance of the French fact, for economic prosperity and for openness to the world, which, at the same time, creates ties with other countries thereby allowing us to participate in development.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Mainly, it was to compensate for a low birthrate, for a lack of children. I do not deny that it was for internationalism, but it is chiefly to make up for a lack of Quebecers.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: So, for you, the principle aim of immigration is demographic recovery. And what is your opinion on immigration into the regions, for example, since each one of us here is from a region? Do you

believe that, through immigration, we could increase the population of the Estrie region and that immigration would be helpful in the demographic recovery of the Estrie region?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: Immigration can accomplish this, but our children can do it even better. There is no doubt that immigration can achieve this, and it is even a good idea to send immigrants into the regions instead of having them concentrated in Montréal, but our children can achieve this too.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: Don't you think, for example, that without immigration, a problem could also arise in the next few years?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: No, there certainly must be immigration, but we should favour our children. We should give preference to populating our territory ourselves.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: In short, what you are saying is that immigration can help in demographic recovery by allowing a family policy to take effect, for example.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau: It can, if immigrants are assimilated and integrated into Québec society; if not, it is going to cause other problems: social tension, ghettos.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: In your mind, how do you perceive integration? I don't know, perhaps there are young Quebecers from cultural communities who are in the classes of the three of you or... How do you perceive integration?

Mr. Nadeau: Maybe how we actually see integration is trying to...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This will be the final response in this presentation.

Mr. Nadeau: Yes. Fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way we see integration is giving them the chance to enter our community, to come into our Québec, that is, not leaving them all alone in a corner and telling them: You are immigrants, we'll leave you there. What we are recommending by integration is making them ours, making them full-fledged Quebecers like us.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, thank you, Mr. Hébert-Croteau, Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Harper, for this presentation. You were asked a lot of questions, and you answered them. I would now ask you to make room for the Association Québec-Libre Estrie, which is this morning's last group.

We will now hear the Association Québec-Libre Estrie. Mr. Robert Gagné will give the group's presentation. I remind you that you have

five minutes to present the main lines of your brief, which has been received and perused by the Commission members. Mr. Gagné.

Association Québec-Libre Estrie

Mr. Gagné (Robert): Commission members, Messrs. Chairmen, thank you very much for offering the AQLE, the Association Québec-Libre Estrie, the opportunity to present its brief to the Commission. First allow me to introduce the people with me, who are AQLE members. On my right, Mr. Maurice Bernier and Mr. Gilles Roy. On my left, Mr. Jean-Claude De l'Orme, Mrs. Denise Landry and Mrs. Francine Ash.

First, the Association Québec-Libre Estrie is a group of individuals, members or sympathizers, who have one common characteristic: they are sovereigntists. The AQLE is also a group of people who work in various sectors, and the objective we have set for ourselves is to promote Québec sovereignty beyond political partisanship.

We would like to point out to the Commission members that we are not constitutional experts and are not prepared to answer questions of this sort. We are ordinary citizens who are active in our workplace, and we are set on acquiring a sovereign country for ourselves. Our group also includes honorary members, and we are pleased that one of these is a Commission member, who came to share his ideas on a sovereign and French Québec with us.

The Association Québec-Libre Estrie wants to impart to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec its clear and precise stand in terms of its own direction as an association and also in direct relation with the Commission's mandate. Our association's objective is to promote Québec sovereignty. Each of us is convinced that, without this option, the Franco-Québec people will inevitably disappear in a relatively short time. In fact, all the demographic experts predict that, unless there is a real collective awareness and a systematic turnaround in our relations with our Canadian and American neighbours, the Franco-Québec distinct society will disappear by the year 2025.

We have therefore put together a creed to proclaim our faith in Québec: We believe in our homeland, Québec. We believe in our language, French. We believe in our roots, a rich heritage to be preserved. We believe in the richness and diversity of the skills of Quebecers. We believe in the indispensable contribution of the cultural communities that come and enrich Québec. We believe that Québec must be sovereign in order to secure its own destiny. We believe that Québec must hold all the powers necessary for the optimal control of its development. We believe that Québec has sufficient international prominence to sign the necessary agreements

with its partners for its security, influence and development. We believe that one sovereign government is required to control our economic levers. Finally, we believe that the Québec people are ready to make a definitive choice on their status as a sovereign country.

The circumstances under which we have come before the Commission have obviously ensued from the first chance we were offered on May 20, 1980. A majority of Quebecers believed in a renewed federalism promised by proponents of the "no" option; consequently, they refused to give a mandate to negotiate different agreements to amend the Canadian Constitution. Sterile conferences, backroom negotiations, twisting people's arms... nothing helped them resolve the situation, which continued to deteriorate, you know, until the end of last May and into June with the failure of Meech Lake.

In the marathon of constitutional discussions, we saw Canada's systematic refusal to recognize the five minimum conditions for integrating Québec into the Confederation. The provinces' refusal to come to an agreement was blatant. Perhaps what stood out the most and awakened Quebecers' dormant pride was the contempt for Québec that we witnessed last spring. A bitter and demonstrative response was given at Québec's National Holiday last June 24 and 25 in Montréal through numerous demonstrations. Later, certain Canada Day festivities were cancelled in Québec. On this occasion, Jean Duceppe, who passed away last night, honorary chairman of the 1990 National Holiday: From now on it is up to Quebecers to decide on their future alone. In front of 200 000 people, he concluded by saying: We have but one country: Québec.

Our recommendation, Mr. Chairman: The Association Québec-Libre Estrie fervently hopes that this Commission will be the final one before Québec accedes to the status of a sovereign country, and it urges the members to tell our government that the time has come to make a clear choice. For the Association Québec-Libre Estrie, sovereignty is the only means of ensuring our people's survival. The Commission's report must faithfully express the consensus observed over the course of the hearings, beyond partisanship. The Association Québec-Libre Estrie demands that the government follow up on the Commission's recommendations without delay. Québec has only one choice: to proclaim itself a sovereign country. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélangier): We will begin with the members' questions. There will be three speakers: Mr. Dufour, Mr. Liberatore and Mr. Larose.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank the Association for presenting its brief, and to welcome Mr. Bernier,

in particular, whom I worked with for many years. From the outset, I must say that I agree with many parts of your creed. I support many of your statements. In our fundamental beliefs as Quebecers, we often contrast sovereignists and federalists, at least Gérard often does, but I think very frequently... We believe in our roots, a rich heritage that must be preserved, and we believe in our language, French, we believe in the richness and diversity of the skills of Quebecers, we believe in the indispensable contribution of the cultural communities that come and enrich Québec. Our council is one of the strongest promoters of immigration, which is absolutely essential in ensuring Québec's economic development.

Where you miss the mark is in your discussion of economics, and it is the next profession of faith about which I am skeptical. "We believe that Québec has sufficient international prominence to sign the necessary agreements with its partners for its security and development." My question, Mr. Chairman, is as follows: I would like it to be possible, but I don't have much hope. We currently have free trade with the United States. You, in the Sherbrooke region, are only marginally affected by those problems. Many of our entrepreneurs export to the United States. How could Québec have the strength to negotiate on its own with the United States or Mexico, with what is taking shape, as opposed to being part of Canada? I would like you to convince me of this.

Mr. Gagné: Mr. Chairman, if it is all right, since there are several members at this table, we are going to alternate in answering. Mr. Roy, from an economic standpoint.

Mr. Roy (Gilles): From an economic standpoint, look. You just indicated, Mr. Dufour, and I am happy you did, that we are in agreement on many things, on much of our creed, we have a common creed. As regards economic issues, I think that, if Canada was able to conclude an agreement with the United States, which is an immense country in comparison with Canada, I do not see why Québec could not do the same with the rest of Canada, with other countries and with the United States, because the difference is not that great. We do represent a quarter of the country.

Mr. Dufour: You always use the reverse argument when speaking about protection of the language. You always approach the argument from the opposite angle.

Mr. Roy: Mr. Dufour, I am a businessman like you. Look, I have been in business for 30 years. For 14 years, I was on the board of directors of a Canadian company. I used to go to Toronto for meetings. I never saw people from

Toronto or people from any part of Canada... because I am in the moving business, and in that business there are representatives who are as comfortable in Vancouver as they are in Halifax. We have representatives throughout Canada. And those people see no problem in doing business with us, on the contrary...

Mr. Dufour: We cannot be meeting the same people.

Mr. Roy: Ah, no!

Mr. Dufour: But, since there are several participants, Mr. Chairman has asked us to be quick. What do you mean when you say that Québec is trapped, is a prisoner of the institutions that it created itself? Are you thinking of the Caisse de dépôt?

Mr. Roy: Certainly not.

Mr. Dufour: Ah! Then, what?

Mr. Gagné: In our brief, we gave a few examples of institutions, and these are much more than legislative, parliamentary or legal institutions. We are not talking about economic matters. We are talking about the common law system, British institutions and our Senate, which is currently the subject of much criticism across the land. For us, those institutions do not correspond to the French culture. It's simple.
(12:00 noon)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to Mr. Liberator.

Mr. Liberator: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too must thank you for this document, because, to tell you the truth, I learned some history; it is quite complete. And I also see an allusion to religion, because, I do not know if this is a coincidence, but your creed has the same number of professions as the ten commandments. You also make me think of my father when you speak of an awakening, because he used to always say: There are two kinds of people who will not succeed in life: those who get up in the morning and stay asleep and those who wake up and stay in bed.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Liberator: But, the point at which I start to get a little confused, and this is the question, actually, I am laughing, because you talk about a free Québec. And I wonder: In what respect is Québec truly going to be free, if it must absolutely negotiate agreements with the United States and with its neighbours? And you say you are afraid of American programs, of television and radio, being broadcast in Québec. In other words, true freedom is the freedom to

achieve self-fulfilment, which implies an open-mindedness. It means going much further than where we are today, having a long-range vision which enables us to improve our system.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bernier.

Mr. Bernier (Maurice): I am not sure that I fully understand the meaning of your question, Mr. Libérateur. By the way, I think you have a very beautiful name, Libérateur...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Libérateur: Thank you, thank you very much, you are very kind.

Mr. Bernier: Perhaps one day we will be able to say the same about Québec, at least I hope we will. I am not sure I understood your question, but you mention fear. Why would we be afraid of preserving... or of confronting American culture? And how could independence dissipate or diminish that fear? Is that what you are asking?

Mr. Libérateur: No, that's not it. What I am saying is, if you advocate a free Québec, you must be able to conceive that, in the long term, by being free, Québec citizens are going to be able to fulfil their potential. Now, if you establish control mechanisms in a society, we lose our freedom. Therefore, if we agree that... Eventually, we want to build a free Québec. We must do this by forming citizens who are ready to face the future with a great deal of confidence, don't you agree? This means with exceptional open-mindedness. However, I find your brief rather restrictive and protectionist.

Mr. Bernier: I do not know where in our brief you see protectionism. On the contrary, we speak of an openness to the world. We speak on behalf of the cultural communities, of people who can come from anywhere in the world to participate in Québec's evolution. And, quite humbly, we think that an independent Québec that is sure of itself will be better disposed to open up to the world. A distinction must be made between protecting Québec's cultural character, and, although I know it was in good faith, Mr. Dufour just now tried to mix the two, which in essence are completely different. When culture and economy are confused, Quebecers are totally in favour of openness in the economic matters; in fact, during negotiations with the United States, most of the support for free trade came from Québec. So, in that regard, Quebecers, and this has been proven in various fields, are quite capable of taking charge.

Culture is a different matter. Everyone realizes, unless he refuses to accept reality, that Québec and Québec Francophones represent a

very small minority on the North American continent; therefore, we also need a strong government to protect this cultural identity, which does not prevent us in any way from being open to other cultural communities. And Québec independence is not inward looking. We must stop carrying on that way and see, let it be known, that choosing to be independent does not mean that Québec has to be inward looking. On the contrary, I think it means becoming more responsible for ourselves in order to mutually understand our Canadian and American partners, and others, and to work together.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larose?

Mr. Larose: Mr. Chairman, I am happy to hear that Mr. Dufour has made some progress on one aspect. The Commission has not finished, so things are likely to progress. I, for one, have read many briefs. Over 100 must have been presented to the Commission, but I have read practically twice that many. Invariably, the federalist briefs tell us that in several areas Québec has the upper hand. This morning we were told: In terms of agriculture, well, Québec clearly has an advantage. There is clearly an advantage in unemployment insurance, in education, in health, and so on. Let's just say, as Quebecers, we have an obvious economic interest in remaining in the Canadian federation. And what I would like to know is: If Quebecers are benefiting so much, what's the idea of depriving ourselves of these benefits? Secondly, if the federal government is so charitable, why is it putting so much energy into preventing us from leaving? In other words, are we, Quebecers, suicide candidates and is the federal government so masochistic that it wants to be charitable to people who no longer want its charity? What is happening in this country?

Mr. Gagné: First of all, Mr. Larose, we would like to point out that part of our brief outlines an improbable current economic context. The duplication of structures in federal and provincial jurisdictions has led to total inertia; the current economic system is almost in a state of cerebral paralysis. So, to say that there are advantages or disadvantages in one system or another is correct, because each jurisdiction holds its corner of the blanket, each one is on its side. And then we hear: It is not my fault; he is the one holding it, or, it is not my fault, the other guy is holding it. And our Minister of Immigration here has done battle to obtain an agreement which is not signed, although this had been promised.

Charest, our Minister, told us at an Estrie CDE forum a month ago: I am going to hold an estates general on training, contrary to all the procedures, because this must be carried out in

Estrie. The training industry is one of the Estrie's development priorities. The two levels of government, the federal and provincial, are always paralysing the machine, because this work method is cumbersome. What we say in our brief is not very explicit, but this is why we have the opportunity to explain it before the Commission. There is one too many jurisdictions. We have a level of municipal governments and we would come to an understanding at the municipal level as to whether to keep the RCMs or a regional government. These are issues to be discussed in the preparation of the imminent Québec constitution. But we want to maintain the local jurisdiction and a national jurisdiction, which would be Québec. The federal government is far from our minds. The programs which are decided in Ottawa do not have practical applications for Québec, which is often excluded from decisions about their parameters.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now move on to questions from a Government party representative, Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Gagné, I would like to thank you for participating in our sitting and for submitting a brief to our Commission. I admit from the start that I do not share your pessimistic view of the future, I am not saying your option, but your pessimistic vision of the future, when you state on page 2 that, unless there is a systematic turnaround, our society will disappear by the year 2025. We would have to renounce the 123 years spent within the federation. No doubt, it will be necessary to ensure our historic continuity and our historic continuance. No doubt, there are things that need to change, but I think deducing that sovereignty is the only option that will save us is going a bit far. The only way... If you consider that the only mandate this Commission has, this is proof that we have the ability and the means to decide on our future, regardless of Québec's future political structure. As long as we can maintain our ability to decide on our future, we will be protected.

My first question is about page 8 of your brief, where you seem to be saying that, in a sovereign Québec, gas prices will be lower, the cost of living will cease to rise and that the public service, which was too extensive, would be more compact than the one we have now. Most of all, I would like you to explain to me how this would happen in a sovereign Québec. And, in addition, last Wednesday, we were in Hull, in the City of Hull, and everyone was wondering how we were going to save the 26 000 jobs held by Québec employees working in the federal public service. Can you tell us what solution you would suggest for those 26 000 federal civil servants who would have to be repatriated to Québec in the event of Québec

sovereignty?

Mr. Gagné: Well, in response to your two-part question, I would first indicate that I answered the second part a moment ago. It is an improbable economic context because of the unwieldiness of the two levels of government. This does not change the current level of gas prices or the rising cost of inflation. Still, the government is lax in certain respects, which means that the control of interest rates is not held by Québec, the control of banking...

Mr. Maciocia: Mr. Gagné.

Mr. Gagné: No, excuse me, but a sovereign Québec would take...

Mr. Maciocia: Mr. Gagné. If you wouldn't mind, Mr. Gagné, I didn't even mention that. I only asked how gas prices would be lower, how the cost of living would stop increasing and how the public service would not be as big, how it would have fewer employees. When everyone in another region of Québec is wondering about the 26 000 Quebecers employed in the federal public service and how they would be repatriated to Québec and integrated into the Québec public service, if Québec became sovereign...

Mr. Gagné: Ah! At the risk of repeating myself, we are not claiming that the cost of living or the economy will change overnight. When we move the levers that control our economy, we will surely agree and make universal and global agreements concerning these matters, if there are global economic problems.

I would like to give Mr. De l'Orme the opportunity to respond to the first part of your question on the distinct society of French Québec.

(12:15 a.m.)

Mr. De l'Orme (Jean-Claude): Yes, here it is. You find our brief rather pessimistic. In our view, it contains no pessimism. We believe this is realism. You are correct. We have been in this situation for 123 years. For 123 years, we have been trying to survive, and now we feel like living. I think this is the basic reality. The entire current debate... I believe that the two aspects are often confused... the cultural aspect, on one side, and the economic aspect, on the other. We know very well that in Québec, as in Canada, there are two cultures, there are two distinct societies. It has clearly been proven that a culture is something dynamic, it is something that needs to progress, to evolve, in the same way as language. It is therefore something that must also be embodied in institutions and these institutions must resemble us. If there are no institutions...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr.

De l'Orme, I would urge you to be brief, since we are almost out of time. Did you have one small question left to ask, Mr. Maciocia?

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go ahead.

Mr. Maciocia: It is very important. I do not believe Mr. Gagné has answered my question. I accept Mr. De l'Orme's answer, but Mr. Gagné has not answered my question. Apparently, he was supposed to respond to my first question, the one about Québec's 26 000 federal public service employees. How are you going to integrate them into the Québec public service if Québec becomes sovereign?

Mr. Gagné: The public employee seated next to me will help you out.

Mr. Roy: I will not answer your question, I will tell you that right now, since I am not an expert in government structures. No, but I will give you an answer. Right now you are addressing people who are simply citizens, but not necessarily simple people, who are developing within their community.

On the question of federal civil servants, the Parti québécois has already taken a stand... In today's newspapers it was probably reported that, since this political party is opting for sovereignty... Perhaps one day you will do the same thing. For my part, I will tell you that if you are implying that 26 000 public employees will be reintegrated, you leave us to understand that there are too many of them for the services Quebecers need and you prove that federalism is not all that profitable for Québec. If there are too many, we will work with the public employees that we need. No doubt, when Québec becomes independent, we will probably not abandon the people living in the Hull region. How will we manage this? I am not familiar with all the mechanics involved.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think this brings us to the end of the question period. We will now hear Mr. Roger Paré.

Mr. Paré: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very quickly, I must first say that you have expressed a very clear wish, and one realizes in reading your document...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Forget the traditional words of someone speaking on behalf of the Official Opposition party. Please continue.

Mr. Paré: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start over. In reading your document, one

notices that your choice is very clear and is also aware that, in a few words and a few sentences, you illustrate the current situation. On page 7, among other things, you discuss the costly duplication, the conflicts between jurisdictions that actually generate ineffectiveness, inefficiency and inertia, which result in a high level of unemployment, hardship and poverty. On the other pages, you come back a bit stronger on the importance of sovereignty for French.

My first question is related to this. You say that sovereignty is needed to ensure the continuity and the strength of French in Québec. However, we have recently heard people from various places, even from the National Assembly, who indicate that we are better protected under the Canadian Charter and by the federal government. What do you think of this?

Mr. Roy: Well, yes. This is an argument that is often heard, about the protection provided by the federalist government system. Mr. Ryan very clearly stated his opinion on the matter this week. This is also an argument used by the federalists, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Constitution as a protective measure. A charter of rights and freedoms is certainly a plus in a society. We recognize this straight away. No doubt, a different level of government can, I would say, I'll use the conditional, could provide better chances for citizens to be protected as individuals. Several systems are in place around the world, but this is not a guarantee.

I would simply like to cite two or three examples. We were part of the federal system in 1970 when Quebecers were imprisoned during the incidents which occurred in October. We were still in the Canadian federation when, I think, Mr. Camille Houde, who was Mayor of Montréal, was imprisoned and committed to a mental institution for several years because he was against conscription. All this took place within the federal system, if my memory serves me. There are certainly historians who will confirm or invalidate the statements I have made. Having said this, I would like to add that, personally, I find this argument contemptuous for Quebecers. I believe that Quebecers are very open to and very tolerant of the various communities. I repeat, I find it contemptuous to imply that an independent Québec would be a, quote, more fascinating Québec. In my opinion, Quebecers do not see themselves that way, and I would hope this argument will soon be abandoned.

Mr. Paré: Yes. One more question. Many English-speaking groups have been heard here, especially at yesterday's sitting. They have told us that, if I attempt to summarize and condense what was said, the Anglophones recognize Quebecers' right to self-determination. It was unanimous. We put this question to just about

everyone, and they go further than that by saying that, if Quebecers decided in favour of an independent or sovereign Québec, the first thing they want to do is to stay, because this is their home. These are Quebecers of English-language origin and they want to remain here. They want to be consulted in the process. They want to participate in it. And one thing they often request, and I think it is important that they request it, it lets us know they want it, they ask that their acquired rights be included in the constitution. So, in my view, that is what came out of yesterday's debate. They agree to our taking a stand, and they want to remain, although they want the rights they already have to be guaranteed. When I look at the sovereigntist creed in your brief, there are in fact ten commandments. Would you be willing to add an eleventh to recognize that right, since you do allude to it in the fifth: "We believe in the indispensable contribution of the cultural communities who come and enrich Québec". This is really the only place you deal with people of non-Francophone origin. Would you be willing to include a particular and definite point recognizing minority Anglophone rights in the constitution?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Gagné, this will be the final response of the presentation.

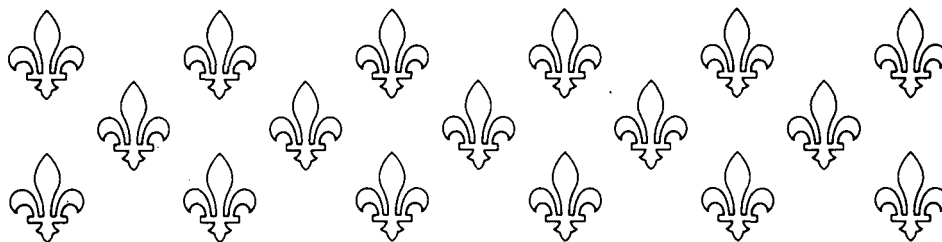
Mr. Gagné: In this respect, Mr. Chairman and Commission members, I think that in Estrie we have proven in several ways that we can live together with the Anglophones. In my own municipality, where I am a municipal councillor, I deal with the Lennoxville and Ascot Société de muséologie. There are English-speaking people working with me, and our current priority is the protection of our heritage, which is Anglophone. The first churches and the first little schools that were restored were in that sector. I think that, in terms of our relations, in terms of our experience, much progress has been made. We have no objection; on the contrary, we have advocated a French Québec, without excluding anyone. We have a broad outlook, we are tolerant, since we have not been hurt by people from here. With regard to intolerance, blows from the outside have been much more frequent. Therefore, our home, Estrie, is a beautiful region and a significant one because of its quality of life, and we very much enjoy living here. We work well together, and we cooperate very well with all the English-speaking groups in the community. So, for us, it is very clear.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Gagné, and I thank your association for presenting a brief to the Commission and your group, Mr. Roy, Mr. Bernier, Mr. De l'Orme, Mrs. Landry and Mrs. Ash and you as well Mr.

Gagné, for defending it so well.

This is the end of our sitting, which extended over two days, of our hearings in the Estrie region, and, on behalf of the Commission, I must tell you that we were very happy to be here. I thank you all for attending. The sitting is adjourned. We will continue in Trois-Rivières next Tuesday.

(End of sitting, 12:22 p.m.)



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Trois-Rivières, Tuesday, December 11, 1990

No 18

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Trois-Rivières, Tuesday, December 11, 1990

Hearings: Organizations and Individuals

(9:32 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May I remind you of the Commission's mandate, which is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon.

Today's sitting will be devoted to hearing various groups and individuals. At 9:30 a.m., we will be receiving jointly the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie and the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec; at 10:00 a.m., the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec; at 11:30 a.m., the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec; at 2:00 p.m., the Coopérative fédérée de Québec; at 3:00 p.m., the Association provinciale de l'industrie du bois ouvré du Québec; at 4:00 p.m., the Ordre des agronomes du Québec; at 4:30 p.m., Mr. Claude Rompré; at 5:00 p.m., the RCM of Bécancour; at 7:30 p.m., the Ordre des comptables agréés; at 8:00 a.m., Mr. Guy Vachon, and to finish our day, at 8:30 p.m., the Federation of General Practitioners.

Joint Presentation

Welcome to the members of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie and the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec. You have three and a half minutes to introduce your brief and then we will move on to the questions. The total duration of the hearing will be 30 minutes. I understand that Mr. Valois will be making one presentation and Mr. Grondin, the other. Excuse me, Messrs. photographers, if you could move forward just a bit, thank you. Mr. Valois, would you please introduce those with you.

Mr. Valois (André): Certainly, Mr. Chairman. To my right, Paul Langlois, secretary of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie, and to my left, Luc Dufresne, head of the Société and chairman of the Société's social committee.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Grondin, would you please also introduce those with you?

Mr. Grondin (Pierre): Mrs. Martel, chairperson of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec and Mr. Julien, economist and member of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): As I understand, Mr. Valois will speak first.

Mr. Valois: Yes, Sir.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Go ahead, Mr. Valois.

Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie

Mr. Valois: Before beginning our presentation, we would like to point out that we understand the difficulties facing you in terms of time management, which no doubt explains why our two Saint-Jean-Baptiste societies were combined. Although we bear the same name and origins, however, we must be recognized as two distinct organizations with full responsibility for our respective positions.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we would like to begin by thanking you, on behalf of our 20 000 members, for giving us the opportunity, within a relatively short time, to present our position on Québec's political and constitutional future, based on 150 years of activity in the region.

Our brief is aimed not at discrediting the federal government's actions but at highlighting the system's inherent problems of dual jurisdiction, whose negative effects constantly plague our region.

We have selected five areas of concern which we feel are tied in with those confronting us regularly and which we feel are currently most relevant for our region: communications, occupational training, higher education and research, the environment and regional economic development.

You will recall that for more than 30 years, we have been seeking the magic formula to reconcile Quebecers' aspirations with those of the rest of Canada. This quest has taken many forms: demonstrations, inquiry commissions, parliamentary commissions, federal-provincial conferences, political party programs. The various formulas proposed could be listed ad infinitum, from the thesis of two nations to that of a European-style superstructure.

The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie is firmly convinced that if we want to be able to build the future, to enjoy the development that reflects our aspirations as a people, Québec must become sovereign. However, this project must be endorsed by the population of Québec as a whole. Hence, we feel that, following the Commission's work, it would be perfectly appropriate for it to propose that the National Assembly hold a broad consultation of the entire Québec population, through a referendum, on Québec's constitutional future. This referendum should deal exclusively with our desire to become sovereign.

We feel that if we want to put an end to this waste of resources and energy and orient our development to reflect our interests, we must, as soon as possible, eliminate all dual federal-provincial jurisdiction and confer on the Québec government all the powers of a sovereign State. In January 1989, the Conseil des affaires sociales published "Deux Québec dans un". A year later, it published "Agir ensemble". We hope that this Commission on Québec's political future will give rise to a publication entitled "L'urgence d'agir dans un Québec souverain".

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now move to Mr. Grondin.

**Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste
du Centre du Québec**

Mr. Grondin: Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, as well as all those that made this meeting possible, we wish you good day and a most pleasant stay in this city, a former trading post founded in 1634 by Sieur de Laviolette. On behalf of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec, we are pleased to summarize the brief submitted to you.

We are faced with a fundamental choice that can no longer be side-stepped, and this may be our last chance to make it in a clear-cut manner. We find ourselves in an eminently favourable, yet incredibly urgent situation. Favourable, because public opinion is now tuned in, people are opening their eyes and joining in a sort of broad agreement among Quebecers, who feel both the possibility and urgency of national emancipation. Urgent because of the increasing momentum of demographic, cultural and linguistic perils.

The time has come for Québec to hold the main instruments for its development, for its domestic and foreign choices, for designing and applying its fundamental social, cultural, economic and scientific policies. Québec has all the assets essential to a sovereign country. International and even Canadian financial circles recognize the possibility of economic and financial independence. Québec owes it to itself and to other peoples to maintain its own identity and culture... something that only independence can achieve. Independence cannot be divided. Cultural sovereignty cannot be distinct from political and economic sovereignty, each summoning and conditioning the other.

Domestically, independence is the only way to ward off the rising perils, to define a global project and to take charge of our development. Internationally, this quest for independence falls within the contemporary trend of emancipation and cooperation. We can make our presence on the world scene known, and participate in intercultural dialogue only if we control our own fate. Independence alone reconciles the twofold

requirement of effectiveness and dignity. We are at a watershed, with expansion and affirmation on one side, and certain decline on the other. The issue is no longer one of degree, a Québec remaining with the federation as it is will never be more than one province among the others. With provincial status, we will be unable to negotiate, it'll always be like trying to square a circle. Only through active self-determination and affirmed independence can Québec engage in true negotiation with the rest of Canada. Only then will areas of common interest to be managed jointly emerge.

Supported by the majority of Québec Francophones, the Québec government must immediately prepare for the move to sovereignty based on a three-to-five-year schedule, and engage in immediate bilateral negotiations with Ottawa to recover full powers in certain vital sectors which, in principle, already fall fully or partially under provincial jurisdiction.

Québec must act as one of the founding peoples of Canada and offer a new pact to English Canada proposing a true confederation of five autonomous States: Québec, Ontario, British Columbia, the Prairies and the Maritimes. The Canadian whole could share currency, defense, postal services, and form a free Canadian market. The principles of reciprocity and subsidiarity would be the bases of this confederal agreement.

We have a country to build. The time for national sovereignty has come. The choice is simple and dramatically clear between assimilation in tension, conflict, and bitterness and the true development that only independence can ensure. Renewed federalism would be the worst possible choice, marked by illusion and enormous deception. Moreover, we would become swept up in another endless, frustrating cycle of sterile negotiations.

Québec must take the initiative and wrench itself from this orbital convulsion of Canadian federalism, orient itself towards a future full of challenges, dialogue directly with English Canada, build a new place with Canada based on the synergy of ideas and common realities. In closing, we are tempted to say that we hope this Commission's report will let us say: Look, Québec is doing something new.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Gentlemen. We will begin the question period with Mr. Maurice Richard.

Mr. Richard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, let me begin by welcoming my co-members of the Commission and all the speakers that will present their briefs before the Commission for our region.

I would like to start with a question for the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec. On page 30 of your brief, you suggest

replacing the federal system by a true confederation of five autonomous States, which you name: Québec, Ontario, British Columbia, the Prairies and the Maritimes. What makes you think this proposal will be acceptable to Canada outside Québec? If it is refused, what are Québec's options?

Mr. Grondin: What we said was that we often talk to English Canada through the intermediary of a central government, and English Canadians cannot express their views. We said that if Québec takes the initiative of orienting its future, I think it could come to an agreement with English Canada, and English Canadians from various provinces would hear and talk about the fact that the Canadian geopolitical system is completely different. I think that their interests would lead them to take decisions along these lines.

Mr. Richard: Now I have a question for the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie. In your brief, you appear to base your comments on the premise that English Canadians generally want a strong central government. How do you reconcile this position with the demands of several provinces, for instance, Alberta and British Columbia, which, in fact, are calling for decentralization of powers?

Mr. Dufresne (Luc): It's a matter of some interpretation. We talked a great deal about the desire of English Canadians in general to have a centralized power because we feel that at the time of the Meech Lake debates, for example, the claims regarding a fairly-elected Senate, the very clear feeling that we came away with is that Canada's different regions are more concerned with influencing policies adopted by the federal government than with having the provinces repatriate powers currently belonging to the federal level. This theme could be developed on several issues, but essentially, this is what we see more in English Canada from the debates surrounding Meech Lake. We didn't hear the English provinces seriously claiming decentralization of powers towards the provincial governments.

Mr. Richard: I have another question for the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec. On page 10 of your brief, you state that acquiring monetary wealth has become an end in itself; some would even go so far as to say that it takes precedence over morality and ethics. You also say that the emphasis placed on the Charter of human rights is evidence of this. I would like you to explain this point and would like you to tell me whether it is your intention eventually to suggest that charters be abolished.

Mr. Grondin: We know that since early

Confederation there have been many deviations from the initial pact of 1867. We don't think that charters are a bad thing. On the contrary, they protect individuals from a certain governmental totalitarianism. We need only look at Maurice Duplessis' action against Jehovah's Witnesses in the 1950s. You must understand what we are saying: The emphasis placed on human rights charters is evidence of this. In some cases, what we realize at some point is that we take precedence over the ethics and morals dictated by our Québec society. It is perhaps not as strong today as in the 1960s, say.

Mr. Richard: At one point, on the same page, you state: "Collective national interest is subordinated to personal interests". You seem to be telling us that you would have it otherwise. Could you please give us further details? Don't you think that could be dangerous?

Mr. Grondin: What we said is that, at present, many people give precedence to their personal interests rather than thinking of our future as a society. I am thinking of certain individuals. Suffice it to say that 5% of Québec's population is currently in Florida, for example. These people, who are all over 18, will, no doubt, if Québec has a future, think of their personal interests before thinking of society's interests in the long term. It is in this sense that community life is becoming increasingly frayed in Québec.

Mr. Richard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Richard, for your short, precise questions. Mr. Jean-Pierre Jolivet.

Mr. Jolivet: Hello. I would like to begin by greeting you today, wishing you good day, and, at the same, reminding you that we are a very important region between Québec City and Montréal, on the shores of the St. Lawrence. I am certain that the people coming to say so today will encourage all Quebecers to get to know our region better.

I would like to ask the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie a question first. On page 4 of your brief, you state: "Our brief is not aimed at discrediting the federal government's program evaluation criteria or the quality of its actions. We simply want to point out that this incredible duplication of structures, organizations and programs is hampering, if not impeding, our region's development based on its priorities and objectives". I would like you to give further details on what you say on pages 14, 15 and 16 on the theme of communications. We'd like you to give us concrete examples of political and administrative overlapping between the federal

government and Québec in the field of arts, culture and communications.

A voice: Mr. Dufresne.

Mr. Dufresne: This is quite a vast subject. One relatively simple question that was asked recently regarding regionalization of services, television for instance, concerned the closing of regional Radio-Canada stations. I think that this is a good example of a Pan-Canadian policy designed using criteria that are not necessarily those that Québec would adopt, I imagine, if Québec were in charge in the field of communications and, in fact, controlled television.

Something we could point out right here in Trois-Rivières on this subject is that if you are an Anglophone, you can enjoy all CBC services since you have a CBC retransmission station in the region, whereas if you are a Francophone... and we are in a region where the population is over 90%, you have no French-language Radio-Canada station. What we get from Radio-Canada in French is what CKTM-TV, channel 13, an excellent television station but one affiliated with the COGECO group which has the full right to decide what, of Radio-Canada's programming, will be broadcast to us or not. This is an example where we can ask ourselves about the difficulty of a Québec vision of things being compatible with a Canadian vision.

Mr. Jolivet: One question that many people are asking right now is should Québec, through a referendum, say "yes" to Québec's political sovereignty, could one of you indicate how it would be in Canada's interest to negotiate with this Québec that had defined its sovereignty?

Mr. Julien (Paul-André): Actually, it would be a matter of habit. Basically, in economic exchanges, and traditionally, economic exchanges have always been north-south. And, they will continue to be north-south. If we look at the development of international trade, of continental trade, there is faster growth in trade with the United States whereas interprovincial trade is growing at a much slower rate. On the other hand, through habit, and given the "national policy", due to economic frontiers that were erected long ago to promote Ontario's economic development in particular, trade habits developed. And, in fact, a good part of our exports and imports involve Ontario. We presume, on one hand, that the other provinces will be interested in maintaining these ties since all parties benefit from them. And, we could add a certain political consideration: namely, that the rest of Canada would have a very hard time getting its bearings, organizing itself, forced by a Québec separatist movement. And, to maintain its own cohesion, it will probably, practically

out of necessity, want to negotiate with Québec.

We must also remember that there is a geographic consideration. Since the Maritimes lie east of Québec and the rest of Canada lies west, there would probably be a problem of cohesion. We can speak of pakistanization... Bangladesh compared to Pakistan. We think that normally, that consideration alone, and also economic considerations, but at least that consideration alone, would quickly bring Canada to the negotiating table when the time is ripe. A little like with Norway in 1905. Sweden refused Norway's separation and it took three weeks... After three weeks Sweden sat down at the negotiating table with Norway, they concluded agreements and developed.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Jolivet. Unfortunately, your time is up. We'll now move on to Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to note the regional flavour of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste societies' briefs. In the regions, we've heard talk of the golden Montréal-Québec City crown. We've heard talk of the privileged corridor, but the briefs presented this morning show that the crown has holes and that even if we're between Québec City and Montréal, people are more likely to move on than to sit back. For this, I'd like to thank them sincerely and congratulate them, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie, among others, for its excellent brief.

My question is as follows. On page 41, you say: The solution lies in decentralization, and even reappropriation of powers to the regions... I'm speaking, of course, about the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie's brief... And why not implement a policy that meets regional needs, and do so in conjunction with the RCMs and the municipalities. I could go on. My question is: Do you think that the regions possess the necessary mechanisms to take charge of things? How do you think that the implementation of political decentralization favouring the regions could be included in a constitution?

Mr. Valois: Currently, Mr. Beaumier, yes, we think that the regions possess the necessary tools. They possess the necessary tools and are operational for better or worse... Things would go very well, in fact, if there was only one governmental decision-making level, one policy-making level. And, in our view, the regions are best placed to contact the population and to implement coherent, single policies. The current confusion is that in several areas, as we showed throughout our brief, policy duplication exists and causes incredible paperwork in implementing the programs we mention, be they related to

depollution, the economy or education. What is unfortunate is that these dual jurisdictions cause delays, cause harm and hinder people from implementing coherent policies.

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

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is directed at the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec and I would like to come back to a point raised earlier by Mr. Maurice Richard. On page 100 of your brief, you say: "To reconcile wisdom and political science and to avoid confrontation...". And now you are proposing a Canadian confederal council of constituent States. Should I take this to mean that you see a body where negotiations are carried out above all to change Québec's constitutional status? Because, when you talk about avoiding confrontation, some people tell us, or past briefs told us: We must begin by declaring sovereignty and then try to rebuild ties with the rest of Canada. You seem to be acting much more cautiously, when you say: Let's explore other avenues first, to see whether we cannot try to reorganize a Canadian confederation. Is this your line of thought?

Mr. Grondin: The end goal for the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec is Québec's national sovereignty.

Mr. Beaudry: I understand the end goal, but on the way?

Mr. Grondin: As we mentioned, the means is by consulting the population and, within the space of three to five years, to build a new space for Québec. As for...

Mr. Beaudry: So, I do understand you correctly. What you are saying is to try to establish certain strengths at other levels to see how we can ensure ties with the rest of Canada.

Mr. Grondin: Yes, but I also believe that we must think and act a bit like businesspeople. When Québec businesspeople contact businesspeople outside Québec, whether in the United States or English Canada, often they don't go through intermediaries. If the general manager of a company has business to do with the general manager of a company outside Québec, they'll get in touch with one another; they'll speak directly. I think this is a source of effectiveness and efficiency which should probably be considered.

Mr. Beaudry: Another question. On page 47, you tell us: "We feel that at this point the Commission has already lost its credibility". We'd like to thank you kindly for this comment...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: And further on you tell us: The only choice open to the commissioners if they are honest and free, as the Commission loudly proclaimed, is to suggest to Quebecers that there be another forum to discuss their future democratically. There is no talk simply of a referendum, you mention a forum for discussion. What form do you think such a forum should take?

Mr. Grondin: Many solutions come to mind. It could be an estates-general, it could also be mini-forums. One of the commissioners here mentioned that he met an Anglophone in the Estrie region who came with a very simple four-page brief. It could also be mini-forums for meeting with elderly people in old-age homes. The Commission can divide to meet, travel to areas that are not very accessible, places where people who come before a learned assembly such as this one will be pretty shy too... the people, I mean... the elderly or even mothers of families. I think that we can talk about mini-forums, we can talk about an even broader forum to listen to the underprivileged. And I think that the Commission should not take that part of the brief as a mean attack...

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, no.

Mr. Grondin: It should take it as an open attitude.
(10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Beaudry: Just a little joke. But actually what you're suggesting is, at the same time, experiments with the rest of Canada and an additional forum before Québec takes any final step on sovereignty? Is it basically what you're suggesting?

Mr. Grondin: That's what might be suggested but the Commission is in charge right now.

Mr. Beaudry: No, I understand, but we're listening to your brief right now. And I want to understand it correctly.

Mr. Grondin: Exactly. As mentioned, a broader forum but one that could also give rise to a new forum, in its report, to have an even better view of Québec, of all Quebecers, the larger strata.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Beaudry. Thank you, Mr. Grondin. We'll now move on to Mr. Holden.

Mr. Holden: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, would you agree with this analysis of your brief, especially for the Société Saint-Jean-

Baptiste du Centre du Québec, you say: "The federal system means that the people of Québec are torn between two centres of power whose aims are often contradictory." Would this be accurate about a portion of your brief?

Mr. Grondin: OK. It's accurate, that is, at the present, Quebecers are torn. I'm 38 and since I was born, I've been looking a bit at politics. Whether it was under Duplessis or Lesage, we've always been torn. Québec's prime ministers have always stood in opposition to the federal government. I think we absolutely must change that to arrive, one day, at a Québec State which nevertheless has very close ties with Canada, with a confederal council.

Mr. Holden: I must admit that the last time I was in Trois-Rivières was for Mr. Duplessis' funeral. But much has changed since then, no doubt.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Grondin: Welcome back.

Mr. Holden: Seriously, when you discussed this among yourselves to arrive at these conclusions, was there someone making arguments for the positive aspects of the federal system, the fact that for 25 years Quebecers have become an increasingly strong voice within the federal government? Was there anyone raising arguments of this type or was it entirely centred on issues like a referendum and sovereignty?

Mr. Grondin: All kinds of questions were asked us. You say that Quebecers are increasingly present in Ottawa. Possibly, I would say, because of representation, because Québec is the province that elected... At the present, the majority of the government is composed of Quebecers.

But I think that if you arrive at our analysis, if you look at the evolution of the Québec people within the Canadian federation... In 1861 we were 35.4% of the population and today, in 1981, according to the latest Statistics Canada census... We only compose 26.45% of the population. And I think this is tragic too. When I presented this graph to students, I always said, turn it this way, you'll see that a gap that was minimal in the federative pact of 1867 has now become considerable. And we need drastic changes.

Mr. Holden: But this change in the population isn't the federal government's fault.

Mr. Julien: In any case, right now I think that we can explain a basic fault of the federal government. This is the first time in Canada's

economic history that Canada is undergoing a recession before the United States. Normally, we were always on the tail end of the United States. Our recession came about three months or five months later. So, currently, we are really tasting the advantages of the federal system. This is just about the first time in our history where, for five years, the differential in the bank rate and the real rate... The real rate is normally about 2% higher than the rate of inflation. Currently, it's more than 5%, it's more than 7%. It's a first in Canadian history.

For a dozen years, it's systematically been like that. And it's the federal government which is graciously giving us that wonderful service... huge interest rates, very high currency... We in Trois-Rivières are seriously affected because some of our exports, especially pulp and paper, do better with a currency that is more representative of Canada's economic advantages and disadvantages in relation to the United States. Yet, at this very moment, our currency is over-valued and our exports very weak. We have big problems and, what's more, investments have slowed down and are continuing to slow down due to this differential between the market interest rate and the real interest rate. So, if you want to talk about the advantages of Confederation for our economy, I think you are probably a bit masochistic.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Julien. Thank you, Mr. Holden. To conclude this 30-minute sitting, I will give the floor to my colleague, Mr. Michel Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was particularly struck by pages 47, 48 and 49 of this brief. And I think you should have the opportunity to tell us: If you had to rewrite them, would you write them differently? I'd like to give you that opportunity. Do you stick by these three pages?

Mr. Grondin: I'm simply the spokesman for the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): OK. Is there anyone who can answer this simple question? Does the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste du Centre du Québec stick by these three pages which, among other things, state that the Commission has no credibility, that the Opposition is guilty, that the Prime Minister made a mistake, that the political parties are irreparably cut off from the population as a whole, that the Québec of today is very different from the image the Commission is trying to give of it, which seems to me to be projecting very far into the future? I'm simply asking: If you had to rewrite these three pages, would you do so differently? It's a very delicate way of telling you that I don't think very highly of them.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Martel (Marianne F.): Even if you don't think very highly of them, I think that the person who wrote this brief thought seriously about it and I don't think we'll change our position.

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): Well then, Madam, I'm forced to answer that you have no credibility where I am concerned, whereas your colleagues of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Mauricie have a brief that is particularly well written.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Grondin, Mrs. Martel, Mr. Langlois, Mr. Valois and Mr. Dufresne. Thank you for having come to debate before us the issue of Québec's future.

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

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

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Our work continues. We will now receive the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec. I would like to point out that the hearing will last 1 hour and 30 minutes, and I'll remind you of the speaking times for 1-hour-30-minute sittings: 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief, 15 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 15 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group, 40 minutes for the other registered members, with each member having a maximum of 10 minutes, and finally 10 minutes for the Chair. I understand that Mr. Johnston will be presenting the brief.

Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec

Mr. Johnston (Raymond): Johnston.

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

Mr. Johnston: Certainly. From right to left, Solange Pronovost, vice-president of the CEQ, Henri Laberge, employee advisor with the CEQ, Ghislaine Fleury, chair of the CEQ's committee on the status of women, and Richard Langlois, the CEQ's economist.

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

Mr. Johnston: Thank you. Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, first of all I would like to take 30 seconds to greet the 30 or so students in the gallery who decided with their teacher to

devote some time today to observe Québec's history in the making by attending the Commission hearings.

I will merely touch on some highlights from our brief, which is quite long, pointing out first of all that the CEQ, and the public at large is aware of this, voiced its disagreement right from the start, about four years ago, with the minimum conditions stipulated by the government for reintegrating the Canadian Constitution. The CEQ continued to oppose the Meech Lake constitutional accord right up to the end. Even before the final outcome of the Meech Lake Accord was known, we began to conduct an internal poll, which indicated that a large share of our members favoured Québec independence and that many of them were in favour of the idea that the CEQ publicly support and work actively towards independence for Québec. This aspect of our brief therefore shouldn't surprise anyone.

I'd also like to point out that at our last convention, in June 1990, the representatives of all the CEQ members adopted a fundamental four-point resolution in favour of Québec independence, in favour of the principle of sovereignty for the people, sovereignty for the people of Québec, in favour of drafting a democratic and progressive constitution for Québec, and also in favour of convening an elected constituent assembly that would be widely representative of the people and have the mandate of coordinating the planning for a constitution, the substance of a future draft constitution, and of drafting the constitution and finally submitting it to the people of Québec. Our brief was therefore written against the backdrop of this defined framework.

It should therefore come as no great surprise that the CEQ, as a supporter of Québec independence, calls at this point for a fundamental law respecting the sovereignty of the Québec people to be adopted immediately by the National Assembly and ratified in 1991 by referendum, a law that must entrust the government with the mandate of negotiating the technical aspects of achieving independence as well as convening an elected constituent assembly that is representative of all components of society. The mission of this assembly would be to prompt a broad public debate and draft a democratic constitution that would be submitted to the people in a second referendum. The ratification of this constitution by the people of Québec would establish the birth of the independent republic of Québec. The time has now come for Quebecers to have their own constitution.

The CEQ feels that the new Québec nation should be founded on the principle of sovereignty for the people. The first section of the fundamental statute might read as follows: "Subject to the aboriginal rights and ancestral

rights of Native peoples and their right to self-determination, the people of Québec only are sovereign in Québec."

We are all aware that the sharing of powers between the federal government and the provinces has worked to Québec's disadvantage. We also know that the Canadian Constitution, even where those areas that fall under provincial jurisdiction are concerned, contains a number of impediments to the full exercise of these powers. And we are also aware that the federal government benefits from the fact that its legislation has a great deal of primacy over provincial legislation. Our brief raises certain questions regarding constitutional impediments in connection with education and the language issue, and we could even talk about the health and social services sector, given the federal government's right to limit the right to abortion via the Criminal Code.

We have therefore reached the conclusion that federal policy, not only by virtue of its jurisdictions but also by encroaching occasionally upon provincial jurisdiction, is holding up Québec's economic and social development. This is true, for example, in the case of Ottawa's power over employment, manpower training, taxes, public finances, language questions and, more recently, communications. Complete power over all economic levers seems to us a necessary condition for our developing in a way that truly reflects the aspirations of the Québec people. But this condition is not enough in itself. Everything naturally depends on the priorities set and the policies promoted.

It is nevertheless time, in our opinion, to repatriate the powers and instruments that will enable us to ensure our full development and to attain a better balance between economic effectiveness and social justice objectives. What is more, the Canadian Constitution, especially its monarchistic character... And we might even talk in terms of a constitutional monarchy... is an obstacle to the institution of true democracy in Québec. The Canadian Constitution is also a definite obstacle to Quebecers' making free use of the government powers exercised on its territory; in particular, it rules out the possibility of referendums. Québec needs real and complete independence and not some form of purely theoretical sovereignty that entails the delegation of countless powers to a supranational authority. We believe that the time has come for us to become independent, democratically and in such a way that democratic values are enhanced.

During the debate on the political and constitutional future of Québec, the CEQ intends to play its role as a union organization by working towards the enhancement of democracy and economic, social and cultural rights for all the people, through access to public services particularly, so that the needs of all citizens can be met. The CEQ intends to carry out this

mandate with the support of current social movements in Québec directed towards the right to equality for women, young people and minority groups, the right to the environment and to peace, better integration of economic and social development, and the development of international solidarity.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Are you about ready to wrap up, Mr. Johnston?

Mr. Johnston: Yes. I'm almost finished. We want independence for countless reasons, some of the most important ones being so that we can make an original contribution on the international stage, so that we'll have all the means at our disposal for implementing a full employment policy, to equip Québec with a coherent social protection system, to consolidate public services, to efficiently reduce socioeconomic disparities between the regions, to fight poverty and impoverishment, to increase democratic control over economic development, to ensure better protection of union and social rights, to promote women's rights, to harmonize all the activities of public authorities in order to promote sustainable development, to establish a new agreement with Native peoples, and to have all the powers we need to promote the French language and our culture. I'll stop there, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Johnston. We will hear from the group forming the Official Opposition first. Mr. Jacques Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Chevette will speak first.

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

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like first of all to congratulate the CEQ; it's always a pleasure to meet with them. I'd like to point out that as early as 1972, the CEQ voted in favour of our self-determination and that this has consistently been on the agenda at its conventions since then. The CEQ has been one of the great reform movements in Québec, has been associated with all the great reform movements in Québec and has always shown a great deal of concern that the people should receive equal, fair and quality services. I'm pleased that we have before us this morning a substantial brief that deals with the real problems, in addition to advocating a clear, unambiguous political option. I think that it's good to be reminded by such a well-organized group that, in a sovereign Québec, there are nevertheless values that must be conveyed afterwards and that a social contract will need to be established, a blueprint for society that

has to be democratically defined. I want to congratulate you. Especially since you are aware that scare tactics will surface, if they haven't already, because on Friday I personally learned that there was a whole strategic plan to try to make the concept of sovereignty ambiguous with regard to the association aspect. I also learned that research data is soon to be published in an attempt to scare people into thinking there would be partition. I also learned that influential people would be polled on an individual basis to shake Quebecers up so much that they'll no longer be able to look into their future calmly.

Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions. Last week, there was a woman who'd been living in Québec for 14 years and who still considered herself an immigrant. This surprised me. I asked myself: At what point does one become a Quebecer? Is it because the Canadian federal approach is multiculturalism as opposed to the plurithnicity you refer to? I'd like to hear your views on the differences: Is it a question of the message, perceptions or integration programs?

Mr. Johnston: My colleague Henri Laberge will answer this question.

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

Mr. Laberge (Henri): I think that it might also, to a great extent, be a question of the reaction of Quebecers to immigrants. But all of these things are part of a whole, they go together. It seems to us that if Québec society truly defines itself as a national society, there will be less chance of our continuing to define ourselves mainly in terms of our own specific ethnic characteristics. This is one of the points that we elaborate on in our brief. Quebecers, the Québec people, are not just French-Canadians, not just people of French ancestry whose mother tongue is French. Everyone who lives in Québec is a Quebecer. However, in our history, there was about a century, from the time of the Union in 1840 to around 1960, when most Quebecers defined themselves not so much as belonging to Québec society but as belonging to the French-Canadian ethnic group. And the whole nationalist ideology grew up around this, around the defense of the French-Canadian ethnic group and the values characteristic of the French-Canadian ethnic group. Therefore, we maintain that in a future Québec that is more conscious of its reality per se, in which its people no longer define themselves in terms of their ethnic background but rather in terms of belonging to Québec society, there would be greater equality between immigrants and native-born Quebecers.

Mr. Chevette: You have insisted in quite a singular way on French being the language of

the workplace. You devote quite a large chapter to this question. In concrete terms, what amendments would you suggest to the present Charter of the French Language or Bill 101 to improve this situation in Québec?

Mr. Laberge: Well, first of all certain difficulties should be eliminated that are not caused by the wording of the Charter itself but by the way that courts have interpreted it. Let me give you an example. I don't remember the exact number of the section, but in the chapter of the Charter of the French Language that deals with the language in the workplace, there's a section that talks about employers addressing their staff in French. A court interpreted this as meaning when employers addressed the staff as a group and not when they talked to them individually. Therefore, given this interpretation, I think that legislation should now be passed to clarify the meaning of this section and specify that this also includes the right of any employee to be talked to in French. Obviously, this doesn't mean that... a right is not an obligation. If the person wants to be addressed in another language, it should be permitted, but the right should exist for all workers, regardless of their origin. We must not say that only French Canadians are entitled to have their employer talk to them in French. This right applies to everyone.

Another example is the francization programs. It's only normal that we had to start with big businesses but we think that now we must apply ourselves to businesses with few employees, so French becomes the language of the workplace in small and medium-size businesses too. Often, some of these businesses are active in innovative fields and have a very significant impact on a series of operations that follow from them.

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

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. For the past few days or a week, more and more people have started... very seriously, with a dismal look about them, their voices shaking... conjuring up the vision of a Québec that has been cut up and dismembered. So, it appears that northern Québec will slide into the Arctic Ocean and that a corridor will be built in southern Québec... I'm not quite sure if they mean it to be just a two-lane highway or an expressway. In your opinion, does the right of the Québec nation to self-determination... does the exercise of this right presuppose not just the ability to make an independent, sovereign nation of itself but does it also presuppose, in your view, the full and total integrity of Québec's territory, the right to self-determination presupposing very set geographical

boundaries?
(10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Johnston: To give you a simple answer to your question, I'd begin by saying yes. But this is nevertheless subject to a right that we would like to see written into the Québec constitution, the right of Native peoples to their self-determination, although we would try all the same to conclude agreements with these first nations that would preserve the integrity of the Québec territory and that would allow them to control institutions and to control a certain amount of legislation that concerns them on their territory.

I'd like to emphasize the fact that early this fall we asked the Québec government to set up a public board of inquiry into relations with Native nations, a public board of inquiry, which was, I might add, supported by the Association of First Nations, so that we could determine if necessary the new global and specific relations that need to be established in Québec with each of the Native nations living here in Québec, which we clearly distinguish from the ethno-cultural communities arising from immigration over the past few decades.

Mr. Brassard: Except that that's not what those who use scare tactics are talking about. What they've been talking about is a sort of dismemberment of key parts of Québec, without any reference whatsoever to what you've just been saying about Native rights, a sort of cutting up or dismembering of Québec's territory.

Mr. Johnston: In our opinion, the way to resist this is to found Québec's political course on the clear determination of Quebecers. And the initiative that we propose ensures the democratic legitimacy of the whole process as well as the incontestability of decisions made by the Québec people.

Mr. Brassard: What you're saying, then, is that if a majority of the people of Québec, or the Québec nation, as you call it, democratically endorses sovereignty or independence, then this would imply respect for the territorial integrity of Québec. In a way, it would follow automatically.

Mr. Johnston: We believe that under international law, we would be in a very good position to assert the right to territorial integrity.

Mr. Brassard: Do I have a bit of time left? Yes? Regarding economic matters, you obviously criticize the federal system very, very harshly. Essentially, you're telling us that as a group we now suffer from economic problems under the federal system and that most of the economic problems that you describe in your brief are

related to the federal system and the way the federal system operates.

I really understand what you're saying, because for a while now, a lot of people have also been more inclined to look into their crystal balls and conjure up future economic problems in a sovereign Québec, but they seem to be very short-sighted as far as the current economic ills to which Québec society is subjected are concerned. Is this what you meant?

Mr. Johnston: Yes, exactly.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you.

The President (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right? You still have...

Mr. Chevette: On page 6 of your brief, you talk about constitutional procedure against... I'll read the text out to you, to make sure I get it right: "controlled by the people". I'd like you to elaborate on what you mean by "constitutional procedure controlled by the people". Do you refer to a system based on repeated referendums or to one that provides for constituent assemblies every time we wish to make amendments, etc.?

Mr. Johnston: I think we need to distinguish the first initiative proposed, which is an integral part of the assertion of Québec's independence: a constituent assembly for drafting a formal constitution that brings together all rights. That's clear. We propose that this be done by an elected constituent assembly and that it be submitted to the people in a referendum. If amendments have to be made to this constitution later on and the amendments can be considered minor, we propose that the National Assembly be empowered to make the amendments without consulting the whole population, provided that two-thirds of the MNAs are in agreement, unless... or a group representing at least 15% of the National Assembly could call for a referendum unless the Executive, which we distinguish clearly from the National Assembly, also calls for a referendum on these amendments. But if the amendments in question are substantial and involve rewriting a large part of the constitution, we suggest that at this point a constituent assembly and referendum should once more be required.

Mr. Chevette: Don't you feel that the process you propose, involving the constituent assembly initiative, would take a long time? This is the impression that I get when I read your brief, that it would be very sluggish and time-consuming.

Mr. Johnston: Two years is the figure we refer to in our text. Two years to initiate a

Québec-wide debate on the substance of the constitution, which would not only define our political institutions but also redefine as it were the rights of minorities, the combination of individual rights and freedoms and collective rights, and attempt as it were to define new parameters for building Québec. Two years for doing all this... Actually we feel that this would keep a constituent assembly busy full time. We don't think that this time frame is exaggerated if we want to arrive at an end product that Quebecers find acceptable and reassuring. It can only serve to reinforce the consensus on the rules that will, as it were, become Québec's fundamental rules.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Chevette. We will now allot 40 minutes to the next group. Most of the members of this group, or block, asked to participate. Therefore, if everyone cooperates, we might be able to hear from all those who have questions. We'll begin with Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some things in your brief that I like a lot, especially what you say, on pages 24 and 25, about the cultural development of a people also having to be based on economic development objectives. My questions, obviously, are connected with this. On page 25, you say: "Over the past 30 years, Québec has made great economic strides. From 1961 to 1989, for example, the per capita gross domestic product rose by 138% in real terms while the per capita income of private individuals increased by 170% on the same basis". This is in the present context of federalism and the Québec constitution.

I have a question for you. Obviously, you make a distinction in your brief between independence and sovereignty for Québec. I think that it was your opening remarks that gave me this impression, that there's a fundamental difference, I think, in your opinion at any rate. If you don't mind, I'd like us to talk about page 95 of your brief... As you see, I'm skipping quite a few, but then maybe we can come back to them later on... Where you say, with great simplicity: "This is doubtless the main thing that lends the other course an appeal that is not insignificant. In effect, although Québec's having its own distinct currency would be liable to create a degree of uncertainty initially in the financial community, it could become a major asset in the medium or long term".

If we read what you say in your brief before you get to this paragraph, we realize that you would definitely prefer that Québec have its own currency. You have an economist working with you, Mr. Richard Langlois, I believe, who you introduced a little while ago. Could he explain to me, explain to the audience

here, how one goes about creating a distinct currency for Québec? What do we do with the dollars we have now? Do we go to a newly created bank, hand over our dollars and say: Exchange these for the ones in the new colour, will you? Well, this all appears very easy to say, we'll get our Québec currency, imagine that, but this whole thing... When they tell us we're scaring people, well these things need to be explained to Quebecers. When we get to our conclusions tomorrow, I'd like to know how we're going to manage to explain all this to Quebecers. How do we go about creating a Québec currency?

Mr. Johnston: If you don't mind, before Richard Langlois ventures out onto the technical ground suggested, I'd like first of all to mention that the position of the CEQ on the question of monetary union, the possibility of monetary union or of a Québec currency, is basically not defined. We indicated a few courses of action; we still have to give this question some thought. What I can tell you, though, is that what we're looking for is an approach that would give Québec as much latitude as possible while creating as little insecurity as possible. And we feel that the authorities, the authorities shared by Québec and Canada, should only, in our opinion, play an administrative role, or apply policies that have already been defined, and not one of policy-making.

I'll let Richard Langlois say a few words about this now.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): First, I'd like to say that we're obviously not asking your union to give us expert answers. The Commission is planning on inviting currency and banking experts so that we can discuss all of these problems. So, you can go ahead if you like but we clearly don't expect you to be a specialized expert in this field.

Mr. Langlois (Richard): What we said in our brief was that we don't advocate any one course of action more than another. We talk about different scenarios, different scenarios. The first scenario entails our having a common currency with Canada, and we present the possible advantages and implications. The second main possibility, the second main possibility is our having our own distinct currency, like others around the world, which would obviously involve the creation of a hypothetical central Québec bank of some sort. We say that with this scenario we might possibly have more latitude in developing our own monetary policy, while admitting however that... And I think that most of the experts are in agreement on this... That when a new currency is created, it's normal for there to be a period of uncertainty. This period of uncertainty, however, can die out with time,

precisely if we manage to develop a monetary policy that is stable enough.

Mr. Poissant: Mr. Chairman, I imagine I still have a bit of time left? In your brief, you appear to indicate that the present federal system penalizes Québec, especially where monetary policy is concerned. I think that when I look at this seriously, I think that I agree with you. But I really have some serious doubts. How could we have a regional monetary policy, with two discount rates in Canada? I really wonder how we could do this.

Mr. Johnston: Look, of the options that we present, there's one where we might have one currency and one monetary policy, in an independent Québec nation. This is one of the options that we must look into.

Obviously, any possibility of monetary union that doesn't allow us to be on an equal footing with Canada at the decision-making level would force us to tag along as it were behind any decisions made by Canada regarding its own monetary policy, and would therefore impose, continue to impose on us any advantages it might have but especially impose on us the disadvantages of Canadian monetary policy.
(10:45 a.m.)

This is why we say that we must try to find an approach that gives us as much political flexibility as possible over Québec's monetary policy.

Mr. Poissant: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask... Is there...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Well, I'm just asking you to be generous, considering the number of members left. If you take your full 10 minutes, the others will...

Mr. Poissant: Get mad at me?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No, but they'll think badly of you.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Poissant: But I'm still waiting for Mr. Langlois' answer.

Mr. Langlois: I'd merely like to make it clear that there's no question of regionalizing monetary policy within the present federal framework. We don't say that. We even indicate that it isn't possible. All we're saying is that it's possible to have a distinct monetary policy if we become a distinct country.

Mr. Poissant: Is it your impression, and this is my last question, Mr. Chairman, that it will be easier to negotiate with English Canada if we

unilaterally declare ourselves independent, or sovereign? Who are we going to negotiate with, the federal government or the other provinces? This problem is important for us here at the Commission to understand.

Mr. Johnston: Well, for us, with the option that we present, we haven't come here to tell the Commission to propose that we opt temporarily for sovereignty in order to negotiate a new arrangement with Canada. What we're telling this Commission is that it must recommend that we chart a course for Québec's independence in the two phases we talk about in our brief. We're not in the same corridor. And in our view, what would arise from the first referendum that we propose is a mandate for the Québec government to negotiate the administrative arrangements for potentially achieving independence, which could materialize with the adoption of Québec's constitution. There's no question of negotiating a new arrangement after the people have voted in favour of Québec's independence.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Johnston. It's now Mr. Serge Turgeon's turn to take the floor.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the last thing I want is for anyone to think badly of me, I'll make it short.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Turgeon: You'll see. I think that your brief brings out a fundamental aspect. Culture is at the basis of everything. As cultured, educated people, I'd like to hear your reactions to these attacks designed to morally and psychologically discredit people like you who say things like what you're saying now. I refer to a paper in today's *La Presse*, written by Louis-Philippe Rochon, who's an economist and who also happens to be the Co-chairman of the Task Force on Canadian Federalism. He claims that federalists don't have the right to present arguments before this Commission. That's his problem. But it becomes a problem for us when he says that, for many Quebecers, the issue in Québec today has become much more than a simple question of language and culture, that at the centre of the separatist hegemony and rhetoric there is a belief in the distinct nature of the "Québécois" and in their profound, immutable characteristics, in other words the very idea of a race. In fact he goes beyond that, even going so far as to say that arguments like yours and the way these arguments are reported by the media... and journalists are directly concerned here... going so far as to say that the current debate is being staged in Québec in a way that it creates imaginary fears of

bastardization, cultural metamorphosis and paraphrenia. I don't know if this is a word that you use frequently, the word "paraphrenia"? Well, personally I was forced to consult my scholarly dictionary this morning and I found that "paraphrenia" is related to psychopathy... This gives us an idea of what we're talking about here... And it says that "paraphrenia" is a chronic delirious psychosis characterized by fantasy, and therefore a proliferation of delirious themes with... And this is the important part... The adjustment to reality being paradoxically retained. What he's getting at then is that people like you, like a great deal of the people in this room and about 70% of all Quebecers, are raving mad and don't know who they are. That's one way of staging the debate. And I want to ask you how you people react... You for whom, by the very nature of your professions, words necessarily have a strict meaning.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Johnston: No, I don't need a dictionary. I'd merely like to say that with this kind of debate, there are many ways for people to try to influence the debate and one of the ways of influencing the debate is to try to label people and apply words to them that don't apply.

Our brief is clear. For us, the people of Québec, the Québec nation is not defined in terms of the French-Canadian ethnic group alone. For us, Quebecers are all the men and women who live in Québec permanently, in keeping with rules that will have to be defined because of immigration laws that will have to be revamped in Québec, but we say nothing whatsoever that would imply that Québec is merely a matter for French Canadians. There's nothing in our brief that is intended to leave the least little doubt as to our desire to build a French-language Québec that is plurilingual, open and tolerant, and accusations such as those you mention, if they'd been directly addressed... They're probably indirectly aimed at us... We might have been able to respond to them using the text of this very brief and I think that this response would have been sufficiently eloquent.

Mrs. Drouin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your brief, needless to say, advocates Québec independence. I'd like to take you into this independent Québec you talk about. You make a few remarks about decentralization, a subject that was raised by many people, but I find that you don't really say that much about it in your brief, not enough anyway. On page 74, you talk, among other things, about decentralization. In one paragraph, you say: "A total absence of uniformity stands in the way of the development of democracy at the national level. Too much uniformity is a source of democratic 'sclerosis'. We have to arrive at a balance between the

national interest and regional interests".

I'd like to know, when you talk about regional interests, if something like what we've been seeing here in region 04, where an individual like Normand Maurice, who belongs to your organization, has managed to disrupt established rules and join forces with big businesses, in the name of a very specific educational project... He joined forces with Cascades, he joined forces with the Mouvement Desjardins and institutions like the Arthabaska hospital, for example, for the purpose of developing a truly regional project, the CEFER, or Centre de formation en emploi et récupération... Is this the kind of regional interest that could be developed, and how could we establish this balance that you want between national interests and regional interests? Many groups have talked to us about creating an intermediate regional government, which might or might not be elected. You don't elaborate on this theme at all in your brief. Could you say a bit more? Is this something you would be in favour of or do you see it as being something else?

Mr. Johnston: Well, I think that we are comfortable enough with the example that you refer to, since the CEQ has already given a great deal of support to Mr. Normand Maurice's initiative. As far as the second part of your question is concerned, I think that this is a very important issue, but also very complex. We tried to define two poles that would have to be taken into consideration in the discussion, but we haven't gotten far enough along in our thinking to be able to propose a model.

We might perhaps say, however, that the approaches to the question of regionalization, the groups that talk about regionalization aren't necessarily all looking at it from the same angle. Some of them talk about it in order to reinforce agencies that we might refer to as coordinating agencies, agencies that therefore aren't necessarily elected, while others talk about it in an attempt to reinforce institutions whose members are just elected indirectly, and others still, in the regions, talk about it from the angle of giving themselves, in the regions, a power of intervention over regional economic management.

We think that talking about defining regional intervention powers that apply to regional economics is not necessarily the same thing as talking about decentralization. From this angle, it probably has more to do with the creation of new powers for intervention that go with the problems and potential of the regions with regard to their development. But as I told you right from the start, we don't at this time have a definite model to propose. We still have a lot more thinking to do, even though our brief is so voluminous. We weren't able to delve deeply into all those aspects that we could have discussed at greater length.

Mrs. Drouin: Fine, I'll let the others ask their questions now.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Drouin. Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to say something to you before I address Mr. Johnston. I just want to tell you, in jest, that my question won't be remote-controlled by the privy council. I'd like to thank the CEQ for its brief. It's a well-prepared brief: its contents are well-organized and I'd even borrow the expression Guy Chevette used when he referred to it as "a substantial brief". But my analysis stops there. As far as its contents are concerned, of course, and the conclusion in particular, since you are well aware that I don't necessarily agree with your whole analysis, your whole conclusion, I do have two very short questions. In your conclusion, while we commissioners are expected to evolve, you tell us that the CEQ will continue to endorse independence, no matter what happens. You were in favour of independence yesterday, you are today and you will be tomorrow. So, the CEQ's position is quite clear. For you, there's no question of joining forces with others who might have things to propose to you.

Mr. Johnston: What we meant by that was that our position is not a question of strategy. It's our fundamental position. If, in the immediate future, we had to analyze strategic perspectives, we'd examine them like everyone else and then take a stand on the basis of the views of the representatives of our members. But our basic position, as I said a little while ago, is not a transitory one, not a question of aiming for temporary sovereignty for the purpose of negotiating something else. Our position is truly that of independence for Québec and sovereignty of the people. And we'd therefore have been very surprised... astonished... if you'd said that you shared our views in this regard.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Dufour: That's true, you made it very clear. But, on another note, I must congratulate you for something else. Your group is about the only one that comes right out and uses the word "independence". The word "sovereignty" is one that often tends to be confusing. Anyway, different people interpret it in different ways, at least the people I come into contact with do. But, in your case, it's very clear. I'm going to move on now to the economy because that's what we're the most interested in, you know, and I must tell you that this is possibly the area where your brief is the weakest. You have a lot to say to us about full employment, and you have a lot to say about unemployment. And I

must say that we share your concerns in this regard. A 12% unemployment rate is scandalous, we agree. You suggest various ways of solving this problem. Let's not talk about monetary policy. We know that it's created problems in Québec, but since you propose the same currency as the central bank, we'll always have the same problems.

This brings me to the subject of Québec's industries. What do you tell Quebecers who are afraid... You know, fear can be a positive thing sometimes... for their jobs? I say this absolutely without animosity, but it's much easier for the CEQ... Whose job security is guaranteed because there will always be a need for teachers in an independent Québec... than for the workers in the FTQ or workers in the private sector whose jobs may be called into question. Anyway, first of all I'd like you to disprove the assertion that it's not true that there'll always be jobs for teachers in a sovereign Québec. My question is more basic than that, though. Have you thought about restructuring the economy? We know that there are many sectors that are weak. The sectors... textiles, furniture... that are found in this region, how could they be strengthened? (11:00 a.m.)

Mr. Johnston: First of all, I'd like to point out that you are entitled to your opinion regarding the supposed weakness of our brief on the subject of the economy. We perhaps didn't develop it in the way you would have liked us to, but it is based on what we see as the interests of the majority of Quebecers. Talking about the unemployment rate, talking about the poverty rate in Québec and talking about the increase in poverty... these things are not unrelated to the current debate...

Mr. Dufour: I quite agree with you.

Mr. Johnston: ...and we can't say that they're not pertinent to economic analysis.

Mr. Dufour: I quite agree. Actually, it's not your analysis... Your analysis is fine... It's the suggestions you make.

Mr. Johnston: I'm going to move on to another point: job security for teachers. It's not constitutionalized in the Canadian context and it probably won't be constitutionalized in a Québec context either.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Johnston: To answer the other part of your question, I'm going to ask Richard Langlois to say a few words.

Mr. Langlois: First of all, I'd just like to say once again that we didn't say that we supported monetary union. This is not what we were

saying a few minutes ago. We mentioned different scenarios in our brief and these scenarios lead us to say that, after a great deal of collective thinking obviously, we would choose an option that would guarantee a maximum of flexibility.

Now, as far as our future industrial policy is concerned, I don't believe that here this morning we're going to define the broad parameters regarding which sectors to promote or to restructure or to transform. One thing is for sure, though, and that's that, at the macroeconomic level at least, we're going to have to give the economy a bit of time to catch its breath. I think that you are bound to agree with me on this, that we have to wait until interest rates drop more quickly than they are at the moment. I think that this would give everyone a hand.

Mr. Dufour: I'll conclude on this note of agreement with respect to lower interest rates. I think that all the groups in Québec share your views in this regard. I think that we could even present a common front in the face of Ottawa.

Mr. Langlois: At this point, I think I could guarantee it.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Lucien Bouchard.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, I've had the opportunity at different stages in my career to work closely with the CEQ and, although our dealings did not always go that smoothly, I never lost sight of the CEQ's members: the teachers, the indispensable and essential artisans of an enlightened, modern Québec, people who work on the future of Québec every day.

I have two quick questions. The first one concerns a passage on page 87 of your brief in which you refer to your position on the kind of structure that a sovereign Québec could choose for itself jointly with the rest of Canada. You say that you are opposed to powers being delegated and exercised jointly. And you say that you are opposed in particular to political powers being delegated to a supranational agency, especially if this agency is under the majority control of another nation. Your use of the word "especially" bothers me a little. You felt the need to add "especially if this delegated power is under the majority control of another nation". Would you feel differently about this if this supranational agency didn't put Québec in the minority, if Québec was part of a confederation, for example, on an equal footing with the other nation, the other nation being today's English Canada? This reminds me of a proposal that was put to us by Mr. Giroux and Mr. Charbonneau. They called it the historical compromise between the two parties now existing in Québec,

regarding the acceptance of a confederal parliament that would not be made up of elected officials... This would be the concession of the provincial Québec Liberal Party... But that would nevertheless exist and be made up of people delegated by two sovereign nations, the sovereign nation of Québec and the sovereign nation of English Canada, it being understood that in a confederation the real decisions would be made by a Cabinet delegated equally by the two nations, etc., and that we can always withdraw from a confederation, we can always refuse to accept a decision, since there would be no interference between the two groups of elected officials in that the delegates would be appointed by the national governments. Should a proposal like this one come up at some point, what would the CEQ's position be?

Mr. Johnston: First of all, I'd like to remind the members of this Commission that the paragraph you refer to clearly establishes the distinction between political powers and technical powers. We have no objection to there being agreements to maintain administrative offices, places with technical powers, provided that the political power continued to belong, as far as Québec is concerned, to the nation of Québec, its democratic institutions and its people.

How would we react to such-and-such a scenario? We didn't come here today as fortune tellers. We came here to explain our position, how we think things should be done. Should any proposals like the one you refer to take concrete shape, we'll react to it when the time comes. Our position is truly, and I want to make this clear, one of independence for Québec. Any possible sharing, possible agreements with Canada should be undertaken within the framework... or rather should permit the establishment of some sort of administrative forum with technical powers. That's our opinion. When we emphasized our point, further on in the paragraph, by saying "especially if...", it was to say that if political forums with the power to make political decisions are created, it is virtually inconceivable, given the present state of Canadian politics, that there could be areas where Canada and Québec would be equal participants in decision-making forums on policies that would apply across Canada. We think that this is akin to wishful thinking.

Mr. Bouchard: If you'll allow me, Mr. Chairman, I have a second question to ask quickly.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Certainly.

Mr. Bouchard: Concerning the process that you refer to on page 36 of your brief... I think that Mr. Chevette alluded to it a little while

ago... for our attaining sovereignty and independence. To me, you know, there's nothing ambiguous about the concept of sovereignty. Mr. Dufour says that it's an ambiguous concept for people in the business community. Everyone will remember that Mr. Landry made this very clear when he came before the Commission. He talked to us about what he called a trilogy, with three elements. He said that a sovereign nation, an independent nation, is a country with three things: it has its income taxes exclusively, it signs its treaties and it passes its laws. I don't think that you see independence as excluding our living in cooperation with other nations and conducting economic relations. But regarding the process you suggest for attaining independence, basically there are two stages. You talk about three but really there are only two. First, the National Assembly would pass a law proclaiming Québec's sovereignty in principle and determining the procedure for becoming sovereign. This would all have to be approved by referendum of course. And the other stage you talk about is the creation of a constituent assembly that would determine constitutional procedure and the structures of the constitution, which would at the same time be accompanied by a government initiative to define with the rest of Canada the *modus operandi* for accession to sovereignty, with regard to monetary matters, transportation, etc. Then there'd be another referendum.

It's the interval, the transition period that's not all that clear. What would happen during the transition period after the first law had been adopted via referendum? There'd be a government in Québec and a government in Ottawa. For all intents and purposes, it'd be the status quo as far as income taxes, laws, treaties, and so forth are concerned. Things would go on as they had before until the final stage, that of promulgation of a constitution approved by the constituent assembly and its submission to the people in a referendum. In other words, in practice, it's the second referendum that would formally determine the coming into effect of sovereignty.

Mr. Johnston: I think that you are quite right about the last part of our position. However... and I can easily understand this, given the fact that our brief is so voluminous... I think that you've forgotten something. Regarding the fundamental law that would be proclaimed by the National Assembly and subjected to a first referendum, there's the principle of sovereignty for the people of Québec on the one hand and the principle that the Québec National Assembly could establish the precedence of its legislation over federal legislation on the other.

Then there's the immediate establishment of the constituent assembly, with the mandate of drafting a constitution and the Québec

government mandate to negotiate administrative arrangements for achieving independence. You're right, though, in that for a period of two years, the federal system would remain in place, as would the Québec nation, and in order to protect ourselves from any stabs in the back that might be aimed our way during this period, we suggest that the fundamental law that would be subject to a first referendum legitimize the right of the Québec government to ensure the primacy of its laws over federal laws. This would give us some flexibility during the two-year period for coping with any problems that might arise, since relations would be strained between Québec and Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue... Just a moment... As of now, before this group of questions, there are 5 minutes left. Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue, you have the floor.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Johnston, I know that I shouldn't be saying this, but I'm going to say it anyway. I think that, up to page 30 or so, this brief is the one I've found the most exciting so far, and I congratulate you. The things you say in some of your pages and paragraphs are serious indeed. Necessarily, we haven't shared the same ideology, as you know, up to now. But pages 16, 18, 21, 22, 24 and 34 are... And, with five minutes, I obviously don't have enough time to deal with such important subjects.

However, on pages 18 and 19, you raise the question of territory, the question of belonging. We also find the concept of belonging on page 16. If we might take a look at this concept... Perhaps we could clear this up quickly... I'm having some problems with... I'm not contesting it, I'd just like, since you've gone so far, for you to be a bit more specific perhaps. You say that belonging to the nation is not a question of characteristics... You know, in the last paragraph here... "but of the tacit desire to live together", and I have a feeling that my questions will always be along these lines. This tacit desire needs to be expressed at some point. It's like friendship, like love... To get the message across, it will have to stop being tacit at some point.

Mr. Johnston: Yes, I'm still listening.

Mr. Hogue: OK, for this tacit desire to live together to show at some point, it has to be expressed verbally. OK, that's all right then. (11:15 a.m.)

Mr. Johnston: Look, just like you, we listened to people who represent English Quebecers, who appeared before this Commission and said that, no matter what the political and constitutional future of Québec is to be, they would continue to be Quebecers.

Mr. Hogue: Yes, but what I said, Mr. Johnston, was that I find this text exciting. You answered a speaker a little while ago and you talked about parallels. You have to admit that our positions, yours and mine are parallel. You have to live with that, you have to accept it. Personally, I accept it. Now, if you'll look at this dialectic on page 18 and then move on to page 21, the third paragraph and the end of the second, where you talk about ethnic diversity, this third paragraph applies to both Québec and Canada, with Québec being a sort of microcosm and Canada being bigger, the nation being... the continent, and so on.

Mr. Johnston: I don't understand what you're asking me, or if you're asking me anything.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Johnston: It's as if you were giving a reading appreciation class.

Mr. Hogue: I'm asking you if this paragraph, which is a paragraph that we can't disagree with, we have to go along with it... I'm asking you if this statement applies to smaller realities as much as it does to larger ones.

Mr. Laberge: Are you talking about the paragraph that begins "What Québec needs..."?

Mr. Hogue: No: "We don't believe that we have to..." the third paragraph.

Mr. Laberge: "We don't believe...". OK, I think that's very clear, now.

Mr. Hogue: That's right.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: "We don't..."

Mr. Hogue: That's right.

Mr. Laberge: Don't you want us to answer?

Mr. Hogue: Yes, you answered when you told me that it was very clear.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: And on page 25, and in the last paragraph on page 24, and the first few lines on page 25, I have a specific question: Are you theorizing that this domination will continue or increase? Then, I'll move on to page 34.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Then your time will be up.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Johnston: You're on page 25?

Mr. Laberge: Pages 24 and 25?

Mr. Hogue: Yes, that's right. The last paragraph and the first three lines on page 25.

Mr. Laberge: No, I get the impression that we're on the wrong page. I don't follow you.

Mr. Hogue: You don't follow me?

Mr. Johnston: Can you ask a clear question?

Mr. Hogue: OK, you hypothesize that this domination... I'm asking you if you're theorizing that this domination will continue or it will increase.

Mr. Johnston: You're talking about domination... Our interpretation at the present time is that domination exists in the present federal context and that it is increasing, not only because of the weight of federal powers but also because of the way that these powers are used.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): The time allotted for this group... I'm sorry, Sir, but you can follow through later. The 40 minutes allotted for this group are now up. We'll now hear from Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Johnston, Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all I'd like to thank you for having agreed to come and testify before us today. Thank you. You represent almost 120 000 members. Yours is one of the finest professions of all, that of passing on knowledge to our young people and preparing them to take up the challenge of the twenty-first century with us and build this contemporary, modern Québec. Your testimony is therefore very important; we are very interested in what you have to say. I read your brief, which is substantial because it has over 110 pages. There are things in it that are very interesting, and others that raise questions of course, which is quite normal.

On page 26 in particular, you list some facts that are food for serious thought. When you say, for example: "Even in today's Québec, there are over a million poor, one-third of whom are children." That's upsetting, a very upsetting reality in Québec. When you say: "The average woman's income is barely 60% of that of the average man's; over half the women earn under \$15 000 per year." That too is a harsh reality that is difficult to accept. You say: "Thousands

of families in the middle-income bracket also suffer from another form of impoverishment: a decrease in their purchasing power because of salary stagnation, etc." You tell us that in Montréal... You say: "Montréal is the biggest poverty basin in the country, with 615 000 people below the poverty threshold..." That too is upsetting, very upsetting to see. And you say: "Regional disparities across Québec are increasing..."

But I didn't see many statistics in your brief that might tell us that our becoming independent... Because it's definitely independence that you propose and not a form of sovereignty centred on a lot of association elements, which would not give Québec full autonomy, it's truly independence with very few elements of association when you get right down to it... Because, if I've understood your brief correctly, you only see currency as being a possible common ground, although you don't take a definite stand on this subject... So, in this context, Mr. Johnston how do you arrive at the conclusion that this description that you give us, which one has to admit is an upsetting description, would improve in an independent Québec?

Mr. Johnston: I believe that I said in my presentation at the beginning, in the summary I made of our brief, that repatriation of all levers of economic intervention was needed for us to improve articulated economic development and social progress, to improve articulated economic development and the objectives of social justice, but I also said that this condition was not sufficient in itself.

It is therefore clear to us that it's the jurisdictional conflicts between the federal and provincial governments, the overlapping of jurisdictions, and policies that are sometimes contradictory and sometimes reinforce each other, but for the worst, that have brought us to where we are at today. Of course, independence will not automatically solve all these problems as soon as the Québec constitution is signed, sealed and delivered. But independence and placing all the leverage for economic intervention in the hands of Quebecers can enable us to develop more coherent policies for dealing with these issues; I repeat, however, that they can enable us to develop all this.

This is why we emphasized in the conclusion of our presentation that independence wouldn't give us everything, that we'd pursue objectives through independence, and that these objectives are also related to social and economic policies that we're going to have to make up our minds to apply some day, in an independent Québec. And we're saying this now because we feel that now is also the time to make sure that the interests of the majority will be taken into consideration, at the social level,

even in this constitutional debate.

Mr. Rémillard: One could say that all of us are responsible for things like the average income of women being barely 60% of that of men, regardless of the constitutional system we find ourselves in. I think that you'll definitely agree with me on this.

Mr. Johnston: Certainly.

Mr. Rémillard: Concerning the increase in regional disparities, too. I think that the message has come across loud and clear, because this is our last stop here in Trois-Rivières, in our tour of the regions, and we've gotten a very clear message. We're going to have to rethink our mechanisms in terms of regional economic development, no matter what constitutional system we work in. It's still a reality that we can deal with, regardless of the constitutional framework.

Mr. Johnston: Yes, I think that we have to distinguish different levels of problems, or break them down. Québec can solve part of the problem of the discrepancy between women's and men's salaries via legislative intervention. For instance, we can adopt a proactive law respecting pay equity. This is obviously possible. So why hasn't our government done this? Let me throw the question back at you.

Mr. Rémillard: But...

Mr. Johnston: But as far as regional development is concerned, we're talking about an area where the respective powers of the provincial and federal governments prevent coherent intervention. There are all kinds of contradictory interventions by the provincial government and the federal government in the field of development, and you're not going to convince me, Mr. Minister, that the federal government's abolishing transportation in the regions facilitates regional development. You're also not going to talk me into believing that recent decisions by the CBC and Radio-Canada to go so far as to cut off communications links between people in outlying areas amounts to promoting development. It's not just a question of jurisdiction, it's what's done with the powers too.

Mr. Rémillard: Mr. Johnston, first of all, please allow me to point out to you that I am a member of a government that implemented the Charter of human rights and freedoms in keeping with its programs, precisely so that it could abolish... and favour equality between men and women, and you are well aware of this, for we've often had the opportunity to talk together, you and I. So, this being said, I believe

the government has done a lot, and we still have a lot more to do, I agree with you on that. I was just trying to see what we must do with the powers that we have now and what we could do with the powers that you want us to have in the plan you propose. This is why I also wonder about something you say on page 27... The other side of the page, page 26 was the last one I referred to... On page 27, where you say in the fourth line of the last paragraph, and I'll read it out to you: "They also emphasize the urgency of abandoning economic policy centred on economic growth, first and foremost, and without consideration for the employment situation." What do you mean by this and how do you link this to your view of independence for Québec in terms of a blueprint for society? Because you also propose a Québec constitution and therefore a blueprint for the society that you would like to see us build.

Mr. Johnston: I'm sure that you'll agree with me, Mr. Minister, when I say that employment is probably one of the sectors where federal government intervention and provincial government intervention compete, from many viewpoints. Even where powers are concerned, there's even a problem there. When we say that we have to curb economic development that has no consideration for social development or development of employment, what we want to stress is that there's an urgent need for Québec to repatriate all the levers needed to develop an integrated full employment policy. And when it becomes possible for us to intervene via a proper forum on the substance of a Québec constitution, we'll have proposals to make in this regard. (11:30 p.m.)

Mr. Rémillard: You talk a lot about respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, and rightly so. Québec society must be as open as possible, and in recognition of a free, democratic society, on page 69 specifically, you seem to be telling us that you are against the "notwithstanding" clause. Do I read you correctly in interpreting it this way?

Mr. Laberge: Yes, we talk about a "notwithstanding" clause in a sovereign Québec, in an independent Québec. We say that we'd be opposed to a clause that would give the legislative body the freedom to exclude legislation at will. Of course, our position is not a highly detailed one at this point, because mechanisms will obviously have to be provided for exceptional situations that can't be anticipated at the time the constitution is being drafted and because we can't foresee all the interpretations that the courts will give to the various provisions in the constitution.

There are things like this for which we have to give ourselves some leeway so that the legislative body can intervene. But what we're

saying is that we'd be against Québec's constitution having a "notwithstanding" clause such as the one in the present Canadian Constitution, where all the legislative body needs to do is vote, like for ordinary laws. It would just have to vote for this law to apply, despite the charter enshrined in the constitution. We'd absolutely be against that.

Mr. Rémillard: Just so I understand exactly what you're telling me... Supposing in an independent Québec, a case were heard by the highest court in Québec, its Supreme Court, and the decision of this court were made in accordance with the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms, which would be enshrined in the Québec constitution. According to what you're saying, there'd be nothing to prevent Anglophones from putting up signs in their language then, because you wouldn't use a "notwithstanding" clause to prevent them. There'd be no restrictions. Am I right?

Mr. Laberge: We're saying that we'd be against a "notwithstanding" clause similar to the one in the Canadian Constitution. If we need to use more rigorous methods in order to depart from the law, then we can discuss that later on. But, what we're saying for now is that if the legislative body just has to vote like it does for an ordinary law for a departure from the Charter of Rights, then there's not much point in having a Charter of Rights. Now...

Mr. Rémillard: What you're really saying is something else. You're saying that there'd be a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that would have supremacy, but that there'd still be a "notwithstanding" clause. Is that right?

Mr. Johnston: The question that you've raised, particularly with regard to languages used in signs, when we draft a Québec constitution, we'll be defining it here in Québec with the help of the people of Québec and an elected constituent assembly, inasmuch as we want to make Québec a French and pluriethnic nation. There'd be ways of providing, within the Québec constitution itself, for mechanisms to prevent these things from being repeated, but basically this doesn't cover all the questions concerning the possibility of applying certain freedoms in a way that's a bit more limited.

My colleague Henri Laberge told you earlier that this is a way of striking out rights for the purpose of implementing a law that comes into question. There are mechanisms that could be discussed regarding the possibility under special circumstances of interpreting these rights perhaps, but not denying them.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Rémillard, you have 30 seconds left. Do you want

them or are you going to pass them on to Mr. Philibert?

Mr. Rémillard: I might perhaps just add something briefly, to conclude, if you don't mind. I know that your members haven't forgotten the famous pool of 20% for 1981, 1982 and 1982, if my memory serves me. When economists come and tell us that, in the decision-making period possibly coming up, there might be... That we might be economically vulnerable and that there'd be economic consequences for Quebecers, how do your members react to this?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Quickly please, Mr. Johnston.

Mr. Johnston: Look, we remember the pool of 1982-1983 very clearly, just like we remember Bill 160.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'd like to say something quickly, if you don't mind. When we arrived in Trois-Rivières, we forgot to mention that applause is not allowed during Commission proceedings. Since I noticed a hint of it there... I prefer to point this out before it actually happens. Now, Mr. Philibert, a short question.

Mr. Philibert: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make a few comments about self-determination. As you know, self-determination amounts to the possibility for a people to choose what it wants: the institutions it wants to have, the political status it wants... Therefore, this must be an absolute right, in my opinion, that can't be subject to any choices that are made. Whether we decide on a form of federation, confederation or sovereignty-association, we must always preserve the right to self-determination. This seems absolutely fundamental to me because it's the right to constantly decide. In your brief, on page 78, you propose that we proclaim the right of Native peoples to self-determination. On page 82, you suggest that the first section of Québec's constitution should read: "Subject to the Native rights and ancestral rights of Native peoples and their right to self-determination, the people of Québec only are sovereign in Québec." I agree with this in principle. But it troubles me a bit at the same time because, since we're talking about an absolute, inalienable right, you suggest that we limit in a manner of speaking Québec's sovereignty before we define Native rights... Because if we ended up, after discussing...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Philibert, I have no choice but to ask you to get to your question.

Mr. Philibert: If, after examining the issue,

we ended up discovering that Native rights cover a half or four-fifths of Québec, what would your position be then on the self-determination of Native peoples?

Mr. Johnston: Look, to my knowledge there are no such supportable claims by Native peoples. But, at the same time as I say this, I'm going to tell you that recognizing the right of Native peoples to self-determination means that we must also accept the principle that we must develop deal with Native peoples as equals in order to conclude new arrangements with them in a context that is more favourable than it is at present. I can't go into all the details today but this is a principle; and there's nothing new about this position on our part. In 1979, our convention upheld the right of Native peoples to self-determination and we maintain this position in spite of the problems this past summer. We know that, with the Québec Association of First Nations, the ground is already laid for discussing all this with all the representative organizations in Québec and successive Québec governments, establishing relations between them, discussing territorial rights, their right to self-government, and the nature and scope of this right. But there must be this initial acknowledgement that this negotiation and these discussions need to be undertaken on equal terms.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, then, Mrs. Pronovost, Mr. Laberge, Mr. Johnston, Mrs. Fleury and Mr. Langlois. We thank the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec for the impressive scope of its brief for having contributed to the progress of the work of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:39 a.m.)

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

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): For the next hour, we're going to hear from the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec. I'd like to ask for silence throughout the room, and I'm going to take the liberty of repeating the rules for one-hour hearings: 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief, 10 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 10 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group, and 25 minutes for the other members. So, Mr. Fontaine, if you'd be so kind as to introduce your colleagues.

Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec

Mr. Fontaine (Fernand): Mr. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, on my far right, Jacques

Parent, responsible for business with the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec; on my immediate right, Benoît Godard, past president of the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec and president of Meubles Norbec ltée, of Sainte-Véronique; on my left, Normand Ricard, member of the board of directors of the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec, chairman of the furniture industry promotion committee and president of Somex International, whose head office is here, in the Trois-Rivières region; and myself, Fernand Fontaine, president of the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec and president of Dutellier Inc.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Go ahead, Mr. Fontaine, you have 10 minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Fontaine: The Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec is honoured to present a brief to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. The fact that Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Campeau were selected to co-chair the Commission, two men who have left their mark on the business world, encouraged the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec to present its point of view on this crucial issue. The Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec is a non-profit organization founded in 1942. Its membership, drawn from every sector of the industry, namely household furniture, office furniture, bedding, upholstery, contract furniture, account for 75% of furniture production in Québec. Apart from furniture manufacturers, our membership includes lamp manufacturers and suppliers of goods and services to the industry. Essentially, our objectives are the promotion and development of Québec's furniture industry and the defense of its interests by means of significant representation before governments and the promotion of furniture as a made-in-Québec product.

Today, the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec is recognized, in Québec as well as in Canada and other countries, as the spokesman for Québec's furniture industry. Its roots go back a long way in every part of Québec. Our industry is a significant presence in the cities as well as in the regions. The industry is integrated both by its market and its agreements with other manufacturers' associations throughout the Canadian economy. Through acquisitions and exports, our industry is increasingly integrated with the North American economy. Any significant change in Québec will affect the industry. The Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec therefore decided to express its point of view, which it feels is relevant, in view of its long and deep-rooted experience in Québec. The Association

realizes that an important page in the history of Québec and of Canada was turned with the failure to ratify the Meech Lake Accord.

The Association hails the initiative taken by the government and the National Assembly to convene this Parliamentary Commission to carefully study the various options open to Québec at an important point in its history. Regardless of the option ultimately chosen by the people of Québec, who will make the final decision, it's important that that choice be made once policies, programs and powers have been inventoried and thought given to how to make use of them. The option or model is only a shell. The important thing is what's inside.

The Association considers that such an important decision, or rather orientation, must be based on as much information as possible, to ensure that Québec is moving in a direction that respects the needs and interests of the majority of its citizens, their businesses, their right to work and to free trade.

The Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec is aware that there is no magic solution, no answer or theoretical solution that will meet all the needs and aspirations of the people of Québec.

The Association is also aware that political and economic issues are intimately related and that the political conditions of the development of tomorrow's Québec will have a very significant impact on economic conditions. There is no easy solution, and the simplistic has no place in such a fundamental debate. The purpose of this brief is therefore to express the specific interests and needs of our industry to continue to contribute to Québec's wealth and to provide Québécois with thousands of jobs, often in regions where employment is scarce, particularly in outlying regions. The globalization of the economy has again substantially complicated the rules of the game for our businesses. Most trade and industrial competition the world over is tied to economic, trade and fiscal policies over which the state wields considerable influence. The form of constitutional status of tomorrow's state will be crucial to how it influences the competitive conditions of our industry. But this form or constitutional model must be selected on the basis of an evaluation of what we want to preserve, develop or eliminate from the current situation given what it has to offer in terms of solidarity and experience.

The state influences the competitive climate. Many aspects of national economic systems affect international competition, in particular so-called economic policies, the structure of capital and labour markets, public funding for research, the procurement method, education and manpower training policy, tax systems, fiscal and monetary policy, international trade policy, antitrust laws, etc. Up

to now, the federal and provincial governments of our traditional federal system have shared responsibilities, sometimes smoothly coordinating their efforts, but often failing to coordinate their policies at all, and at times even deliberately contradicting each other.

The Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec views the current constitutional review exercise as a good opportunity to correct mistakes of the past. The Association does not want this to be done by radical means. The Commission must aim to improve conditions for our businesses, our workers and Quebecers in general, by reinforcing the strengths of the Québec state, by further developing the integrated commercial and economic sphere we have achieved over the past few decades which, in the world economy, remains a very modest, not to say small, entity.

The Association will therefore contribute to economic conditions and to the way these services are provided, which the state should adopt, in view of the major changes to the international scene over the past 30 years, and the truly accelerated pace of history since 1989.

This contribution will focus much more on the infrastructure of tomorrow's Québec and the needs of its businesses, than on the superstructures that should flow from it. The latter could be entrusted to the care of the political and constitutional experts who will be following us, according to the schedule of witnesses to appear before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission.

The first chapter of the brief describes the industry in terms of production in Québec, its development and progress in recent years. It also describes the economic and commercial environment in which the industry operates, particularly the size of the Canadian market.

In Chapter 2, the Association gives its views on the role of the state in the contemporary economy and ties it in with Québec's constitutional status. A new international order, economic in nature, can already be discerned and its main feature is its technological structure.

Globalization has caused the economy to become extremely mobile and has altered the balance of power between major industrial areas. A new international division of labour and production has emerged. The domestic furniture industry is facing stiff competition from Asia, the southern United States, and prestige furniture makers in Italy. In this global economy, the state is a major player in industrial and trade competition, a partner of businesses which find themselves in the front line. We will describe, in terms of philosophy and means, the various roles of the state that have been assumed by Québec and Ottawa in recent years, and we expect that during the 1990s, a committed, fiscally responsible state

that is also judiciously respectful of business choices, will be a partner.

The Association will express what the industry needs in terms of economic climate and conditions, to continue to contribute to Québec's prosperity often, in regions with little wealth. Many of our furniture manufacturing companies, in fact 50%, are located in the regions, often in small villages with only one company, the company that makes furniture.

We will therefore deal with the jurisdictions of the state in the field, such as manpower, labour relations, unemployment insurance, transport, public contracts, the economy, trade, industrial policy, research and development and regional development.

Finally, we will discuss the contentious monetary issue, which is central to international trade, the economic sphere to be maintained and the flexibility to build in, because of the needs of some regions compared to others. The U.S. Federal Reserve, for instance, maintains slightly different interest rates in some states.

Of the main competitive factors, the tax system is crucial to our industry's ability to remain competitive on our domestic and export markets.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You're coming to your conclusion, Sir...

Mr. Fontaine: In two minutes, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You'll have to go a little faster.

Mr. Fontaine: I'll speed up. In recent years, Québec has corrected some anomalies that penalized us substantially compared with Ontario, and compared with southern states in the United States. The American industry enjoys advantages, in terms of labour legislation, technology and experience in producing for a very large market, and has made significant gains. **Furniture Today**, the weekly magazine considered the Bible of the furniture industry, reported in its issue of last October 1, that U.S. furniture makers increased their exports to Canada by 240% between January and June 1989 and January and June 1990. And during the same period, Canada lost close to \$300 million (businesses closed) in furniture production, representing about 3500 jobs.

And in its own market, several state, county and municipal agencies offer fiscal conditions and preferential interest rates that have no equivalent in Canada. Some of our own businesses have taken advantage of very generous programs in some states to finance lengthy training sessions, to familiarize foreign companies establishing themselves there with the culture. Our industry has not received a single transition program, though that was considered

essential by the MacDonald Commission and was promised by the federal government.

And our companies that establish themselves in other regions of Québec enjoy fewer benefits by far than when they move to states where reception structures offered by cities, counties or the states themselves are exceptional. The Governor of Virginia personally attended the opening of a plant of a Québec entrepreneur in that state. Compared to Ottawa, Québec's economic development model responds better to the requirements of partnership between the state and business and to the requirements of the world market, which the furniture industry needs. Since 1960 in Québec, the state has played a major role in our taking control of the economy. First, through better training, where education has played a substantial role, particularly in terms of management and administrative abilities, but also through the creation of Hydro-Québec and businesses that grew as a result of spin-offs from mega-projects, thanks to the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, the Société générale de financement, the Société de développement industriel, the stock savings plans, QBICs and even the FTQ solidarity fund.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I have to stop you here, Sir. That will please Mr. Laberge, and you can continue when you answer his questions. First speaker, Mr. Claude Béland.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for your brief because it's always interesting to have briefs from this sector of activity, especially like yours. You give many percentages in your brief, to show the changes in exports and imports. And I notice that it's especially because of market conditions, interest rates, the value of the dollar, etc. We've seen figures here, during our hearings, that show us that manufacturers' exports to the rest of Canada amount to about 28% and... To the rest of the world and to Canada come to 29%, about the same thing. I realize the situation isn't the same for furniture, but for manufactured goods in general, it's 29%, 28%. So, 29% with an economic sphere with which we have political links and 28% with economic spheres with which we have no political link. And what strikes me is that you make a big case in favour of strengthening the Canadian economic sphere but you complain a lot about the rules that apply in that sphere, especially interest rates. You're pretty strong. You say: the federal government's monetary policy in recent years has done considerable harm to the furniture industry. So, when you make this case, in favour of strengthening the Canadian economic sphere, you do so under what conditions? I imagine you want to change things since you are complaining so much. So, what would you want to change in the

rules of the game of this economic sphere?
(12:00 noon)

Mr. Fontaine: You know, there are 140 furniture makers in our industry, about 100 associate members and 200 affiliated members who are suppliers to the industry. Among all that membership, there are as many diverging opinions as there certainly are around the table of the Commission. My position, as president of the Association, is not to say to the Commission: we must have independence, or we must remain in Canada.

Mr. Béland: But I'm not asking you that.

Mr. Fontaine: Our position is to say that there are irregularities, there are policies made in Québec, for Québec businesses, that are not supported by Canada, or differing policies in Canada, and we would like to see that corrected in a new formula of federalism.

Mr. Godard (Benoît): To give you an example, in 1987-1988, the Ontario government contributed to inflation by initiating all kinds of projects that were assisted by the federal government. They spent astronomical amounts, and they created inflation, they caused the economy to overheat. And now, we're still paying interest rates that are too high. We're paying more than 5%.

Mr. Béland: Yes, we're aware of that. But how do you correct that?

Mr. Godard: How do you correct that?

Mr. Ricard (Normand): I think you've read the entire brief. What's very clear, what emerges from it, is that we need the state as a partner. Our role is not to define the structures. Now, what we've also defined very clearly is that to date, the best partner we've had has been Québec. And I also think the brief indicates there are areas of jurisdiction that have to be repatriated, precisely to strengthen that partnership.

Now, there's a second aspect that's very important, and it's that it's very clear that the Canadian market is a large part of our market. You can't deny that aspect and dream in technicolour of building something without taking into account this very substantial market.

So, we say both those things at the same time. OK. We aren't political experts, we're not constitutional experts. We say that, yes, the Canadian market is extremely important to us, Québec furniture manufacturers, and we have to pay attention when we build structures later on to take that aspect into account. But also, yes, our best partner to date has been Québec.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

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

Mr. Laberge: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I read your brief with a great deal of interest because we've had some differences of opinion on the question of free trade, at one point, and we saw that your Association, in the final stretch, said we were right because free trade had not benefited Québec manufacturers, particularly in your industry.

I read your brief, and I found it very interesting. My friend, Claude Béland, you must have been patient to get to the last page, as I know you, and yet it says: "Québec can and must assume new powers... As an Association, we stress that this change must take place without compromising our economic structure... etc." But later, it says: "We support Québec as a partner of our industry..."

Good, more powers, Québec a partner of the industry. You criticize, and rightly, the abominably high interest rates, the over-valued Canadian dollar, I mean... Perhaps just talking about leaving a monetary association or agreement with Canada in suspense, if its primary effect would be to cause it to fail, we should perhaps start to talk about it a little more loudly. That would help everyone a bit, because we've got a lot of people there, in furniture, in pulp and paper, a lot of people affected by the over-valued Canadian dollar.

So, you're basically saying to us: we don't want to take a position on the kind of association there will be. Economic association with Canada is very important to us because of the market, but the rest is also very important. We need our United States market and markets elsewhere. And, as long as Québec is our partner, we'll stick by its decisions. Basically, that's more or less what you're saying.

Mr. Godard: Mr. Laberge, you talked about free trade. If you recall, the Association des fabricants de meubles du Québec asked for 10 years. And I don't know why...

Mr. Laberge: Exactly.

Mr. Godard: ...that was cut to five years. So, a drop of 3% per year, of the 15% or 16% we started with. That's very hard to absorb. That's why American imports have grown by 240%. It's no joke, this situation.

Mr. Laberge: Besides, we were in more or less the same boat...

Mr. Godard: Yes.

Mr. Laberge: ...because, in principle, we're not against free trade. We were against this Free

Mr. Godard: If you recall, we said "nyes" at the time...

Mr. Laberge: Yes, yes, I remember.

Mr. Godard: ...it was in the papers. And we were in Ottawa two weeks ago to try to obtain credits on the GST because we currently charge 13.5% on furniture, the federal tax at the wholesale level. And Ottawa only credits 8.1%, leaving our retailers with a net loss of 3.2%. That amounts to about \$20 million in Québec at the moment. And we've tried everything, and there's apparently nothing to be done. That's funny because, in the automobile sector, for instance, the full amount is credited and most cars come from outside Canada. So I find it strange. That's why there are things that have to be corrected, and fast.

Mr. Laberge: And maybe it's time we told each other, nicely, like that, it's time to stop saying "nyes" and say "yes" clearly.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Laberge, a question for Mr. Godard. At the time you saw 10 years, 5 years, where did you see the Canadian dollar compared to the U.S. dollar?

Mr. Godard: That's a good question because, when we talked about 10 years, the dollar was at \$0.78, and it's now at \$0.86, \$0.87. We've lost all our advantages because the politicians of the day, it was, if I remember correctly, first, it started with the politicians, free trade, it wasn't us, an extraordinary market of \$250 million.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, isn't that the problem, the dollar, and not the rest?

Mr. Godard: I think that's part of...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK.

Mr. Godard: ...the dollar and the 3% each year. There's another tariff reduction of 3% on January 1, 1991. So we're losing each year.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, an accumulation of factors?

Mr. Godard: Well, yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Assad?

Mr. Assad: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your

Association has a lot of experience in business... since 1942... And, clearly, your observations on that score are very important. I listened to you relating the various problems you've had, be it interest rates or the lack of harmonization with the federal and provincial government. For instance, you seem to feel changes have to be made. That's not like a previous brief that said the existing rules of federalism can't be reformed, they're immutable. Like you, I'm convinced that changes are necessary and that it's very likely. For example, the Depression showed us that governments failed to act and the consequences were very harmful for Canada. In your observations as a businessman, you're an exporter, and you export a lot throughout Canada, what part between the federal government and the Québec government has improved? Is it the area of occupational training? Or in what area do you feel it's most important for your industry to find a balance and avoid conflict?

Mr. Ricard: In practice, I think there are many areas, OK? We point out many areas including, obviously, more clearly, education. OK? And Québec also has a responsibility there for having abandoned vocational training. Unfortunately, a mentality has been created within our sector of activity that, if you haven't gone to university, you're just about worthless. And, unfortunately, today that means that we need skilled manpower in the furniture industry and there isn't any because our furniture schools have no recruiting. It's as clear as that, as precise as that. So, it's extremely important to enhance the worth of this sector and that's up to Québec. At the federal level, there's the whole problem of research and development. In the furniture industry, we aren't eligible for that at all. For them, there's no research, no development in furniture, textiles, hosiery, there's... Unless you're in a leading sector, research and development doesn't exist in our sector. So, we're denied access to everything.

So in that whole sector, it's very important that it be redeveloped and rethought. Obviously, the entire tax sector. The entire sector of interest rates where it's very clear that we're being heavily penalized. That's not within our sphere or in our jurisdiction. There's the whole area of transport where, in fact, when transport is cut... Currently, the United States has the advantage in terms of transport, so there's a big problem there. And you've got a list of all the sectors that have to be considered. Now, what we've added, and that's why we say that Québec has to repatriate many sectors, because our immediate partner and the one with the most influence within a structure, I think, that will be important within Canada, is still Québec. It's very clear that, when the federal government has to think of all businesses across Canada, there

are some good points there for us, but Québec has always been the closest and most appropriate partner for dealing with the needs of its industry.

Mr. Fontaine: To complete the answer, I'd say that what has to be corrected in the existing formula of Canada, of its Confederation as we know it, is simply a better definition of its fields of activity. If the state is to be the partner of business, is the federal government to be the partner of a regional business in Québec, or does Québec take on that partnership? That implies a lot of things, a lot of laws that are different at present.

Let's take taxation. We're businesses that no longer compete against each other, we compete with the entire world, with Asia, the United States, Italy. The Italian government provides its manufacturers with substantial export subsidies. The Canadian government has never subsidized anything to help exports, except to give us \$2500 for an APEX to New York, things like that.

To date, it's not Québec that controls interest rates. And Québec represents 35% of Canada's population, but has only one vote out of 11 partners, because there's the federal government and ten provinces. So, I calculate 11. So, interest rates, interest rate policy has cost Québec's furniture industry dearly, and cost Ontario even more. I think each province, under a new formula that you have to define, will really have to take charge of all economic legislation so that these businesses can hold their own against world competition.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Mr. Assad, do you have a quick question?

Mr. Assad: Fine. I'd like to ask how many people work for furniture manufacturers in Québec, do you have a figure, about how many?

Mr. Fontaine: There are currently 16 000 direct jobs, and that excludes jobs among suppliers to the industry, etc. There are 16 000 direct jobs in our plants.

Mr. Assad: And the last time you made representations to the federal government concerning the lack of assistance or of research and development?

Mr. Fontaine: I think at that time, we had 22 000 or 23 000 direct jobs in the furniture industry.

Mr. Assad: At the time.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Assad. We now move on to Mrs. Pagé, who will be followed by Mr. Holden and Mr.

Dufour.

(12:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Pagé: First of all, I want to say I was very happy to hear you insist on the need to enhance the status of occupational training. I think that's a mandate we should all support, businesses as well as large public educational institutions, at the secondary and college level, the ministère de la Main-d'oeuvre or the ministère de l'Éducation. That's definitely a crucial mandate for you, and I'm very happy that we'll be able to count on your commitment in this necessary initiative.

Fairly quickly, you know, since the beginning of the Commission, when groups come to talk to us about becoming independent, quickly, the question that's raised is: how will you do that? I'm going to start with your brief. You tell us that monetary policy has been catastrophic for Québec. So we need the ways and means to influence monetary policy in the interests of Québec. So we're talking about repatriation of powers or, in any case, a new distribution of powers. In addition, you talk about powers in immigration, manpower and you realize that when you talk about manpower, we're talking broadly, we're talking about post-secondary training, we're talking about research and development. You talk about labour relations. You deal obliquely with transport. That's a lot of powers to repatriate.

Looking at the situation, there aren't many ways to work at successfully negotiating this new distribution. The first is for Québec to pass a law in the National Assembly saying it repatriates all those powers. In your opinion, how will talks with the federal government be handled if that option is taken?

Second possibility, we negotiate one-on-one with the federal government. Mr. Bourassa has said that negotiations with 11 are finished. One-on-one with the federal government. The federal government has already said it isn't interested in negotiating one-on-one with us. Fine. That doesn't work.

Third, it's with 11. Mr. Bourassa has said he wouldn't go back to 11, but let's assume he changes his mind and goes back. The first thing to do is to agree on an amending formula for the Constitution. After that, you agree on the distribution of powers and in your brief you tell us that it's urgent. In your view, how do we renegotiate federalism in the sense of all the shared powers you want repatriated under Québec's full and complete jurisdiction?

Mr. Ricard: On that score, I think we can say that's your role. You have an enormous challenge and we're not experts in that area. I think it's up to you to pave the way for the establishment of a new structure that will avoid the major traps: the status quo and being focused solely on culture and language. I think

those are two traps to be avoided.

In the past, Québec's strength has been to promote our aspirations as a distinct society, while respecting our minorities within Québec and respecting our partners outside Québec, and I think that's very important. And that's your job. I think you're 32 very competent, very influential people and it's not up to us and we especially don't want... What we're asking for is a competent and effective partner and we say: Québec has a duty to be that partner as soon as possible, but within a structure and we have confidence in you and wish you... Because it's an enormous challenge to propose it and pave the way to it.

Mrs. Pagé: You appreciate that you're not particularly reassuring because you're not a constitutional expert and neither am I, but when I look at our supposed experts who tried to agree on the repatriation of the 1982 Constitution, then on the Meech Lake Accord, it seems to me that the experts have failed to prove that our federalism could be renewed.

Mr. Ricard: Our comment on that is that when you look at the globalization of markets, the companies that have been successful belong to economies like Japan, Germany, countries where the partnership between entrepreneurship, business and the state is very strong. So, we say show us the road, and you'll see how we entrepreneurs can move.

Mrs. Pagé: And you think that this partnership model is possible in a sovereign or independent Québec, depending on the term you use.

Mr. Ricard: I don't think we want to take a position on an independent state, a sovereign state, an associated state, sovereignty-association or whatever you want. As entrepreneurs, we say: give us a strong, powerful partner, give us the structure you settle on and you'll see us roll.

Mrs. Pagé: Thank you.

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

Mr. Holden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see from the analysis I have of your brief... You say that under a free trade structure, the federal government failed to provide transition programs. It seems to me there was the Grandpré committee that dealt with that. What happened with that celebrated committee?

Mr. Fontaine: I have to say that, concerning the furniture industry, that committee had very little to say. As we say in our brief,

we'd been promised that some of our legislation would be matched with the United States to help us swallow the free trade pill in five years rather than ten, because we weren't against the principle of free trade, but the commission you refer to did absolutely nothing in terms of the furniture industry, except look at the difference in textile tariffs, because tariffs on furniture will be eliminated in five years, while it'll take ten years for textiles. They forgot that there are textiles in furniture. So, they looked at that. Technically though, we as an industry think that the federal government has forgotten about the furniture industry in its free trade treaty.

Mr. Holden: In the idea of free trade, has the effect, even though it hasn't been very long in your industry, increased your productivity or have you had positive effects from free trade?

Mr. Ricard: No. It's had two very clear effects: in the last 18 months, we've lost \$300 million. That's gone, and it's very clear that it won't be back. And it's very clear that in the medium term, it's obvious that we'll become considerably more competitive. That's excellent. I don't think we've come crying to the government. We can take care of ourselves. What we don't want, for instance, is sticks to be put in our spokes and planning that fails to take certain things into account. We have no control over the Canadian dollar, we have no control over a bunch of things that have come out of the blue, like that, to undo what we as an industry had planned to do.

Finally, we ended up losing 3%, but with a total, at the end of the line, of a dollar at \$0.76, that's gone up to \$0.86. Do you have any idea of the impact that has on exporters? It means the Americans can now come in. And the increases are clear, a 240% increase in the last 18 months. That's a very clear and very concrete reality.

Mr. Holden: I think your complaints there are common throughout Canada, not just...

Mr. Ricard: Yes, yes. We don't pretend we're alone in Québec, but we say that it's a practical reality that wasn't planned for. We think Québec could perhaps do a better job of planning, because it's more concerned within its region, which is where we are.

Mr. Holden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A voice: With your permission, Mr...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Holden, for your short comment. Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to thank and congratulate the Association des fabricants de meubles for its contribution to our work. I'd also like to say to you that with everything we hear around the table, it's possible your problems with a free trade agreement aren't over, because when you talk about a sovereign state, you're also talking about renegotiating free trade with the United States. So, we'll start over the same way.

I have two very quick questions. The first is on page 13. You say: "Canadian solidarity has been important to the industry in many ways." Could you give me two or three examples of this solidarity that have contributed positively to your industry.

Mr. Fontaine: You know, Mr. Dufour, Mr. Jutras, the master craftsman of this document, is stuck somewhere on a plane, in Zurich, so when you talk about solidarity...

Mr. Dufour: Can I suggest some?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Fontaine: Yes, you could. You know, my job as president of the Association is a secondary job.

Mr. Ricard: I think there's been the free trade negotiation where the Canadian furniture industry formed a common front to deplore a bunch of things. In fact, it... It didn't change anything, but it was a significant common front in that sector.

Mr. Dufour: On that score, I was very happy to hear Mr. Godard, a moment ago, make an important distinction: the furniture industry has never been against free trade. You asked for a ten-year timetable, you didn't get it, you got five years, and your problem is with the dollar's exchange rate. Speaking of the dollar's exchange rate, a minute ago you spoke of the possibility of regionalization of interest rates under the existing federal system. And you referred to the United States where you say that actually exists. That's a completely new point of view and I'd like you to go a little further. In other words, you're saying that, if we didn't still have these interest rates across Canada, we could probably have come through if it took into account certain specific economic considerations. That exists in the United States, so it's not necessary to take Canada apart to have different interest rates. What do you say?

Mr. Fontaine: It's exactly what I was saying in my introduction. Through legislation, the states can decide on an interest rate through what's called a bond in English, that's a publicly sold security equivalent to an RRSP. For instance, Virginia can currently provide

businesses with long-term financing at 7.5% while the U.S. prime rate is 10% and ours is 13.75%. On the other hand, you don't have that advantage in California. So, states within the United States have adopted mechanisms to counter a monetary policy that could, as we've seen in Canada over the last two years, offset overheating. The overheating is in Ontario, and interest rates have been raised everywhere. Regions like Québec and other regions in Canada are suffering from the consequences.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you for your comments, and, Mr. Chairman, this is an issue that we'll certainly have to study further.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Dufour. We now move on to the parliamentary group forming the Government. Mr. Gil Rémillard, followed by Mr. Richard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Fontaine, Gentlemen, welcome to the Commission and thank you for being with us this morning. I read your brief with great interest and I noted, as have many others judging from their questions, that your message this morning is the same as our businesspeople have conveyed from the beginning of these hearings, whether it's the Chambre de commerce du Québec, the Conference Board or the Manufacturers' Association. You say very clearly that with high interest rates, consumption declines, people buy less furniture. You say that with an over-valued dollar, you export less because your products can't compete. In fact, what you're telling us is that the federal government's monetary policy is strangling Québec's economy. And you say: Hey, something has to be done about that.

You argue for renewed federalism and say, among other things, just how important it is to you to have a guaranteed market, whether the Canadian market or the U.S. market. For instance, on page 3, I'll read your second paragraph: "Foreign markets, mainly Ontario and the United States, are essential to the industry, since they account for more than 65% of these shipments." But what I liked a great deal, and I think it's something very special you've brought up today, if I remember correctly, it's on page 29, in your conclusion, where you write, in your conclusion, the first paragraph: "Following the unfortunate failure of the Meech Lake Accord, Québec has also been thrown into a delicate, difficult situation, but one from which a creative and constructive synthesis may emerge." So you give a note of optimism. How do you envisage this construction, specifically given the problems you've so eloquently identified?

Mr. Godard: That will be up to experts... You'll be meeting them after the Holidays, experts in your new... It's rather difficult, I

think, for us to take a position there. One thing I'd like to... Let's talk about the federal... That we've never received assistance, but the provincial government as well, has just tripped us up a bit. The 8% tax on furniture that will apply as of January 1, 1991 doesn't help our situation. Our situation is pretty sad at the moment.

Mr. Rémillard: Can you tell us how much it costs, on average, to produce a chair here, and how much it costs to produce the same chair in the United States?

Mr. Fontaine: I can tell you, because I'm already involved in making furniture on both sides of the border, and I can tell you, I could show you the documents, there's a minimum 20% savings. Savings on manpower, of course, and certain social policies we have to pay in Québec that the Americans don't have to pay account for the 20% savings. I'm not saying that I agree with the fact that the Americans are perhaps a bit behind in terms of their social policies, I'm simply saying there's a big difference in the price of supplies and raw materials. Why? It's easy to explain. Trees grow faster in the United States. There's less snow, and the summer lasts longer. The market is bigger, so they know what economies of scale are all about while we, in the Québec furniture industry, have some difficulty with that. It's hard to achieve economies of scale in a little market of 6 million people in Québec.

Mr. Rémillard: You're saying that the chair you produce in Québec costs an average of 20% more than the same quality article, the same chair, in the United States?

Mr. Fontaine: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: And if you compare with Ontario?
(12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Fontaine: Ontario is basically at the same level as us, compared to American manufacturers. And the proof is that, of the \$300 million in sales we've lost over the last two years, Québec has lost \$100 million and Ontario, \$200 million to the Americans, who've increased their furniture exports to Canada by 240%, thanks to little combination of monetary policy and a rapid decline in tariff rates.

Mr. Rémillard: If I understand your brief, Ontario is your main client outside of Québec?

Mr. Fontaine: In the Canadian furniture industry, yes.

Mr. Rémillard: It's Ontario? You export more to Ontario than to the United States?

Mr. Ricard: At present, yes.

Mr. Rémillard: And that's why you insist that we keep the value of the Canadian economic market?

Mr. Ricard: I think it's very clear. No businessman, no company tries to jeopardize his markets. It's clear that we're increasing our U.S. market at the moment, because our whole future depends on it. That's quite clear. But we're in a transition period. We'll adjust. And I think, perhaps, the strength of our social structures, currently, will help us develop companies that perform much better than the Americans, very clearly.

Mr. Rémillard: Do you think we could further develop our free market with the other provinces of Canada? For instance, on page 19, you mention public contracts in other provinces. Are you in favour of greater economic integration, even more than at present, with the other provinces of Canada?

Mr. Fontaine: At present, I don't think greater economic integration with the other Canadian provinces favours our market. You have to realize what's happening: evolution. In the preamble, we said that we were no longer competing with each other, as we were 20 years ago, but with the entire world. So, if it's easier for me to sell furniture in Saskatchewan where there are a few million people, I'd perhaps prefer to sell more to the United States. Allow us, with the required policies, to penetrate that market, and not just theoretically by saying: the free trade agreement gives you access to a market of 250 million. But everything that's happened since we've had access to the market of 250 million has given access to the Canadian market. Their tariffs have fallen much faster than ours. At the same time, our dollar has increased in value. The Americans have invaded us. Saskatchewan or Manitoba won't help Québec's furniture industry to recover. It's the global economy, and that term must not be allowed to remain in political annals. It has to apply in the structures of the new federation, and your mandate is to find the new federation.

Mr. Rémillard: You're saying that your two main clients are Ontario and the United States. And to compensate for the extra 20% it costs you to produce here, given the social measures and everything we have, the type of society we've chosen, you want to see that the value of the dollar reflect that.

Mr. Ricard: We want more than that. I think we want a much more effective partnership that will help us become significantly more productive. I think we can achieve that. We need

support, in research and development, in manpower, in training programs. Some things have been started and done well. We're asking you to go much further than that because, in fact, we're talking about total quality, we're talking world class. It can't be allowed to remain in the books. It's got to become concrete in policies that will help companies and employees because at present, you realize that in our sector, we're one of the rare sectors that's finally formed a partnership with our employees. We're currently studying in a sector-based CAMO that's taking charge of our industry at the worker and factory level. And that will finally give rise to a huge number of specific, concrete demands. We've already invested, in a very difficult period, \$350 000 in our furniture industry promotion fund to develop our sector. I think we're doing our job and we're asking the government to be even more aggressive.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Over to you, Mr. Richard.

Mr. Richard: On page 27 of your brief, you say: "...that the Canadian economic and commercial sphere be more integrated that it is at present and not less integrated under this country's new constitutional reality." Can we deduce that this new constitutional reality, as you say, is a renewed and more centralized federalism, according to the document you've given us? I'd like you to be more specific on that, please.

Mr. Ricard: I think it's clear that we haven't been talking about a more centralized federalism, on the contrary. I think it's very clear in the brief, it's very clear what we're looking for, a structure in which Québec will take on more autonomy in terms of power to be a partner because it's the partner immediately beside us. We're saying two things. It takes a new structure, OK; it has to exist, that Canadian structure. Now, it's very clear... And Québec isn't the only province. You've travelled to the regions. You've said so. You've heard the regions tell you: as regions, we want more power in such and such a sector. I think we're saying the same thing, in other words, Québec has to repatriate more powers, but within a Canadian structure. What will it be? How will you define it? That's not really our role.

Mr. Richard: On pages 9 and 10 of your brief, you say that the state must not impede either with its regulations or its tax burden. You then suggest that Québec narrow the difference between its tax system and that of the United States. Your orientation is exactly the same as the economists who said that independence would lose some of its relevance because we're bound by continental and even world constraints. So, I

repeat my question: what do you think Québec should do?

Mr. Fontaine: You know, we're clearly not here to recommend independence to the Commission and I told you at the beginning that we represent many people, we won't recommend independence, or federalism under its current form. We simply want to tell you that there has to be a change. Québec has to have more power. Québec has to be able to decide its own monetary policy, adjust its tax system to world taxation. Currently, in Virginia, taxation, the personal tax rate, the maximum marginal rate is 6%. How am I supposed to hire an executive to manage a plant in Virginia? How much should I pay him, compared to the same executive in Canada, so that he has the same pay in his pockets?

So, all the furniture industry asks or wants to convey to the Commission is that there are powers Québec has to repatriate to become even more of a partner to the industry, if you want this industry to remain. We're talking about 16 000 direct jobs, and perhaps 30 000 indirect jobs. That's the total number of jobs in Québec represented by the Québec furniture industry, and under current conditions, I can guarantee that we've lost 300 000 jobs in Canada including 100 000 in Québec in a year and a half and \$100 million in sales, excuse me, we've lost 3500 jobs, yes I'll return, in Canada, with a third of that in Québec in barely two years, and if you let things continue the way they are now, there won't be a furniture industry in 15 or 20 years, like the textile industry, unfortunately.

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

Mr. Richard: It's clear that you're against the status quo.

Mr. Fontaine: Completely opposed to the status quo of any kind.

Mr. Richard: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. We now go on to Mr. Chevette, to be followed by Mrs. Blackburn.

Mr. Chevette: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I read this brief with a great deal of interest. Our mandate is to ask questions on our constitutional future. I realize you're not required to answer, but our duty is to see what you're feeling in your guts. And there are contradictions in your brief. For instance, on page 20, you say you can't be for a strong economic union and for the elimination of all common political authority. As such, if I understand you, you're for a neo-federalism, reading that sentence, and I'm trying

to place myself.

Yet, you tell us in many places that the partnership is the Québec state, that you want a strong economy, but that we have to continue developing ourselves vigorously socially, economically and, well, politically, to have strong institutions. To such an extent that at one point, on page 12, we wonder if you want the Québec economic development model to respond more to the requirements of partnership.

At one point, you're in favour of a strong partnership in Québec, you maintain a link or umbilical cord with Ottawa. We don't know where you're going. But I'd like to ask you some specific questions. You know how things have gone with the federal government for 30 years. You went through the Meech experience just like us. You know what we were asking in Meech? And you know what you're asking us to get from the federal government: all of occupational training, immigration, and you add: Continue to increase your autonomy. Are you ready to wait another 30 years, or is there any urgency in your case?

Mr. Ricard: I think the answer is simple. OK. If you people come to the table with a consensus and unanimity on a way to proceed, then I think we can be unanimous too, because, like you, we represent a major element of Québec society. If you're asking me, personally, for my opinion and if you ask each person around the table their personal opinion, it will be different.

If you're asking us as an association to take a position, we'll turn the question around and come back to you saying: You people, take a really strong stand. You are 32 exceptionally bright people, quite a bit brighter than we are, and you reflect Québec's social fabric considerably better than we do. Get together, give us a consensus and you'll see that, finally, we'll come to a consensus as well.

I think Mr. Rémillard did well to point out what we indicated in our brief. That in the past, Québec has demonstrated, without any doubt, that it's in the forefront of creative imagination, that it's in the forefront in terms of finding formulas for the respect of others, the respect of people both here and elsewhere and I think that... Why not trust ourselves and be capable. That draws on the creative imagination of everyone around this table.

Mr. Chevette: Yes, but I'd like to continue quoting from your sentence: It is impossible to be for a strong economic union and for the elimination of all common political authority. When Canada signed the free trade treaty with the United States, there's no political link. What would prevent a sovereign Québec from signing free trade treaties with Ontario directly, if that's your closest, most immediate partner, or

with Canada or the United States, or with other countries in the world? What prevents us from having strong economic unions with the globalization of the economy without political structures?

Mr. Fontaine: You know, Mr. Chevette, we're not here, with our mandate, to destroy the whole idea of independence. Neither do we want to destroy Canada completely. We're simply saying: we're against any form of status quo and the mandate of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission is to present Quebecers with a consensus. I softened that because I'm not sure it's possible.

Mr. Chevette: No, in that, you're realistic.

Mr. Fontaine: And from that time on, Quebecers will have to take a stand. And we, in the industry are saying: there are distortions. Some States in the U.S. help businesses. The great State called the United States, helps business, goes into the jurisdiction of business. Here in Canada, we have some policies that are a bit backward, except in the case of free trade where Canada and Québec agreed on free trade. But the aftermath wasn't quite what had been promised. And so we say: let's do something. We're not destroying independence. And we don't want to destroy Canada either. Above all, we don't want to stay in the status quo. Something has to happen. And, Ladies and Gentlemen, unfortunately or fortunately, it's your job to submit something.

Mr. Chevette: Yes, and it's your job to explain what you wanted to write.

Mr. Ricard: Yes, but I think what we wanted to say is very clear.

Mr. Chevette: On page 20.

Mr. Ricard: It's very clear what we wanted to say. It's that we think Québec has to repatriate powers to be a better partner with business. OK. That's very clear. What form will it take? What structure will it take? That's your job. We say that, in fact the closest partner and the one that's shown the greatest sensitivity over the past few years to our business, clearly it's Québec. That's obvious. OK. Now, do we have to destroy Canada to do that? That's your job and we think... And I maintain what I said earlier, on a personal basis, that Québec has shown in the past that it can affirm itself as a distinct society, but by respecting within its structure, both its minorities and its partners outside Québec, and that's a challenge to creative imagination. I think we've already proven that in the past. There are 32 of you around the table to do that.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps before getting to the exchange, I'd like to correct a mistaken view that's probably... He doesn't know the document. I trust him. Mr. Dufour said a few moments ago that, assuming a sovereign Québec, the free trade agreement would have to be renegotiated. That's false because the Vienna Convention, which covers successor States, says that the successor State also takes upon itself the agreements signed at the time of succession. So, there's no need to renegotiate, unless we decide to renegotiate. I thought it was important to say that.

Reading between the lines of your brief, Gentlemen, you don't seem particularly afraid of sovereignty and, unlike my colleagues, you're not deluding yourselves on the possibility of negotiating with Ottawa. I'll take a couple of sentences as examples. The first is on page 11, where you say: "Ottawa barely reacts to even minimum demands like labelling..." We're not under any illusions. Labelling, in fact, involves indicating where something is made. So they say: we reject that, you can imagine the rest. That's about it. You also say, on page 12 of your brief: "The Canadian model of economic development no longer satisfies anyone." Curiously, you know, what strikes me in the exchanges here, with the Commission, I was led to believe that the business community was pragmatic and said, once it did an analysis, it drew its conclusions and knew where its interests lay, more popularly, on which side its bread was buttered. The Conseil du patronat told us the factors behind the economic slowdown are essentially within federal jurisdiction: interest rates, the exchange rate, spending policies, research and development, occupational training, good, and you've also pointed them out. We would've expected the conclusion: Let's organize ourselves! But no, it says that federalism has to be renewed. And I'm still struck by that, that inability to carry the analysis to its conclusion. It seems to me that one day... There are more and more of you who go right to the end, saying we have to be sovereign to control our development.

You now say: We're ready to go with you. And you've even said we have to trust ourselves. I've read that that can go pretty far, the trust we can build among ourselves. You say that a whole range of powers has to be repatriated, knowing that federalism can't be renewed. But you want a guarantee, you don't ask much, finally, you ask that our foreign markets be protected. I imagine Ontario will say the same thing to Canada, since Ontario's shipments of manufactured goods to Québec, in 1989, amounted to 8% of Ontario shipments, which is \$10 billion. I'll leave it to you to determine what that represents in terms of jobs in Ontario. So, I

imagine Ontario would also be a bit interested in protecting the Québec market. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Fontaine: I agree completely with that but, playing with the numbers, you know, you come to all kinds of ventures. When you give us Ontario statistics, you give us statistics that include all their manufactured products and we only represent furniture. So, it's certain that if we did a full analysis of all economic sectors, we'd perhaps come to different conclusions than those this morning. We have to defend the position of the furniture industry. Ontario might cry at Ottawa to protect the Québec market. I think the Québec market is now just as open to Ontario as the Ontario market is to Québec. The drama isn't being played out within the furniture industry, but within other industrial sectors that have become overheated in Ontario, and the story we all know.

Mrs. Blackburn: The Conseil du patronat proposes a common front that would make a pilgrimage to Ottawa. Do you think that has any chance of success, given what's happened before?

Mr. Fontaine: There have already been pilgrimages. I absolutely can't take responsibility or refute what the Conseil du patronat may say. All I can tell you is that there've been a lot of pilgrimages to Ottawa, and we know the results.

Mrs. Blackburn: Will you tell me...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fifteen seconds, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Fifteen seconds. Briefly, does Québec sovereignty, a sovereign Québec which, in the past, has shown it can establish a partnership with businesses, does that Québec scare you?

Mr. Fontaine: I'll answer personally, speaking for Fernand Fontaine, president of Dutilleul. I say to you that in a sovereign Québec, knowing in advance all the lines, all the information, I think it's possible because there are other countries Québec's size that can live. But we've got to be careful, because there are traps around that, and I won't go further than that.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): From Mrs. Blackburn's time, 15 seconds to Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Listen, Mrs. Blackburn referred at least three or four times to our briefs. I want to say that I think the analysis is a bit sharp. The only thing I want to say to Mrs. Blackburn is that you don't tear a country apart because, at a given point in history, interest rates are

too high.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's it. So, that wraps up... You have 10 seconds to comment, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: No. It's just that I was wondering if there were new rules, if we were starting to rebut each other. I say no. So, I don't see the necessity.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Let's say that there are exceptions. So, Mr. Parent, Mr. Godard, Mr. Fontaine, Mr. Ricard, there were people around the table who wanted to have businesspeople return. We saw some at the beginning, chambers of commerce, the Conseil du patronat, the Mouvement Desjardins. I think they'll be satisfied today. So, thank you for your contribution to the ongoing work of this Commission on the future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:46 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:06 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Ladies and Gentlemen, if you'll be seated. This afternoon, we welcome the Coopérative fédérée de Québec. The hearing will last an hour. Mr. Alphonse-Roger Pelletier, would you introduce the people with you.

Coopérative fédérée de Québec

Mr. Pelletier (Alphonse-Roger): To my right, Mario Dumais, secretary-general of the Coopérative fédérée. To my left, Paul Massicotte, first vice-president, and Maurice Lapalme, member of the Coopérative fédérée executive.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Pelletier, you have 10 minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Pelletier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, thank you for inviting us, as a federated cooperative, to present the short brief that you have before you to this Parliamentary Commission on our constitutional future. The constitutional status quo is no longer feasible and no one is advocating independence without economic ties with the rest of Canada. A middle-of-the-road solution will certainly be proposed by Québec, a solution involving greater autonomy, which may even go so far as sovereignty, along with an association whose exact contents have not yet been specified.

The Coopérative agricole, as an association of individuals with very diversified political

opinions, does not have the inclination or special skill to formulate a specific solution to the constitutional dilemma confronting us. Especially as the Union des producteurs agricoles, which groups together all farmers, including farmer's cooperative associations, has taken a position on the issue during its conference. The cooperative farming movement acknowledges the Union des producteurs agricoles' role of representing the opinion of all farmers on general issues, such as the constitutional issue.

Farmer's cooperative associations have had the opportunity to express their opinion within their union. However, we would like to present to the Commission our perception of the problems that the constitutional debate raises for the agri-food industry. In addition, we will point out the relevance of the cooperative formula with regard to increasing Quebecers' control over their economy.

First, the problems for the agri-food industry. Several aspects of the Canadian constitutional system, and government intervention, both federal and provincial, have a direct impact on the settling of certain rules which govern the agri-food industry. It is important, both for the industrialists in our sector and for all other players in the economy, that we find out as soon as possible, should the new rules prevail, what they will be. The interdependence of Québec's and Canada's agri-food industries is great. An economic association between Québec and Canada is desirable, regardless of the constitutional choice that Quebecers will make. Québec primarily imports beef, eggs, grains, fruits and vegetables from the rest of Canada. We primarily export dairy products, pork, chicken, maple products and some fruits and vegetables. It would be just as advantageous for the rest of Canada to have access to our market as it would be for us to have access to theirs. This is the basis which makes it possible to envisage the fruitful negotiation of a blueprint for economic association with the rest of Canada in our industry.

The future of the milk marketing, poultry meat processing and hatching and market egg marketing boards is a concern to the farmers and industrialists working in these sectors. While Québec represents 26% of the Canadian population, our share of national quotas is 48% for manufacturing milk, 31% for chicken meat, 29% for turkeys, 16% for market eggs, 29% for hatching eggs from meat chickens and 13.4% for hatching eggs from layers. Maintaining this system should constitute one of the priorities of a blueprint for Québec's economic association with the rest of Canada. The federal and provincial governments exercise shared jurisdiction in the area of policies which apply to the agri-food industry. This situation has historically given rise to many duplications and

conflicts. The two levels of government intervene in research, marketing, financing, inspection and income protection, crop insurance, to only give you a few examples. While the Québec government has stepped up its role in the agricultural sector over the last few decades, it has often had to fight pitched battles to convince the federal authorities that regions other than the Canadian Prairies have an agricultural vocation.

Too often, the federal agricultural policy has merely revamped the style of a regional development policy that is favourable to the West. Federal institutions, such as the Canadian Wheat Board, the Canadian Grain Commission, the Western Grain Stabilization Act, the federal feed grain marketing policy, as well as policies for western grain transportation, such as the Crow's Nest Pass, diversification of the agri-food industry in the Prairies and farm income protection, are examples of the many issues in which Quebecers had to and must struggle to obtain a semblance of equity.

Let us add to this impressive list of disputes the changes in the regional distribution of federal agricultural expenditures during the 1980s. In 1988, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec, the Union des producteurs agricoles and the Coopérative fédérée de Québec released a document denouncing the inequity of federal expenditures in agriculture. The situation has not been corrected as, in 1988-1989, Québec, whose share of Canadian farm cash receipts was 16%, received only 6.4% of federal expenditures in this sector. It is therefore not surprising that farmers at last year's conference of their professional association, the Union des producteurs agricoles, stated that they were in favour of repatriating all agricultural policy powers to Québec.

The federal government's economic responsibilities are enormous. However, the results obtained from the exercise of these responsibilities are disappointing. We are especially thinking of the behaviour of the interest rates in Canada and our currency exchange rate. Within the context of freer trade, the Canadian government is urging companies to increase their competitiveness. Many Canadian agri-food companies have a world-class operational performance, but the difference between Canadian and American interest rates, without mentioning the difference between the Canadian rate and those of Switzerland or Japan, significantly increases the financial burden of the heavily capitalized companies in today's economy.

To this financial obstacle posed by the high cost of capital in Canada, we must add its resulting adverse effect on the exchange rate of Canadian currency. It is good for a nation to have its currency rise if it is in demand as a

result of the increased competitiveness of the country. However, if the exchange rate increases because the interest rates are abnormally high, which causes holders of speculative capital to make investments in Canada, as is currently the case, the increase in the exchange rate translates into a proportional loss of competitiveness for our exporting industries.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Pelletier, you have 30 seconds left.

Mr. Pelletier: In closing, I would like to point out that the Coopérative fédérée de Québec exports goods worth approximately \$250 million. So, we are heavily penalized.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, regardless of the system which Quebecers will choose to give themselves, it is important to ensure that the rules which govern our economy enable us to continue to grow, develop and ensure our increasing control over the main decision-making centres of Québec's economy. The economic issue has often been presented as a severe constraint limiting the constitutional choice. In our opinion, this is less and less the case. The expertise of our population, the natural and financial resources which we enjoy, the entrepreneurial spirit which we have developed enable us to anticipate the future with serenity, regardless of the constitutional choice which Quebecers will make. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(2:15 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Pelletier. We will begin this afternoon's speakers with Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Pelletier, for the brief which you have presented before this Commission, and may I just make a comment to stress that I support your opinion to the effect that the cooperative formula promotes an increase in Quebecers' control over their economy. This being said, your first paragraph sets the tone for your brief. You said: "The status quo is not feasible and no one is advocating independence without economic ties with the rest of Canada." On page 2, you also said that "economic association is desirable" and on page 3, I quote: "It would be just as advantageous for the rest of Canada to have access to our market as it would be for us to have access to theirs. This is the basis which makes it possible to envisage the fruitful negotiation of a blueprint for economic association with the rest of Canada in our industry."

If I may, I would like to quote from the brief of the Association des économistes du Québec. They told us, among other things, that we had to beware of an optimism which is often based on nationality, and I'll quote a short paragraph from page 19 of the Association des

économistes du Québec, which said: "Although it is clear that both parties have everything to gain from negotiating a rapid settlement, nothing indicates that reason and common sense would prevail in such a situation." My question: Considering what the economists said to us and your desire for economic association with Canada, in your opinion, should we first define the sort of agreement which would settle our business without negotiations and establish the association with the rest of Canada after, or should we first go ahead with independence and negotiate what is in our interest to negotiate after?

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Chairman, I don't think I can answer such a pertinent question. Still, I think that we need some time, we need a lot of reflection, and it's on this issue, I think, that the Commission has met to hear the various parties, and it seems to me that there is considerable work to be undertaken before making a decision about an answer to that question.

Mr. Maciocia: I could ask you a question that is sort of in the same area but phrased differently. You made a reference, on the first page of your brief, to a middle-of-the-road solution which would be proposed by Québec. Could you specify what a middle-of-the-road solution would consist of and to whom it would be proposed?

Mr. Pelletier: You are referring to the first page. When you speak about a middle-of-the-road solution, I think that it was said...

Mr. Maciocia: I think that you are talking about between the status quo and independence. Is that right? A middle-of-the-road situation, what would that be?

Mr. Pelletier: Yes. I think that we are talking about association.

Mr. Maciocia: Yes. OK.

Mr. Pelletier: So, an association, in my opinion, which also remains to be defined. There are various points of view which have been given around this table or to this honourable Commission, and I think that, subsequently, the commissioners will study and provide some indications to help the government. I think that what is important is for Québec to be fairly unanimous about a direction, because it was said, at a given moment, somewhere, that a house divided against itself cannot stand. So, we must find a means of uniting Québec to arrive at something concrete and profitable for the Québec population as a whole.

Mr. Maciocia: In your opinion, would it be

easier to negotiate what we have to negotiate with the rest of Canada before taking such a dramatic, such a radical action as pure, hardline independence may be?

Mr. Pelletier: I don't know. Personally, I think that this will be very, very difficult. We have only to look at the Meech Lake Accord, which was aborted. We were negotiating there, and it was aborted. How can we restart negotiations to arrive at...? I don't know.

Mr. Maciocia: Do you think that the political context has changed since the failure of Meech Lake?

Mr. Pelletier: Yes. The political context changes from day to day, I think, and I hope that this failure will make all the partners think, has made them think and will make them think even more. In my opinion, this meeting here, around this table, will make people think.

Mr. Maciocia: OK. In another line of thought, within the framework of an economic association with the rest of Canada, as you are advocating, by which mechanism would you ensure Québec's presence in the joint management of the marketing boards?

Mr. Pelletier: I think that I will turn this question over to my secretary-general, Mr. Dumais.

Mr. Maciocia: Fine.

Mr. Dumais (Mario): In fact, at the present time, the Canadian marketing boards exist by virtue of an agreement on the part of each participating province. Each participating province has a marketing board and, for the board to be established, it must give its agreement. And when a province no longer gives its agreement and wants to withdraw, in the current system, it's already possible. At the time when we sign, the provinces sign an agreement to say: For manufacturing milk, or for poultry meat, or for eggs, we will establish a body to manage the marketing board that we want. The framework has been defined. That is, the participants in the various levels of industry are governed: the primary producers, the manufacturers, the buyers, the distributors of the final product, and a body is established that is different for milk, where conditions are a bit different, for chicken, for eggs, for milk, but which are all more or less inspired by the same principle. The current operating system of the marketing boards is a model which could very well be used as a model to be perpetuated within the framework of a new arrangement between Québec and the rest of Canada.

In my opinion, I don't think that it is necessary to invent a formula that is radically different from the one that is in place, because it involves provinces which are sovereign in that respect, up to a certain point, and which say: We will pool our responsibilities and this is how we will manage things in the future. It wouldn't be easy within the framework of a constitutional readjustment, just as it isn't right now. You know that there are always very virulent discussions on interprovincial quota-sharing. From time to time, dissatisfied provinces withdraw from the agreement and return. In our opinion, it doesn't seem to us that we must think of a model that is radically different from the one which currently exists. The one which exists could inspire us.

Mr. Maciocia: Fine. My other question is: Mr. Pelletier, should the Commission recommend the repatriation of certain powers to the government? Which, in your opinion, should Québec repatriate and have exclusive responsibility for its growth?

Mr. Pelletier: I told you, I think we pointed it out in the brief, that the body which speaks on behalf of all Québec farmers is the Union des producteurs agricoles. I don't want to get into starting to establish priorities today. I think that there are people much more competent than we who can establish these priorities, and there are some which have already been mentioned. I don't want to get into that.

Mr. Maciocia: I understand, but do you have an idea, more or less, which would be more important for you, as the Coopérative fédérée de Québec, so that the Commission can be enlightened regarding the steps to be taken between now and the end of March?

Mr. Pelletier: I don't want to get into that today.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now turn to Mr. Baril.

A voice: No, Mr. Brassard.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Brassard? Fine.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank the Coopérative fédérée for coming to testify before us. Your conclusion pleased me very much and I would like to quote it, even though you read it earlier: "The expertise of our population, the natural and financial resources which we enjoy, the entrepreneurial spirit which we have developed

enable us to anticipate the future with serenity, regardless of the constitutional choice which Quebecers will make." End of quote. I find that interesting, coming from an organization whose sales figure exceeds \$1.3 billion, including \$250 million in exports. This is a statement which, I think, carries weight, because it more or less says to a lot of people that they should set aside all forms of terrorism or economic blackmail because of the debate which was initiated in Québec. And it repels, with serenity, as you said, this sort of permanent Halloween that some would like to establish in Québec on the economic level. I find that interesting, a statement such as this. And I won't ask you to give your opinion on Québec's future constitutional status. Just that satisfies me. When you have a sales figure of \$1.3 billion and you say that, I think it must be taken seriously.

Regarding the equity battle, according to what I've seen, the latest figures, it's deteriorating even more. I'm just observing this. Because federal expenditures were in the order of 7% or 8% in the document that you signed jointly with the Québec government and the UPA; this has now dropped to 6.4%. So, this has deteriorated even more in terms of our shares from the federal government. I was especially struck by your sentence on page 3, which I will also quote. My question will be regarding this; after that, my colleague Baril will take up where I left off. "It would be just as advantageous for the rest of Canada to have access to our market as it would be for us to have access to theirs. This is the basis which makes it possible to envisage the fruitful negotiation of a blueprint for economic association with the rest of Canada in our industry." On Friday, the farmers came to tell us: Watch out, disaster, catastrophe. We risk losing everything if Québec decides to become sovereign. In particular, they obviously cited the milk example. You said it, 48% of manufacturing milk comes from Québec. My question is simple: To be able to write that, you probably have data, figures, facts. What makes you say that, if it would be advantageous for us in Québec to associate economically in the agricultural commodities sector, how would it be just as advantageous for English Canada to do the same? Do you have some figures, in some sectors, which could enable us to illustrate that?

Mr. Pelletier: First, Mr. Brassard, I would like to thank you for your appreciation. As for the figures, just take beef for example. We know that beef is produced in the Canadian West, especially Alberta. We in Québec import \$750 million in beef from Alberta. Therefore, it would be advantageous for them to keep this market, that's obvious. It would be advantageous for us, as we also said in there, to continue to have economic and trade ties, as much with the rest of Canada, if, as with the Americans, we see

what's currently happening with GATT, and finally, we have become international, and you know it. So, I think we need to trade with those who are closest to home first, before going farther.

Mr. Brassard: Therefore, the conclusion, if I understand you correctly, it wouldn't just be advantageous for Québec to seek a form of economic association with Canada, especially in the field which concerns you, it would also be just as advantageous for English Canada as for us to do so.

Mr. Pelletier: Obviously.

Mr. Brassard: And you think that common sense in all this will win out.

Mr. Pelletier: I think that, as regards the Coopérative fédérée – it was mentioned in the document, I think you read it, I believe I understood – we are optimistic on the whole and, regardless of what happens, we have experienced, we have developed the cooperative farming movement in Québec within a federation and we think that, regardless of what happens, we are also capable of continuing to develop. Everything will depend on the governments in place, if they want to pass laws which ensure that the cooperative farming movement is treated on a par with all the sectors.
(2:30 p.m.)

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

Mr. Baril: Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. I read your brief very attentively, which reinforces the position of the Union des producteurs agricoles during the last conference they held last week, since we know that the Coopérative fédérée and the Union des producteurs agricoles have the same members, the same producers. To continue along with what my colleague began earlier, as regards... The Coopérative fédérée, two years ago, was a member of a sort of coalition, the UPA, the Coopérative fédérée and Québec's Ministère de l'Agriculture, which had shown, as regards equity, as regards sharing, as regards what the Québec government, as regards what Québec agriculture received from the federal government... And significant figures were disclosed on Québec's major shortfall in its share of federal government investments. On page 5, you pointed out that Québec, whose share of Canadian farm cash receipts was 16%, received only 6.4% of federal expenditures. Do you have figures, over the last two years, has the gap widened, stayed the same or...?

Mr. Dumais: Yes. The figure that you have here in the Coopérative fédérée brief is the latest figure available. For three or four years,

we must point out something which somewhat explains the context for this figure. We understand, we admit that, at the present time, the Canadian Prairies are experiencing great difficulties in agriculture. We know the status of the world grain market, which is extremely depressed because of the trade war between the United States and the European Economic Community. And we know that federal expenditures, over recent years, have greatly increased for the Prairies, because of the droughts, and because of the depressed prices of the world grain market. We must definitely look at this situation realistically.

However, the fact remains that, at the present time, in Canada, we must often fight like madmen to make the rest of Canada admit that our way of organizing agriculture in Québec makes sense, that the marketing boards constitute an economic policy which costs the government in place almost nothing, and which enables farmers who depend on them to live reasonably.

Therefore, we cannot say that right now the situation is still deteriorating, for several years, from the point of view of federal expenditures, it has already deteriorated a great deal, in part also because of the drought. However, what we can say in this regard is that it isn't easy to make the rest of Canada admit that our way of organizing agriculture in Québec is legitimate and serves the interests, not only of farmers, but also of the population in general, indirectly, in the sense that taxpayers are not obliged to put their hands into their pockets everyday to enable Québec farmers to survive.

Therefore, as regards more accurate figures, year after year, we don't have them here. We think that there might have been some change over the last year or two, but it isn't very significant. Our share of federal expenditures has continued to be around 5%, 6%, 7% for three or four years now, while Québec agriculture represents 16% of Canadian agriculture.

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

Mr. Baril: Time is passing quickly. In 30 seconds, the federal government is currently in the midst of reviewing its agricultural policies. There was a great document which was tabled there, which is called Growing Together. I would like that... How would the Coopérative fédérée analyze this document? Is it in the interest of Canada, or of Québec, or of the West in particular?

Mr. Pelletier: I will turn the floor over to Mr. Dumais, who studied the document.

Mr. Dumais: It isn't easy in 15 seconds, or in 2 minutes, to summarize all this, because you

know that the review of the Canadian agricultural policy right now focuses on issues as complicated as grain transportation, income protection methods, the Canadian dairy policy, the poultry farming policy, etc. We cannot honestly draw a portrait right now of the situation by summarizing it, by saying that there is a plot in Canada on the part of the federal government or on the part of the other regions against Québec agriculture. That isn't our interpretation of the Canadian agricultural policy review.

However, what we can point out is that the old problems of relationships between Québec, or, more generally, the agricultural sector organized into marketing boards and the grain sector continue to have the same problems that have existed for many decades. In particular, the Crow's Nest Pass issue is an issue which crops up periodically. We are familiar with the battle which was fought in Québec on this, and in all of Eastern Canada. The Crow's Nest Pass issue is still on the table. There are still people who would like for the subsidy to be paid in such a way as to increase animal production in the West. On our side, we are told there was a traditional specialization in Canada. Grain was for the Prairies. When grain prospers on the Prairies, we are very happy and we are treated as recipients of public assistance in the sectors in which we are present.

However, it's the opposite right now. Things are going badly for grain, and for us, it's going a little less badly than it is for grain. And our marketing systems are being questioned again. So, in the various working committees, whether for milk, chicken, grain transportation or income protection, there are tensions that are perpetuated across the various regions of Canada and, from time to time, it is found to be more profitable to work to build things than to continually have to justify our way of working, in these fields which are our...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Baril, thank you for your question. We will now continue with the 25-minute block. And the first speaker who apparently knows that, Mr. Jacques Proulx.

Mr. Proulx: It's the advantage I always have when agricultural organizations appear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back to a question which was already asked but which I think really merits further discussion. Because you very clearly asserted that it would be advantageous for the rest of Canada to do business with us. You began to answer earlier, but I think that... This issue crops up often because everyone has the impression, in any case, especially around this table, many people often have the impression that, if ever Canada's constitutional structure changed somewhat, it

would be a catastrophe, because we overproduce in certain areas, and so on.

I would like for you, as an organization which truly does business — which belongs to the producers, but which trades and specializes more in that — to discuss this further. Not only to talk to us about milk, because we are overproducing it, but to give us, especially those who are around the table, several examples, because you have become increasingly diversified over recent years. Right now, you are into market gardening; you are into pork; you are into milk, and so on. Is it possible to paint us a picture which will show us that it would be advantageous for the other provinces to trade with us, regardless of the constitutional status?

Mr. Pelletier: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that it's fairly easy to show that, in the current context, the Coopérative fédérée has already established markets in some thirty countries and, naturally, with the other provinces of Canada. That was pointed out earlier. In that regard, it doesn't matter — and we stressed this in our brief — it doesn't matter what type of constitution we have tomorrow morning. In any case, we no longer have concerns about what form the constitution will have or the composition of Canada. The food needs of this great country will stay the same and I think that it would be very advantageous for the other parts of Canada to get their supplies also in the parts... There will be trade agreements which will have to exist. To give you some specific examples, listen, perhaps Mr. Dumais would have some figures to give you. I don't have any figures here, but trade is currently very well established and, with our people with whom we trade, there doesn't seem to be any worry in this regard.

Mr. Proulx: You're telling me that your partners elsewhere, partners or those with whom you trade, have no worries. It's a question of trade, a question of price, a question of quality. Is that what you're telling me?

Mr. Pelletier: In any case, we haven't currently seen these concerns. When we speak about the Constitution or Meech Lake, the people with whom we trade... we haven't seen that there was any concern in this regard. But perhaps Mr. Dumais could finish, if he may, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dumais: Yes. Besides the figure which is perhaps the most well known, that of the interprovincial beef trade in Canada, Mr. Chairman already mentioned it, I can't perhaps give you exact figures immediately on each of the other sectors in which we import from the rest of Canada. But we can identify them qualitatively. In particular, we know that we in

Québec have traditionally purchased grain from the rest of Canada. We buy much less today because our own grain production has greatly increased. However, where our grain production has especially increased is in cattle fodder. For human consumption, we continue to get supplies primarily from the Prairie provinces. We continue to purchase grain for cattle fodder from Ontario and also, occasionally, from the Prairie provinces. We in Québec continue to buy potatoes from outside the province, primarily from the Maritimes. We know that, as regards fruits and vegetables, we buy these products in abundance, particularly from Ontario in season. Also, we can mention that, as regards market eggs, in Québec we produce approximately 65% of our domestic needs, and the other 35% currently comes primarily from Ontario. Overall, the data indicate to us that, in the agri-food field, the trade balance, if we can use that expression, between Québec and the rest of Canada is favourable to the rest of Canada. We export to the other provinces and we import from the other provinces. If we add up everything exported and everything imported, the total of what is imported is higher than the total of what is exported to the rest of Canada.

Mr. Proulx: Second question, while agreeing with you that... In any case, I'm trying to convince myself that there hasn't been a national plot over the years to try to minimize agriculture in the East or, in any case, to try to limit it up to a certain point. Could you tell us, as an agricultural organization, about all these battles which had to be fought anyway, because you fought them with the producers, especially from 1974 regarding grain, the Crow's Nest Pass, all the other issues, all the revision of agricultural policies. As an agricultural organization, can you measure how much, even if you have expanded and so on, how much that has limited you, up to a certain point? Can you tell me if that has limited you?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I must ask you to answer quickly on Mr. Proulx's time, please.

Mr. Pelletier: I don't think we can say how much that has limited us. It's possible that it has limited us, it's also possible that it has also given us certain advantages. But to assess the pros and cons, I can't do that.

Mr. Proulx: So, I understand that the position taken by your producers through the UPA conference doesn't frighten you and that Québec's sovereignty won't limit your progress.

Mr. Pelletier: No, in that regard, I don't think we have any fears.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Nicolet, who will be followed by Mr. Larose, and then Mr. Libman.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may, I would like to briefly return to this whole problem regarding markets, because, in fact, that has been the subject of some exchanges as you must have heard last Friday. The entire problem that we are discussing is part of an international dynamic, and I'm thinking about GATT and the recognition of GATT accords in North-South trade, Québec-United States, which will have, regardless of how slowly the GATT talks are progressing, fairly major impacts on the entire Québec agri-food sector. Changes which will have the effect of promoting North-South trade while perhaps placing East-West trade on a secondary level in relation to the trans-border dynamics with the United States. All this will require Québec's agri-food industry to adjust in a relatively short period of time. If you add to this process, which is already well underway, the evolution, the constitutional issue with the possibility of the affirmation of Québec sovereignty, how do you view, given this possibility, the acceleration of this dynamic and this process of converting agri-food markets for Québec?
(2:45 p.m.)

Mr. Pelletier: Listen, you have brought up the GATT accords. Everything that's going on at the international level will affect Québec, will affect Québec agriculture, will affect the development of the Coopérative fédérée, that's possible. It's possible that this will have an impact, and it is very, very important, in my opinion, in 1990, that farmers, that Québec industry, that we look forward, and there will be, as you pointed out, adjustments to make. We can look backwards all we want, but regretting the past is useless. We are moving forward. So, perhaps that will give us a kick in the pants, as a group, but a kick in the pants, I've never seen that make anyone move backward. It makes them move forward!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Pelletier: So, that will make us be serious. That will make us take ourselves in hand; that will make us roll up our sleeves, to say: We are moving forward. But we will have to have Québec solidarity. In my opinion, that's extremely important. And in our field, the cooperative farming movement, I say that it's the best school. We teach people to work together to defend common objectives. I believe, I have always believed in joining forces; not in division. That perhaps doesn't say much, it doesn't fall in with what we are currently

discussing.

Mr. Nicolet: Interdependence between Québec and the rest of Canada will be reduced. Is that a change that you fear?

Mr. Pelletier: Listen, there have been so many things which have taken place within the last ten years. To tell you that, right now, there is no fear, I think that the people who have no fear are not here. There are some fears, and we must take the necessary steps to face them. We must take the necessary steps so that in the year 2000 we will be stronger than we are today.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Larose: Mr. Chairman, this is a fairly concise brief, 12 pages. I will tell you that I find this brief to be very clear and, contrary perhaps to our friend Dufour who, this morning, wanted to stand out from the privy council while having the speech of the privy council, you don't have the UPA speech. You say that it's the UPA which will give the answer.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Larose: I have work to do in reading the briefs as they are presented to us, including between the lines. What I like is - and there are speakers who have said it - the last paragraph which, in my opinion, has great political significance. And it perhaps gives the brief the meaning that, "The economic issue has often been presented as a severe constraint limiting the constitutional choice." You seem to be telling us: We are no longer in this era, that's in a different period.

First question. I would like for you to tell us: Did you take a position in 1980? What was it? In other words, do you have a position in 1990 which has changed from that of 1980?

Second question. My friend Dufour said, before leaving for lunch, that we don't break up a country because the interest rates are a bit high right now. I would like to know, based on what you assert on page 5, if we must wonder about a country when, systematically, this country or this province has 20% to 25% more unemployment; when, systematically, we receive almost 15% to 18% of research and development investments; when, systematically, federal dollars for goods and services are at least 50%, if not 30% of what is given elsewhere; when, systematically, yes, the surplus comes to us as social welfare or unemployment. In other words, your progress over the last ten years, is it the

periodically higher interest rates or if there was a systematic transfer in the economic management that you believe to be fairly severe, especially on pages 4 and 5? Is there a problem which has grown worse with regard to the economic management of this country and which has taken place to the detriment - I'll be specific - not only of Québec, but of the outlying areas, and whether, if there were people east of Québec, it could be that they also wanted their independence, but since they are a part of the whole, they decided to continue to row in the same boat?

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Larose has asked a lot of questions. First, in 1980, to my knowledge - I wasn't president - the Coopérative fédérée didn't take a position, was not called upon to take a position. You said: Have we progressed? I think that I must answer yes. There has been progress on the part of everyone. I think that those who have not progressed are not around this table. I think that everyone has progressed for different reasons. A special reason, and one which I believe is a main reason, is the refusal at Meech Lake to recognize the five minimum conditions by a certain number of premiers who changed tack. In my opinion, that was a major blow which gave us a kick in the pants, as we said. So, many other questions were asked and I wouldn't want to compromise myself further on this. I think that the Coopérative fédérée which I represent here is an economic organization and that there aren't many organizations like the Coopérative fédérée, in the agricultural sector, where we are in competition with everyone in the industry, which will come to testify here regarding the relevance of this or that with respect to the Constitution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): ...Mr. Pelletier, because Mr. Larose's time is up.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's sometimes unfortunate to have the last question in a block of questions because often your questions are taken by others. That happened this time. So, my second question.

I will continue along the same lines as Mr. Brassard and Mr. Larose, but I will formulate my question differently. In fact, I'm referring to the last page of your brief where you said: "The economic issue has often been presented as a severe constraint limiting the constitutional choice. In our opinion, this is less and less the case," less and less onerous. So, you are comparing today's economic situation, in 1990,

with the referendum debates of 1980. And there are some members around this table who do not like to hear some of these arguments from 1980. Mr. Brassard used the terms "economic terrorism", "economic blackmail". But I'll ask you the question anyway: Do you sincerely believe that today, in 1990, the economic impact of a Québec which is heading towards sovereignty will be minimal? Reassure me, please, more explicitly. That's all I want. I want reassurance. When you make a statement such as that, can you be a bit more specific?

Mr. Pelletier: Mr. Chairman. Is your question: What economic impact will that have for Quebecers?

Mr. Libman: If Québec moves towards sovereignty, will there be a minimal economic impact, as you suggest, as you insinuate, in your brief? And, if you think so, can you be a bit more explicit to reassure me?

A voice: About reassuring you, I'm not so sure.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Pelletier: I'm sure of one thing: There will definitely be, for some sectors, a certain economic impact which will, in some cases, be positive and, in other cases, adjustments will surely be needed. But there is only one thing today which does not change: We must get used to change. Only change does not change. Everything else, what was true yesterday is no longer true today. So, we must continually make adjustments.

Mr. Libman: But, can you be a bit more explicit? Why is the economic situation so different as regards the economic impact?

Mr. Pelletier: I will let Mr. Dumais answer this question, because Mr. Dumais is an economist and he'll be right on target.

Mr. Dumais: Basically, you are telling us: If there was a step towards sovereignty, can you reassure us that there won't be an economic disturbance? No. We can't reassure you in that regard. If we remain within the current framework, could someone reassure us that there won't be an economic disturbance? No. No one can do that. This being said, what makes us see the future with a bit of optimism? It's that Québec agriculture, first of all, has basic strengths which have been there for a very long time, which have lived under all sorts of constitutional systems and trade systems.

Let's go as far back as 1850, when there was a reciprocity treaty between what were the provinces which would eventually make up

Canada, at that time, and the United States. And, this reciprocity treaty, the Americans asked for it to be repealed because, for one thing, Canadian agriculture at that time, which was primarily centred in Québec, was competitive on the American market, something which the Americans no longer wanted to put up with at that time. In Québec, we have in our agricultural and agri-food productions – whether it's milk, whether it's pork, whether it's poultry, whether it's grain crops, more and more breeding – an expertise, natural resources, which are not in any way connected with the current or future constitutional system.

As for us, we sell extremely large quantities of pork to Japan. And we are completely convinced that the competitive advantages which enable us to sell pork to Japan will be there next year and in five years, regardless of the constitutional system within which we will live. That's what reassures us.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that all right? So, Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I went through your brief twice and I tried to find within your brief a constitutional system that could be suggested. I wouldn't want to take this up again... Because the question was already asked and I will simply get the same answer that you gave to someone else.

For example, I found on page 2: "The interdependence of Québec's and Canada's agri-food industries is great." I told myself: Maybe they are for sovereignty-association. When I looked at page 3, while reading that the farmers were concerned about the marketing boards, I told myself: Maybe they're for sustained federalism. But, when you get to page 12: Regardless of the system that Quebecers will choose to give themselves, it's important to ensure that the rules which will govern our economy will enable us to continue to grow and so on. I wondered: According to you, which of the systems will be the best so that our agri-food industry will continue to prosper, but you don't want to answer.

Mr. Pelletier: Because this sort of answer, Mr. Chairman, it's after touring the province and assessing all this together that you will arrive at a conclusion around this Parliamentary Commission on the Constitution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, Messrs. Dumais, Pelletier, Massicotte and Lapalme, thank you for your involvement in the work of our Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:01 p.m.)

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

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now continue with the Association provinciale de l'industrie du bois ouvré du Québec, for a one-hour sitting. Mr. Jean-Louis Bonneville, if you would introduce your colleagues.

Mr. Bonneville (Jean-Louis): On my far left, Robert d'Amours, on my left, Jean Tremblay; on my far right, Émile Morin, and on my right, Gaston Brouillette.

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

Association provinciale de l'industrie du bois ouvré du Québec

Mr. Bonneville: Mr. Campeau, Mr. Bélanger, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, on behalf of the Association provinciale de l'industrie du bois ouvré du Québec, we would like to thank the members of the Commission for having agreed to hear us. Our association, aware of the importance of these discussions, wanted to contribute in its own small way to the most important forum of this century. We consider the topic fundamental. The brief we tabled before your Commission does not reflect an individual position, but rather a consensus reached by our industry. The members of our association represent over 3000 workers and collectively, our contribution to Québec's economy is somewhere in the area of \$350 million. Today, our association is an appropriate representation of the people of Québec through our companies' size, diversity and localization, which is more regional than metropolitan, and by their diversified management, which represents various political allegiances. To present our association's viewpoint on Québec's constitutional future, I would ask our director general, Mr. Jean Tremblay, to give his report.

Mr. Tremblay (Jean): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, our process of reflection and the decision which led us to table this brief are mentioned in the document which, obviously, I do not intend to read, and were inspired by the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. I realize that this has already been brought up, but maybe not by a manufacturer's association whose members are scattered throughout Québec. Of course, our position is not unanimous, we can't claim to be a single voice, we aren't a political party, but rather an association whose members compete among themselves, who are often located in the regions, more or less outside the urban areas, so it appeared important to us and to the board of directors to make a statement, because the members, individually, submitted this request to

us, and also because they felt, like all Quebecers, rather humiliated following the failure of negotiations where we demanded no more than the strict minimum.

Therefore, we decided to draw up this document after the failure of Meech Lake. We mention on page 6 that it would be dangerous to erect a country's structures solely on an emotional foundation, and in this regard I am obviously referring to the weeks and months following the rejection of Meech where one heard everywhere, on the street, on the radio, people who were more or less violent in their opinions or, well... And we said to ourselves that we had to be a bit more rational, and consider it thoroughly. We have decided to propose that the reality of Canada's geographical layout be maintained. In other words, we think it would be advisable that Canada be maintained as a geographical entity. However, neither can we accept the status quo, nor do we have a specific formula to propose to you. This morning I was listening to the Association des fabricants de meubles sparring with some of you on the ideal formula. We don't have an ideal formula. We are counting on others who come before you to make presentations to suggest the ideal formula or formulas to be selected, probably by means of a referendum.

However, the importance of our trade relations with Ontario, the Western provinces, and to a lesser extent the Maritimes and the United States, seems to point to this premise. In any case, it is probable that the Canada of tomorrow will not be one of 10 provinces, and when I say that it is probable, I would even go so far as to say that it is preferable, given that Québec must ensure the repatriation of the tools essential to its development.

As for the others, as for the rest of Canada, whether it is divided into three regions, four provinces, this is of no importance to us, except that we must ensure that Québec's representativeness is in keeping with its importance in all respects.

We believe that Québec must have full powers, first of all, over its financial institutions. You will understand that as a manufacturer's association, we have economic concerns, and we feel that economic tools will provide us with the means to ensure our specific nature, the level of social services we want, and the cultural aspect of Québec society. And we believe that the financial institutions, which serve as a model for the rest of the continent, and we quoted, Mr. Chairman: the Caisse de dépôt, the Fonds de solidarité, the decompartmentalization of our financial institutions, and the extreme dynamism of the Mouvement Desjardins and insurance companies.

In this respect, we have been unable to determine whether it would be advisable for Québec to declare its sovereignty first and

negotiate later. We're not sure if a constitution is needed, and you understand that the meagre resources available to us did not permit us to consult specialists of any type; law professors, lawyer's firms or others. Therefore, we preferred to leave this entire area to your authority and wisdom. And, in this respect, we are laying ourselves open to a certain degree of ambiguity - I am once again referring to what I saw this morning with the furniture manufacturers - I imagine we'll be asked if we're federalists or sovereignty supporters. And we will have to repeat that we feel Québec should be as sovereign as possible and that there should be an agreement with the rest of Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You may now go to your conclusion. You have about a minute left, Sir...

Mr. Tremblay: Okay. Well, I just wanted to point out that on page 9, there is an important point that I wanted to rectify. Instead of "5% of our production is sold, mostly in Ontario," there should be a 3 in front of the 5. We should be speaking of 35%, which enormously changes the outlook in which... So, what we're saying is that we believe our currency should remain Québec currency; that the interest rate and the value of the dollar so that we can, even if we wanted it to be Canadian, contribute to intervention mechanisms in such a way as to ensure ourselves a certain degree of control; that certain fields, such as vocational training, research and development, be repatriated back to Québec and that it be as clear as possible. And I am coming, Mr. Chairman, to the conclusions.

Québec must calmly decide and assert itself in all fields of jurisdiction necessary to its full economic, cultural and social growth. Québec must ensure that it is very clear on the jurisdiction it intends to exercise exclusively, as well as on what it intends to share and what it will entrust to eventual partners. The entire process of consultation, discussion, and negotiation should be out of the realm of political parties and remain open and transparent. Quebecers' standard of living must remain a primary objective of the constitutional approach. We believe that Québec must assert itself as strongly as possible, given its specific nature, without isolating itself. We claim that the Canadian entity must be maintained to ensure a market of 24 million persons, considering the importance of our economic ties with Ontario, the scope of the American market, and the difference in size between American and Québec companies. We hope that the entire process will be carried out as calmly and especially, as rapidly as possible. Thank you.

The Chairman (M. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Tremblay. We will begin with Mr.

Jacques Baril.

Mr. Baril: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the representatives of the Association provinciale de l'industrie du bois ouvré du Québec for having taken the time to come and inform us of their concerns over Québec's future. I have read and reread your brief and I have not yet been able to discern a clear position on Québec's future. I don't know if it's because your analysis isn't finished, ended, or because you haven't received a kick in the pants, as the president of the Fédération said earlier, to make you progress further. But in any case, you're wondering about the possibility of Québec proclaiming its sovereignty before taking any other action.

You are demanding that the Canadian economic layout be maintained, as well as a number of additional powers for Québec. Although you said that the failure of the Meech Lake Accord demonstrates the impossibility of renewing the 1967 constitutional pact, your Association asks all politicians to reach an agreement on the constitution rapidly. On page 11 of your brief, you begin, in a general way, to assess the real problems of the industry. A rapid read-through of your brief shows that you begin by discussing the continuing high dollar, you discuss the inability of the federal government to get its expenses on a healthy footing despite seven years of prosperity, you discuss the GST, you also discuss, on page 12, the interest rates which appear to you – and you are not alone – unjustly too high. On page 13, you speak of repatriating vocational training powers; on page 14, you demand more powers in the area of research and development and, in the area of technological transfers, that they should be under the jurisdiction of the Québec government.

You also say, on page 14: "Our industry works closely with the Centre de recherche industrielle du meuble et du bois ouvré, which promotes technological innovation through specific research applied to our plants." We know that it is the Québec government, along with the associations, which created this agency. On page 15, you speak of uncertainty, because: "Despite all the rapidity with which the politicians or their representatives act, this period will still be too long." In conclusion, on page 16, you say: "We understand that the process may involve a referendum so as to validate the proposed approach, but we ask our elected members to be clear and precise." Could you explain to us just what is meant by "ask our elected members to be clear and precise"?

Mr. Tremblay: First of all, I thank you for having summed up our brief better than I could have myself.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Tremblay: You will recall... the 1980 Referendum was mentioned earlier. You will recall that the question was long, half a page, and the entire issue stemmed from two political parties, or at least, two political options. There is a good chance that the approach you will use to draw up the report to be submitted to the government – obviously, this is not a question for the Commission but rather for the government as such – will probably encourage it to go ahead with a referendum. We would hope that the discussion will be very clear, that the question or, if there is a choice from among a, b, and c, in any case, that it be easy to understand for everyone and that it won't be an entire page of discussion ending with a single question, yes or no. This, really, is what we mean.

We are an association of manufacturers, businesspeople, people who make decisions rapidly, and what happened was that for some twenty years, we left a problem which didn't bother us all that much in the hands of the politicians. We complained about the energy invested in the constitutional issue because we thought it should be otherwise and that it should have been focused more on the economy. But we made do until the partner with whom we've lived for some one hundred years told us: Sorry, but minimum or no minimum, we do not agree to your five conditions. And this was when we first said: Wait a minute, there's a serious problem here; it has to be solved as soon as possible, as clearly, as simply as possible.

Now, I haven't yet heard any miraculous solutions proposed here, I haven't read any and I don't know of any. Now, the government thought that 32 people could enlighten them, and I think that you'll probably do so. Now we, on the other hand, have no solutions, especially since a number of our members are very worried about their business with Ontario, and some of them are fervent nationalists, sovereignty supporters, and I could go on, but... And since we are an association that must represent these people, and not a political party that can establish a rule, a single law, and say: Everyone must toe the line. Here you have no right to do that. We must respect the people we represent and this forces us to be slightly ambiguous in our brief. We may have given you more problems than solutions, but...

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

Mr. Jolivet: To continue in the same vein, Mr. Chairman, I would like to know, because the minimum demands made at Meech Lake were rejected, your demands also seem, according to your brief, to be minimal. And you say that we must act rapidly and find a solution rapidly. How, in such a context, do you expect to renew

something which has already been rejected? If we went a little higher in what we asked... Unless we go a little lower. So I would like to hear your comments on this. Is our only option to warn them that for us, sovereignty comes first, and that after that we will negotiate other things, but that we can no longer, in the current context, act rapidly and go lower than the minimum already rejected, unless we go higher, and if we do that, what's the problem, how will we solve it?

Mr. Tremblay: How will we solve it? I don't have the miracle solution. Will we go lower? We can't go lower. We already made an offer and it was refused. Starting now, we can only go higher. That's all there is to it.

Mr. Jolivet: In this context, don't you think that putting pressure on those across the table would work better than saying: We're ready to negotiate something, when they have already refused the minimum?

Mr. Tremblay: I don't think there's any use in sitting down and renegotiating something we already have and that doesn't work. I think other methods must be used. I gave as an example and as a question: Should we declare sovereignty first and then say: Okay, if you want to negotiate, now's the time?

Mr. Jolivet: But would sovereignty frighten you in such a scenario? As a means of negotiating something better?

Mr. Tremblay: There is nothing that frightens us specifically.

Mr. Jolivet: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Gentlemen. We now go to Mrs. Pagé, who will be followed by Mr. Beaudry.

Mrs. Pagé: Good day, Ladies and Gentlemen. I have two questions to ask you. The first: while reading your brief, I got the impression not that you wanted to preserve a geopolitical entity, but rather a geo-economic entity. And I'd just like to make sure that I'm getting the right impression. You spoke of Canada much more as an accessible market than as a country you wish to maintain.

Mr. Tremblay: You're right to some extent, but I think it must be pointed out that we asked ourselves a number of questions to which we did not know the answers. What becomes of the currency if there is no deal with Canada? We'll print Québec dollars, Québec stamps, we'll have a Québec army. We'll have... And we said to ourselves... A few weeks ago, someone, I forget

who, said: Well, we could make a deal with the United States who could be our army, in exchange for so much a month. Maybe, but it was to facilitate the administration that we said that a lot of things like currency, stamps, the army, everything which is currently of a federal nature, necessarily... Because I think that Québec, when it declares its sovereignty, will have to negotiate with someone. We'd like to have to negotiate environment, for example. Well, we can't stop clouds at the border. Wouldn't it be ideal to entrust areas such as currency, stamps, and so forth to the federal government? Being very specific, we say: You can administer this for us.

Mrs. Pagé: In other words, just about all the powers it would be important for us to have for our own development, without shared jurisdiction, overlapping, or anything like that, but what it is convenient for us to share because it is to our advantage or because it appears simpler on an administrative level, with respect to these areas, you agree that we should negotiate a number of agreements, treaties or associations with the rest of Canada.

Mr. Tremblay: Exactly. We have the Queen of England; we could have the money of Canada.

Mrs. Pagé: You absolutely want to keep the Queen?

Mr. Tremblay: No, but I'm saying: Canada has the Queen of England; we could have the money of Canada.

Mrs. Pagé: My second question is, you're telling us: as a Commission, show us the path we should take. We are ready to follow it. We believe we have the necessary tools for our development. We trust the Commission to show us the right way to proceed. This trust is very flattering for us, but I have a question for you. I won't ask you which status you prefer. I know you won't answer; you've already told us so. But on what basis is the Parliamentary Commission supposed to establish the path you wish to take? In your opinion, for example, should the viewpoint expressed in most of the briefs we hear be a key factor in the Commission's assessment?

Mr. Tremblay: I don't think we have to be governed by the principle that there's strength in numbers. I don't think it's your responsibility to supplant an eventual referendum, for example. Just because there are 60 briefs on one side and 40 on the other, this doesn't necessarily mean that this should be the basis for your recommendation. I think that the government, in order to gather as many opinions as possible, asked you to listen to Quebecers, and we

thought, even if it wasn't much, that we should say: We will explain to you what we are, and this will contribute to the information which should enable you to formulate one or more recommendations because, after all is said and done, it is the government who will decide. I don't believe you're an official government body.

Mrs. Pagé: No, but we do have a report to submit.

Mr. Tremblay: Exactly.

Mrs. Pagé: And we can't base our report on a referendum.

Mr. Tremblay: No.

Mrs. Pagé: We'll have to base it on the tool given to us, and that tool is these public hearings.

Mr. Tremblay: Exactly.

Mrs. Pagé: That tool is the briefs, the expert opinions we receive. So what I want to know is: In your opinion, the main impression received from the briefs, the overall opinion they seem to be expressing, should this be a key factor when the commissioners draw up the report and submit recommendations to the government concerning the procedure to follow in the coming weeks and months?

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

Mr. Tremblay: It is the "key" that stumps me. I am convinced that it is important, but whether it should be the key factor...

Mrs. Pagé: Do you have others in mind? I am open to suggestions.

Mr. Tremblay: I think that if I were your neighbour, I would listen, take notes, read and formulate my idea based on everything I'd read. You're the one who was asked to be a commissioner, and I think it is your vision and capacity for synthesizing that are needed.

Mrs. Pagé: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right. Those are nice compliments for Mrs. Pagé.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Pagé: My neighbour already told me so.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

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

Mr. Beaudry: There are 25 briefs presented to us. There is one which draws your attention and convinces you. Does this mean you disregard the other 24?

Mr. Tremblay: Well, if all the members of the Commission chose to throw themselves off a bridge, I'm not sure I'd do the same.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: No, no. I understand, but I mean, in briefs presented to you, if there is one that convinces you and the others don't, of course that's the one you're going to remember, according to the answer you just gave Mrs. Pagé.

Mr. Tremblay: Of course. And if there's only one, I mean...

Mr. Beaudry: Right. So that means we don't all have to throw ourselves off the bridge.

Mr. Tremblay: No, no, no.
(3:30 p.m.)

Mr. Beaudry: Having said this, you continue, on page 16 of your brief, and this is your conclusion on the uncertainty which might reign: "Because, in our opinion, this entire period will intensify the exodus of capital and the demands of investors, and drain so much energy from Quebecers that one wonders if there will be any left to allow the economy to progress." And in this respect, you tell us: It is the uncertainty that will prevail during the time it takes to make the decision to change the Canadian Constitution or choose the Québec option, what people will do with it following the measures we recommend.

If I understand your brief correctly, I assume that you are basing yourself on different opinions from different sources. While looking at, while observing the objectivity and the good will of the members of this Commission in all that is presented to them, you must have, of course, read certain newspaper articles which express certain fears, certain prices to pay for independence, just as there are prices to pay for the current federalism and prices that would have to be paid for renewed federalism. What I am asking you, when you make a statement of this type, is: Do you have specific indications to let us know that because there will be a period of demands, a period of uncertainty, we can expect a certain amount of capital to leave Québec, we can expect that investors will not come to Québec, we can expect a negative impact on the Québec economy? Do you have specific examples or is this just a general

observation?

Mr. Tremblay: It's not something we said just for the sake of saying it.

A Voice: No, no.

Mr. Tremblay: Of course... It's not the time the Commission takes to hear people, reflect, gather opinions – that's not the period we're referring to. It would be in a case where, for example, the Commission report was postponed. The government has the report in hand, a first referendum is held, then a second is held and so on. We spend two or three years in the middle of an election campaign, or practically, and we end up with middle-of-the-road elections, between two... I wouldn't want, we wouldn't want, a quote unquote election period to last months or years. We realize that this is not something which will be resolved in a day, but neither should the population be consulted 3 times in 18 months. It shouldn't be an election referendum.

Mr. Beaudry: Does your reasoning go so far as to say: In a case where sovereignty was declared, we would like to distribute the assets and liabilities, the agreements requiring intervention, etc., and that we might not agree? Because some say that it could, perhaps, be difficult. I've seen, for example, articles... There was one this morning that was quoted. There was another one in *La Presse*, by Marcel Adam. We're told: In either case, companies would run up against, if not insurmountable obstacles, at the very least staggering difficulties which could prove very costly. Assuming negotiations with Canada are long, is it in this context as well, that this statement was included in your brief?

Mr. Tremblay: Of course this will arouse, on the part of investors – and I don't mean foreign investors, I mean people from here – questions: Will we have to wait a year, two years, before building a new plant, before expanding, before buying new equipment? So let's wait a year or two, or three. Well, that waiting period costs everyone money. That's what I mean. I was in Boston a week ago, and I went to Boston Garden to see the only basketball game in history that lasted 15 minutes. People asked me, probably guessing from my accent... They asked me: "Are you from Québec? What's going on? Are you going to separate?" Okay. I'm not worried, at least we're talking to each other. But I think that if the negotiation process, if the tug-of-war process is too long... It's always too long, but I realize that we have no choice... And everyone is aware that we'll have to pay to some extent.

As you were saying, we're already paying in another way and we're not satisfied with how

it's working. So, all that's going to happen is that it'll cost more, and I'm not sure... I'm not sure that anyone is sure of anything. So I say to myself, let's try to do that... To be as clear as possible, as specific as possible. Let's explain what's at stake. And, as someone mentioned during the presentation of the preceding brief, I believe, we've all grown and developed. We're no longer in the 1980 situation.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right, Mr. Tremblay. I think the time is up, but if you would allow me one short question before going on. What I understand is that uncertainty causes the exodus of capital. What you are saying is that we have to make a decision, is that right?

Mr. Tremblay: Exactly.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now continue with Mr. Ghislain Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On several occasions in your brief, you profess your faith in modern federalism. On page 8, I think the essence of your opinion as concerns the economic aspect is expressed when you say: "One thing we are sure of is that the Canadian geopolitical entity must be maintained in this time of market globalization, North American free trade and at the dawn of Europe 1992." I quote another part, on page 7. You express it differently and I would like you to explain what you mean in a concrete fashion: "...the Canadian geographical entity – which is also the geopolitical entity – must be maintained, even if the makeup of the parts of the whole has to be modified to ensure the value and importance of our representativeness." Could I, Mr. Tremblay, when you refer to the makeup of the parts of the whole...

Mr. Tremblay: We assume that if we are not satisfied with the current federal regime... We read about what's going on in the West, one has to go to Vancouver to meet people who want to associate with their neighbours to the south, in Alberta. At the present time, intolerance is growing throughout Canada with regard to all sorts of situations, all sorts of problems. I'm not sure that once Québec has decided to give itself a status different from its current one, of one province out of ten, we can't be absolutely sure that the West won't decide to present a united front, that the Maritimes won't decide to... Whether we call it a Canada of five regions or a Canada of four provinces or... But what we'd like as well, is that if there are four provinces and Québec represents one of them, we must have 25% of the importance and intervention mechanisms of the new regime.

Mr. Dufour: In other words, you could redistribute Canada but keep its current federal form, with regions as you mentioned. There are certain businesspeople who suggest that such a Canada should include, almost automatically, Québec and Ontario. How do you, as an association, react to that? Given that, as you say in your brief, the majority of our trade is with Ontario.

Mr. Tremblay: You mean that Québec and Ontario would be one region?

Mr. Dufour: Exactly. Why not?

Mr. Tremblay: In the first place, I have nothing against it. I would prefer that Québec and Ontario form a province to having Ontario as a province and Ottawa in Ontario and...

Mr. Dufour: Last brief question. This morning, the furniture people told us that, in the United States, in a number of states, the interest rates are different from the federal ones, which led them to propose that we could use the same approach here in Canada, to take into account specific natures, or more exactly, economic zones. Does your association share this viewpoint?

Mr. Tremblay: I admit that this has not been examined closely, but it appears attractive at the very least. We are all convinced that this overheating occurred solely in Ontario but that everyone paid for it. It seems to me that it would have been fairer if a different interest rate had been possible for companies in Québec and out West, or... But I think the most important thing to remember is that we must absolutely - if there is an agreement with Canada - have intervention mechanisms, ways of ensuring that we will not be subjected to an interest rate based on a single region of the country.

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

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We tried union with Ontario for a few decades, before Confederation, in the Act of Union, and it didn't work.

Mr. Tremblay: I don't recall.

Mr. Bouchard: We can't make the same mistakes again.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: I'm sure Mr. Dufour remembers.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: I must admit that I'm a little perplexed at what you're saying. You're telling us: It's impossible to amend the Constitution, we realized this at Meech Lake. The word "impossibility", you use it in the brief you presented, and then you say: But it must be changed considerably, this Constitution. And you say: Well, change it, you, the Commission members, find a solution, we don't have one, but you find one, ask a clear question, we're relying on you, you have a mandate, it's up to you. Isn't this "mission impossible"? Aren't you just passing the buck?

Mr. Tremblay: That may be your viewpoint, but we think it may be a little pretentious, given our skills, to claim to truly understand the full implications. I heard on the radio a law professor explaining the impossibility of declaring ourselves sovereign, or at least... What I mean is, I've only followed Mr. Rémillard's constitutional law course, and...

Mr. Bouchard: Ah ha, that explains it! That's why you don't have a solution!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: Now I understand.

Mr. Tremblay: Unfortunately, he's not here.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: In the end, perhaps this is why you're telling us: We need a referendum, and then the population will decide.

Mr. Tremblay: I think it would be a good exercise in democracy to involve everyone. We came here, without having consulted experts, we came, and we said to ourselves: It's worthwhile, after all, taking a day off, losing a day's worth of work in the plant, to come here, to speak...

Mr. Bouchard: OK.

Mr. Tremblay: ...and I assume it's worthwhile for everyone.

The President (Mr. Jean Campeau): A brief question of 10 seconds.

Mr. Bouchard: So you say: Let's ask a clear question. Shouldn't this question, since, based on surveys, two thirds of all Quebecers support sovereignty, shouldn't this question include the sovereignty option, which would be submitted to the population in a referendum?

Mr. Tremblay: I'd rather not get embroiled

in a war of words or definitions, but I think, and once again this is not directed at the Commission, but rather at the government, we say to the government: Make sure you are clear, because we wouldn't want these discussions to serve purposes other than those for which the hearings were originally intended.

Mr. Bouchard: I have another very brief one, five seconds.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That depends on the answer.

Mr. Bouchard: Could a clear question not be something like: Do you, or do you not, support Québec sovereignty?

Mr. Tremblay: That could be one.

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

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to get back to your report, on page 8, where you say: "We first have to decide what we want, and then negotiate it." My question is the following: But if negotiations prove impossible, what do we do?

Mr. Tremblay: We'll cross that bridge once we come to it. As far as I'm concerned, we submitted five conditions, which everyone called a minimum, and they were refused. Everything people are complaining about is related to federal-provincial overlapping, all the inefficiency, the waste of energy, money and so forth, and federal spending powers which are often exaggerated in some areas. I believe that in Québec, those with a mandate must get together and say: This is what we absolutely must have exclusively, this is what we can entrust in the form of a mandate - because we would give mandates - and this is what we can share. And we'll see if anyone will agree to sit down with us. If no one does, we'll have another answer, I mean, we'll stay at home. In any case, we'll have no choice.

Mr. Beaumier: Another short one, Mr. Chairman. Going back to page 17 of your brief, in your conclusions, the last conclusion at the bottom of the page: "We believe that Québec must assert itself as strongly as possible with respect to its specific nature. However, it must not isolate itself." What exactly do you mean by "isolate"?

Mr. Tremblay: We wouldn't want to be - and here I come back to what I think Mrs. Pagé said earlier - we wouldn't want to be confined to a market of 6 million. Our land is big and beautiful, it's much bigger than many

countries, but we wouldn't want to put up barriers, we wouldn't want to equip ourselves, we wouldn't want to have to equip ourselves with currency, stamps, an army, and so forth.

We believe there is still a possibility, not for, I don't know... I would be tempted to say that I wouldn't want to renew the marriage, perhaps, but that doesn't mean I won't someday get married again. I can end the first one and get started on a second.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right. Mr. Proulx, there are two minutes left. Do you want to use them?

Mr. Proulx: On the condition that I'm not speaking on behalf of the next person, Mr. Chairman. All right, I'll use them, because there are two left. Rapidly, to point out that there are a few contradictions in your brief, at least I see some. And rapidly, I'll read from a page where you say: "Québec must decide what it wants before beginning to negotiate." And then, immediately afterward, you state: "But we must question ourselves seriously on the possibility of first declaring sovereignty or another status." This seems to me to be contradictory.

Mr. Tremblay: This was to give an example of a means we had heard of, and we asked ourselves, although trying to avoid getting involved in strategies, we asked ourselves: Well, would this be a way, for us to declare independence, complete sovereignty, blah, blah, and we'll negotiate afterward? Should we do it this way or another way? But one thing's for sure: we have to repatriate, we have to give ourselves powers. That's for sure.

Mr. Proulx: Fine, OK.

Mr. Tremblay: Do we invite people to negotiate before having enumerated everything we want to keep for ourselves...

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

Mr. Proulx: Yes, yes.

Mr. Tremblay: It's another...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. We now continue with Mr. Robert Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Bonneville, Mr. Tremblay, thank you for having come with your group. I was pleased to read, on page 3 of your brief, that you consider this forum the most important in the history of Québec, as concerns the constitution, it's a change from what we heard

in the first brief this morning, where people told us we were just doing this for the benefit of the gallery. I happen to be among those who believe that we've been working like the very devil for five weeks, and that we believe in this approach, and that it will give results as we progress. So I was happy to see this in your brief.

I would also like to point out, on page 14, a sentence that sums up about twenty briefs we've heard over the past five weeks, and I'd like to read it because frankly, I find it very good. You say: "The link between education, vocational training, language, immigration and regional development, that only Québec can make coherent and functional in a responsible manner (...) must be considered, since the regions are too different in too many respects." This is an accurate summary of what we have heard in many briefs and I congratulate you.

On pages 15 and 16, you speak of a referendum. I find you courageous. You speak of an exodus of capital. You realize that there are many people who've been telling us, for a number of weeks, every time we have the misfortune to mention an exodus of capital, that we're conjuring up the phantoms of the 1980 Referendum. And you were aware, when you put that in, that you might be accused of the same thing?

Mr. Tremblay: Listen, could it be that the words are a little strong, perhaps? People will have to judge for themselves. But I think there are people who... And I don't wish to conjure up phantoms or scare anyone; I just want to be realistic. I think there are people who'll be investing part of their savings elsewhere, in other currencies or whatever, because they're frightened. Are they the ones who are overreacting? There again, people will have to judge for themselves.

Mr. Benoit: Fine.

Mr. Tremblay: I'm not saying we're going to end up with nothing, far from it.

Mr. Benoit: When you speak to us about the referendum... I'm coming back to that. You propose a referendum. Do I understand from this that you do not want to go through what occurred in 1980, where there was a preliminary referendum, where we asked permission to negotiate and where we would have come out with a second referendum, which was a very democratic method? What you're telling us is that you prefer a referendum, and after that you want to go on to something else. Is that what we are to understand?

Mr. Tremblay: Exactly.

Mr. Benoit: OK. Going now to page 8 of

your brief, you talk about the Conseil économique which shows that a large number of jobs in Québec, 37% of all jobs stem from the Canadian market, 43% from the local market and 20% from the international market. What can we do, in the case of eventual sovereignty, to maintain this distribution? You must have reflected on it, you're businesspeople. You have companies. How can we keep this corporate market?

Mr. Tremblay: Well, this is what underlies our statement that we would like the federal link to be maintained because we can be sure that this, at least, can be relied on. For reasons... You know, we try to sell to the United States and we don't succeed in... No one's making a killing. All we're making is minimal progress and there are some manufacturers... I'm thinking of Mr. Bonneville, my neighbour, who owns companies generating \$70 million in sales figures and he sells out West, he sells in Ontario. But he doesn't make any sales worth mentioning in the United States. And I went to Boston with a delegation, for this very reason, to try to understand, because we have no success whatsoever. And we have competitive products, maybe a little more expensive, a little better, and sufficiently adapted to Boston's market needs. I'm not talking about the Louisiana or California markets, our products would be too high-performing; but we do have products that would interest these people, and these people don't buy them because they prefer to buy American first. They don't see any use in buying elsewhere. So we say to ourselves: If negotiations become unpleasant, won't Ontario decide to make an effort to buy from the West and leave us in the lurch by cutting our sales to Ontario in half? Because we do very well in Ontario. We do well out West and also in the Maritimes.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Tremblay, the furniture people, this morning, had an important point in common with you. They suggested keeping the Canadian dollar. They went a bit farther and asked us - others had mentioned the same thing to us earlier - to find a formula like that of the United States, where the interest rates vary based on the regions. Fine. Everyone seems to agree on this. I have a question for you. Earlier, you mentioned the answer given by the Conseil du patronat: Perhaps we'll have to establish certain mechanisms if we plan to keep the Canadian dollar. What could such mechanisms be, to provide us with a dollar that would meet our needs or an interest rate that would meet our needs? Have you thought about this? Your group?

Mr. Tremblay: We have thought about it. Unfortunately, I am unable to come up with a

precise formula. What we do think is that instead of it being the federal government that appoints someone to decide about all this, without considering the opinions of anyone else, we think that if Canada was divided into four regions, there could be five people, a president and four representatives. Or, at least, a formula where everyone has a say based on their importance in such a federation, such an entity. But as for the exact mechanism, I couldn't tell you.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Tremblay, a last question. You say, on page 9: "We believe that it is important to maintain the free flow of goods and persons, on the current Canadian territory where we are competitive," and so forth. Could we eventually consider this same formula, concerning the flow of goods and persons, with our American neighbours to the south?

Mr. Tremblay: I doubt it, for one very simple reason. The scope of the American market, the size of American companies, the salaries paid in the United States, the price of raw materials in the United States and especially, the current value of our dollar mean that we are unable to be competitive. I said earlier that Mr. Bonneville's companies generate some \$70 million in sales figures; this is among the biggest. And in the United States, the biggest is called Andersen and he has a sales figure of \$1 billion. So this is no longer the usual ratio of one to ten, it's more than one to twenty. So there's no common ground here.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you.

Mr. Tremblay: And if I may add, Mr. Chairman, the size of American companies, the manufacturing processes, the suppliers are often the same. Therefore, we are capable of negotiating better prices. We're far more competitive and this is definitely one of the reasons why we do much better in Ontario than elsewhere.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Just before thanking you, just a question which comes to mind. When you speak of the exodus of capital...

Mr. Tremblay: Yes?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): ...and you speak of other currency, are you referring to the exodus of capital from Québec and all of Canada, or solely from Québec?

Mr. Tremblay: I was thinking more of Québec...

Mr. Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): And...

Mr. Tremblay: ...it's possible that it may

apply to Canada as well.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK. Fine. So, another group of businesspeople. Thank you for your kind words with regard to Commission members and the Commission as a whole, it's heartwarming. And thank you for your contribution to the Commission's proceedings.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:55 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:01 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Welcome to the Ordre des agronomes du Québec. So, Mrs. Saint-Yves, if you would introduce the people accompanying you.

Ordre des agronomes du Québec

Mrs. Saint-Yves (Angèle): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. To my right are Jean-Pierre Wampack, who helped write the brief, and Jean-Marc Paquet, vice-president of the Ordre des agronomes. To my left are Rhonda Beauregard, assistant general manager, Jean-Pierre Lachapelle, Éric Marquis, member of the executive committee, and Jacques Rolland, who also helped write the brief.

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

Mrs. Saint-Yves: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the Ordre des agronomes du Québec is pleased to take part in the debate on the political and constitutional future of Québec. Under the Professional Code, the Ordre des agronomes is mandated to protect the public by guaranteeing the integrity and quality of the professional services offered by its members. With 3000 members working at all stages of the agricultural and food chain, our professional corporation is the largest in Canada. The diversity of opinions arising from this, however, means that we cannot decide in favour of one option or the other that are likely to be examined at this table. Nevertheless, we believe it is appropriate to highlight the importance of agriculture and the food and agriculture industry as an economic and social force for Quebecers' health and food safety.

The strength of a State is related to its ability to feed its citizens. The role of agriculture is much broader than that of a simple producer of raw materials. I would make a distinction between immediate and long-term stakes. Among the immediate stakes, we can list the contribution of agriculture to healthy eating habits at a reasonable cost, and to overall economic stability, that is maintenance of food demand, market for industries and services

providing material to or receiving material from agriculture, and consequently contribution to employment. Long-term stakes: contribution to the conservation of resources and the conversion of the economy to sustainable development, contribution to the economic life of rural areas by maintaining a minimum population, contribution to the preservation of the natural, social and cultural heritage of the regions and contribution to the penetration of new development markets.

The food and agriculture industry is one of the most important economic and social industries in Québec. It accounts for 11% of the gross domestic product, generating more than \$16 million in revenue. In 1989, it represented more than 350 000 jobs in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. In a context of mixed economy (agriculture, forest, fisheries, tourism, mines) and of diversity in agricultural production, initiative, creativity and a spirit of entrepreneurship have to be encouraged so that we can be the first to occupy the new important niches in world trade. Applied research will help discover and exploit these riches, thanks to Québec's remarkable research infrastructure.

In developing new products, farmers and industries will increasingly take into account the consumers of today and tomorrow, domestic and foreign. Mutually beneficial agreement between partners will become possible, to the extent that the communications channels between managers, producers, consumers, and everyone involved are open and appropriate training tools are made available. Teaching and ongoing training are what guarantees adequate preparation of farmers and professionals to face the new socio-agro-economic situation of Québec. These elements are essential for the development of agriculture, and it is important to control this area. Land use depends on the choices made by farmers, villagers, city dwellers and politicians. When choosing to keep rural services or not, people will have to be aware of these factors of influence.

Finally, the Ordre des agronomes reiterates its commitment to all Quebecers. Whatever their choice, we will respect it. We pledge to bring into play our knowledge, experience and expertise to meet the resulting challenges in agriculture and in the food sector, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Madam. So, we begin with Mr. Mark Assad.

Mr. Assad: Good afternoon. Some time ago, the Coopérative fédérée de Québec presented a brief and demonstrated very clearly the interdependence of agriculture in the Canadian Confederation. It also demonstrated, as in fact we already knew, that the food and agriculture business is as important, if you like, as defense, and so that's why it is important that our food

and agriculture business should always be in a healthy state, to say the least. The five points you have stated, and as the Coopérative fédérée mentioned earlier, it's not a problem of constitution, those exchanges and bargaining sessions they had with the others throughout the country. Knowing agriculture and of course its vital importance, it cannot be overemphasized, keeping in mind the pros and cons and the difficulties in federal-provincial discussions governments for our farm producers. In your opinion, given the real obstacles of shared jurisdictions, in your mind, is it possible to find a common ground so as to harmonize, as much as possible, this sharing of jurisdictions for the well-being of our agri-food industry?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: I think it is absolutely possible and necessary. It is absolutely imperative, especially in the context of market globalization, it is absolutely imperative to find areas where all involved can work together with all our counterparts, either within Canada for Québec, or outside on the international scene. This is not easy, however, because it requires compromise, and also a change in attitudes and production habits... adapting to consumer needs, for instance... But I think it's possible.

Mr. Assad: In other words, we could encounter some problems. Necessity, so to speak, will force us to streamline this industry.

Mrs. Saint-Yves: Absolutely, I think the necessity of being able to feed oneself can make many people stop and think.

Mr. Assad: So, no matter what the system, so to speak, there is always common ground, especially in an industry of such importance...

Mrs. Saint-Yves: People have been feeding themselves ever since day one, and international negotiations do exist, so I think people have always managed to come to an agreement to develop the food and agriculture sector.

Mr. Assad: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Assad. We'll now move to Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I want to tell you that even you have a very good brief, an excellent brief because it is very extensive. In fact, it discusses rural Québec as a whole, which is very interesting. Unfortunately, I think you do not go far enough, in that you do not decide one way or the other, but at the same time, I feel this gives the Commission new confidence. Actually, everyone who has been before us today has given us the mandate to show them the way. This is terribly interesting,

especially with the previous declarations from certain members of the government to the effect that it's a bit of a mockery. I find that interesting and I feel the value of my role is reassured.

Two questions. The first concerns the issue of agricultural policies. You say at one point that the country's policies have brought about supply stability. Are you ready to assert that they also brought about stability for the farm producers?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: I will let my colleague, Mr. Marquis, answer that question.

Mr. Marquis (Éric): Mr. Chairman, Mr. Proulx. We of the Ordre des agronomes du Québec believe that, after observing the farm market in Québec, after observing the versatility of our farm producers and also after looking at the figures on bankruptcies and the trends for the income of farm operations, we really believe that agriculture in Québec has reached a certain stability. It can be said that in Québec, agriculture is in a good position, as opposed perhaps to our Western colleagues, who have developed a strong export-oriented agricultural structure. In Québec, we moved towards farm production based on feeding Quebecers first and exporting our surpluses. I think that, based on that principle, we can only have a stable agriculture.

Mr. Proulx: But, when you say that, I agree completely, since it is what we have always defended. But it's because you state... You continue to state that it depends on the federal policies, or does it depend predominantly on the provincial policies we have adopted for ourselves?

Mr. Marquis: The role of the federal government in targeting supply in terms of quotas cannot be denied. It cannot be denied because quotas are often under national jurisdiction. On the other hand, within this system, Québec has managed to react. We have managed to focus our production on specific fields, which in turn enabled us to occupy a very important position. Despite the quotas, we export hogs and dairy products. People at the Coopérative fédérée told us that we, people involved in animal production, export a lot. Québec oriented itself very nicely within all that. We have an economic strength in that respect.

Mr. Proulx: But you will agree with me that this adjustment, carried out over the years, was done with the money of Quebecers.

Second question, since my time is getting short, and you will answer me in your second reply. There is another part that was a big

surprise to me, so much so that I had it checked. It's your assertion that 60% of the financial resources for research and development come from the federal government. This was a big surprise to me, because this is not the kind of data we've had, and above all this is not the kind of claims we've made for the last few years. And then, I considered that if I had been wrong to such an extent for the last few years, it was high time for me to adjust my aim. So I had it checked and it's not what I find to be true at the present time; I want to try to have you confirm which figures are right, mine or yours.

The statistics for 1989 show \$86 million for overall agricultural research in Québec. When you break it down, 38% was provided by the federal level, 40% by the province and 22% by Québec's private sector. And when we go west and look at the statistics indicating the funds allocated, exactly the opposite is true, namely somewhere around 60%, or a little bit more, from Ottawa, because there is little investment from the private sector and so on.

Added to that, because this still comes under research and all that, are the tens of millions of federal dollars that are spent for the purchase of goods and services which are only made... And when I say "goods and services", I mean for agricultural institutions, experimental farms, I mean tools for research and so on, and I'm told this is purchased exclusively in Ontario, and this is tens and tens of millions of dollars.

Third, and this concerns research too, once again, the Economic Regional Development Agreement (ERDA) was not continued. This means that, lately, \$40 million were not renewed for Québec. And yet in the West and Ontario, ERDA was renewed by the federal government. Those are important sums. Have you taken all these elements into account? And when you say what you're saying, are you using the most recent data?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that the figures you find in our brief concern only money paid for institutional research, namely universities, research centres and experimental stations. So I can neither confirm nor deny the other figures you have on the table, except that our investigation was concerned with research institutions as such, the research structure we have in Québec, and this is the conclusion we reached. Through other means, it might be possible to arrive at the figures you just mentioned.

Mr. Proulx: Still, could it be that in your calculation, if I come back... 38% federal, if I add the 22% from private enterprise, could this give approximately what you are saying? Could it give that?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: No. It's not that.

Mr. Proulx: It's not that?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: It's really the money currently paid to research institutions. But still, I will point out to you, in passing, that in 1988, this amount, which corresponded to approximately 21% of the total federal expenditure in food and agriculture research, was two and a half times less than what was paid in Ontario.

Mr. Proulx: OK. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now move to Mr. Maurice Richard.

Mr. Richard: Mr. Chairman, in your brief, on page 45, I would like you to clarify something. You mention: "trigger the regionalization process and better land use by granting the rural populations access to advantages and services comparable to those available in an urban environment." And in the same vein, on page 49, you say: "It is important of course, to regionalize government action." When you say that, what mechanism are you referring to? What mechanisms do you favour? (4:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Saint-Yves: I will let Mr. Paquet answer this question.

Mr. Paquet (Jean-Marc): This is what we wanted to favour there. I think it is no secret that rural areas are presently in a state of severe destructuralization. And what we wanted then... Almost everyone agrees that regions must decide what they want to be, and that they should have a power, in the regions, on the use and transformation of their resources. Now, this is the main objective. Another preoccupation we had in mind is that... It implies more comprehensive use of the land of Québec. This was, I think, the idea we wanted to defend, in that respect, and to propose as a recommendation.

Mr. Richard: I have another question. Do you think it would be appropriate to repatriate certain powers in the field of agriculture? From the federal government, of course. What constitutional option would be best for Québec's agricultural specificity, or would provide the best advantages at the present time, particularly if we want to get the best out of the GATT negotiations, for instance?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: Mr. Chairman, I think I've warned people that we are not advocating any of the options. But as far as the specificity of Québec's agriculture is concerned, whatever the regime, it's already there, and I think the best thing we can do is to work at maintaining it,

because our mixed, diversified agriculture is very specific to Québec. And many countries or provinces envy us in that respect. I think that our farm producers, assisted of course by society, have been able to acquire specific characteristics and stabilize them.

In the political option that Quebecers will choose, the top priority will be to maintain the specific nature and stability of our agriculture.

Mr. Richard: Ladies and Gentlemen, in an eventual association with the rest of Canada, for instance, what mechanisms would enable us to ensure the presence of Québec, given the joint management of the marketing boards? Do you have a recommendation or suggestions in that respect?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: Mr. Marquis.

Mr. Marquis: Mr. Chairman, what mechanisms would enable us to take our place in the organization, in the case of an association with the rest of Canada? It is quite obvious that our strength in Québec has always been based on the diversity of our agriculture. As far as marketing is concerned, we will always have to work with the agricultural basis we have in the field at the present time. In agriculture, we are strong in certain areas. We are strong in marketing. In Québec, we are very strong in food product processing. I think it is certainly in these two areas that... Marketing must come into the picture for a much of agricultural production. Since we have always considered producing for the needs of Quebecers as one of our main objectives, we will always have to work in that direction. We shall not enter the debate by saying that we should export a lot outside the country, or outside the Canadian provinces, if you wish. Our starting point is as follows: Québec's supply management agencies work very well and it is in these areas that we should first intervene. Whether in dairy production, poultry, eggs or various other fields of this type, it's in areas such as these that we absolutely must intervene. I don't think that the rest of Canada is interested in modifying what exists presently, as far as stability is concerned. We talk about stability here in Québec, people are also talking about stability in other provinces, for certain types of production. So I think that, in Québec, this is where we have to intervene, as a starting point. Stabilization is already working very well.

Mr. Richard: I will refer you to page 46, since it seems clear you do not want to make a decision on the choice of a constitutional option. Would you explain in what sense the future of agriculture is linked to the constitutional future of Québec?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: The future of Québec's agriculture is linked to the future of Québec. This has always been the case. I explained to you a short while ago that Québec's agriculture is already very specific. Inside or outside Confederation, agriculture will be able to adapt to this new political context.

Mr. Richard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. So, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Madam Chairman. Few professional corporations in Québec are chaired by a woman, and women agronomists are certainly not the majority. So I am delighted, and I appreciate that you requested to be heard by this Commission, because too few professional corporations have shown interest in this debate much less asked to be heard.

I read your first version with much interest, and the second version too. You insist, with reason, on the importance of research and development by recalling the figures Mr. Proulx quoted earlier, showing that in fact, in Québec, as far as R&D is concerned, it's more or less the same as in all other sectors of activity. Meaning that somewhere around 18%, 20% or 21% of Canadian research funds are allocated to Québec businesses, institutions or research centres. This represents a serious loss of earnings. And your brief calls for this to be repatriated. You also discuss the impact of a change in the industrial structure of the food and agriculture sector on transportation. You know that the federal policies in this respect have not generally been in our favour. You also talk about manpower training, which should put Québec back on its feet. These are major sectors of activity, whose importance was stressed by most speakers.

I still have a question, after all, because I didn't really feel that, but as you are the specialists of the food and agriculture environment, do you believe, as was mentioned by the UPA earlier and by the Coopérative fédérée, that our farmers have the experience, the expertise, the competence, the will and the specificity, in a sovereign Québec, to make it?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: Whatever the political choice of Quebecers, I think the farmers of Québec have all they need in terms of competence, expertise and structure to make it.

Mrs. Blackburn: So by that, you mean that you support what was said by the UPA, to the effect that we would also be able to do so in a sovereign Québec, as opposed to what we have heard elsewhere, unfortunately?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: We support no particular

option. All we are saying is that sometimes the option... And there I am referring to history; we have lived with Lower Canada, Upper Canada, etc. and the transformation of a confederation into a federation, and agriculture in Québec has always survived. I think this is perhaps the sector of the economy which can best adapt to political change, and this is due to the flexibility of the principal players, the farm producers.

Mrs. Blackburn: So you trust them. Well, bravo! Do you recognize that Canada has at least as much interest as Québec in maintaining market stability and also, generally speaking, good relations regarding the sales market and the stabilization of the food and agriculture industry? Is it as much in their interest as it is in ours?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: I don't quite understand your question. Could you repeat it, please?

Mrs. Blackburn: In a sovereign Québec, supposing that Québec declares its sovereignty, is Canada interested in ensuring that food and agriculture policies remain relatively stable, with relatively stable production sectors, so that the agricultural economy is not completely disrupted in their territory too?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: I think that we already have, and this was mentioned a little earlier during the day, very important exchanges with the rest of Canada. So, eventually, if the option chosen was to cut the federal tie, I think that actually, Canada would want to keep those ties.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you. Now there is a question which has been often discussed here, the question of the debt. And here I think that businesspeople, even if they do not agree with me on other matters, will agree on this one. A partial cause of inflation in Canada is the runaway debt over which provincial governments have no power, because we do not control Ottawa's spending power. Given this situation, do you think Canada will have the means to pursue its agricultural development policy? I remember the advice of the Auditor General of Canada, who said: In several fields, Canada can no longer afford its policies. Might this also affect the agricultural policies?

Mrs. Saint-Yves: I cannot answer the question, we haven't studied this aspect.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Madam. So now, on the Chair's time, Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I

have three questions to ask you, and I want to congratulate you because the type of answer you are giving us is that of down-to-earth professionals, and I'm certain this demonstrates the strong roots of Québec farmers and the Québec population. As Chairman Campeau was able to ask a question to the Association provinciale de l'industrie du bois, I'm not going to raise ghosts, but Québec dairy producers are holding 40% of the milk production quotas. What does the Ordre think would be the impact on the Québec dairy sector following a political change that would limit its producers for a certain time? The word exodus was mentioned and the chairman answered in a certain way, according to his opinion. So, following a political change that would limit producers to Québec's domestic market, we then have two different magnitudes: 40% and, all things being equal, 25%, which is the Québec market.

Mrs. Saint-Yves: I would ask Mr. Marquis to answer please. Sorry, Mr. Lachapelle.

Mr. Lachapelle (Jean-Pierre): We discussed that question, and what we said is that, if there is an eventual negotiation, it should be global. And while we produce more than we need in dairy products, the same is not true for other staples, as we can see if we look at eggs or poultry. For eggs, the opposite is occurring, our self-sufficiency index is at a little more than 60%, this is what we produce here as compared with our needs, so Ontario is selling its eggs here. And the same thing happens with other staples. So this whole question should be discussed globally.

Mr. Hogue: But I'm asking you a specific question on the dairy sector, where we have almost 40% of the market and necessarily, with only the domestic market for a certain time, this 40% would be reduced considerably.

Mr. Marquis: Mr. Hogue, this question could be answered by saying that if it ever happened that Canada, the other provinces of Canada, did not want to buy our products, they would be left with two possibilities: buy them elsewhere or produce them. To produce them, it's impossible to think of anything shorter than a strict minimum of three years, to give them time enough to turn around, establish infrastructures, three years is really a strict minimum. There is a GATT article which says that the imports which were traditionally made, that is during the last years, are protected under GATT law. When the rest of Canada is obliged to buy Québec products, they will not be able to cut their line of supply overnight. I think there's a certain security for us.

Mr. Hogue: In any case, this is a nice

answer you're giving us.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: And I thank you very much. This is the answer of a professional, thank you.

Mr. Larose: I was going to say a doctor's answer.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, Mr. Wampack, Mr. Paquet, Mrs. Saint-Yves, Mrs. Beauregard, Mr. Lachapelle, Mr. Rolland, thank you for coming here on behalf of the Ordre des agronomes to enlighten the Commission on the subject of agriculture.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:30 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:32 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): During the next 30 minutes, we will hear the presentation of Mr. Rompré. Mr. Rompré, please.

Mr. Rompré (Claude): Good afternoon, Chairman Campeau.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Like the others, you have five minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Claude Rompré

Mr. Rompré: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. First, I would like to tell you how proud I am to see you take the time to be part of this Commission, and I want to also tell you how happy I am to make my own modest contribution.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I'm an ordinary citizen who has had a rather unique experience. I am the only Francophone Quebecer ever to have held a position as a senior advisor to the leader of the NDP. It means that I sat and spoke with people who, in my opinion, are going to have major influence on the direction Canada takes in the immediate future. I lived in Ontario for one year as a Francophone outside Québec, and I worked mainly with Anglophones from the West, since, of the 43 members the NDP has in the House of Commons, 19 are from British Columbia, 10 are from Saskatchewan and a leader who, as you know, is from the Yukon. My experience took place right in the middle of the debates which led to the Meech Lake disaccord.

Therefore, it is truly as a witness that I appear before you today. I am going to testify to a reality that we still don't speak about very much in Québec. If there's one thing I gained

from my experience over there, it's the conviction that with Meech, the traditional consensus about Canadian duality died. We, Quebecers, and especially Francophones, have always thought and acted as though English Canadians were the English, period. This may have been true until about the 1940s or 1950s, but not any more. Immigration, demographic changes and economic changes have considerably altered Canadian geopolitics, especially in the last 25 years. Today, we are seeing the emergence of a new English Canada, made up of Canadians of non-Anglo-Saxon origins, of immigrants and the sons of immigrants and also of Native people. This is the English Canada that killed the Meech Lake Accord and this is the English Canada which is beginning to emerge, and which will soon have the most influence on Canada's future because it now has a foot in the door.

This is the English Canada that I had the opportunity to discover and about which I wish to tell you today. This other English Canada, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, now constitutes the majority of the population, those of Francophone origin make up 25%, those of Anglophone origin, 35% and other, 40%, this is the other English Canada. This other English Canada rejects traditional Ontario leadership.

During the Meech Lake debate, for the first time in the recent history of Canada, we saw the traditional leadership of Ontario not followed by the rest of Canada. I could even go so far as to say that in British Columbia, you find a certain sympathy for Québec, to the extent that they bad-mouth Toronto. This other English Canada supports Native claims because they too have been left out, feel left out of Canadian duality.

This other English Canada refuses Québec the right to be different. It blames Québec for being responsible, through its cynicism, for the destruction of the Canadian dream, of unity in diversity, of the famous multicultural mosaic they had heard about. It blames them so much, that English Canada is convinced it has made an effort.

You know that official bilingualism, no matter what anyone says, will encounter less resistance in the West than in Ontario. Remember, Sault-Sainte-Marie had many followers in Ontario, but during that time, Vancouver passed a resolution supporting bilingualism. This other Canada has a major grudge against Québec, which acts as if it were a majority and which refuses to play the game of Canadian unity the way they want it to. This other English Canada, Mr Chairman, wants a strong central government to counterbalance the economic and demographic unbalance in this country. This other English Canada is in the process of lining itself up behind the New Democratic Party, a party which

was born and raised West of Ontario. But, it's a party that's beginning to find a place in Ontario because, personally I think it's the ethnic vote that made the difference for Bob Rae when he was elected. Tony Penikett, of the Yukon, is a fair representation of Native people there. I think that, in the next year, British Columbia and Saskatchewan will get New Democratic governments; it already forms the Official Opposition in Alberta and Manitoba.

This other English Canada, Mr. Chairman, wants a regional Canada, within a renewed federation. It wants to have a say. That's why it's calling for a Triple-E Senate and why it wants a place for Native people because, in the West, Natives represent a much larger proportion of the population than they do here. This English Canada, Mr. Chairman, is very aware that the constitutional impasse puts it in a position of power. Just like Native people, the dead end gives them a foot in the door to prevent it from being shut while their place is not guaranteed. This English Canada presents Québec with one choice, not two. Either Québec abandons its traditional view of Canada with two founding peoples, or it gets out of the federation. In English, you'd say, "Shape up or ship out." That means, you accept your place, only your place, nothing but your place, or you pick up your toys and you go somewhere else. In this sense, this English Canada, Mr. Chairman, is going to adjust quite well to the loss of Québec, because it will find itself in a stronger position with English Canadians of English origin, especially Ontario.

And I hope, in closing, that this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec won't wear rose-coloured glasses. I'm sorry to have to point this out to you, but, if you think that a renewed Canadian federalism is possible, with the repatriation of a number of supplementary powers, you are headed for some bitter times. In English Canada, at the present time, there is neither the will, nor the ability to remake federalism the way Québec would like to see it happen. To avoid choosing is to condemn us to the status quo, with the interminable skirmishes we've had to put up with for thirty or so years. And the choice we're giving the other English Canada is the status quo or sovereignty. Personally, I choose sovereignty.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr... Perhaps the audience has changed, but I want to remind you that applause is not allowed at this Commission.

Mr. Rompré: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I didn't bring my fan club.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No, I

know. It's because...

Mr. Rompré: ...they are taking my precious minutes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No. But what I find sad is that I met someone as I was leaving for lunch and he said to me, I hope that when you leave this evening you'll mention how well-behaved the people of Trois-Rivières are and that they listened to you the whole time. Unfortunately, I won't be able to say that.

Mr. Rompré: We're next door to the little guy from Shawinigan, you know?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Are you through?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK, we'll move on to Mr. Dauphin.

A Voice: We know a little guy from Shawinigan too. Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Dauphin: From Lachine, Mr. Chairman. Excuse me?

Mr. Rompré: Which of the two.

Mr. Dauphin: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rompré: We used to say that when I was in school.

Mr. Dauphin: From Québec. OK, Mr. Rompré, on behalf of the parliamentary commissioners forming the majority in the Québec National Assembly, I would like to welcome you before this commission. And, I find this interesting, your brief especially, that based on your experience, acquired at the federal level, with a party, which is obviously federalist and almost exclusively Anglophone, and you say, apparently, Canada is currently looking for itself and before it finds itself, Québec has too much time to lose. My first question... You tell us that, currently, English Canada is too heterogeneous to speak with Québec using a single voice. However, you suggest, on the last page, that the central government should negotiate with Québec. I would like to hear more about that. On the one hand, you tell us that a single voice is impossible because it's too disparate and heterogeneous, but, on the other hand, you propose that Québec negotiate a contract with a single central government.

Mr. Rompré: Perhaps someone gave you

another version of my brief, but I only wrote one, and I didn't put that in my brief. What I'm saying is that, in fact, it will be impossible to negotiate with a central government. What I'm telling you is that we could maintain an eventual link and have what we could call a central government, only without power to levy taxes, as you can see in my brief. So I don't think that that's the government Québec would be able to negotiate with. Personally, I think that it'll be impossible to negotiate. That's why I chose sovereignty.

Mr. Dauphin: It's because I read in your second-last paragraph on page 9: "Therefore, what we have to look at is a situation in which Québec could enter into a contract with a central government and would pay its share for the services it needs."

Mr. Rompré: Yes, I said a central government. It would be a structure that we could use to ensure links, at least during the transition, for a few years. I meant it in that sense.

Mr. Dauphin: My second question, with the experience you gained at the federal level, should there eventually be a unilateral declaration of independence for Québec, what, in your opinion, would be the reaction of English Canada and the majority Canada made up of minorities which you told us about in your brief?

Mr. Rompré: I think that this other English Canada I told you about would have an immediate common reaction: Fine, if they want to go, "qu'ils s'en aillent". And English Canadians of Anglo-Saxon origin, I think they'd react much more emotionally. As I said in my brief and in my presentation, this other English Canada that I told you about will eventually profit from this because they'll find themselves with a better balance of power vis-a-vis English Canadians of Anglo-Saxon origin. And I think that, of course there would be an emotional reaction. I think we have to be realistic, but I think that other interests would win out quickly enough, and that businessmen and representatives of the groups that have appeared before the Commission so far would be the first ones interested in maintaining economic ties. I also think they are expert enough in the art of lobbying, and therefore, they would continue.

Mr. Dauphin: Sovereignty... Mr. Chairman, thank you. Sovereignty as such, do you see it as an end in and of itself, or, as several others have told us, as a means to get what we want and to change the status quo?

Mr. Rompré: Both. I think that it's impossible to make the other side budge in the

way Quebec has always wanted it to: it's not possible to make the other side budge if we don't have sovereignty to give us the power. On the other hand, I think, and many other organizations have already told you this, that sovereignty would allow us to channel our nationalism into an openness which Québec in particular has been experiencing for the past 10 or 15 years. Therefore, not an end in and of itself, a means, really, for Quebecers whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, Québec Anglophones, and Québec Francophones to develop and conquer world markets. My God, you've been telling us that, some of you, since the beginning.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Are you through? Mr. Jolivet.

Mr. Jolivet: Thank you. Mr. Rompré, you have presented us with an unpublished view of the Canada you knew through your work in Ottawa. I would like to hear, from you, in a context where people say we must renegotiate. There are others who say that Meech Lake is dead, but that we should go and ask for new chances. In this sense, in certain cases people are saying, "We should ask for less to be sure it passes"; others, "We should ask for more". In a situation where, one way or another, Québec is going to ask, at whatever level, in such a negotiation, for a type of individual or distinct society status. Your view, your understanding, is it possible to do this, to hold this new negotiation, with the new Canada you described? Would it accept such negotiations?

Mr. Rompré: Personally, I think that with the current state of affairs, the Meech experience showed us that it's impossible to negotiate and that Québec must calmly, but clearly and decisively, decide in favour of its own path and its own future. I think that the ball is in the other court right now. If they ever want to negotiate something with Québec, they'll probably find a way to get together and then try to come present something to Québec. But with the current state of affairs, I think it would be completely, at least for me, I think we'd be dreaming to imagine that they're going to negotiate anything, especially since some representatives in Québec are jumping to say, "OK, pay close attention, if ever they decide against it, it could mean hard times for a couple of years, and that could affect our buying power, investments, etc." Of course someone's smart enough to tell them in advance, "If you don't want to, fine, perhaps we should withdraw since people are going to be afraid of being afraid." I mean put yourselves in their shoes, they won't want to.

Mr. Jolivet: But in the increasingly likely eventuality that Quebecers opt for political sovereignty for Québec, what do you feel would prevent Canada, the one you describe, from negotiating with Québec?

Mr. Rompré: I think that people there, if they see that Quebecers are no longer holding back, that they have made a firm decision to leave no matter what comes to pass, I think that the others are going to submit their interests to closer scrutiny, using a magnifying glass, or microscope if necessary, and will certainly propose negotiations to maintain the necessary economic ties. That I am convinced of, but at first, you can be certain that the media will scream, "You're not going to have a chance, and if you want to do that, fine, you're going to pay for it and everything that follows." I think that that's what... that's the negotiation that's already started in that sense.

Mr. Jolivet: If the premise is sovereignty first, and then economic association, in what sectors, in your opinion, will economic association be necessary?

Mr. Rompré: Personally, in my brief, I described the association as I saw it, with certain roles for a central organization which I called a central government, where we could send Members of Parliament. I wouldn't want them to wake up tomorrow morning without a job, but they would lose their power to levy taxes in Québec, and they would only be able to fulfil the mandate given to them by the Québec National Assembly. Economic ties, personally, I think it's more up to the businessmen to maintain them, weave them, develop them, rework them, adjust them and adapt them. I'm sorry for all the synonyms, but I think that a good part of it is the province of the businesspeople around this table, who are representing others that aren't here. Therefore, from the Québec government's point of view, I think we have good reason to encourage... This morning, someone asked for a partnership between the State and entrepreneurs, this would be an example of that.

Mr. Jolivet: Following the Bélanger-Campeau commission, do you see a quick referendum or an election?

Mr. Rompré: I see a referendum. Quick... well, that's relative. But I think we have to be clear about it and if, for example, the referendum is held by the current government, there is reason to think that it would rally a good majority of Quebecers. In any case, I think that the Opposition party would not be in disagreement with the Government on a referendum asking Quebecers: What do you want? Do you want sovereignty or the status quo?

Something pieced together or something whole? Readjusted, mended or the best thing possible?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Jolivet. We will now move on to Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Mr. Rompré, before asking my question, I would like to clarify a minor point in your brief. I don't remember having heard the Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney, make the statement you attribute to him on page 5, to the effect that, without Québec, Canada is no more than an extension of the United States? Can you give me the reference if you remember?

Mr. Rompré: I have... Mr. Hogue, in my work in Ottawa, first thing every morning, I'd go through eight newspapers and listen to taped televised news broadcasts. I know that I definitely saw it in the *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail*, and, if I recall, I also saw it in *Le Droit*.

Mr. Hogue: You couldn't have gotten it confused.

Mr. Rompré: No, there's only one Mr. Mulroney.

Mr. Hogue: On April 6, 1989, Mr. Chrétien said, "On the day there are no more Francophones in this country, the English will be swallowed up by the United States." You didn't confuse the two I hope?

Mr. Rompré: No. I know Mr. Chrétien. As you know, we both come from Shawinigan. I'm sure that I wouldn't confuse one for the other.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: Very well. In your description and your view, there are three ideas that I'll allow myself to put in general terms: first, that Québec is homogeneous; the second generalization I can make from your text is that the rest of Canada is not; and the third idea, that Native People have now found a place. And you give percentages: 35%, 25%, 40%. I'll describe a scenario and you give me your opinion.

Say Québec signs with groups who don't agree and who are looking for an identity while ours is apparent, and Québec takes the leadership. Okay? Or say that Québec doesn't sign and finds itself alone, no matter what happens to the others. And that'd be the partial answer you gave to Mr. Jolivet.

Mr. Rompré: First of all, I said that Québec is more homogeneous than English Canada. I didn't say it was homogeneous, for the...

Mr. Hogue: No, no, I'm just generalizing.

Mr. Rompré: Fine, for the two other ideas, I think I agree with you. When you say that Québec would sign with different partners, I don't believe Québec could make proposals to different partners, except those within Québec's borders... and I'm thinking of Native People... otherwise, Québec won't sign and will find itself alone. Personally, I'm not afraid of being alone. When the road is stretching out ahead, I charge. I think that we're a couple of years ahead of other people in Canada. I think that you know it as well as I do, Mr. Hogue. And if they don't walk as fast as we do, I don't see why we should wait for them.

Mr. Hogue: Then the idea of taking the leadership, since you know what leadership is, there would be three partners in a way, and that means, of course, that the one that best represents the entity takes the fore. You don't believe that?

Mr. Rompré: No, because I don't believe that in English Canada, at the present time... No one accepts Ontario's leadership anymore; I don't believe, for very good reason, that anyone would accept Québec's, even less so because there's that other English Canada that I told you about, which is beginning to make itself heard in Ontario, and I think the election of the new government is a sign of that. Personally, I don't believe they're going to let things go on the way they are. If Québec goes, I think that would allow them, really, to reestablish a balance of power, and more, to solve the alienation problem the West is constantly talking about, and you have a certain number of representatives who tell you that.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Thank you, Mr. Hogue. There are several others who wish to speak. The next one then is Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to say that when I found your text to be fascinating, and the presentation has been the best so far. I think it comes at a good time for the Commission, because your whole argument is centred around what steps to take, based on an objective view of Canada, which is no longer the Canada of 1867, but the Canada of 1990. Do I understand you correctly when you tell us, basically, that we should hurry up and begin the "cooling off period", that the message should be made clear as soon as possible in the process so that the dust can settle right away. That way, as soon as it happens, they'll be ready to make arrangements? Do I understand you correctly?

Mr. Rompré: That's it exactly, Mr. Larose,

and we didn't even get together beforehand.

Mr. Larose: No. I promise.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Larose: Second thing. What you're also telling me is that the growing forces, in English Canada... Because one of the issues that occupies, or haunts, this Commission is: Who are the people on the other side? Because of course, there's Jean Chrétien, one of your compatriots, who has come... There are others. But let's say that we have no idea who's going to have the mandate. Are you telling us that these growing forces... That, first of all, they're going to be NDP forces? That this is in the political cards, and, even more, in the social cards, in the sense that those involved don't really fall into our traditional view of a British English Canada. It's English Canada, but mainly ethnic, and the underlying philosophy is not the same?

Mr. Rompré: Exactly. And that's what I wanted to bring out in my brief. That that's the current situation. And I think that it would be dangerous to believe that we can hold new negotiations with the traditional Anglo-Saxon Canada, located mainly in Ontario, Québec and the Maritimes. There's another English Canada which has its foot in the door now. And whether we like it or not, it's going to engulf us soon, and it will be accompanied by the Native People.

Mr. Larose: Very clear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank Mr. Rompré for the very great confidence he places in the business world to establish these economic ties with the future Canada. I'm not certain that all my colleagues around the table share his confidence.

I would like... My question will be very short. At the end of page 6, at the top of page 7, you say, "The failure of Meech has led English Canada to realize that the current federal system is a dead end." Following paragraph, "English Canada is going to become increasingly aware that the system has to change." Personally, I would expected you to tell us about the possibility for negotiation and discussion. That's not your conclusion. What exactly do you mean when you say that English Canada might also want the system to change?

Mr. Rompré: They're going to want to change it by giving more weight to the view of Canada held by the other English Canada I told you about, which, in my opinion, goes completely

against the Québec's traditional view. And I don't believe that Quebecers have changed their outlook concerning this view. That's what I mean.

Mr. Dufour: You, who come from Ottawa, you're talking, ultimately, about two Anglophone Canadas: native Anglophones and various ethnic people. Then talking about power, in quotation marks, currently, in Ottawa, which of the two groups, in your opinion, is in power?

Mr. Rompré: In Ottawa, in the region it's probably the Anglo-Saxon group, I think. But, what I said in my brief is that we must not operate under the illusion that it's Ottawa with whom we'll be negotiating whatever there is to negotiate. You'd have to see, for example, in Vancouver, I think you've been there a few times, there's a lot of slant eyes with power out there. And, just to tell you, for example, that the famous Bill 178... I explained it to them fairly. I explained that in the same way that, in Vancouver, people wanted to stop Asians, particularly Hong Kong Chinese, from buying up property and buildings in downtown Vancouver, in Québec, we felt the same need to protect ourselves.

Therefore, economic power, I agree that in Ottawa and Toronto, it's still largely in the hands of Anglo-Saxons, Canadians of Anglo-Saxon origin but, I think, that more and more... I remember, among other things, taking a trip from Ottawa to Winnipeg with a Canadian of Hindu origin who... Unless he was lying to me, the economic success he seemed to have achieved, impressed me greatly, he was just starting to look at the markets in Montréal. He had already built his bridge between Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and now, he was starting to look at Montréal where he was beginning to look for people to help him.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Dufour. We're going to try to get through three others, beginning with Mr. Béland.

Mr. Béland: This is going to be very short. You're not very optimistic, Mr. Rompré, about the determination of the first ministers of other provinces to build a new Canada. But would you be more optimistic if someone proposed to them, so that it's at least legal, to change the Constitution's amending formula? We spoke of this earlier. Are you more optimistic about this?

Mr. Rompré: No. Because you've seen the provincial first ministers, in certain cases, go back on their signatures. And one other, Bill Vander Zalm, threatened to go back on his signature at one point. Like someone said this morning, he felt the kick in the pants that moves you forward, but in an opposite direction

to our own. I think that what killed Meech Lake is very revealing, and the first ministers, at some point, have to obey the impulse behind it. It would be the same thing for you Mr. Béland, if the members of your mouvement were all to push in one direction, I think you'd give them an automatic teller.

Mr. Béland: I saw that, I saw that, yes. Not only automatic tellers, we have to give an answer at one point.

Mr. Rompré: That's it.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

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

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rompré, your brief touched on some very important issues that I find very interesting in terms of the Canadian identity. It's not often that we read briefs that try to define or analyse the Canadian identity. I, too, am going to discuss the subject of negotiation a little, like the others have done. If Québec becomes sovereign, it's obviously going to have to negotiate with the rest of Canada to achieve a certain type of association which I believe is extremely important, extremely necessary and extremely desirable. No one around this table is in favour of complete independence. And one major point that you make in your brief, on page 7, is that to renew federalism, Québec "cannot return to the constitutional negotiating table, unless English Canada adopts a single voice and a single spokesperson." Is this criteria no longer applicable if Québec is sovereign? You have to admit that once Québec becomes sovereign, there's no longer a chance to negotiate with an English Canada that has one voice, one spokesperson. It's much less likely. Québec sovereignty could provoke the dismemberment of the country. In light of all this, do you believe it would be easier to negotiate with the rest of Canada, after Québec becomes responsible for its breaking apart?

Mr. Rompré: Yes. Mind you, I wouldn't have used exactly those words. But I think that when you say Québec would have to sit down with Canada and negotiate, no. Personally, I think Québec has to set its agenda following the exercise that we're all here for and a decision by the Québec government; Québec must set its agenda and send a clear signal to the English Canadas, with an "s", to say, "Listen, if you want to talk, get together and gives us a call sometime, we'll set up the translators and we'll talk." If we don't send out a clear message that no matter what happens, we've already set the course we, Quebecers of all cultures, have

decided to take, then I think they're going to want to shuffle the deck.

Mr. Libman: If it's a group of parts, for example, are you ready to consider complete independence for Québec?

Mr. Rompré: Yes, completely. As for the parts, you can be sure they won't take six months to get together to say, "Now what are we going to do?" or "Maintenant, qu'est-ce qu'on fait?"

Mr. Libman: Finally, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Rompré, you must consider the place of minorities in a sovereign Québec. This morning, the CEQ presented a brief that was disquieting for Québec minorities. It said that discrimination will no longer be useful when the linguistic character of the society is confirmed... that's in their brief... But at the same time asks that the discriminatory measures in Bill 101, which were overturned by Québec and Canadian courts, be reinstated. Do you believe that in a sovereign Québec, where there will ultimately be cultural security for the Québécois society, do you believe that the irritants currently found in Bill 101 will be necessary?

Mr. Rompré: First, I'm a member of the CEQ. I didn't write their brief, but I have to tell you that personally, I think that since I'm here as an individual, I think a sovereign Québec constitution would have to include the historic rights of the Anglophone community in Québec, which is part of our common heritage and who are, I have to admit, one of the founding peoples of Québec. What you call irritants, I call protection of the majority against linguistic invasion, we don't use the same terms, but are they going to be necessary at that time? Personally, I haven't looked at that aspect of the question any more than that. In my brief, I was basically looking at the issue, from a different angle, but I left that to others.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Are you through, Mr. Libman? Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't see anything upsetting for minorities in the CEQ brief, perhaps Mr. Libman read it rather quickly. Whatever the case, what's important to me at this moment is the emotion that's in the air, and it does seem to be there. We held a survey, yesterday, which was published in *La Presse*, which said that English Canada is not ready to let any piece go and that, if Québec decides on sovereignty, it could react in all sorts of emotional ways which would win out over reason, leading to all the things we fear most? Which English Canada will react like that?

Mr. Rompré: I think that Canadians of Anglo-Saxon origin are going to react the most emotionally, for two reasons, because, first of all, they were one of the founding peoples of Canada and therefore thought they could integrate all immigrants of all nationalities... Ukrainians, Scandinavians, etc... and they are just beginning to realize that instead, it's another Canada growing alongside these others. And the second thing is that perhaps it is this Canada which, ultimately, has the most to lose in terms of the other's growth, and with Québec gone, the distribution of power changes dramatically.

Mr. Turgeon: Then, in your opinion, does that mean, that we need two sets of discussions when we talk to English Canada?

Mr. Rompré: In any case... Two discussions...

Mr. Turgeon: Not in terms of the basis, but in terms of the approach.

Mr. Rompré: Yes. Yes, I think that it would be really good to have people come to explain it and not leave it to the media, the Ontario media in particular, explain to Western Canada what we're doing here.

Mr. Turgeon: And you say that the multi-ethnic Canada is more prepared to accept Québec sovereignty?

Mr. Rompré: Yes, I think so, because that would give them the opportunity to position themselves, ultimately, in Canada where they came to establish themselves.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Rompré, this is a landmark brief which seems to have created a lot of interest among members. Thank you for your contribution and, please, no applause.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:08 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:10 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Ladies and Gentlemen, please take your seats. We will now welcome the group from the Regional County Municipality of Bécancour and Mr. Roland Laquerre. You're giving the presentation?

Mr. Laquerre (Roland): Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): If I

understand correctly, you're accompanied by Mr. Laval Dubois?

Mr. Laquerre: Yes, Mr. Laval Dubois, director general of the RCM.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. You have five minutes to make your presentation.

Regional County Municipality of Bécancour

Mr. Laquerre: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, it is our pleasure to be here today to give a brief account on behalf of the RCM of Bécancour. In the broad context of the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, the RCM of Bécancour, as a level of government which represents the citizens of its territory, would like to inform you of its opinion on the future of Québec as well as to highlight its position on the sharing of responsibilities between Québec and its municipalities.

Québec has always constituted a distinct society within Canada, and even North America, by its language, its attitudes, its hopes and its effort to maintain certain values within Canada. For many decades, and especially in the last year, Québec has had more and more problems defining its position in Canada. In the wake of recent events, and more particularly with the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, we are anxious to specify to the Parliamentary Commission that Québec is and always will be a distinct society, free to determine its political and constitutional future.

In the considerations that the Parliamentary Commission intends to put forward, we would ask that any blueprint for society recognize the primacy of the taxpayer, as an individual and as part of a whole, protecting his economic, social and cultural interests. To maintain this respect, it is necessary that taxation be proportional to representation.

Municipalities are legitimate governments, democratically elected and represent the level of power closest to the taxpayer. They, therefore, have the right to be recognized as institutions, as conferred in a constitution, a fundamental law or a charter. This legitimate recognition of our municipal institutions must include a formal mechanism for the transfer of responsibilities between the different levels of government. Furthermore, these transfers of responsibilities which, all in all, may be in favour of the municipalities, must include a transfer of power. Clearly, this implies political power, that is, the power necessary to adapt a municipality's responsibilities to its needs, in a word, the power to modulate. This political power must be coupled with financial power. This way the

municipalities will be able to depend on an independent source of financing.

Finally, in any transfer of responsibility, the transfer must be analysed according to its efficiency, seeking to give citizens the best service at the least cost.

Furthermore, these transfers must be real and effective. Any duplication of powers reduces the efficiency of the proposed actions, raises the costs, and dilutes the responsibilities of each level of government. These duplications occur to the detriment of the taxpayer, and reduce the efficiency of the objectives inherent to these responsibilities.

The RCM of Bécancour endorses the reflection of the Parliamentary Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. However, these political and constitutional considerations must integrate the municipal level which represents the level of government nearest to the taxpayer. Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance to clearly define the manner in which these responsibilities and powers will be shared between the levels of government. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. First speaker, Mr. Jacques Baril.

Mr. Baril: Mr. Chairman, first I would like to congratulate the RCM of Bécancour on coming and presenting their brief to the constitutional Commission. By doing this, you realize the important role that the municipalities can and must play in the development of their region. And if we sum up your brief, as well as the... We take into account the opinion of the regions as a whole, the message is quite clear. The regions condemn the waste of energy and money resulting from the duplication of actions by the federal and Québec governments in regional development and want it stopped, once and for all. It is essential that there be only one boss in the area, and that together the regions choose Québec. The regions insist, if not implore, that Québec establish, with them, a sort of contract on regional development. And, along with the rest of the regions, do you wish to see the government of Québec become the head of regional development? And if so, do you think that after the death of Meech Lake, Québec would be able to obtain such authority within the present federal system?

Mr. Laquerre: What concerns us most at the RCM is the duplication of tasks. We are very close to the population. We are in a period of taxes, budgets, those kinds of things... And we find costs increasing enormously. But to answer the question, we are asking ourselves some serious questions regarding... You have a Canada Employment Centre, a Québec Employment Centre, many committees, regional organizations such as the Industrial Commissioners' Offices,

the CFC, which is a federal project, the CRCA, the BDC, which is the committee helping businesses, the regional socio-economic joint committee... Many things that could possibly be grouped together rather than... I believe that we are set apart somewhat because we are very close to the population, and people looking for work ask themselves, "Where do you go?" Do you make the pilgrimage to the Canada employment centre? Or to the Québec employment centre? To the CFC with the Laprade fund, or the CRCA? The EIC? That's why we're a bit confused in that respect. And grouping these organizations together may be a solution.

Mr. Baril: Yes but how would you prefer to group them? Because of all the organizations that you've named, some are at Québec's provincial level, some are at the municipal level, and some at the federal level. Therefore there is one level of government too many somewhere, which would you eliminate...

Mr. Laquerre: The RCM of Bécancour is not making any statements in that regard, these are simply recommendations. They are 14 politicians sitting around a table, also, there are 16 of us sitting on Bécancour's city council, plus two municipal advisers. And I think it is quite clear that, on that subject, we will make no comment.

Mr. Baril: But you must certainly have an opinion, a solid choice? That is your day-to-day experience, so you are... You must have a preference as to which we should eliminate from all of this, and which we should keep? I will start over, I will say: Which would you keep in all of this?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laquerre: It's maybe... It's like a negotiation. How? We may not be 100% for Québec's total independence but neither are we staunch federalists. But there is perhaps a middle, a joint in the middle somehow... Because we, having a mandate as elected officials to the city of Bécancour, do not wish to make such a statement here.

Mr. Baril: What should be the objectives of redefining the contract between Québec and its regions? And, do you agree that it should be negotiated with a sovereign Québec while Québec is working out its constitution?

Mr. Laquerre: It might be better that the Union des Municipalités, with the regional county municipalities, hold a series of special meetings before any such decision were taken because unfortunately we, as municipalities, only receive... Often, the governments will give us services but, in the end, will not give us

sufficient funds to continue to offer these services. And that is what we deplore. We are very close to the population and I think that all our RCMs, presently studying budgets to avoid raising taxes this year, must fall back on their reserve surplus, if they have one. And even at home, at the RCM of Bécancour, to be able to balance our budget, we have gone and retrieved the whole of our \$45 000-reserve, 15 days ago, in order to balance a budget without coming down too hard on the taxpayer. What will happen later on? We're asking ourselves some very important questions.

Mr. Baril: Can you...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Baril. I'm afraid we're out of time. We will now go to Mr. Beaumier, followed by Mr. Nicolet and Mr. Hogue. Mr. Beaumier.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Warden, I will refer to the last three lines of page 3 in your brief, where you say: "Furthermore, it is essential to clearly define, through statutes, the powers and responsibilities to be shared by the municipal and government levels." My question is simple: Which powers could easily be shared by the Québec government and the municipalities. And what roles would the RCMs play?

Mr. Laquerre: When we addressed the question of powers, we considered more than just the RCMs. I think it would be wise to have more information, to have informative meetings, to determine exactly what it is. We are receiving... We are hearing rumours about the Sûreté du Québec and how the Québec government might assign to us a part of that responsibility. Lately, over the weekend, we had heard nothing of the sort. They talk to us about the road system. We are really going to have to sit down with the Québec government or the Government of Canada and ask: What do you want to give us and what will you give us in the end? If you give me a road network but in the end you give me nothing to get it started or to continue the project, we will soon find ourselves going backwards rather than forwards. Put yourselves in the place of our rural municipal populations, which are quite small. Our RCM has populations of 600, 300, 1000, and 1500. It's not easy. The taxpayer bears the burden, he is at his limit. The municipalities cannot raise their taxes any higher. If they do, they will have to make cuts somewhere. And making cuts hurts, I know, I go through it every Thursday night, at home. To avoid raising taxes, I have to make cuts. And, that is why I say it is extremely important that the governments sit down with the municipalities, the Union des Municipalités, and the RCMs to clearly define

those policies.

Mr. Beaumier: But what roles do you see for the RCMs in this redefinition of powers? In the regions, for example when we visited Val-d'Or, 4 RCMs had united and had come to give their presentation, ready to take on certain responsibilities in the fields of economic development and the environment. But in your case, on the south shore, what is the role of the RCMs? Because you mentioned it, do you think it would be better if we took charge of the road network? It would be an advantage, it might be less expensive for the taxpayers, if we took over the responsibilities for the environment.

Mr. Laquerre: Regarding the environment, that is a point that we studied somewhat similarly. You have Environment Canada, you have Environment Québec, you have the environment, it must be passed at the municipal level, and furthermore, it must go to the RCM for authorization. To get a simple sand quarry permit, you have to make trip after trip, you often have to wait for the monthly RCM assembly meeting which is usually out in the middle of the woods somewhere. That's why we say: We're going to have to sit down somewhere and sort out the tasks. Are the RCMs ready to commit themselves to all of this? That's another question? We are all elected officials, at the same table, and I think that at the RCM of Bécancour, we've had our share of problems. And we still have problems sometimes. And I see the former mayor of Bécancour, Mr. Richard, an excellent mayor in his time, and with whom I had the pleasure to serve. He's an extraordinary fellow. But I think we went through some tough times and we don't even have an administrative committee in Bécancour. It isn't easy; 14 politicians, always putting things to a vote. You know how it is: Everyone's looking for the lion's share. And that's that. That's what my personal experience is. That's what our personal experience is.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is, of course, with pleasure that I greet you, and I would like to congratulate you on having agreed to come and present your brief. I will refer to page 2 of your text and I would like to hear you elaborate more on, actually it begins at the bottom of page 1. Out of respect for the taxpayer, taxation must be consistently proportional to representation. Could you please elaborate on the subject and what do you mean precisely when you say that I share with the rest, if I understand correctly?

A voice: Are you talking about page 2?

Mr. Nicolet: Yes, the first two lines on page 2.

Mr. Laquerre: Actually, I don't know... We are open to receiving services from Québec. We see new mandates conferred on the RCMs, but never anything lasting. Example. A few years ago, we, the municipalities, received the former sales tax, that was meant to help municipalities. It was really a gold mine for us, to help us along... Today, we have none. We are stuck with road systems that we cannot afford. We are far from sand quarries, pits, etc. We have no money and the government... It isn't with small, local subsidies of \$5000 and \$10 000 that we will be able to get out from under. I don't think we will get out from under. From asphalt costs that are much too high... \$75 000 to \$100 000 per kilometre in the RCM of Bécancour, which is far from any sand pits. It isn't the same for RCMs that are closer to sand pits. It is all sorts of things like that that really makes us think that... It's not easy, and we just went through it recently, studying the budget. People talk of regional tourism and really, it's not easy to sell the idea of regional tourism to all the mayors of the RCM because you have a certain number that will benefit more than the others and it's always the same. We are men and women politicians at the same table and we are not always able to solve the problem.

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

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): And now we will go to Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Hogue: Yes. You endorse the idea and you suggest that a significant decentralization should be amongst the top priorities. Does this imply that the present structure, remodelled from top to bottom, could give an area such as yours, adequate responsibilities?

Mr. Laquerre: Yes. If we look at our RCM, we have some problems. You know. With knowing to whom we belong. We have to deal with two or three federal deputies, we have to deal with two provincial deputies, we have to deal with two or three judicial districts which are Québec, Arthabaska and Nicolet - Trois-Rivières. It isn't easy. We have the Sûreté du Québec that is served by three in our RCM. It is things like that, and we are... You have the Office de la Construction: part is served by Québec, another by Trois-Rivières. You have bulk trucking, transport. You know how it is, they all have their line, the trucker that hauls sand or gravel into the area beside his, a ticket, the guys watch each other closely.

We are in straight lines between the Trans-Canada and the seaway. And that is what is difficult, to be able to find something that will bring us all together or to clearly define the RCMs. Either enlarge the RCMs or have a deputy for each RCM, I don't know. There are some very important solutions required at that level. It is not easy for us, mayors, to discuss in the judicial district. We have had the pleasure of receiving the Sûreté du Québec. We had two at the last assembly: one from Gentilly, one from Laurier-Station. It's not easy to sell these ideas. And it's like that throughout in our RCM.

Mr. Hogue: But you agree that this complexity cannot be simplified to the point of having one representative that may take all the decisions.

Mr. Laquerre: No. Perhaps not one representative, but maybe what we find deplorable, is the Cs. Do you know what the Cs are?

Mr. Hogue: Yes.

Mr. Laquerre: The CFC, the CRCA, the BDC, the Industrial Commissioner's Office. If we had a good Industrial Commissioner's Office, and if everyone got involved, if the municipalities wanted to participate, if these municipalities could agree, we might go far with that, but you know that there are certain municipalities that want to pay, and others that don't. If we took the trouble to group them under the same roof, maybe we wouldn't need 10 offices or 8 offices, 8 photocopiers, 8 receptionists, and so on. Have some form of grouping together so that we would be able to really... where our RCMs could really structure themselves.

Mr. Hogue: And, by the same token, reinforce the sense of belonging.

Mr. Laquerre: Yes.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Hogue. We will now go to Mr. Yvon Lemire, sitting in for Mrs. Pelchat.

Mr. Lemire: All my greetings, Mr. Warden of the RCM, Mr. Laquerre, Mr. Dubois. It is with pleasure, as deputy of the riding of Saint-Maurice, that I emphasize my greetings to the whole municipality, which is a RCM in the territory of my colleague, Maurice Richard. I would like to come back to the idea of power that we discussed, for example, the question of power accorded to the municipalities. What we have heard, up until now, we have heard before,

as the Commission made its way to different places throughout Québec. I think there are two ways to see things. Power to adapt programs established by other levels of government, is one way to see things. The second way, is to hold exclusive powers. I would like to know which of the two you prefer.

Mr. Laquerre: If we had powers at the RCM, for us to take a stand on that, certainly, there are two sides to that. If you bring up the road networks, it won't be easy for the RCM to take a decision and I don't think I would want to be Warden when we would have to take political decisions. Then again, on the other hand, there are powers, in recycling and things like that, where the RCM may intervene, and, by the way, we are presently studying the potential of the area. There are a few, but by offering them slowly to the municipalities, the municipalities will be better able to study and decide whether they are able to take on such powers.

Mr. Lemire: Now, when we speak in terms of regions, would you prefer a power, for example, a sharing of power with the municipalities? Should it be symmetrical, that is, each having equal powers? Or should we give certain municipalities more powers? From where you stand, how do you see things?

Mr. Laquerre: What do you mean exactly when you say more powers? Do you mean powers for maintaining roads, the environment, and so on?

Mr. Lemire: According to the regions, according to the populations, according to the capacities of... At any given time, for example, the City of Montréal, don't you think we should have different ways of delegating power to the municipalities or should such a delegation of powers be done symmetrically?

Mr. Laquerre: It isn't a fair way of doing things. I don't think any of the RCMs in Québec have the same problem. In Mr. Richard's county, or where you are in Lotbinière, Mr. Camden's county, we are underprivileged in terms of roads. As I mentioned earlier, we are far from the sand and gravel quarries and asphalt programs. Road construction costs \$75 000 to \$100 000 per kilometre in asphalt as opposed to \$35 000. That is how our proximity to the seaway puts us at a disadvantage.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right? Then, thank you, Mr. Laquerre and Mr. Dubois, thank you for having contributed to our work. We will reconvene at 7:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:32 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:31 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will hear from the Ordre des Comptables agréés for the next 30 minutes. Welcome, Mr. Levesque. If you would please introduce the people with you.

Mr. Levesque (Jacques): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to present, first, on my left, Richard Jacques, our general manager and, on my right, Monique F. Leroux, chairperson of the committee responsible for preparing our brief.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. You have 5 minutes to present your brief.

Ordre des comptables agréés du Québec

Mr. Lévesque: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, we are presenting this brief on behalf of the 13 700 chartered accountants in Québec, all members of the Ordre, in conformity with the law. Chartered accountants are present in all sectors of activity, in accounting firms, businesses, government services and universities. Because of the nature of their duties, they are associated with everything surrounding economic decision-making. Thus we believe this brief to be representative of the opinions of the vast majority of our members and that it will help to clarify society's choices with regard to its future. We are presenting a brief consisting of statements of priorities rather than a stand in favour of an option. Taking a constitutional stand would be incompatible with the status and mission of a professional corporation since it is not a voluntary association. Rather, we want to state here priorities related to the main concerns we have, as chartered accountants, and, in particular, the impact that Québec's future choices will have on the competitiveness of Québec business firms and on their interaction with the rest of the world. From that viewpoint, we have chosen five major topics: economic freedom, monetary policy, public finances, taxation, manpower and research and development policies.

The Ordre des comptables agréés wishes to make clear from the outset the importance it attaches to the preservation of the special economic ties between Québec and its Canadian and American partners since its economy is based largely on its external trade. We would like Québec to undertake to eliminate all restrictions on economic freedoms, in particular by preserving the freedom of movement of people and capital and by eliminating those relating to goods and services. As well, Québec will, of course, demand reciprocity from its Canadian partners. As an example, it appears inadmissible to us that there are still so many restrictions on interprovincial trade in services.

Chartered accountants have blazed the trail in this area with the Pan-Canadian reciprocity of their title and the standardization of accounting standards. This is a model which should be imitated.

In the monetary sphere, the Order asserts its confidence in the Canadian currency. It is preferable for our business firms which favour a stable environment. If the federal framework is not maintained, we would like to see a monetary union with Canada. However, whatever the framework may be, Québec's participation should be tied to a revision of the structure and operating method of the central bank with a view to enabling the regions to have a greater influence on monetary policies. In this new structure, Québec would have immediate access to complete and accurate information on the monetary policy. This would enable it to adopt, at the appropriate time, offsetting budgetary measures designed to soften, where necessary, the negative effects of a restrictive monetary policy on the Québec economy. For example, it could use its goods and services tax as an offsetting measure by suspending its application to certain sectors of the economy, as it did just recently in the case of the book industry.

The Ordre des comptables agréés is extremely concerned about the alarming state of public finances. To finance the public debt, governments are competing with the private sector in the financial market and this is jeopardizing the economic growth of business firms. To reduce government expenditure, we propose eliminating the overlapping and duplications in sectors of activity where the federal and provincial governments each have responsibilities. Québec should have exclusive jurisdiction in a good number of these sectors and a detailed study should be carried out to identify them. Let us cite, for instance, manpower, research and development, and the environment. We would also like to see more control over the spending power of governments and, in this regard, we propose that changes in government expenditure be more closely tied to expenditure by the private sector as a whole, just as in other businesses. We consider that the financial framework should be clearly defined and that the principle of taxing to spend should be uppermost in the minds of our elected representatives. In this area, we would like the Commission to explore the avenue of constitutional amendments to control the public deficit.

In the taxation field, we know that the tax system constitutes an important economic lever. We applaud the incentives and competitive measures that Québec has put forward in recent years to support the development of business firms. Take, for example, in regard to the capitalization of business firms, the Stock Savings Plan and the Québec Business Investment Companies. There are as well, for the mining

sector, the flowthrough shares, and, for the film industry, certain accelerated write-offs. Finally, in more specific sectors, tax credits for research activities and for manpower training have been introduced.

Moreover, in Québec, corporate taxes are very low and that is an attraction factor for outside investors. We deplore, however, that their impact has been dampened by a lack of harmonization at the federal level, which means that more than half of the personal income tax paid by individuals goes to the federal government. Therefore, this represents a half measure for Québec.

We urge Québec to use any new taxation field that will enable it to apply these incentives more forcefully. And if the federal framework is maintained and taxes continue to be collected by a central government, we would like to see it adopt these principles.

As for manpower and research and development, these are two factors which are essential to the vitality and growth of any business. The failure to harmonize income security, employment and training programs has serious consequences for the labour market and for the competitiveness of business firms.

Consequently, we consider that the only way to break the deadlock that has lasted for close to 20 years in this field is to integrate all the manpower policies and place them under a sole jurisdiction, namely that of Québec. We must think more in terms of job creation than of income security. Québec will also have to retain the levers necessary for defining and applying its immigration policy. In the area of research and development, another field where government policies have a significant impact on the competitiveness of business firms, the facts show that Québec is by no means receiving its fair share of the federal expenditures. On the other hand, Québec, for its part, has adopted policies which are highly favourable for business firms. We, therefore, urge Québec to continue and to enhance its current support policy in the area of research and development.

Should a federal framework be maintained, we would like to see balance restored in the regional distribution of expenditures and protocols or mechanisms provided for to this end. At the very least, the federal government should stop taxing the credits granted by the Québec government.

In conclusion, we recommend that the Québec government act quickly on the constitutional issue by adopting a clear action plan which states objectives and stages and sets specific deadlines, just as we do in our capacity as business advisors.

We stress the importance of providing Quebecers with complete and accurate information concerning the options raised and the action plan proposed. It is the mission of the

Ordre des comptables agréés du Québec to protect the public by ensuring that it has access to financial information which reflects the true position of business firms. Similarly, we feel it is essential that the information disseminated concerning Québec's options be quantitative, complete and accurate, taking into account that a balance sheet is composed of both assets and liabilities and that it is necessary to consider the economic and social impact of investments. Finally, we would like the government to implement a communications plan to reach the population of the other Canadian provinces, and Québec's international partners, so that they may share in its evolution and be informed of its action plan. We thank you for your attention and for this opportunity to prove to you our social commitment. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Lévesque, thank you for your presentation. Mr. Roger Nicolet, you may start off the question period.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to refer to your concern that certain constraints be placed on the spending power of the government. As you see it, would it be a question of establishing a constitutional obligation to balance the budgets or are you prepared to consider more flexible mechanisms that would take economic conditions and the hazards of government management into account?

Mr. Lévesque: On this particular question, I'd like to ask my colleague, Mrs. Leroux, if she'd care to develop this point concerning the deficit.

Mrs. Leroux (Monique F.): I think your question is positively excellent and, at the same time, we know that it raises a great number of difficulties. However — and I would like to come back, if I may, to our brief — we must nevertheless recognize that, in the area of government finance in Canada, we have a situation which is extremely alarming and, in fact, something must be done, because this situation, the state of our deficit, and the state of our public debt has an extremely negative impact on our economy. Therefore, somehow or another, we'll have to come to the point where we'll be perhaps just a bit more efficient in this area. In fact, we present two factors. One relates, on the one hand, to expenditure cutbacks as such, which can be achieved by eliminating certain duplications and overlapping with which we are very familiar in the Canadian and Québec situation in which we live. Second, we bring up the idea, which has been considered by others, the United States for instance, of trying to devise means of setting

limits to spending power. Of course, if we look at the American situation, we can see that that may not have worked. There are a great number of difficulties involved and, in short, we invite the members of the Commission to seriously explore this avenue because we are convinced that drastic measures must be taken in order to better control the debt and the deficit.

Mr. Nicolet: By the way, Madam, I'd like to congratulate you for this well-written brief, as I see you were in charge of the drafting committee. It is of a very high calibre and it's presented in a very clear manner. But to come back to my question, the Gramm-Rudman Hollings Act is more of a mechanism which makes it possible to progressively improve an alarming situation. Perhaps we could apply it at the Canadian government level. But, from a medium-term perspective, do you think it would be advisable to establish much more stringent and rigid restraints, which would actually be enshrined in the Constitution, regarding the management rigour of future governments?

Mrs. Leroux: That is, in fact, a course we are considering. And, as we mention in our recommendation on page 20 of our brief, we invite the Commission to explore the avenue of constitutional amendments.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We are now going to hear from Mr. Poissant.
(7:45 p.m.)

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My dear president, at the beginning, on page 13 at any rate, you've obviously pointed out certain problems. For example, you're in favour of retaining the Canadian currency. You've talked about stability, you've talked about risk, but I won't question you on that because, when that comes from Quebecers, many a time it means that we're trying to inform the public and we're sometimes called fearmongers.

Nevertheless, this morning I read a statement by Mrs. Cavanagh, who is from New York, with Standard and Poor's. As you know, that's the company or service agency which evaluates company securities, provincial government securities and federal government securities. And this doesn't come from Canadians, it comes from New York. She says that, as far as they're concerned, they have no intention, at the moment, of changing the ratings of Québec and Ontario, that they are, however, keeping a close watch on Québec's position at the present time and, from positive, their opinion will be a Québec... to developing economic changes. In auditing, as I recall, when I was a bank auditor and there were different qualities of accounts, and I was told: OK. These are accounts

receivable but which need to be watched. It doesn't mean that they were bad. It means, however, that an orange light is turned on. Be careful, maybe you're being watched. And on this point, I have no question to ask you. However, on page 29, and you're breaking new ground here, yours is the first brief which says, in the second paragraph: "It is the mission of the Ordre des comptables agréés du Québec to protect the public", and I'm going to skip a few lines, "similarly, we feel it is essential that the information disseminated concerning Québec's options be quantitative, complete and accurate, taking into account that a balance sheet is composed of both assets and liabilities". I'd like you to explain that a bit more because I have emphasized that myself. It's simple, the issue raised is clear, but, even so, it's a matter which, in my view, should be explained in more detail and that's one of the problems we have. Can you expand on that?

Mr. Lévesque: I thank you, Mr. Poissant, for that question. I think that, yes, we are very likely the first to present an action plan to the members of your Commission, and the main reason for that is the fact that we are advisors to businesspeople and that, as advisors, we have to take a position on the basis of our scrutiny of financial statements, in a context where decisions are made to purchase or sell businesses. Consequently, when drawing up an action plan, it's important to examine the advantages for the favourable items, and the unfavourable items; that is the image one can refer to in a balance sheet which has assets and liabilities.

Of course, before undertaking such a step, we must consider the investment factor itself. There are costs to assume, but they are costs and the reason for which we call them investments is that they will have a medium and long-term impact. In this context, what we are asking of the Commission is that it draw up an action plan that is specific and clear, just as we do as advisors to businesspeople, and that our objectives, the Commission's objectives, be determined truly in the light of the consultation you began a few weeks ago. It will also be important to set deadlines, by progressive stages, there's no doubt about it in our minds, again as we do with respect to a project with a business firm. Each of the alternatives will have to be examined and the information communicated. Once again, in analysing a given situation, it's necessary to have the courage to communicate with everyone within the organization, and this parallel applies very well to the people of Québec. It will be necessary, then, to communicate this information without delay, both to the people of Québec, so that they will have a simple, concise and complete picture of the situation, and to people outside Québec, that is

to say, our Canadian counterparts and the international market. Why? Because the image Québec projects will have a major impact on the realization of our objectives which are to preserve economic ties with our partners, to preserve as well a freedom of action, an economic freedom, on many levels, with our colleagues. Therefore, just as in a business, it is important to provide leadership, to make a careful diagnosis of the needs, to select the alternatives and to make a full report of the results by presenting a balance sheet to the population.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Lévesque. We will now turn to Mrs. Pagé.

Mrs. Pagé: I've a few questions I'd like to ask. The first is this. On the second page of your summary, you list the fields of jurisdiction which you believe should be solely Québec's responsibility. You name manpower training, placement, unemployment insurance, immigration, research and development. Is this an exhaustive list or does it represent a minimum?

Mr. Lévesque: I think it is neither a minimum, nor is it exhaustive, it is merely exemplary. It's important to remember that, in the light of the discussions you are having, in the light of the information you are gathering, certain sectors characteristic of our economy will certainly be singled out for greater control by Québec. Those mentioned there are only by way of example.

Mrs. Pagé: Fine. Second question, page 30 of your brief. In the recommendation you submit, you suggest an action plan, with objectives, stages, deadlines, which should be implemented, and communication. Nowhere do you touch on the question of a referendum or a mandate given by the Québec people. In effect, you're entrusting the Commission with the task of preparing for that, of recommending it to the government which will be able to do what it likes with it, without there ever being at any point the assertion that Quebecers must decide their political and constitutional future. So, I'd like to have a few more details on that point.

Mr. Lévesque: As you have so aptly put it, Mrs. Pagé, the action plan, which is to be determined by the members of the Commission, will have to provide for consultation mechanisms. And the Commission will have to determine them on its own. It is not up to us, I believe, to spell out the consultation mechanisms.

Mrs. Pagé: Fine. My third question. It relates to your provisions to be enshrined in the Constitution regarding budgetary deficits. In your

brief, you tell us we should take our inspiration from what's taking place in the United States. You say that there are serious problems in the United States but that the formula is valid. I have to tell you that, as an explanation, it doesn't convince me, when I'm told that there are problems and that, at the same time, it's valid... Well, do you have examples of other countries where this type of thing worked better than in the United States? Because I must tell you, I don't find the American venture particularly convincing.

Second, how do you provide for mechanisms of flexibility? At a certain point in your text, you speak of accelerating investments in repairs and improvements to public buildings, and so on. These are measures which are often recommended to governments in periods of recession, for example, but which often have the immediate effect of increasing the deficit over the period when we're trying to accelerate certain investments in order to combat the recession. If we had your formula, how could we make adjustments for that?

Third, I seem to recall a Resolution 30 in California where, at a certain point, people said: That's it! No more investments in education. It seems to me that the bill that Californians are now paying because for years they let their education system go to ruin, the bill is now higher than if they had continued to invest for a time. So, I'd like you to expand a bit more on that point, as you're the first group who has raised it. I'd be interested in hearing you speak about it at greater length.

Mr. Lévesque: With your permission, Mrs. Pagé, I'll ask my colleague, Mrs. Leroux, to reply.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Leroux, no offence, but I'll have to ask you to be brief.

Mrs. Leroux: Very well. I think that, once again, you've clearly described the situation, the problematics. Actually, to my mind, we mentioned the American example in our brief not necessarily as an example to be followed but as a hypothesis. And we can see that there are problems entailed, such as, you're quite right, the situation in California. That caused major social problems. Now, as a parallel to that, what we recommend, and I invite you to refer back to our recommendation, is that we propose that the members of the Commission explore... We don't have, most unfortunately - I wish we did - we don't really have all the elements of a solution for controlling public finances, the deficit or the debt. It's an extremely big problem that we sometimes tend to forget about. And we thought it important to bring it to the attention of the Commission, here, because it's essential to

realize that it puts us in a situation where we have very little leeway. I don't know if that answers your question?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right. Thank you, Mrs. Pagé. We will now hear from Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Allow me to welcome you to this Commission, on behalf of the Government, and to congratulate you on your brief. I see that the Ordre des comptables agréés du Québec has 13 700 members across Québec. You are therefore familiar with everything surrounding economic decisions in our society. You are present in all sectors of activity, in business firms, in government agencies, and I believe you are active in just about all aspects of Québec affairs. Therefore, for all these reasons, in my opinion, you have a tremendous amount of credibility and your brief, all the more.

If I go to your brief, on page 31, your recommendation number 3 says: "Whether the federal framework is preserved or not, that Québec should retain the Canadian currency as its monetary unit and, if necessary, it should conclude a monetary union to that end". When we heard the Mouvement Desjardins on November 13, the Mouvement Desjardins, through the voice of Mr. Béland, said, among other things - and this is found in the *Journal des débats* - that one can imagine all sorts of reactions from our partners - he was referring to Anglophone partners - so we say yes to a monetary union; yes preferably with Canada. If that isn't possible, we'll have to have a monetary union with others; if that isn't possible, then Québec will have to have its own currency that will be pegged to a strong currency. In the opinion of the Ordre des comptables, could a Québec currency jeopardize the economic security of Quebecers, and do you recommend that the Canadian currency be retained?

Mr. Lévesque: Once again, I'd like Mrs. Leroux to reply.

Mrs. Leroux: All right. In the first place, I believe that in our brief, if you've had the opportunity to read it, to examine it, we do not analyse in detail the possibility of having a Québec currency. Just suppose that's the case. Now, you're asking us the question, and what I'd like to do is give you the reasons behind our recommendation that the Canadian currency be retained and a monetary union concluded. And maybe with the answer that I'm going to give you, you'll be able to reply to the question regarding the Québec currency.

The first factor we have to recognize is that, when we look at the world we live in today, we must acknowledge the present trend

toward a common currency within large blocks. Take, for example, what's currently happening in Europe, with the move toward the use of the ECU. That's the first factor we must nevertheless recognize.

The second factor. And here I would like to bring you back a bit closer to our perspective as accountants and company advisors. As accountants, as businesspeople, we appreciate the importance of a stable environment. We are well aware that it can't always be stable. But, in general, we prefer stability. Therefore, it must be understood that a change of currency, whatever it may be – a Québec currency, an American currency – involves a transition period which creates... We're not saying it's impossible, but it creates a transition period which can create uncertainty and perhaps a crisis of confidence. So, what that means, in short, is that costs are certainly entailed, costs for our economy and for our business firms. And that must nevertheless be seen in a context where the economic situation today is extremely difficult. We have very little leeway in any area.

It must also be said that the fact that Québec has a very open economy would complicate matters. That's obvious.

Finally, I'd perhaps like to conclude by saying that I think that if you look at the medium and long term, once again, considering the interrelation of our economies, the Québec economy and those of its neighbours and the rest of the world, Québec, even if it had its own currency and its own monetary policy, in the medium term, would have no choice but to more or less conform to the policies of its partners, that is the Americans, that is its Canadian partners, in other words, go back to square one, and this, after going through a costly transition period. So, for all these reasons, we suggest maintaining the Canadian currency. But, if you've read carefully, we don't propose maintaining the present system since we talk about concluding a monetary union which doesn't exist. So we do have other recommendations concerning the monetary policy.

Mrs. Hovington: Precisely, Mrs. Leroux...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Leroux. You've barely enough time for one sentence.

Mrs. Hovington: Yes? But I wanted to come back, precisely... Afterward, you say, you talk about the central bank whose operating method nevertheless needs to be revised. I'd like to have heard you speak about that, about the structures and changes you'd like to see in the central bank so that Québec would have a say in the policies.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Let's go

through all the questions. We'll come back to that later perhaps, if there's any time left.

Mrs. Hovington: All right. Thank you.

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

Mr. Brassard: What I have to say is somewhat along the same lines. I wouldn't like to frighten people either, but last year, in the spring, the International Monetary Fund urged Canada to reduce its \$9-billion deficit starting this year. Then a supposedly confidential report of the International Monetary Fund was made public – in the newspapers, for example – which was quite critical of Canada's policy, the monetary policy, and, of course, the policy concerning Canada's huge deficit. And it even predicted rather disastrous impacts or effects if the federal government of Canada didn't adopt measures sufficiently strong and sufficiently harsh to rectify the situation. It's not often that the International Monetary Fund... at any rate, I don't think there are very many cases... It's not often that the International Monetary Fund... It often happens with "Third World" countries, but for industrialized countries like Canada, it's not often that it is so harsh in its criticism. Moreover, the ideas in your brief concerning the Canadian deficit are very much like those of this report described in *La Presse* in March 1989.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Do you have a question?

Mr. Brassard: Yes, I've a question about that, Mr. Chairman. I have five minutes? On that point, obviously, how do you think that in a Québec... Suppose that Québec becomes a sovereign State. You're not taking a stand, I understand that, but let's just make the assumption. Do you think it would be in the interest of the Canadian government to negotiate rather quickly the apportionment of the debt?

Mr. Lévesque: With regard to your question, I think it's important to recall that the Canadian government, as well as the other provincial governments, must analyse the situation. And this analysis will, without a doubt, be done in the light of your recommendations.

Mr. Brassard: It's a bit short, as Cyrano would say...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: It's prophetic. What I want to know... I'm not trying to get you to take a position on sovereignty, I understand that... But I'm just posing the hypothesis of a Québec that becomes sovereign through a democratic process.

There's a referendum, and the population, democratically, comes down in favour of sovereignty. Considering the financial position of the Canadian government, the huge debt which is approaching \$350 million, close to \$400 million, who do you think might stand to gain by negotiating a debt-sharing arrangement pretty darn quick?

Mr. Lévesque: I think that, irrespective of the political structure that we will have, any government, whatever it may be, had better revise its deficit financing policy without delay for, as I said earlier, governments are becoming competitors of our business firms. One must never lose sight of the fact that our business firms also distribute securities to the public and that the fact of having to finance a \$400-million public debt leads to additional costs owing to the fact that the risks for investors who are going to finance certain business firms are going to be greater, which indirectly entails additional financial costs. What is more, growing numbers of these investors are non-residents of Canada, accounting for an increasingly large share in the financing of the debt.

Mr. Brassard: Almost a third, now, according to you...

Mr. Lévesque: Twenty-eight percent, now.

Mr. Brassard: Almost a third. I want to come back to Mrs. Hovington's question on the structure of the central bank or the monetary authority regulating a common currency. You do have some rather interesting proposals. You refer to both the Federal Republic of Germany and Québec. I'd like to hear more from you on that very point. I'll rephrase the question, I'd like to hear more from you... In your view, what should be the management structure of an authority responsible for regulating a common currency, in any hypothesis whatever, but let's say the hypothesis of a sovereign State, a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Lévesque: I would ask my colleague, Monique...

Mrs. Leroux: If I may, I'd like to assume the hypothesis that we've looked closely at, if you agree...

Mr. Brassard: Yes, yes.

Mrs. Leroux: ...in our brief, that is to say that we, of course, propose a monetary union.

Mr. Brassard: Yes.

Mrs. Leroux: The monetary union, as a matter of fact, should be with Canada, of course,

but it should be tied, if you like, to a revision of the structure and operation of the central bank so that the various regions of Canada, including Québec, would have a greater... How should I put it... a greater influence on the policies of the central bank.

If we look at the current operation of the central bank, you have a board of directors which is there, if you like, with more of an advisory role, but the decisions of the central bank are actually made by a very inner management committee.

So what we propose is that it must nevertheless be recognized that there are major regional disparities within the Canadian economy. In fact, I think that several of you recognize the distinctive characteristics of Québec. And what we believe to be important then, is that the structure should be such that the regions, that is Québec among others, could have representatives on the bank's management committee, who would be there to provide input, to ensure that the general policy directions of the bank take regional disparities into account. That's the first point.

Once that input is provided, and reflected in the central bank's decisions, which is not necessarily the case today, then these people could bring information back to the regions, and that's very important, so as to enable, if you like, the regional governments, consequently the Québec government, to react at the appropriate time with offsetting budgetary measures, if you like.

So, in other words, if we have a monetary policy which is aimed at fighting inflation, then, in that case, we could have, if you like, budgetary measures at the Québec level which would have somewhat of an offsetting effect.

Therefore, we believe it extremely important, despite the fact that we suggest that the Canadian currency be maintained or retained, to have, nevertheless, a mechanism which would enable Québec to have a greater influence on monetary policy.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Leroux. Mr. Brassard's time is now up. Mrs. Hovington, from the Chair's time, your question on the central bank.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you very much. I've heard quite a few details about the central bank, but I'd like to take advantage of your generosity, Mr. Chairman, to ask... On page 26, you list all the preconditions for any change taking place in Québec. You accountants who are used to doing pro forma statements, can you do a pro forma statement of Québec's situation in the event one or more of your preconditions are not met? You talk on page 28 of your preconditions for any change in Québec. In your view, is it really necessary, in a constitutional

change, that all these conditions be met, or just some of them?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): The answer shouldn't be too long.

Mrs. Leroux: I think that's quite an assignment. We could come back to it later, if you decide to give it to us.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK. Fine. Thank you.

Mrs. Hovington: ...your pro forma statement within the next few days, for sure!

Mrs. Leroux: You supply the hypotheses.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Well, Mr. Lévesque, Mr. Jacques and Mrs. Leroux, thank you. Your brief, as Mr. Nicolet put it, your high-calibre brief... and many thanks for your contribution to the work of the Commission on Québec's future.

Mr. Lévesque: Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:09 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:12 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, we are now going to hear Mr. Guy Vachon. Welcome, Mr. Vachon. You have five minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Guy Vachon

Mr. Vachon (Guy): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission to the lovely region of Mauricie - Bois-Francs - Drummond. I consider it a privilege to be heard by your Commission, a privilege I will try not to abuse.

In the brief I addressed to your Commission, last November 2, I demanded that Québec alone be responsible for all policies concerning education and occupational training. That demand was based mainly on the counter-productive nature of a useless sharing of powers and responsibilities between the two levels of government. Based on what I've been able to follow of your work, I have observed that if there's one point on which just about everyone agrees that Québec should have exclusive jurisdiction, it's occupational training. Though we still can't say that that's the case, at least we can say that the case has been put and that it shouldn't be the main point of disagreement within the Commission. So, I won't add anything to the arguments that have already been put forward.

In the second part of my brief, I insist on

the links that must exist between occupational training, manpower policies and the responsibilities of modern governments. I then go on to argue that Québec should exercise all the powers of a sovereign State and I indicated the broad principle that should guide the accession to sovereignty. Time constraints prevented me from further developing these points, so I would like to use the time I've been allotted to add a few considerations.

Like many others, I favour the implementation of a full-employment policy. It's not my intention here to discuss how or why that could or should be done. However, I'll give a short qualitative description. Such a policy makes employment the central concern of economic development. It works from the hypothesis, which can be verified, that the creation and maintenance of as many jobs as possible is the best way to ensure a country's economic development and a fair distribution of collective wealth. However, it means that labour is no longer seen as a mere component of the pitiless law of the market and too bad for those without work. It also assumes, of course, that the State's efforts and those of business to create and maintain employment are often less costly, and particularly more worthwhile for individuals, than the billions spent each year on unemployment insurance and social aid.

Occupational training is an essential component of such a policy. This ambitious project requires that the State have a clear vision of its objectives, and it can't be achieved without the cooperation of all partners, namely the government, businesses, unions and workers. You will note that I said the government, not "governments". This indispensable cooperation cannot be hobbled by contradictory objectives among various levels of government.

A full employment policy is a policy of economic development with all that implies in terms of control of the levers of such development, namely taxation, research, development, investment policy, monetary policy, international trade and the rest. Since I believe, for the sake of consistency of objectives and coherent action, that you can't have two governments acting and that, besides, Quebecers will never agree to leave it to the federal government to assume its responsibilities on their behalf, I conclude that Québec's constitutional and political future leads to its accession to the status of a sovereign country.

A few words are required on the meaning of words, however. It's impossible to be more or less sovereign. Either you are or you're not. The association everyone wants with Canada has to be considered as an agreement that can be changed or revoked over time. In any association that would give another level of government the possibility of passing a constitution, a charter of rights, laws, to levy taxes over the head of the

Québec government, we couldn't exercise any kind of sovereignty.

I trust the Commission to ensure that these conclusions enable citizens to see things more clearly and especially to avoid attaching a meaning to the word "sovereignty" that it doesn't have. As to how Québec should become sovereign, I hope the work of your Commission leads to a referendum on sovereignty as soon as possible. As I see it, we have to avoid an approach that makes use of sovereignty as a bargaining chip with English Canada. In fact, that's what was attempted during the Meech Lake negotiations, by predicting the worst if the Accord wasn't accepted. The spectre of sovereignty was invoked. This bluff clearly didn't work and now they want to start again, saying this time it's serious, this is the last time. Well really!

What's worse is that by acting this way, the very idea of sovereignty is trivialized. Either the project is valid and we accept it, or we consider it harmful and reject it. If it's not valid now, will it be more so after we've been told no two or three times more? Sovereignty is not a worst case scenario or last recourse option, despite what some think. It's an exciting project, positive and normal for a mature responsible people. So I said that the government should, as soon as possible, hold a referendum on sovereignty. If it can't resolve itself to make that decision, it should resign and leave it to others to do so. But for goodness sake, let's have no more stupid tricks that lead nowhere and cost us precious time.

Mr. Chairman, if one word has been frequently used concerning the results of your Commission's work, it's the word "consensus". Since the mandate of your Commission deals with the political and constitutional future of Québec, that's where the consensus has to be formed, if there is to be one. In my view, and despite the respect I hold for the members of the Commission, the consensus you seek must not be a simple consensus among yourselves.

If there is to be consensus, then all Quebecers must be fully involved. Now, Mr. Chairman, the consensus you seek already exists among those on whose behalf you say you are searching for it. Though we may not want to admit it, a consensus exists on the idea of sovereignty among Quebecers. When almost 70% of citizens agree with an idea, I think we can honestly say that we've reached a consensus. Democracy doesn't ask as much. To hope for unanimity is utopian and results in inaction. To believe people are fooling themselves stems from contempt, pure and simple.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I ask those who question the solidity of this consensus to have the courage to hold a referendum on sovereignty as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Vachon. The first speaker is Mrs. Louise Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: First of all, Mr. Vachon, allow me to thank you for your brief. I appreciated it, particularly because I noted you were a participating member of the executive council of the Parti québécois. Nonetheless, your brief, as far as the field of education and occupational training is concerned, is a good one and I share your views. Your view of Québec society is not particularly flattering. You say it is under-educated compared to the United States. You say our manpower is not skilled and, unless we resolve this problem shortly, entrepreneurs have two choices: simply go elsewhere for their manpower or move their business elsewhere. Your solution is education and to this effect you recommend that Québec alone be master in the field of education and occupational training and, as you have said, Mr. Vachon, many people before you share your point of view concerning education. On the other hand, you deal briefly, on page 17, if I can find it, with unemployment insurance where you say, and with your permission I'll quote you: "I therefore think it is desirable that Québec also exercise full powers concerning manpower and income security including unemployment insurance to maintain the coherence of these measures and lower the costs of managing programs dealing with the same clientele." Mr. Vachon, since Québec now draws more from the unemployment insurance fund than it contributes, would you not say it would be more beneficial to continue sharing the risks of unemployment insurance with the rest of Canada?

Mr. Vachon: Mrs. Bégin, I think you have to see unemployment insurance in this new context, in the context of a sovereign country, as part of a package of policies. Starting from the point when the federal government announces that it is withdrawing, for all intents and purposes, from unemployment insurance programs and that these programs will be financed in large measure by employers, and the remainder by workers, I think Québec is perfectly able to manage in the future, as others before me have demanded at this table, control of all its programs because, at that point, it's possible to integrate unemployment insurance, income security, occupational training and all that goes with it much better.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Vachon. One other short question. You have a great deal to say on education in your brief, but you say that your demonstration, in terms of education, should be extended to other areas of activity. Could you develop that a little?

Mr. Vachon: I've said nothing at all on cultural policy, nothing on language policy, nothing on farm policy. I limited myself to the area I know a little better: education, but I think other people have given persuasive proof of Québec's ability to manage all its other policies. So, I simply mention those headings, without providing evidence that others, much more knowledgeable in those fields, could provide.

Mrs. Bégin: That answers my questions, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Bégin. Mr. Guy Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got a few comments, Mr. Chairman. First, like Mrs. Juliette Simard, who was president of the LPC in Jonquière who said... I didn't think it worthwhile to point out her political colours. I thought she was very brave to come before the Commission and I congratulate you for doing the same thing, and I won't repeat your title, that's already been done.

Having said that, I'd also like to say that, concerning the unemployment fund, and returning to a question that you've just been asked, Mr. Bourbeau, the current Minister of Manpower and Income Security in the Bourassa government, wants to repatriate the unemployment insurance fund. He doesn't want to share the risks with the federal government. He thinks it's important that we repatriate that to improve the integration of manpower policy in Québec. Now I'd like to talk to you about a niggling little point on occupational training. I got out the government's report, the annual report for 1989-1990, 1988-1989 and we can also check the statistics for 1990 that are complete, and we've gone, from 1986-1987 to 1990, from 19 683 students in occupational training to 7178. It's a catastrophe and I'm glad you point that out in your brief because I think it's disastrous, when business is asking for skilled manpower, it's catastrophic that in Québec we're heading in precisely the opposite direction. From 19 683 to 7178 and I'm glad that you're worried about that as a teacher, as a person involved in education. It's no coincidence that there are 26 groups in Québec, if I remember correctly, taking part in the forum on employment and putting a great deal of stress on occupational training. We can't ignore it, chambers of commerce, employer groups, everyone agrees with full repatriation of powers concerning occupational training so we can stop fighting over programs where funds lapse each year. There isn't any, for all practical purposes, and the results prove it. And that's not something a partisan political group is saying. It comes from government statistics. So, I want to thank you for that.

I've only one question. I'd like to ask you, in the education community, at present, do you sense a will to settle the constitutional issue once and for all? Do you sense a certain weariness in the discussion? Do you sense that people are ready to make an informed decision? And do you see any difference between the climate in 1980 and the climate prevailing today in terms of the discussion?

Mr. Vachon: Yes, Mr. Chevette. I'll try to answer this question as objectively as possible, of course. I've never made a secret of my political leanings, they've been public for a long time, but I think, even from the beginnings of the Parti québécois and the progress of the idea of sovereignty, the people in the education community have been among the most committed to the idea of sovereignty. Of course, there have been periods of economic difficulty when the project perhaps cooled a bit, but I think the same vigour, the same intensity is apparent, today, in the education community as in Québec society as a whole. When poll after poll... You can take them or leave them... shows at least 65% of the public convinced that the idea of sovereignty makes sense, you have to believe that, in the education community, which maybe corresponds to particular age and educational segments, the percentage is even higher. And the desire to get on with it that you mention is, I think, shared by the education community and all others in Québec, including the business community.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that answers my question.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. We now move on to Mr. Libman, who will be followed by Mrs. Drouin and Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Vachon, welcome. Mr. Vachon, you say, on page 19, that economic association is not a precondition for sovereignty. So, you're ready to risk, by supporting Québec sovereignty, a complete rupture with the rest of Canada.

Mr. Vachon: That's right.

Mr. Libman: We all know that a dismembered Canada will hardly be willing to negotiate anything with the province that initiated the dismemberment. Having said that, can you be more explicit with me concerning the aftermath of Québec's sovereignty? For instance, how do you see the establishment of customs posts, post offices, armed forces, a Québec passport, a Québec currency, the disappearance of all the benefits of a broad federation we now enjoy? How do you see all those responsibilities, from a logistic, economic, etc.

standpoint? How do you view all those responsibilities for a fully sovereign Québec?

Mr. Vachon: Your question is based on a premise I don't share, namely a systematic refusal by the partners in English Canada, a refusal to negotiate with Québec, a sovereign Québec. I think a lot of people have said the opposite, on many occasions, concerning some of your questions, and other questions of members of the Commission as well, in this sense. I think it's naturally in the interest of the Canadian partners, to maintain their markets, to maintain their standard of living as well, to be full partners. I'm not saying there won't be some ruffled feathers at the outset, but those things will be put aside.

As for the mechanisms, I don't know how many states, since the beginning of the century, how many countries have become independent. And, for the vast majority of them, states that, in terms of economics, in terms of education, in terms of knowledge, are a lot worse off than Québec is at present. So, if those countries could do it, I don't see any reason or reasons why Québec couldn't.

Mr. Libman: So, based solely on the fact that other countries have done it, you believe it's completely possible for Québec to do it, then?

Mr. Vachon: Well, it tells me at least that it's not impossible.

Mr. Libman: OK. Second. If you think it's possible, what do you think would be the effect of Québec's independence on the standard of living of Quebecers? Do you think Quebecers would accept a significant decrease in their standard of living if that proved to be a necessary consequence of sovereignty, either temporarily or permanently?

Mr. Vachon: There again, your question is based on a premise that I don't share. In other words, the status quo, the existing situation, what Québec has experienced since it's been in Confederation – and let's restrict ourselves to recent years – that that's the ideal context for Québec's economic development. I think a lot of people have said that this constitutional bottleneck, this constitutional questioning that's dragged on for more than 30 years, is a negative factor for economic development. I'll mention just one item. Where would Québec be today, in terms of standard of living, had it controlled its own research and technological development rather than being content with 12, 10, 8, 9, 14% of research and development funds in Canada? So, I don't share your premise. But in any event, I think, and I'm not an expert in economics, but I think that in the economy, it's the relations between persons as far as exchanges of goods

and services are concerned. I don't see how sovereignty will change Quebecers' needs for goods and services, or those of Ontarians, Americans, the rest of Canada. So, there is a demand for goods and services there and it's up to us to satisfy those demands for goods and services as much as possible. It's in that sense that the challenge of occupational training is so important, to be in a position to satisfy that demand.

As for whether or not Quebecers would accept a hypothetical drop in their standard of living, you'd have to ask them. I don't see that as a threat, so I won't answer that.

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

Mr. Libman: Because you have to realize that the economic associations people want with sovereignty-association exist already in the Canadian federation. So, you're ready to give up all those economic associations, that exist now, for the possibility or chance that economic associations can be reestablished? Is that your opinion?

Mr. Vachon: It's not a question of reestablishing economic associations. If you're talking about economic associations in the sense of free flow of goods and services, trade, investment and people, that's one thing. And I think it's perfectly feasible between sovereign countries each with their own objectives, their own orientations. And it'll happen then in accordance with the interests of Québec, not by a higher government passing contradictory policies over the head of the Québec government.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Libman. We now move on to Mrs. Drouin.

Mrs. Drouin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Vachon, in your brief, you acknowledge the substantial progress made over the past 25 years in education.

Mr. Vachon: I've played some part in it, I hope.

Mrs. Drouin: Me too, I hope. However, on page 9, you say, and I quote: "In spite of this progress, we have to conclude that Québec is far behind the leaders... Even in Québec, 14% of young Francophones 18-30 attend university, while the percentage among Anglophones and Allophones is as high as 28%." You also say that: "Various businesses regularly complain of an inability to find skilled manpower for available jobs." You talk of occupational training. You realize that, in other provinces, the college level does not exist. Last week, we heard from a

group of Université de Sherbrooke masters and doctoral students who also raised the possibility of reviewing the educational structure for young people.

I'd like to know if, as a solution to the observations you make and to which I referred in your brief, you believe, as it has been suggested to us, that possibly by adding a year to the secondary level, that would enable young people heading for occupational training to receive more solid training, and young people heading for general training to be more mature and perhaps, as a result, have a better career orientation, and, of course removing the college level, adding a year of pre-university? Would there be fewer university drop-outs? Do you think that could be a solution to the problems you mention?

Mr. Vachon: I realize that's been an issue in the college network, almost since the inception of the CEGEPs. I believe in the college level as a distinct entity for the following reasons. There's the question of access to education. There aren't 45 university campuses in Québec, there are only four or five. But at the college level, if you add the 45 or 46 CEGEPs and the 24 or 25 private colleges that also provide college education, I think that in terms of accessibility in the regions, the existence of the college level is a very positive factor as such. And even if the results haven't always been convincing, I still believe in co-existence for a period of time, even if it's too short, and though a longer period would be desirable, we're up against all kinds of constraints, co-existence for a number of years of young people with occupational objectives, going to university, then going on to the labour market. I still believe in the positive aspects of this dynamic for the personality of Québec society in years ahead.

Mrs. Drouin: Is college an important stage for the young person?

Mr. Vachon: I firmly believe so.

Mrs. Drouin: Thank you, that's it.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Drouin. Mr. Dufour

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Vachon, for being concerned about occupational training. You realize we're also concerned about it. And your analysis is absolutely correct when you say that the needs of the labour market are not being met by training at the secondary and even college level, and in adult education.

Having said that, I wonder why it wouldn't be possible, if we simply went ahead and repatriated all the powers from Ottawa concerning occupational training, to resolve the

problem. Because, you'll agree with me that there are already mismatched problems with young people. Yet we already have full control over the situation with young people and there are all kinds of problems. You even say, on page 12: "If it were possible to simplify the number, the nature, of programs, eliminate contradictions, etc., etc. We will have taken a major step in the right direction." Since you already control, at the provincial level, education for young people, what more has to be done to resolve the problem under the existing framework?

Mr. Vachon: There's a way of viewing occupational training that, as far as I'm concerned, is a direct component of a full-employment policy. In the sense that occupational training policies are not, as I see it, independent of manpower policies. Manpower policies are not independent of economic development policies. So, when you start putting all the pieces of the puzzle together, you start to see that occupational training isn't just a way of dealing with such and such a need for this or that business, but a way of advancing a project.

Mr. Dufour: I understand. But you're not telling me that, because we're sovereign, then, speaking of full employment, we'd have jobs for the unemployed 12%. That's not what you're saying.

Mr. Vachon: That's not what I'm telling you, but under a full-employment policy, and I won't pretend to explain that to you, there are some very competent people... When you're discussing among yourselves, you'll be able to evaluate the pros and cons, but I favour a full-employment policy.

Mr. Dufour: ...everyone able to work would have a job. Me too. Except that you can't fool people by saying, because we're sovereign, we'll have full employment, there'll be jobs for everyone... That's not what you're saying...

Mr. Vachon: It won't be for tomorrow morning. It won't be tomorrow morning that everyone has a job, but you have to believe that that alternative is possible. You can't imagine that in the Canadian, and even the Québec, context, under a federal system, we've got even the shadow of a full-employment policy, or even an employment policy. Employment is considered a component in the law of the market. When there's work, you've got a job and when there's no work, you don't have a job, too bad. A full-employment policy, Mr. Dufour, is nothing like that.

Mr. Dufour: At any rate, we agree on one point. Continue to concern yourself with

occupational training.

Mr. Vachon: And employment.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Vachon, for coming this evening to discuss the future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:41 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:43 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Welcome to the representatives of the Federation of General Practitioners. You have the floor, Mr. Dutil. Would you please introduce your colleagues.

Federation of General Practitioners of Québec

Mr. Dutil (Renald): Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I would like to thank you for inviting the Federation to present its brief. First allow me to introduce those accompanying me: to my right, Dr. Marie Girard, second vice-president of the Federation of General Practitioners; and to my left, Dr. Georges Boileau, Director of Communications for the Federation.

I would like to ask you to excuse the president of the Federation, Dr. Clément Richer, who, despite all his efforts, wasn't able to clear his schedule for tonight.

I won't read our brief word for word. I'll just give you a brief oral summary. First of all, I'd like to remind you that the Federation of General Practitioners represents the 7000 general practitioners in Québec in negotiations with the State and with its agencies. Our general council commissioned us to present a brief before your Commission. However, it did not give us a mandate to favour one constitutional path over the other. And our members were not consulted individually on this subject, even if the issue, as you may have guessed, interests physicians as much as any other Québec citizen.

Instead, we wanted to use this brief to describe the experience of the Federation of General Practitioners, and of specialists, as an organization, typical of Québec, autonomous, and distinct from other provincial organizations, distinct from the Canadian organization called the Québec Medical Association. As you know, in Canada, health falls under provincial jurisdiction, which means it was natural for physicians in the various provinces to organize themselves within provincial structures, structures affiliated with a Canadian organization called the Canadian Medical Association. In Québec, such a provincial organization, affiliated with a Canadian one,

already existed. It was founded in 1922. However, in the 1960s, for various reasons, Québec physicians chose to create their own structure, autonomous from the Canadian organization. General practitioners were the first to adopt the professional union formula and create... found the Federation of General Practitioners of Québec. Afterward, medical specialists adopted a similar structure. During all these years, we have functioned differently from any other Canadian province. Of course, we've had official contact with the Canadian Medical Association, but we've been entirely autonomous from the central organization.

The Québec Medical Association, which is a branch of the Canadian Medical Association, has continued to exist, but its only role has been to offer certain services to its members, such as group insurance. It has tried, at various times, to unite physicians under its wing and replace the federations, but all these attempts ended in failure. And in 1982, once again, the Association, supported and financed by the Canadian Medical Association, wanted to replace the Québec structures, called federations. This was another attempt plagued by failure. However, those in charge of the various associations held discussions and reached an agreement to put an end to the tensions that this problem created for physicians. An agreement that would maintain the complete autonomy of Québec medical structures, but which allowed Québec federations to collaborate with the Canadian Medical Association on certain services.

We called this agreement, by analogy, the Medical Meech Lake. You'll understand why. However, the agreement differs from the other in one respect; it has been signed and, under the agreement, the federations now sit on the administrative council of the Canadian Medical Association. They retain complete autonomy, but more formal exchanges now take place between Québec physicians and the Canadian Medical Association.

We wanted to tell you about our experience, hoping the Commission could perhaps draw from it some elements of a solution in exercising its mandate. We would also like to add, here and now that, no matter what Québec's future status within the Canadian federation, the Federation wishes to maintain its assets in the health and social services field. And we believe that Québec has proven that it was not only able to maintain, but also, to improve its assets over the last few years, despite a growing decrease in federal participation.² In terms of financing for health and social services. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Commission, I will close here and we'll be available for questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Dutil. First speaker, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Dutil, Mr. Boileau, Mrs. Girard, good evening. I would first like to thank you for coming here to appear before us and telling us about your experiences in negotiating relationships with the Canadian Medical Association. You draw parallels between your negotiations and Meech Lake. I have to agree that there are, at least, a few. In English Canada, we have a Quebecer, Mr. Mulroney, and there are negotiations with Québec; but someone said that you've succeeded and the governments of Québec and Canada have failed. But beyond that, perhaps simply to satisfy my personal curiosity first of all, the agreement which is enclosed in your brief is in English only. Has the Canadian Medical Association translated the documents into French?

Mr. Dutil: Listen, for the last two or three years, there has been more French at the Canadian Medical Association. First, the secretary general is Dr. Léo-Paul Landry, a Francophone physician from New Brunswick who is very familiar with Québec, having always worked here, and the president of the Canadian Medical Association a year ago was Dr. Marcien Fournier, a physician from Québec. Spurred on by these two physicians, the Canadian Medical Association has been more vigilant about translations. I have to say, however, that translations already existed for most documents sent out by the Canadian Medical Association.

Mrs. Blackburn: And this is recent. In the agreement you signed, which is extremely interesting, you point out the advantages it offers. You say: exchange of medical demographic data, of data on representative organizations, exchanges during forums, exchanging ideas on physicians' social responsibilities, exchanges of proposed laws and at the same time, participation in joint projects. But you conclude by saying that, in summary, the agreement clearly establishes medical organizations' determination, both in Québec and the rest of Canada to maintain links which contribute to their enrichment and progress, without ending their autonomy. Therefore, I asked myself if the experiences you brought to our attention didn't resemble sovereignty-association, or independent-association to a certain extent? But, and I say this in all seriousness, what I see in your agreement, it's more relationships which are useful to both parties.

Mr. Dutil: You're right, Mrs. Blackburn. On a much smaller scale, I think that the relationships Québec physicians have had with Canadian structures are strangely similar to discussions which were held between Québec, the Canadian federation and the other provinces. I have to say that physicians achieved autonomy almost 30 years ago... I was going to say their

sovereignty... And that they decided even then that it was necessary to establish links with other provincial organizations and with the Canadian organization, which is the Québec Medical Association. Dr. Boileau.

Mr. Boileau (Georges): I just want to make a point. It's that the agreement that was signed and that you... It's the last document in the brief... was written in French, signed in French, with a translation for the benefit of our Anglophone colleagues. But the official text is in French.

Mrs. Blackburn: It was among Quebecers, if I'm not mistaken. Four Québec physicians.

Mr. Boileau: There were also several Anglophone physicians who participated in the discussions, Dr. Vail for example, who is an Ontario physician and former president of the Association. There were several Canadian and Québec leaders who participated in drafting this document.

Mrs. Blackburn: I find it interesting that you have succeeded in establishing a harmonious and beneficial relationship with the Canadian Medical Association. It makes us realize that the road of negotiations with English Canada could be strewn with obstacles if Québec chooses a sovereign path. English Canada would react badly, would be hostile, even vicious, which reminds me of an editorial I read this morning. You know, English Canadians are portrayed as... In 1980, they were calm, serene, pragmatic, and suddenly, they're emotional, insecure, worried, masochistic and are even making decisions harmful to their own best interests. For example, they wouldn't want to negotiate the debt, they'd keep it all...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Blackburn: That's a joke...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Blackburn, 15 seconds.

Mrs. Blackburn: Nor would they negotiate monetary union, which might be able to bolster confidence as far as the Canadian dollar is concerned. Free flow of goods and services, and of people, which would allow those working in Québec to come to work; they wouldn't want that either. You, with your understanding of negotiations with professional people in English Canada, do you get the same impression?

Mr. Dutil: No, not necessarily. Once again, health falls under provincial jurisdiction and as far as negotiations are concerned, they're carried out on a strictly provincial basis. There

are exchanges of information and data. I would like to add here that the Canadian Medical Association has become much more interested in talking to the federations, rather than the Québec branch, because the federations have demonstrated to the Canadian Association that they have a lot of data, expertise and experience not available to other provincial organizations, which are affiliated with the Canadian Medical Association. Therefore, on a more pragmatic level, the Canadian Medical Association realized that, despite their autonomy, it was to their benefit to talk to those representing Québec physicians.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue, who will be followed by Mr. Ghislain Dufour and Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Does each province have its own college of physicians.

Mr. Dutil: Yes. Listen, perhaps it's a bit confusing for people who aren't in the field, there are a lot of organizations. The College of Physicians, like the Corporation des médecins du Québec, has a mandate which is very different than that of the Federation in Québec and in the other provinces; you have the College of Physicians, which is responsible for the quality of public health care, and then you have a provincial association which is responsible for the working conditions for physicians in the province, including negotiation of agreements.

Mr. Hogue: And each province has a different college with rules which may or may not differ greatly.

Mr. Dutil: Listen, if we're talking to the College... within a province, the College of Physicians is basically responsible for the quality of care.

Voice: That's it.

Mr. Dutil: It's very different from the provincial medical association, which is responsible for negotiations, if you will, between physicians and the government in terms of their eligibility for membership in the regime. Certainly there are a number of similarities between the various provinces.

Mr. Hogue: And among all those, I assume there's a Canada-wide organization that sets the standards for accreditation of hospitals, where accreditation would be given by a Canada-wide organization.

Mr. Dutil: Yes. There is an existing Canadian accrediting body for hospitals which

also has jurisdiction over Québec. There's also the Royal College which is an accrediting body for physicians. In Québec, we have an accrediting body for hospitals, for example. The Corporation des médecins is also a type of accrediting body, since it issues permits. But you have Canada-wide organizations, such as the Royal College, the Council on Hospital Accreditation...

Mr. Hogue: And physicians in Québec who give accreditation to hospitals, for example, on behalf of the Canada-wide organization, they're from Québec, are Francophones like us, or some Anglophones, but Quebecers, and they don't tread on the toes of provincial organizations.

Mr. Dutil: No, because their mandates are different.

Mr. Hogue: And that helps the profession, having this Canada-wide recognition, whether by the Royal College or accreditation from the Canada-wide organization.

Mr. Dutil: Yes. It's considered good to be accredited Canada-wide, if you will. In effect.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One thing that struck me in your brief was the list of national organizations with which you'd like to remain affiliated for the profession's benefit. This isn't new anyway. I drew up a quick list of the national organizations other groups wish to remain affiliated with: the Canada Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Council for Scientific Research, the Science Council, the National Film Board, etc. I get the feeling that if we were to do a rundown on all the groups, we'd wonder why choose sovereignty, since everyone wants to remain affiliated in some way with national organizations.

This being said - and I'm addressing this specifically to medical specialists - don't you feel that current health benefits would be better guaranteed within the current federation? I just want to give you an example. In Québec, we're talking about a user fee, a service tax. I read in the paper this morning that Ottawa won't be "taxing the sick." Therefore, the debate about user fees or a service tax seems to be closed already. There's already a federal position which, in fact, protects health, and people are opposed to these deterrent fees on general grounds. Doesn't that give you a safety net in terms of people's health?

Mr. Dutil: For the first part of your question, I would have to say that medicine is North American anyway and that Québec physicians, no matter what Québec's future status, cannot isolate themselves scientifically, in terms of professional exchanges or even in terms of shared health objectives, if you will.

As for the second part, "Do we have a certain federal protection in terms of arrangements like those you mentioned?" I don't know to what extent the federal government protects us. However, I must say that over the past few years we've noticed, as I said in my presentation, that the federal government has set national health objectives, but that it does not assume all its responsibilities, currently, in terms of these objectives.

If I take the numbers presented by the Rochon Commission, for example, the level of federal financing for health and social services expenses went from 44.7% in 1977-1978 to 39.7% in 1987-1988. This includes tax points transferred to the provinces. Looking strictly at cash contributions, the drop is 25.3% to 22.3%, and we think it'll drop to 18% for 1990. Therefore, the federal government has reduced its health contributions. And if we want to maintain our assets in other things then, for God's sake, we're going to have to make arrangements at some point, because the federal government isn't taking full responsibility for the cost of objectives it has set.

Mr. Dufour: I understand that, but the health field is not the only one to experience reductions in funding. Cuts have been made in higher education, and in a number of fields because of the current deficit. Governments have to make reductions, but there's no guarantee that in a sovereign Québec - which you are not proposing, we agree on that - there's no guarantee that we'll have any more money than we do now. But in fact, you say that there's a certain security at the federal level, except that they've had to reduce their budget over the years. The Conseil des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec told us exactly the same thing the other day. I think that all organizations are in the same situation.

Voice: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Are you through? We'll move on to Mr. Louis Laberge for a quick question.

Mr. Laberge: It'll be very quick, Mr. Chairman, but I hope you won't mind if I make it a toughie. Your brief talks about "the end of the 1960s, beginning of the 1970s". Things were sort of hopping in that era. I was pretty close to Gérard Hamel, president of your Federation at the time, and knew pretty much what was going

on, the ties with the Canadian Association, etc. I was also part of a Canada-wide organization and that didn't cause any problems.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: I'm sure that they're going to continue to accept us. The question that I want to ask is very simple. You noticed, at some point, that once your associations were in place, in Québec, you had all the powers needed to steer your course, that negotiations with other parties were easier?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Dutil: I have to tell you, time being short, that I went through numerous discussions and tensions as you can guess, which were held, if you will, during these negotiations. One thing that's certain is that, against all odds, we maintained complete autonomy once our structures were put in place.

Mr. Laberge: Will you allow me to congratulate the Association des médecins des CLSC?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Guy Bélanger...

Mr. Dutil: ...who are affiliated with the Federation.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Good evening, Dr. Dutil and Dr. Gagnon, who I know quite well, and Dr. Girard as well. It's always a pleasure to see you, especially in these circumstances. But in the same vein as questions that have been asked since the beginning, do you believe the integrity of our health and social services could be jeopardized in the future? And, no matter what decision is made, I look at the federal deficit which the chartered accountants' association and economists association, a couple of weeks ago... Sorry, I'm getting a little lost, it's been five weeks... We remember that as being gigantic. Someone even told me that it was costing \$1 billion in interest per week. I don't know if that's an exaggeration. Right now, we're talking about \$54 000 each minute, or something like that. That's almost more expensive than a doctor. I say to myself, taking that into account, and taking... The result is that transfer payments have gone down, as you just said. They've gone from \$1.5 billion to \$1.2 billion; a loss of \$300 million while on the other hand, costs have gone up significantly. Fine, in Québec, we're restructuring our services and reorganizing them so that we can continue to provide the same quality and intensive care, if we can say that. That's the proposal of renewed federalism. If we become, many people... It seems to be the same

old story, if we become sovereign, is it going to be easier to pay them? I really want to know, and I'm asking in terms of both scenarios.

Mr. Dutil: Listen, Mr. Bélanger, the tax sharing arrangements that the federal government imposed on the provinces between 1982 and 1986 mean a \$6-billion loss for Québec between 1982 and 1992, according to experts in the health and social services field. I'm not a tax expert. I think that there are those here today who know more about the field than I do. Will Québec be better able to maintain its assets if it becomes sovereign? I'd like to paraphrase a bit, to plagiarize from Québec's premier who, last June, said to the National Assembly, that in the field of health and social services... That's my addition... "is and will be able to determine its destiny, no matter what its future role in the constitutional scheme."

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I'm getting your message, but it seems to contradict the bulk of your document a little.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Yes?

A Voice: ...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Dutil: What we're saying in our document...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): If I read it correctly, what you're saying basically is, don't let go, you'll have them in the end. This is a bit simplistic, but in effect, that's what it means. You were telling us earlier about the difficulties you encountered but, persevere, persevere and there will be a result. Have I read it correctly?

Mr. Dutil: What we lived through, the difficulties we encountered to defend our autonomy from all and against all comers; we maintained it, but we realized, what with one thing and another, even at the level of the Canadian Medical Association that our Québec structures, that there was interest in links between the two because we had much to contribute, in terms of scientific sharing, of course, but also sharing of demographic data, and data dealing with health and social service requirements, if you will, in Québec. Therefore, these links seem important to us, and it's possible to maintain them within as autonomous a structure as our own.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Fine. Now, what powers need to be repatriated to

achieve this autonomy?

Mr. Dutil: In the health and social services field, health is a provincial jurisdiction. We already have all the powers...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Yes.

Mr. Dutil: ...except that the federal government has one power, spending power. God knows that they spend enough, look at the size of the deficit, but they have this spending power and their involvement in the health and social services field is always based on this spending power.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Are you through, Mr. Bélanger? Fine, that completes our work for the day. Mrs. Girard, Mr. Boileau, Mr. Dutil, thank you for your contribution to our work.

As for the people of Trois-Rivières, thank you for your warm welcome. Thank you to all the organizations and individuals that submitted briefs today.

The Commission will continue its work in Québec City tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. The first bus will leave in 15 minutes, the second bus in 30 minutes.

(End of sitting, 9:10 p.m.)