

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

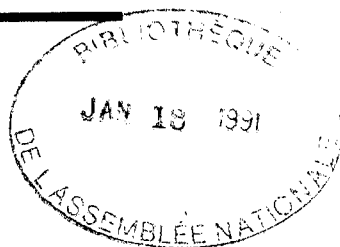
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Québec City, Wednesday, December 12, 1990

No 19

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

QUÉBEC



AUAS
A-24
1993-01
5102
A
2
6x2
OL
P. pour.

Note de l'éditeur:

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

Editor's note:

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

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

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

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Dépôt légal
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
ISSN 0823-0102

Table of Contents

Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec	1243
Volce of English Québec	1252
Mr. Léon Dion	1259
Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick	1271
Council of the Huron-Wendat Nation	1277
Conseil permanent de la jeunesse	1287
Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario	1295
Université du Québec	1303
Conseil de la coopération du Québec	1312
Mouvement Québec français	1319
Fondation de l'entrepreneurship du Québec	1327

Speakers

Mr. Michel Bélanger, Chairman
 Mr. Ghislain Dufour
 Mr. Richard B. Holden
 Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue
 Mrs. Christlane Pelchat
 Mrs. Pauline Marois
 Mr. Gil Rémillard
 Mr. Guy Chevette
 Mr. Robert Libman
 Mr. Guy d'Anjou
 Mr. Louis Laberge
 Mrs. Lorraine Pagé
 Mr. Jacques Brassard
 Mr. Claude Béland
 Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier
 Mr. Lucien Bouchard
 Mr. Gérard Larose
 Mr. Serge Turgeon
 Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer
 Mr. Jean Campeau
 Mr. Marcel Beaudry
 Mr. Jacques Proulx
 Mr. Roger Nicolet
 Mr. Russell Williams
 Mrs. Jeanne L. Blackburn
 Mr. Christos Sirros
 Mr. Pierre Fortin
 Mr. Denis Perron
 Mr. André Boisclair
 Mr. Roger Paré
 Mr. Robert Benoit
 Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant
 Mr. Cosmo Maciocia
 Mrs. Louise Harel
 Mr. Claude Dauphin
 Mr. Guy Bélanger
 Mr. Réjean Doyon
 Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington
 Mrs. Pauline Marois

(continued on next page)

Table of contents (cont.)

- * Mrs. Henriette Lanctôt, Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec
- * Mrs. Guylaine Lanctôt, idem
- * Mrs. Diane Lemelin, idem
- * Mrs. Louise Clément-Tessier, idem

- * Mrs. Deborah Hook, Voice of English Québec
- * Mr. Pierre St-Maur, idem
- * Mr. John Keyes, idem

- * Mr. Réal Gervais, Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick

- * Mr. Max "Oné Onti" Gros-Louis, Council of the Huron-Wendat Nation
- * Mr. Luc Lainé, idem
- * Mrs. Rayne Lainé, idem

- * Mr. Guy Gagnon, Conseil permanent de la jeunesse
- * Mrs. Marie-Andrée Bertrand, idem
- * Mr. Sylvain Tanguay, idem

- * Mr. Jean Tanguay, Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario
- * Mr. Fernand Gilbert, idem
- * Mrs. Line Michaud, idem
- * Mr. Daniel Saint-Jean, idem
- * Mr. André Lécuyer, idem

- * Mr. Claude Hamel, Université du Québec
- * Mr. Guy Massicotte, idem
- * Mr. Jacques Parent, idem
- * Mr. Alain Soucy, idem

- * Mr. César Simon, Conseil de la coopération du Québec
- * Mr. Yves Michaud, idem
- * Mrs. Juliette Bonneville, idem
- * Mr. Jean-Claude Guérard, idem
- * Mr. Garry Lavoie, idem

- * Mr. Guy Bouthillier, Mouvement Québec français
- * Mr. Michel Rioux, idem

- * Mr. Paul-A. Fortin, Fondation de l'entrepreneurship du Québec
- * Mr. Jean-Marie Toulouse, idem

- * Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Québec City, Wednesday, December 12, 1990

Hearings: Organizations and an Expert

(9:35 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):

Welcome to 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 the political and constitutional status of Québec and to formulate recommendations in that regard.

Today's proceedings will be devoted to hearing the following groups and organizations, all of which have sent briefs to the Commission: Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec for one hour; Voice of English Québec for 30 minutes; Mr. Léon Dion, an invited expert, for one hour; Société des Acadliens et Acadliennes du Nouveau-Brunswick for 30 minutes; Council of the Huron-Wendat Nation for one hour; Conseil permanent de la jeunesse for one hour; Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario for 30 minutes; Université du Québec for one hour; Conseil de la coopération du Québec for one hour; Mouvement Québec français for 30 minutes; and Fondation de l'entrepreneurship du Québec for 30 minutes.

For hour-long presentations, the time will be allocated as follows: 10 minutes to present the brief; 25 minutes for members who have registered with the Chair, with each member having a maximum of five minutes; 10 minutes for members of the party forming the Official Opposition; 10 minutes for members of the Government party; and five minutes for the Chair.

For 30-minute presentations, the time will be allocated as follows: five minutes to present the brief; 10 minutes for members who have registered, with each member having a maximum of five minutes; five minutes for members of the party forming the Official Opposition; five minutes for members of the Government party; and five minutes for the Chair.

We will now proceed with the presentation by the Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec. Will the spokeswoman for the group please introduce herself and the people accompanying her.

Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parliamentary Commission, my name is Henriette Lanctôt and I am founding president of the Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec. The people accompanying me are Diane Lemelin, president of Diane Lemelin Communications; Dr. Guylaine Lanctôt, president of Cliniques Dr. Guylaine Lanctôt; and Louise Clément-Tessier,

president of Gestion médicale Louise Clément-Tessier.

Your Commission has been given a mandate to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to formulate recommendations in that regard. During the debate leading to the adoption of the Act that established the Commission, it was very clear that the process of study and dialogue would have to be inspired by economic factors.

During the past 10 years, businesswomen have left their mark on the development of economic activity at all levels. At the level of entrepreneurship, women are the source of over half of the new independent companies established in Canada since 1980. We can therefore state that women entrepreneurs have made a far-reaching contribution to new job creation in Québec over the past 10 years. In large public and private companies, the presence of women in key positions has influenced policies and decision-making in these organizations and also given rise to new values in the decisional and management process.

Finally, more and more women hold university degrees, and thus have the means to play an active role in Québec's future in the professional, technological, research, manufacturing, and management spheres. For this reason, the Association wishes to share its reflections with you in the context of the work of your Parliamentary Commission. It is important to establish that we have no mandate to specifically support either of the possibilities for the constitutional future of Québec. We would like to stress, however, that the option selected must put a high priority on new values and set up new systems so that Québec can be innovative and develop strategically by ensuring its competitiveness and its specific character, and by putting its faith in its own leadership and dynamism. Rethinking our political future means reviewing our collective values, our way of thinking, and our behaviour.

Allow me first to introduce the Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec. It is a profit-making, non-partisan organization working toward the advancement and success of women in the business sphere. Founded 10 years ago, it includes nearly 4 000 women from all regions of Québec. It has encouraged businesswomen to play an increasingly important role in the Québec economy. Although we are concerned with all sectors of activity in Québec, economic factors remain a constant in our approach. We will begin our discussion with this sector. The Québec economy of the future must continue to encourage the dynamism and special character of our economic forces, namely small businesses that act as a catalyst to release the energy that

creates new jobs, and large companies that are completely at home in the context of market globalization. Whatever the constitutional structure eventually chosen for Québec, we must provide ourselves with tools to encourage the emergence and development of small businesses in which the entrepreneurship of women comes into play. Such businesses exist in all regions of Québec; they operate particularly in the tertiary sector, mainly in the business and service domains. Current government aid and support programs have kept pace with the developing needs of larger companies, but what is happening to programs, services, and financing facilities for smaller companies?

In this regard, the Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec recommends that the Québec government create or designate a government structure with a genuine and exclusive mandate to support small businesses; that the Québec government provide services and facilities for financing, in collaboration with the appropriate banking spheres, that will more adequately meet the needs of small businesses which are starting up or are reaching the critical level for expansion; that the Québec government develop training programs to help small businesses more easily make the transition to the phase of expansion and adaptation to technological changes; and finally, that the Québec government show concern for all forms of small business, including businesses in the home.

We will now go on to the manpower education and training sector. Québec businesses need a high-quality work force. Whatever the constitutional structure decided on for the future, Québec must have full powers and exclusive jurisdiction over higher education, research, and manpower training. Education must be appropriately managed so that it takes into account the present and future needs of companies and of a work force that is in the midst of an adaptation crisis.

Two aspects of this question concern us particularly: preparing a replacement work force, and placing a higher value on the job of teaching. Everyone agrees that we are currently experiencing a growing lack of qualified manpower in high-tech sectors. The situation is made more delicate by the fact that our companies must operate in a situation of free trade and globalization of economic activities. The Association deems that it is necessary not only to rapidly institute mechanisms for adaptation and training of the current work force within companies, but also to encourage adequate training for our Québec work force at the grass-roots level.

If you talk about adaptation of the work force, you are talking about lifelong education. Continuing education in new technologies is all the more pressing since companies here are going to be investing several hundred million

dollars over the next five years to install sophisticated systems that combine automation and computerization. A number of sectors of industry have a desperate lack of the qualified workers and specialists they need to be competitive.

The education system must reflect the needs of the market and encourage the creation of programs of study that are better adapted to the imperatives of the working world. The Association deems that entrepreneurs absolutely must be involved in this process. Involving businesspeople in this operation increases their responsibility and makes them see the real importance of adequate training for their work force. In this regard, the Association has for the past two years been initiating replacement integration programs for students in their last year of secondary school. The students, at a time when they are making important choices about their future, are invited to experience the type of work they are interested in under the aegis of Association members.

The Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec thus recommends that the Québec government maintain and broaden tax programs to encourage manpower training, and for on-the-job training, that the Québec government use various measures to encourage executives in companies to become aware of their responsibility to institute and maintain training programs for their employees.

We will go on to the immigration sector. Various studies estimate that by the year 2 000, women and immigrants will constitute over 80% of new arrivals in the workplace. If Québec companies have acquired a moral authority, they have also acquired a social responsibility that they cannot neglect today, in particular regarding immigrants. Whatever the constitutional structure chosen for the future, the Association believes that Québec must have greater autonomy in decision-making in regard to selection criteria and integration of our new Quebecers.

This is a priority for which Québec must allow itself some financial latitude. But selection is not everything. Reception, training, and in particular integration of recent immigrants are absolutely essential. The business community has the means to speed up their integration and must provide an example by establishing frank, constructive communication with the members of the cultural communities.

The Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec thus recommends that to protect its culture, to keep its immigrants, to encourage more harmonious integration of immigrants and invite them to join us in meeting the challenges of the future, Québec take charge of its immigration policy, in particular regarding selection criteria and integration of immigrants; that the Government institute measures to

motivate the business community to recognize the role it must assume in ensuring better integration of immigrants into Québec society, in light of the fact that immigrants will constitute a major share of the new arrivals in the work force ten years from now. Finally, that certain corporate groups more readily grant recognition for experience acquired abroad in the practice of certain occupations.

Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parliamentary Commission, the discussion in which you have invited us to take part is a unique chance to reflect on the organization of a society that has the possibility of setting aside the old patriarchal models and choosing a society in which there is a balance between material and human values.

We have to reinstate the fundamental values of humanism, morals, and ethics. The new organization we are seeking must be the driving force towards a society that is responsible and future-oriented. The State must review its role and its structures in the light of future needs, seek to innovate rather than draw its inspiration from traditional models. Québec could thereby assume a position of leadership, and establish a new society that could serve as an example to other nations that are also reflecting on their future.

The Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec deems that the demographic weight of women among the working population can no longer be neglected. It is no longer possible to disregard their economic influence as leaders, businesswomen, producers of goods and services, as well as consumers. It is no longer possible to ignore their competence and their collective and personal vision of society. Consequently, the State must more than ever recognize the importance of increased representation for women at the various levels of decision-making.

Rest assured, Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parliamentary Commission, that we have the interests of our society at heart, just as you do. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam President of the Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec. We will start with questions from the members. The first on the list is Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank the Association for its brief. I must say that I basically share your point of view. It's a brief I would sign myself.

You make a certain number of proposals to strengthen the economic situation of small businesses, in particular, at the end of page 5, you suggest a structure. You say that the Québec government should create or designate a government structure that would have a genuine and exclusive mandate to support small

businesses. I don't remember whether it was under the Parti québécois government that there was a more specific aid structure for small businesses, but I recall that Mr. Vallerand, for example, was Minister of State for Small Businesses. This structure has disappeared. Is that what you want to set up again?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): It is extremely important to help the very small business because, in fact, there are currently no measures, and no government department, if you like, concerned with very small businesses. Many efforts have been made for small and medium-size businesses, but nothing for very small businesses, which nonetheless are a very dynamic factor in our economy. That is why we are making a recommendation here, to stress their importance.

Mr. Dufour: You make a whole series of recommendations in the sphere of economics; it is your particular mission. You link them to various areas connected with the economy, in particular vocational training. Moreover, you have an interesting statistic: 77% of companies with five or fewer employees are run by women. I think this statistic is striking. Do you think all the proposals you make to help you in your role as developers can be realized within the current federal context? I'm not asking you to take a position.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): I think that whatever the structure chosen, these measures could be taken, absolutely.

Mr. Dufour: So within the current federal context.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Whatever, and I repeat, whatever the structure decided on.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): I think it's a question of time, yes. No, I'm just going back to your question. That is, negotiations will be carried out before or after separation, whether it takes place or doesn't take place. In any case, there will be things to be repatriated. Will they be repatriated before separation or after separation? As for that, you are the ones who will know. But we need more operating tools. I think that's what we're saying this morning.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): All right, Mr. Dufour?

Mr. Dufour: Very good.

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

Mr. Holden: To go back to what Mr. Dufour was saying, and your answer. From a practical point of view, have you considered the options: independence, federalism? And in particular, given that you are businesswomen, have you considered the cost of these different options?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): We haven't chosen an option. We have no mandate to take a position for or against sovereignty. I think we stated that very clearly, and we repeat it. That isn't the goal. This is an association of businesswomen and not a political association. So we won't take a position on that point.

Mr. Holden: On the business side, it's necessary to consider the effect of certain political decisions on business. You don't want to hazard a guess about the different options?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): Yes, I want to answer you with a question. Tell me, as a politician, where are you leading me? What do you prefer for the future? I'm a businesswoman. A businesswoman is a woman with a long-term policy. In my business, I know where I'm going.

You want to bring about political change. You're the politician, not me. And you're asking my advice. What I would say to you, Sir, is, tell me where you want to go. You tell me to get in your car. I'd like to. Where are we going? Are we just going to go out for a little spin, to show that we're OK and we can do it? Or are we going on a long trip, to found a new city, to build a new house, which will be a model house out of new materials that are completely different, that is going to be so interesting that everyone is going to want to come and build more just like it all around? These are two very different points of view. And I'm the one asking the question, Sir: which one have you chosen? Give me that information fast and then I'll answer you.

Mr. Holden: The Commission hasn't yet chosen; I personally have chosen the federal system, but the question has to be asked of all these people. I appreciate your frankness, and I also like what you said about reinstating fundamental values. I like that idea very much. It is in the same perspective as when we talk about the aboriginal peoples and other groups in society. It's very fine. I hope that we can reach a conclusion that is human, as you put it, that is moral. I hope you are right, Madam.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): Our policy is a philosophy of life, Sir. Business is very important and that's why we're here today. That doesn't prevent us from having a philosophy of life. And our philosophy of life is to maintain the natural order, that is, the balance of opposites — materialist and humanist opposites. And I think

that if society, at this time, is in the state it's in, it's because we have neglected the humanist side and favoured the materialist side. We are not preaching poverty; that is exactly the opposite of what we are doing, but there must be a balance. The material, economic side must be in balance with corresponding values. And if we don't have that, we're on the road to ruin.

Mr. Holden: I hope that we're equal to the task. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Holden. I notice that the members are being particularly well disciplined this morning. That augurs well for the day.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It has been suggested to me that I not jump to conclusions.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: That's so typical of you, Mr. Chairman. I would have four or five very specific and very short questions. The first: is your Association... It is a good brief, and there is nothing to comment on. It's not my place to congratulate you, but I'll do it anyway. Your group, your Association, is it made up of Québec Francophone and Anglophone women?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Yes. The Association des femmes d'affaires is open to all women in Québec and outside Québec too.

Mr. Hogue: Fine, that was another one of my sub-questions. Do some of you have offices outside Québec?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Yes, we have members who are in fact outside Québec.

Mr. Hogue: How many member companies do you have? Would you happen to have the statistics?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Oh, dear, it would be difficult...

Mr. Hogue: Roughly?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): I can't tell you. All I can tell you is, the way our membership is divided, approximately half are owners who manage their own company, a quarter are professional women, and a quarter are administrators. From that to giving you exact statistics about the companies, I couldn't answer you.

Mr. Hogue: But it would be around a hundred companies?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Oh! My goodness! Maybe more than that! We have 4 000 members...

Mr. Hogue: Really?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Oh, yes! We could maybe say, my goodness, I don't know, perhaps 2 000, yes, thank you, that's it...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): I was going to say 1 800!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Hogue: Would you have an approximate idea of the sales figure you generate? Or that the members of the Association can generate?

Mrs. Lemelin (Diane): You know, I would like to issue a warning. When you get into figures or statistics, you have to define your terms very precisely. In the case of the Association, the members managing their own businesses have a median sales figure of about \$75 000, but this doesn't mean, if you consider certain documents published by the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce québécois, that many women who are members of the Association have sales figures around \$250 000. Which means that if you ask me for an average, I wouldn't be in a position to give it to you, but I can tell you that our member businesswomen are situated between \$50 000 and about \$225 000, and the figures correspond to the proportions of the companies they represent - small businesses with 5 or fewer employees, or around 10 employees when we are talking about the higher sales figures.
(10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Hogue: Then the great majority of them have achieved the break-even point they wanted in order to develop, since that takes...

Mrs. Lemelin: Yes indeed.

Mr. Hogue: That takes a base.

Mrs. Lemelin: And it seems, again according to the studies, that they have the capacity to persist much longer than many so-called male companies, longer than five years, that is, to get through the expansion stage, although it is fairly difficult for many of them.

Mr. Hogue: Do you meet or associate with similar groups in the rest of Canada, in the United States, in Europe?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): We are in contact. In addition, we strongly encourage our members to think big, to think international. So we keep up our contacts. We are in contact with networks in Canada, networks in the United States, and in Europe too. We are making a strong effort to get our members used to the idea of doing business abroad, too.

Mr. Hogue: And about 55% of your members operate in the Greater Montréal area?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): That's exactly right, and the rest in the regions.

Mr. Hogue: That's right. And among the 55%, and elsewhere, you have Francophones, Anglophones and members of other ethnic groups too.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Exactly. Oh, yes, we are open to everyone.

Mr. Hogue: And there are a number of women entrepreneurs who could be termed, in quotes, new Canadians.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): New Canadians, well, listen, it's starting. We are making a great deal of effort in that respect - moreover, we discuss this at length in our brief - to make it easier for them to integrate. But we really want, more and more, to go looking for them too, to have them join with us, precisely to make it easier for them to integrate into our society.

Mr. Hogue: And my last question, surely the least important, do you do all that in French, just like that?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): That is... What do you mean, we do all that...? Ah!

Mr. Hogue: That is, in Montréal you speak French, uh...

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Oh, yes, we speak French, but there is one chapter that likes to speak both French and English; that gives our Anglophone members a chance to come practise French and our French-language members a chance to practise English.

Mr. Hogue: Does it seem to you that your French is in the process of being lost?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): What do you mean?

Mr. Hogue: That you are losing your French because of rubbing shoulders with the English language. It's because there was a brief that said, in the Montréal region, you know, it was

becoming very precarious, the position of French. It seems to me that you are a very dynamic, positive, open-minded association, with statements, questions, answers like the ones we heard Dr. Lanctôt give Mr. Holden. You go out in the big wide world, you speak, you do that in French? Your business is conducted in French, when you need to do it in French.

Mrs. Lemelin: Listen, when we are conducting business, we try to make ourselves understood.

Mr. Hogue: Bravo!

Mrs. Lemelin: If the person we are talking to is Francophone, we will first and foremost speak the French that is the native language of some of us, most of us. There are Anglophones, but we start out by speaking French; but if the person we are talking to is Anglophone, we would be in a pretty poor position if we kept on speaking French when we could speak English.

Mr. Hogue: And that does not bother you too much.

Mrs. Lemelin: I think that in the context of globalization, we would have to go even beyond the two languages.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): We would have to, exactly.

Mrs. Lemelin: If you want to get into that discussion.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): The business market really involves several languages, not just French.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): We are just as much in favour... Yes, I think this is important. Sir, we are just as much in favour of impeccable French, and we are talking about excellence; excellence is important. And I think the quality of French could clearly be improved. But that still doesn't have anything to do with speaking other languages. On the contrary, we are in favour of Quebecers' speaking not one language, not two languages, but three or four. It's important. It's important from a human standpoint, but even more from an economic standpoint.

In this case too, whatever perspective is chosen, whatever solution is decided on, Québec will have to do business with foreign countries in any case. So give us the facilities we need. That's what we have come here to tell you this

morning. Give us the tools to be able to do it, and that means several languages.

Mr. Hogue: You can count on me.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to questions from a representative of the Government party, Mrs. Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies, I would first like to thank you for having taken the time to prepare your brief and for coming and sharing it with us this morning. It is very refreshing to hear women talk about business, and to do so as you have done this morning. I think it does us good to hear it.

In the section of the brief on economics, you speak of a structure whose exclusive mandate would be to support small businesses, thereby avoiding the inconsistencies resulting from the encroachment and overlapping of the two levels of government. Don't you think that rather than setting up a structure to avoid overlapping, or to coordinate it, it wouldn't be better just to repatriate these powers, for example those that you speak of in your brief, and arrange things so that there is only one government that can have jurisdiction over, for example, immigration and vocational training, among others, which you mention in your brief?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): It's still the same question, Madam. Repatriation will take place, one way or the other. I'm not the person who will decide; it's you and the politicians.

Mrs. Pelchat: But why do you say that repatriation will take place, one way or the other?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): Because we have to have the tools to work, and we've been telling you that: we need tools to work, tools that are simple, effective, and within our grasp. How are you going to get them back? That's your problem, not mine.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Pelchat: But at any rate, you are used to negotiating, you are used to conducting business with human beings. You know that negotiating isn't as easy as all that. I think the Parliamentary Commission also exists so that you, as businesswomen, can help us find solutions. It's the reason we are sharing these questions with you this morning. On the subject of immigration, you talk about the importance of properly integrating immigrants, new arrivals to our country, in particular regarding the language of the majority, and you say it is important to have authority over selection criteria and

integration of immigrants. As a businesswoman, you surely have to cope in your everyday affairs with newly arrived immigrants, and if I may use the feminine form, newly arrived immigrant women, and I would like to know what is the greatest problem in the job market for new immigrants? For instance for women, in particular in Montréal. Ladies?

Mrs. Lemelin: Why don't I answer. The main difficulty encountered is that I think entrepreneurs, both businessmen and businesswomen, lack information on the qualifications of immigrants or new arrivals, just as new immigrants are unfamiliar with the needs of businesses. I think the existing departments are making a great deal of effort to integrate, to facilitate a certain minimum, at the very least learning French. But afterwards, when this step has been taken, there is what I would term a wide gulf of incomprehension, which is due, I would say, to a lack of knowledge on both sides, both by the immigrants, who find themselves on the street, as it were, looking for a job, and on the other side, by us, the potential employers, who every time we have to make a decision when it is time to hire someone, get: "But who will I have to be dealing with?" There is this feeling that a new immigrant is some sort of monster. No one knows quite what he is. There is already a barrier. I think that if we set up incentives, and that's what is being talked about, incentives that could be established, this would broaden the means of communication so that the two sides would get to know each other better...

Mrs. Pelchat: But how...

Mrs. Lemelin: ...both the immigrants and the businesspeople, and it is in this respect that we are saying that businesspeople must be responsible for their actions.

Mrs. Pelchat: We have been visiting the regions for several weeks now. We have travelled throughout the different regions of Québec and people have been telling us how important it is for Québec's development that we welcome recent immigrants and try to direct them toward the regions. How do you think small and medium-size businesses could be useful to us? And how could we use them to aid in such integration and encourage these people to go out to the regions?

Mrs. Lemelin: This is just a hypothesis. I know there were reactions to this regionalization, would it be possible? Would it be financially sustainable? We anticipated that regionalization could be a solution because effectively, many small businesses... I think going out and looking for this new clientele is more often considered appropriate for small businesses

to do, in particular if you know what the requirements are and whether they can meet them. So in that sense, as businesspeople, we consider that regionalization, if it could be implemented financially, I would say even by collaboration between the Government and the entrepreneurs themselves, I think that if that energy could be used, it would be a worthwhile thing to do.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to a representative of the party forming the Official Opposition, Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to our proceedings. I have been familiar with your organization for a good while. I know that you work very hard with businesswomen to try to enable them to carve out a place for themselves, which they are certainly managing to do, let it be said. I would like to go back to the core of your recommendations, in regard to the content of a plan that you would like to see adopted for Québec, and also on more specifically constitutional questions and the way of solving the problem which you know we have, but which is your problem too.

First, in regard to this new structure for support to small businesses - Mr. Dufour very rightly mentioned it just now - there was an entrepreneurship directorate for women in the early 1980s. This structure disappeared at the end of the 1980s; in fact, the structure was dropped from the 1988-1989 budget, but the directorate was retained. So do I understand that you don't have the impression that this directorate offers you the support you need to fulfill the expectations you have regarding aid to entrepreneurship?

Mrs. Lemelin: Yes, we don't have that impression, and it isn't just an impression. In fact the aid to entrepreneurship, with what remains of the resources and people who work in it, answers the needs more of small and medium-size businesses - I'm not going to get started on a definition of small and medium-size businesses - but it is still true that in comparison with...

I repeat, as I said a while ago, that 64% of our Québec businesswomen have companies with fewer than five employees, and I think the problem lies there. It's that most businesswomen are, in a way, somewhat forgotten because more attention is devoted to larger businesses, which have been there for two years, with a sales figure, I don't remember the statistics any more, with a certain sales figure and with the ability to go looking for major amounts of venture capital, while that's not what these businesswomen need. So in that sense, there is a grey

zone, worse than grey, where everything gets delegated to someone else, where in effect they are playing hot potato to find out who will take care of these small businesses, which are not looking for so much financing, which are not asking for such major amounts of capital, but rather help at the right time.

Mrs. Marois: A type of support, in the end.

Mrs. Lemelin: And if there is a very clear mandate given to a directorate and that directorate is answerable to the Government, I think it will do much more than if the buck is passed from one department to another.

Mrs. Marois: Let me say I'm in full agreement with you, from my having worked with businesswomen, and also with young people who wanted to start up businesses. The problem we note at present is that there are no tools, no facilities where their projects can be implemented and where they can get help, which sometimes is of a completely different kind from financial assistance, but is more in the nature of working with them in preparing a file for a bank or a Caisse populaire, say, and so forth. You...

Mrs. Clément-Tessier (Louise): Just a short comment...

Mrs. Marois: Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Clément-Tessier: ...It's because there are many women who have service companies and those companies have absolutely no support, and they are companies that, at some point, become very large, but women have much more of an uphill fight. Companies like these were mentioned, companies that need less money for start-up. So banks and Caisses populaires are less willing to lend money to those people. Since they have no government support, the bank manager has to say: Your company must be nearby, it must be small, and that will be OK, we will be able to check up on you. There isn't the support from the government, and we are asking for it, because there are a lot of them around.

Mrs. Marois: I agree, and it's the same thing, the same logic applies, for the second point on page 9, where you mention that there would be facilities for financing and collaboration with the banking sphere. If I understand correctly, the policies developed, for instance at the SDI, with the participating loans in conjunction with SPEQ, do not correspond to the expectations that businesswomen might have.

Mrs. Clément-Tessier: Certainly not in small business. They say that a small business should have an average of \$20 000 to start up. That

isn't much. They say that a very, very small one could start up with \$6 000, but the overall average is about \$20 000. At \$20 000, your bank manager is going to say, OK, I'm going to be patient, go ahead; but there are no facilities to support it, and it must be really persistent. We don't have it, and we're asking for it.
(10:15 a.m.)

Mrs. Marois: I agree. You are raising a third question, the question of training. You note that there is overlapping. You say that we should finish with this overlapping that gets in the way of the aid that businesses could receive, because first of all we have a struggle to find out where to go looking for aid, etc. I think everyone is familiar with that situation.

You talk about tax measures, saying that they should be intensified. I have to admit I have a problem with tax measures for training. It works fine for large businesses, but for — that's all right, the TV will see less and we won't be so hot — small businesses, do you think training credits, that is, tax measures, are adapted so that small businesses can utilize them to enable them to do on-the-job training? Or aren't there other avenues which should be developed and which would correspond more closely to what small businesses are really like?

Mrs. Clément-Tessier: We certainly need other avenues. I don't think there are enough at present. So yes, personally, it is other avenues that are going to help us at that level.

Mrs. Marois: I agree. Because at present, to be even more concrete, do you have the impression that you know that your companies, the companies you represent, are currently using that credit?

Mrs. Clément-Tessier: There are some that do, yes. There are some, but they are not small businesses. As you say, it works better for medium-size businesses.

Mrs. Marois: OK.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): They are two completely different things. Everything that is currently set up is set up for the medium-size company and not for the small company. We're asking for... Because it isn't the same thing. They are two completely different ways of operating, with different needs and different structures. So we're asking for an agency that is created, thinks and is designed for the small business.

Mrs. Marois: I agree. I essentially share your point of view, from having discussed it often, with people at the grass-roots level who are experiencing these problems in concrete form.

Let's go on to the other part, which is the process we are currently involved in. You have 4 000 members. You tell us that you don't have a mandate. I imagine that in your board meetings you have debated the issue; you don't have a mandate to make a choice or decide on an option, but do you think it would be interesting to consult your membership? Have you thought about it?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): We have thought about it. We had very little time, and, as a point of information, we were in the process of conducting a survey when the Commission came out. So the timing was very bad. We didn't have a chance to ask the opinions of our members, our 4 000 members, that goes without saying. So that is why we don't have a mandate. We can't come here this morning and tell you yes, our 4 000 members think or don't think a certain way.

Mrs. Marois: But you think it could be a good idea to consult them?

Mrs. Lanctôt (Henriette): Definitely.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): Absolutely. But I asked you a question just now.

Mrs. Marois: Yes, but wait a bit.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): OK. Go ahead.

Mrs. Marois: It's because I want you to answer me. Do you think at the end of these proceedings, the Commission should submit a question to the people of Québec about their future? You are right to say that the problem is ours, but it is ours by delegation. It's the people of Québec who experience it in their everyday lives, who experience the duplication and all the rest. We won't go back over that. So in that sense, wouldn't the avenue be to go ask the people of Québec? And I would like to know whether you have a point of view about this.

Mrs. Lanctôt (Guylaine): We are practical, down-to-earth women. Businesswomen are women who, in general, run a business or manage a lot of money, who have employees and a family. They are practical women, down-to-earth, who understand good old common sense.

I don't often watch television, but in the evening, at 10 o'clock, when I've finished my day, just like everybody else, I sit down in my easy chair and I watch Bernard Derome. It was clear. It has been very, very confused for a long time. He would talk about Meech Lake and I'd say, what's the matter with Bernard Derome? What he's telling us isn't clear any more. And at a certain point it became clear again. He told us, listen, either Meech Lake works and we stay in

Confederation or it doesn't work and we separate. I found that very clear. It didn't work and...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Marois: I agree, thank you, Ladies.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): For a change, there is a little time left for the Chair. You have one particular recommendation that was touched on a little earlier, dealing with incentives to the business community so that it will facilitate better integration of immigrants. Are there specific measures, support for jobs, similar to certain student programs, or funds set aside for training, or something else that you have in mind?

Mrs. Lemelin: About immigration? Excuse me, Mr. Bélanger.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, yes. On the recommendation that states that the Government should create incentives for the business community so that it recognizes the role it should play in better integration of immigrants into Québec society. What sort of incentives do you have in mind?

Mrs. Lemelin: Just now, I brought up the example of encouraging the two sides to get to know each other better. I think that if on one hand, governments and even businesses make their manpower needs better known, and on the other, people know more about the immigrants here, if we select them better, if we are more familiar with them, we will be able to present them better in the context of a future work force for entrepreneurs. So when we talk about tools, really, we are asking whether it wouldn't be necessary, first and foremost, to get to know each other better, in businesses. Once the step has been taken and we know each other better, we already have tools that, as I said, can spring up on both sides. Companies have needs, and immigrant women, through the intermediary of the governments that accept them, also have needs. They have qualifications, they have skills that we should be more familiar with. Once that step has been taken, I think complementary programs, like those you mentioned just now, could be added. It is really with that in mind that we are talking about incentives.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Very good. Thank you, Madam, and thanks to all the representatives of the Association des femmes d'affaires du Québec for presenting your interesting brief. You made a point of the importance of excellent French, and you have demonstrated it here; I must congratulate you for that, and thank you once again.

Voices: Thank you for welcoming us.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:24 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:28 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission will kindly take their seats. We now welcome the Voice of English Québec. Mrs. Deborah Hook, the president, will introduce the group and present the brief. Go ahead, Madam.

Voice of English Québec

Mrs. Hook (Deborah): Thank you. Good morning, Commission members. What follows is the result of the reflection by Québec's English community on our constitutional future, presented by me, Deborah Hook, president, and Pierre St-Maur and John Keyes, members of the board of directors of Voice of English Québec.

The adoption of Canada's Constitution Act in 1982, and everything that followed, made Quebecers and Canadians aware of the importance of arriving at an acceptable resolution of the constitutional crisis in which we find ourselves. The current impasse resulting from the failure of the Meech Lake Accord has amply demonstrated that the constitutional status quo is not a viable answer to the challenges we face, in this the beginning of the 1990s.

À titre d'organisation indépendante, consciente du rôle qu'elle a à jouer, au service de toute la communauté anglophone de la région de Québec, Voice of English Québec a, dans le passé, assumé ses responsabilités sur ces questions. L'attitude adoptée par VEQ dans le débat sur l'accord du lac Meech est un exemple parmi d'autres. Le débat sur le projet de loi 178 et la commission actuelle sur la participation des anglophones aux services publics en sont deux autres. Tout comme la grande majorité des Québécois, VEQ reconnaît l'urgence de défendre le statut constitutionnel du Québec et l'importance de participer au processus de consultation entrepris par cette commission.

The English-speaking community of Québec City is the oldest in the province. Our history goes way back in time. We have always enjoyed close and friendly relations with the Francophone majority next to which we have lived for the past 200 years. This common heritage has provided us with a unique environment in which English-speaking Quebecers live alongside their Francophone neighbours without losing their identity or being assimilated.

Pour préparer notre mémoire, nous avons distribué plus de 7 000 questionnaires; on nous en a retourné environ 1 000 remplis, plusieurs d'entre eux accompagnés de commentaires sur la question constitutionnelle. Ce taux de réponse

élevé de la communauté anglophone servie par VEQ montre bien l'engagement sincère de ces Québécois à vouloir participer à fond au débat constitutionnel.

As with all Quebecers, the English-speaking community surveyed revealed a broad range of opinions on the subject of constitutional change and the place of Anglophones in a rapidly evolving province. Like other Quebecers, they too are highly dissatisfied with the status quo and ready for a change. Regarding the protection of individual rights and the rights and institutions of Québec's Anglophone community, respondents expressed a considerable degree of dissatisfaction with the provincial government.

En tant que Québécois, les membres de la communauté anglophone qui ont répondu au sondage partagent nettement certaines des grandes préoccupations touchant au caractère distinctif du Québec et à la nécessité de protéger et d'encourager ce caractère distinctif dans l'avenir. Il s'agit de résidents de longue date de la région de Québec; ils n'éprouvent aucune difficulté à travailler et à vivre dans un environnement francophone. Chez notre minorité linguistique, un nombre considérable s'accorde à dire que c'est dans le meilleur intérêt des Québécois que l'État protège la langue française. Cependant, une certaine insatisfaction est apparue lorsqu'on leur a demandé de se prononcer sur l'esprit de justice et d'ouverture d'esprit dans lesquels ces mesures ont été implantées dans le passé. Sur l'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec, les réponses à notre questionnaire ont révélé une nette préférence pour une solution fédérale. Une minorité importante était cependant à l'aise lorsqu'on lui a demandé de se prononcer sur l'avenir de la communauté à l'intérieur d'un système plus décentralisé, dans un Québec bénéficiant d'un statut particulier, et à l'intérieur d'un Québec autonome partageant certains champs de compétence avec le reste du Canada.

En réponse aux questions portant sur des aspects particuliers comme les fardeaux financiers, la protection des droits en tant que citoyens canadiens pour tous les Québécois, advenant des changements, nos répondants se sont pratiquement tous exprimés dans le même sens. Voice of English Québec est convaincue que le statu quo constitutionnel et politique est impraticable et doit être corrigé de toute urgence. Nous estimons également que ce redressement devrait être envisagé dans un contexte canadien. Il s'agit d'une préférence non pas inspirée par la crainte, mais qui reconnaît plutôt les avantages positifs à retirer d'une telle formule.

Le fédéralisme, qui assure la répartition et le partage des compétences entre les différents paliers gouvernementaux, est une formule qui semble particulièrement bien conçue pour assurer la protection des minorités.

Federalism is also an important and effective instrument for Canadians and Quebecers alike. Québec, a distinct society, has followed its own path to modernization, particularly through the socioeconomic changes that took place during the Quiet Revolution, and has managed to preserve and develop a solid foothold for the French language and French culture. The growth of Québec's Anglophone community has continuously enriched the distinctiveness of Québec culture and the way of life in the province. The persistent vitality of our community must be treated as an integral part of any effort to define a constitutional status for Québec. We are rallying all the forces at our disposal to build a promising future for all Quebecers.

À la lumière de ces propos, il importe au plus haut point de protéger et de mettre en valeur les outils nécessaires à la survie de notre communauté, tant pour le Québec que pour les Québécois anglophones à l'intérieur du Québec. Si nos jeunes ont un rôle important à jouer dans cet avenir commun, il faut continuer à leur en fournir l'occasion dans les programmes d'enseignement, augmenter pour eux les possibilités d'emploi et leur permettre d'apprendre la langue seconde. Comme tous les Québécois, nous nous demandons si les services nécessaires seront disponibles pour répondre aux besoins d'une population vieillissante et si les soins médicaux et les programmes sociaux seront accessibles.

Consequently, our community would like to make the following five recommendations. Voice of English Québec acknowledges the need to protect and develop the distinctiveness of Québec as a fundamental priority that must guide Quebecers in their reflection on their constitutional and political future. The distinctiveness of Québec's Anglophone community must constitute an essential element in its projects for the future.

Secondly, it would be advisable to seek out a solution to the present constitutional impasse within a Canadian context, based on a federalist approach, in which we have confidence.

Thirdly, it is essential to find a solution for Québec's ambiguous constitutional status. Whatever the measures taken to overcome the present impasse, the protection of the rights and institutions of Québec's Anglophones must be an integral part of any changes. This protection will be ensured through the legitimization of our language in Québec.

Furthermore, VEQ considers that the Commission's purpose is first and foremost to identify the priorities common to all Quebecers concerned with their future and to draw a blueprint for the type of society we are in the process of building. A number of paths may present themselves to us. Under no circumstances must we limit in simplistic fashion our reflection

on the choice of one constitutional option over another.

Lastly, any changes arising from these hearings must be subject to a permanent democratic consultation and the public's consent by way of a referendum.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Hook. Let's begin with questions from the representative of the ruling party, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Good morning. Good morning Mrs. Hook, Mr. Keyes, Mr. St-Maur and thank you for being here today. I am very pleased to welcome you as the MNA for Jean-Talon and as minister for the Québec City region. With your permission, I would like first of all to salute the Anglophone community of the greater Québec City area, a community that contributes much to the region on the cultural, political as well as economic level, and that also participates in truly exceptional fashion in the community we all share and share very well, I might add. Moreover, as you yourself quite rightly point out in your brief, the English-speaking community of Québec City has a long history of cooperation and close relations with the Francophone community, and I would like to emphasize - and this is a rare example - that you pronounced yourselves in favour of the Meech Lake Accord.

You were being realistic when you said: If the Meech Lake Accord is not accepted, the consequences will be serious. You were quite right. But in your brief you say: The status quo is not acceptable, but neither is independence. The middle ground between these two positions is a renewal of our brand of federalism, adapted to meet with the satisfaction of Quebecers. I was touched in your brief to see to what extent you refer to Quebecers, saying: Quebecers must be satisfied. You talk of democracy, of the democratic process. In the wake of Meech Lake, how do you think the rest of Canada might react to the proposal of a renewed federalism, as various participants here understand the meaning of the term, and, more generally, as we might conceive it?

Mr. St-Maur (Pierre): It is evident to us that the purpose of this Commission and the purpose of drafting a constitution that will be an integral part of our lives in the future is to arrive at a social contract. Such a social contract involves all the integral components that make up Québec society, which includes all minorities and ethnic groups. This social contract also necessarily must reflect the evolution of Québec society, and fundamental principles such as the protection of rights, be they linguistic or institutional. In this spirit, our community has made its mandate very clear: We want to

participate in these negotiations. We want to continue being an integral part of this society and, as you quite aptly put it, our participation in Québec society is a definite plus, and I would hope that our role in the future, under a new contract, will be just as significant in shaping a society in full evolution. When this Commission ends, Canada will have to realize that Québec means business, and it will have to respond accordingly.

We have no control over how the rest of Canada will respond. I believe that if Canada has maintained a rich identity throughout the world, it must now show generosity towards all its constituent parts. It must recognize the fact that Québec is a distinct society, and that for the good of the evolution of this integral part of Canada, it must sit down and negotiate, enter into negotiations to arrive at a constitutional arrangement. This is our wish.

Mr. Rémillard: Vous parlez de l'"égalité des chances", mais si vous voulez discuter d'un fédéralisme renouvelé avec le reste du Canada, de quels atouts devrions-nous disposer pour être en mesure de négocier cette question avec succès?

Mr. Keyes (John): D'une part, nous avons une commission qui aborde probablement aujourd'hui la question la plus fondamentale devant les Québécois. Dans notre recommandation n° 4, nous proposons humblement que la première tâche des Québécois membres de cette commission soit d'établir des priorités. Non pas choisir un moyen comme une fin en soi, mais établir des priorités qui contribueront à créer le "plan de société" dont Pierre parlait tout à l'heure. Voilà le consensus que le reste du Canada reconnaît, au terme des délibérations de la Commission. Ce consensus sera le résultat d'une consultation sincère, totale et démocratique auprès des particuliers et des groupes vers lesquels la Commission se dirige.

Les résultats de la Commission constitueront alors la base de la négociation. Le consensus des Québécois sur le... the "plan de société" that Québec desires for the future. This would be a blueprint for society that reaches, I would hope, the rest of Canada and opens the door to fruitful negotiations, perhaps more fruitful than the negotiations of this past year.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now move on to questions from the Official Opposition representative, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read your brief with much interest and I would like to thank you for having taken such pains to prepare it, going so far as to consult the members of your community.

I have a couple of questions for you, but first I would like you to refer to your questionnaire, first, to page 5 of your questionnaire, to find out if you truly believe what is written there. In question 12 you state that, if Québec were to separate from Canada, it would be fundamental for the governments of Canada and Québec to guarantee the right to the full enjoyment of one's personal property and real estate, as well as one's right to possess, acquire or dispose of property, and to bring it into Québec or take it out without impediment, regardless of the country, citizenship or place of residence one has chosen.

Deep down, do you truly believe that an independent Québec could deprive its Anglophone minority of property rights?

Mrs. Hook: No, we don't really believe that, but it was our duty, in carrying out our consultation as we did, to ask that question, so that we would be in a position today to tell you exactly how our population feels. We wanted to approach the issue from every angle.

Mr. Chevette: OK. But, deep down, you know very well that the people of Québec would recognize that any group whatsoever has the right to own property.

Mrs. Hook: Yes.

Mr. Chevette: The free movement of goods and people is already a given. We've already talked about that. The right to own property is a fundamental right and I would hope that, if anybody asks you, you'll tell them that it's totally unrealistic to believe that the right to own property would be curtailed in Québec. I hope I've reassured you.

Mrs. Hook: Thank you.

Mr. Chevette: My question is the following: I recognize that you disagree with the status quo, and I agree with you on that. So, on this point, we agree. Where our views differ, however, is on the means of getting out of this status quo. As you know, let's face it, the option we favour has been public knowledge for a long time now. But yours is one that I'd like to question. Since you're opting for a renewed federalism, could you explain and tell me what makes you think that we could arrive at a renewed federalism when... It goes back to what the minister asked you, for all intents and purposes, and I would like to hear some more reasons: What makes you believe that English Canada, after rejecting Meech, would be prepared to sit down and negotiate areas of jurisdiction you yourselves are claiming, as well as others, such as businesswomen, chambers of

commerce, even employers are asking for more power. How are you going to go about negotiating a renewed federalism when much smaller points have already been rejected? (10:45 a.m.)

Mr. Keyes: Well, whenever you enter into negotiations, as some of the people assembled here may well know, nothing is guaranteed in advance. What we firmly believe, however, is that it would be worth a try... Somewhere in the brief, we talk about means and objectives. We have a clear idea of what a constitution should be, whatever its form. Be it independence or federalism, we see it as a tool, a means of building the society that we, together, want to build. They are not in and of themselves goals as such. We live in a brand of federalism that, we feel, has enabled the societies of Québec and Canada to become what they are today. Needless to say, today, we are one of the most democratic societies in the world. We have reason to be proud of the evolution undergone by the existing federalism until now, but it's an ever-changing process.

What we envisage is working to establish our blueprint for society by conferring with groups such as ours, by conferring with the employers groups, by conferring with the unions, in order to arrive at priorities that we together wish to achieve in terms of way of life. And, subsequently, choosing the means best suited to get us where we want to go. Federalism got us where we are today. We feel it's worth pursuing a dialogue, if at all possible. What would be different today is that the message would be much clearer. You are in the process of taking the pulse of Québec. The rest of Canada will listen to you.

Mr. Chevette: ...And yet, Sir...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Chevette, I'm sorry but I believe your time is up. Right?

Mr. Chevette: I was under the impression I still had half a minute.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ah! I bet you'll make up for the lost time later in the day, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Mr. Chairman, I will ask that I be given the same treatment as others in the past weeks. It's my first time. How about half a minute, on the Chair's time?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Chevette, if I grant this time now, you'll have to do without it later. As you wish.

Mr. Chevette: Mr. Chairman, I'd rather have the time now.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Chevette: That you are opting for federalism is clear to me, but the question I put to you was the following: What makes you think that English Canada, which has refused for the past 30 years to change the scheme of things with regard to the division of power, could spontaneously agree to negotiate much more than what we were asking for in the past? And secondly, since it's the last time I can avail myself of this privilege, pray tell me why so many people in your community are opposed to the "notwithstanding" clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights but want their collective rights entrenched in Québec's Charter of Rights in the event of separation.

Mrs. Hook: I think I'll field this one. I think the process we've begun with this Commission is only the first part of the process. Negotiation with the rest of Canada will come later. But it has to be a forewarned and well-informed Canada, and the only way to educate the rest of Canada is to inform them of what we want here, to eliminate the emotional side of the debate. Two people angry at each other will never resolve anything. Negotiation must be entered into in good faith, with both parties well informed on the issue, and I think this is what has been lacking until now.

Mr. St-Maur: I think that Québec has quite a history when it comes to negotiating. We might remember Mr. Duplessis who, through one formula or another... I'm trying to answer your question on how we expect to reach our goal. Mr. Duplessis managed to get what he wanted, taxes. Jean Lesage succeeded through negotiation in modernizing the financial institutions of Québec. And René Lévesque, your own former premier, succeeded in...

Mr. Chevette: And yours...

Mr. St-Maur: ...of Québec. And René Lévesque, your own former premier, succeeded in...

Mr. Chevette: And yours...

Mr. St-Maur: And ours too, yes...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. St-Maur: ...and we as Quebecers are proud of him for leaving us one thing, and I think it's very important to say this today, that he was seeking a new challenge for Québec society, and I think this new challenge is to be

found within the framework of an arrangement, just like Mr. Duplesis and Mr. Lesage before him were able to reach. What we're advancing as a premise is that these negotiations can be conducted as they have in the past.

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

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Voice of English Québec, a very important organization in the greater Québec City area, but before getting to my questions, I'd like to point out two little things. First, on page 1 of your survey, in the questionnaire, there appears to be a mathematical miscalculation in question 4. The figures there add up to 122.7. It's just something you might want to check and correct.

Secondly, I'd like to mention the fact that, as the Justice Minister has already stated, you were the only Anglophone group in Québec to support, although deeply divided, the Meech Lake Accord. All the other Anglophone groups in Québec felt that if there was the slightest chance that the distinct society clause, that this interpretative clause could compromise the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, if there was even the shadow of a doubt, then they were not ready to take that risk. That's why I was somewhat surprised to read in your brief that... Quand je lis en première page, que "la position prise par Voice of English Québec dans le débat sur l'accord du lac Meech illustre le sérieux d'une organisation au service de tous les membres de la communauté anglophone". Ce point m'a semblé un peu bizarre puisque la plupart des groupes anglophones se préoccupent de la façon d'interpréter la notion de société distincte.

Mais pour en arriver à mes questions, je trouve que votre questionnaire est très valable pour sonder la communauté anglophone. Je crois que les statistiques confirment la forte tendance fédéraliste de la communauté anglophone du Québec. Je pense qu'il pourrait y avoir une légère divergence d'opinion entre votre désir ferme, ou votre expression de désir ferme, que nous devons de toute urgence trouver une solution au statu quo et ce que révèle votre questionnaire, que 70,1% de la communauté anglophone estime qu'un gouvernement central plus fort pourrait mieux protéger la communauté anglophone du Québec. Alors je vois là une certaine anomalie. Mais ma question n'est pas tant de nature constitutionnelle que de nature communautaire. Tous les groupes anglophones qui ont comparu devant cette commission ont exprimé, comme vous, un grand attachement au Québec; ils ont également reconnu la nécessité de préserver l'identité linguistique du Québec dans le contexte nord-américain.

Cependant, tous ces groupes ont invoqué d'une manière très énergique, en fait, le respect

d'une démarcation subtile entre la protection de la langue et de la culture de la majorité au Québec, d'une part, et le respect des droits individuels des minorités et des droits des anglophones, d'autre part. C'est ce qui a soulevé, dans un grand nombre de ces discussions, la question de la clause "nonobstant", et son utilité comme dispositif de protection de la langue de la majorité ou de constatation de cette ligne de démarcation, alors que la Cour Suprême estime que l'article 1 de notre Charte, ou la clause "limites raisonnables", représente le parfait compromis, le parfait équilibre entre les deux.

Alors ma question, aujourd'hui, est la suivante: Quelle est la position de Voice of English Québec sur cette question d'une ligne de démarcation entre les aspirations collectives, d'une part au Québec, et le respect des droits individuels, d'autre part? Et comment, en fait, la communauté anglophone du Québec peut-elle convaincre tous les Québécois de respecter cet équilibre entre les deux?

Mr. Keyes: En ce qui concerne la relation entre la minorité et la majorité... Nous traitons de cette question plusieurs fois dans le mémoire. Quelqu'un a déjà dit: "Un bon moyen d'évaluer la santé d'une démocratie, c'est de voir quel traitement elle réserve à sa minorité, et non de considérer la puissance de sa majorité." Et nous sommes totalement d'accord avec cette façon d'envisager la démocratie. Ceci dit, en matière de protection des droits des minorités, je crois que la formulation que nous utilisons est celle-ci: une partie intégrante de la société que nous allons bâtir ensemble. En ce début des années 1990, nous prenons la voie démocratique pour atteindre la majorité. Le vent ne peut en venir à bout, dans un sens ou dans l'autre.

Mr. Libman: Alors, vous estimez qu'une clause "nonobstant" ne devrait pas figurer dans notre constitution pour protéger la majorité?

Mr. Keyes: Nous estimons que la clause "nonobstant" est une mesure temporaire d'ici la mise sur pied du "plan de société". Ensuite, il conviendra de rédiger une bonne constitution.

Mr. Libman: Avec la clause des limites raisonnables. Je vois. D'accord. My second question, Mr. Chairman, very briefly... D'autres groupes ont également formulé des recommandations. Nous devons en formuler auprès de l'Assemblée nationale, tout comme d'autres groupes l'ont fait avec nous dans le même sens. Plusieurs ont souligné l'importance de protéger, dans la constitution, les commissions scolaires linguistiques en vertu des garanties de la nouvelle réforme de l'enseignement, l'accès aux services médicaux et sociaux en anglais et, bien entendu, comme je l'ai déjà mentionné,

certaines préoccupations touchant la clause nonobstant.

Avez-vous des recommandations précises dans ce sens que vous pouvez présenter à la Commission, pour nous permettre d'en transmettre quelques-unes à l'Assemblée nationale? Êtes-vous d'accord que la constitution doit garantir des commissions linguistiques, par exemple?

Mr. Keyes: L'une des recommandations touche spécifiquement la légitimation de l'anglais comme faisant partie du caractère linguistique de la province de Québec, qui devrait figurer au nombre des priorités dans l'établissement du nouvel avenir constitutionnel que nous discutons. Nous sommes convaincus que, en tant que minorité contribuant à former l'ensemble du Québec, ces droits devraient être légitimés. Les commissions scolaires linguistiques sont peut-être une façon d'y arriver. Nous estimons que le temps est maintenant venu de reconnaître officiellement l'anglais à l'intérieur du cadre constitutionnel.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): M. d'Anjou. Nous avons déjà dépassé les cinq minutes depuis un bon bout de temps.

Mr. Libman: Il a utilisé le terme "légitimer" la reconnaissance. Pourriez-vous être un peu plus explicite quant à...

Mrs. Hook: En légitimant la reconnaissance, nous en ferons certainement partie. La légitimation est, en effet, la reconnaissance légale, la reconnaissance d'une société.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now move on to Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to follow up on Mr. Libman's questions, if I may.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, but keep it short if you can, Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. d'Anjou: As short as possible, Mr. Chairman.

Civil rights fall under provincial jurisdiction and we know that the civil law of Québec is different from that of Canada. In 1982, the inclusion of a Charter of Rights in the Canadian Constitution, when Québec already had its own Charter of Rights, constituted an intrusion, without Québec's consent, into the civil rights of Québec. What is your reaction to this sort of intrusion by the federal government into an area of provincial jurisdiction, without the consent of the province in question?

Mr. Keyes: The repatriation of the Cons-

titution in 1982 — being an historian, I like dotting my i's — was completed without the consent of Québec; I think this is at the root of the problem you've just raised. Had the Constitution been drafted by all the constituent parts of Canada, we wouldn't have this problem 8 years later. We would have had a constitution everyone could live with. We didn't get it in 1982. Now we're at an impasse. That's the impasse we're in right now, the status quo. When we speak of the constitutional status quo, that's the status quo we firmly wish to break out of.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge.
(11:00 a.m.)

Mr. Laberge: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First let me compliment you on the presentation of your brief, its contents, its tone, and, by God! It's refreshing to see that you think of yourselves as full-fledged Quebecers. None of that "we're considered to be"... No. We're talking about Quebecers. You're a group in favour of federalism and you have your reasons for that. I don't know many people, although there are some, unfortunately, who go around saying "Canada is a terrible country". No, on the contrary, Canada is a big, beautiful country, democratic and everything. Fine. But I was reading, a bit out of curiosity, the comments made by some of the members of your group in response to the questionnaire. And there, I must admit I read some absolutely dreadful comments, the type we hear now and again, but we shouldn't be up in arms over that.

I also noted in your brief that you speak of the status quo. To that you say: We need change. You also speak of more power for Québec. Now, I must tell you, I represent at least 100 000 to 125 000 Anglophones and allophones at the FTQ. And, obviously, our position was taken with their approval, their consent. What we're saying is: Canada refused to negotiate, so let's have a sovereign Québec, but not without guaranteeing and ensuring that the rights and privileges of Anglophones, allophones and Native people — yes, because we also want to include Native people in the picture — are preserved, maintained and even guaranteed. We have no problem with that whatsoever.

But what should our bargaining strategy be in negotiating with the federal government? Maybe it's my background, I don't know. Would you do like me under similar circumstances? Would you first get a strike mandate and then go to the federal government and say: Listen, if you don't want to negotiate, we strike? It might be because of my background, as I said.

A voice: More than likely.

Mr. St-Maur: Mr. Laberge, you probably have a great deal of experience with negotiations. I think we trust that the institutions of Québec can negotiate with the rest of Canada in good faith. Sure, we've failed in the past, but who hasn't tripped up at least once in their life. What we're asking here is that we pick ourselves up, and get back on our feet. That's what we're doing right now, at this very moment, by identifying the strengths that Québec can rely on. I think Canada in the past has proven that it is not such a pig-headed society. I believe we must continue to negotiate, we're in a democracy after all, by relying on our strengths — we do have them — we managed to do it in the past.

It's hard to understand why a society like ours can't move forward. This is why we consider the status quo to be ineffective.

Mr. Laberge: In every negotiation, as you know, there nevertheless is a power struggle.

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

Mr. Laberge: One little question and my time is already up?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You did stretch it some, Mr. Laberge, and, anyway, we're already running a little behind. However, I guess if you have another small one you'd like to ask, seeing how things have been going this morning, you may go ahead.

Mr. Laberge: Very kind of you, but no, no, I was just surprised, that's all.

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

Mr. Laberge: Very well. We approached the negotiations with nothing, that is, in the eyes of many Quebecers, with very little. This was before Mr. Bourassa told Canada about the repatriation demands that a whole lot of groups are now making: chambers of commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and so on. A lot of organizations: Mouvement Desjardins, banks, universities. Now, before even telling the federal government that we wanted to assume all these powers, they said "no" to the minimum. There, you must admit that... It's true, I have some experience with negotiations. Before I even ask for a raise I'm told: No, not a penny, when I've got a mandate for a hike of at least 50 cents...

Mrs. Hook: I think that's exactly it, Mr. Laberge, the process itself was at the root of the 1982 failure. This time around, again, we hope to be able to... We'll try to negotiate once

again but this time with everything we have acquired, and also deciding ahead of time with whom we'll negotiate, and especially the process...

Mr. Laberge: A strike mandate!

Mrs. Hook: A strike mandate? Well, Sir, I think...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Hook: ...you have much more experience. But it's the process and the instruments, the tools that should be revised, and then let's try again with these.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Pagé, we're out of time, but we ought to let you ask at least one question.

Mrs. Pagé: I would hope so.

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

Mrs. Pagé: First let me thank you for presenting us the Anglophone community's point of view; I find it particularly important, at a time when Québec is pondering its political and constitutional future, that all the components of Québec society come before us to express their views. I would like to remark on your first recommendation, in which you talk about developing and protecting the distinct character of Québec. In my opinion, one feature of Québec's distinct character is that it's the only province where the majority is Francophone. Also, when I look at your survey, page 1, question 3, your members disagree with the foundations for Bill 101. On page 6, question 15, they disagree with Bill 178, the sign law. That's how I see it, because to use the language of one's choice in public or in private must certainly also include signs. So, they're against Bill 178. It seems to me that they are also opposed to the existing provisions of Bill 101 respecting education. My question then is the following: What are you prepared to do to develop and preserve the distinct, i.e. Francophone, character of Québec, beyond simply stating the fact? Because, if you have nothing concrete to offer, then you'll have to agree with me that all this is wishful thinking.

My second question refers to page 7 of your brief where you say your members don't have as much faith in their provincial government as they do in the federal government when it comes to respecting individual rights as well as the rights and institutions of the Anglophone community, which is in the minority in Québec. If the federal government is indeed the better champion of individual rights and the

institutions of Canada's minorities, how do you explain that it has been able to play this role so well, as you seem to think, for Québec's Anglophone community and yet so poorly for the Francophone communities outside Québec?

Mr. Keyes: It's a question of trust. We surveyed 7 000 people and got 1 000 responses. We're proud of our response rate. And, as democrats, we've presented you with our findings and it's clear that in terms of trust, our community has less confidence in the provincial government to defend its rights than it does in the federal government. That's what we discovered, and you and I must deal with that.

Bill 101 hurt us, and Bill 178 also hurt us and continues to do so. What we've observed through other questions, however, is that of the 1 000 respondents, 88% have been in Québec 10 years or more. Also, 43% work "mostly in French", to quote the English questionnaire. This figure includes the nearly 20% that work equally in both languages. Ours is a community that feels it's being brushed aside. When we speak of legitimizing the English language in Québec, that's what we mean. Historically, we have a place in Québec, and we feel that some things were kind of lost in the shuffle during the debates on Bill 101 and Bill 178. As we forge ahead into the 1990s and the future before us, we'd like to give it a little more thought. The errors of the past should not dictate our actions in the future. There have been errors in the past, on both sides. The fact that Franco-manitobans have been less fairly treated than Québec Anglophones, well, that again is an error of the past. That should not influence the future of Québec society. Instead, it should be guided by its generosity, its sense of compromise and a historical sense of what makes up Québec society. Looking around the table and, going back to history, I think of names such as Claude Ryan, Daniel Johnson, and of institutions - key institutions in Québec - and I can't help but feel that the English community has its place in Québec and we want to keep it. In short, yesterday's mistakes are behind us, let's work on the future together.

Mrs. Pagé: You speak of errors...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry, Mrs. Pagé, but we've been... I was going to say extremely tolerant as it is, but that would be inappropriate under the circumstances. What I mean to say is we're out of time. We've had good questions and good answers. Thank you, Mrs. Hook, Mr. Keyes, Mr. St-Maur for your presentation. Thank you for the survey you conducted and for your answers to our members' questions.

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

(Proceedings resumed at 11:13 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, please regain your seats. We'll now proceed with the first of our expert witnesses appearing at the Commission's request. I'll remind you that all the people given hearings here are people who responded to the Commission's call for briefs. We also let it be known weeks ago that the Commission had asked a certain number of university and other personalities to complete a list of eight questions that would serve as the basis for a brief to be submitted to us, that would help in our later hearings. Mr. Dion is the first of these experts to appear before us. He is a well-known sociologist.

Let me remind you that we shall proceed with these presentations according to the same rules as applied for the presentation of briefs from the general public. However, let me remind you that all expert witnesses may be asked to appear before us again, individually or as part of a group, at one of the Commission's private working sittings. Though we'll do our best to give every one of the many members who want to ask Mr. Dion a question the chance to do so, please bear in mind that the Commission not only has the right but also the duty and the pleasure to hear these experts again during its private sittings. Having said this, the floor is now yours, Mr. Dion.

Mr. Léon Dion

Mr. Dion (Léon): Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Commission members. I see only friendly faces here. I'm very happy to be here with you for at least these few minutes and I thank you very much for inviting me to reflect with you on the political and constitutional future of Québec. Like you, I regret the absence in our deliberations of our Premier, Mr. Bourassa, and I hope that Mr. Bourassa will recover soon enough to take part in the work of the Commission, so that the Commission may benefit from his wisdom and experience.

The problem which has been facing us for so many years is too complex for me to get to the bottom of in one short hour. My time, I must tell you, is timeless. Yours, I see, is very, very precise. Still, I'm going to attempt to go straight to the eye of the beaver, our national animal. I apologize for the abstract nature of my remarks, but I do ask you to listen to them. I don't have the time to add my usual eloquence. I'm forced to adopt a synoptic form.

First, as a preliminary remark, I suggest that we avoid haste. It is quite certain that we are at a turning point: the post-Meech Lake period, the presence of a federal government which many people find wishy-washy, we have an economic recession that can be attributed,

perhaps too much, to a government and so on. As well, I believe that we must not be in too much of a hurry to hold a referendum, as is sometimes proposed.

So, we ask the question: What sort of referendum should we hold? If we were to lose this referendum, where would we be? This is perhaps prudent. This is why I say that reason must prevail over passion. We must take the time to reflect; we must take a lot of time.

The more Canada proves to be impatient and short-tempered, the more we must be patient and thoughtful. The important thing is to be well governed. This is not easy, but it is feasible. Let's not attribute to federalism, on the other hand, all the difficulties that we are subject to today and which may be due to accidental errors of government.

We have four basic concepts. First, there is the federalism of the status quo, or perhaps slightly modified. The second concept is that of sovereignty-association, a sovereignty which would be accompanied by an association, which must be defined before any referendum. The third is a federalism which would be renewed, in depth, and which would give Québec a new, unique political and constitutional status. And the fourth is the choice of independence, without any proposal, at least initially, of association.

If, after negotiations or attempts at negotiations, we do not obtain either sovereignty-association or an in-depth renewed federalism, we would be obliged either to remain with the present federal status quo or to take the risk of independence. And these are, I think, the positions in which we find ourselves today.

If we opt for independence, what form of sovereignty would be enjoyed by an independent Québec? I'm sure that you are all familiar with the work of Hugo Grotius, *De jure belli ac pacis*, published in 1625, on the question of sovereignty. I think that he has provided the fundamental concepts on which we have based most of our reasoning since then. It is power, the plenitude of all internal and external powers which are based on a powerful civil society. This is what sovereignty is. And according to what we may gather from the work of Hugo Grotius and others who have followed him, there are no countries which are completely sovereign. We are all, all countries are more or less sovereign. Some probably more than others. On the other hand, and at the same time, all countries, at present, are rapidly becoming integrated into a world science, a world-wide science, and a world economy, and, to a certain extent, into a world culture and world politics. So, we may ask ourselves the question: What then becomes of the political and constitutional status of a Québec which has declared itself independent? It would also, of course, be caught up in this vast movement of world-wide integration, in addition

to being subject to, of course, the dependencies of its position in a continent that you know so well: economic, social, cultural, and political dependencies, as well.

So, an independent Québec would at the same time benefit from its environment and be a prisoner of it. It's already, as you know, sovereign in certain aspects, in the aspects where it enjoys exclusive jurisdictions. And what we want to obtain is more jurisdictions for Québec. We wish to increase its constitutional jurisdictions so that it may obtain the constitutional and political status appropriate to the unique character of its society.

So, we have, I think, a common objective: to increase the sovereignty of Québec as much as conditions allow. More political jurisdictions for Québec may be obtained in two ways: sovereignty-association, or in-depth renewed federalism. I will come back to the question of independence. The differences between sovereignty-association and in-depth renewed federalism are qualitative and quantitative. Qualitatively, a sovereign and associated Québec would become a country and this has an unquestionable symbolic value. In the second case, that is if we chose in-depth renewed federalism, Québec would remain a province and if the change is extremely profound, perhaps it would be granted another status which is today uncertain and which would have to be defined. Quantitative differences depend on what would be involved in the association, if we opt for sovereignty, and what we would like to retain of federalism, if we opt for a renewed federalism.

Consequently, we are involved in a balancing act and I dare not make a decision on this subject at this time. I think it's too soon. I personally favour maintaining links with Canada, if possible. Both in-depth renewed federalism and sovereignty-association are equally acceptable to me in principle. Before coming out in favour of one or the other, I want to work perhaps with you, on my own or with other persons to see what sovereignty-association would be and what renewed federalism could be. If both of these paths are closed to us, for example, by a negative reply from English Canada, between the federal status quo and sovereignty-association which would be closed to us, I would opt for the independence of Québec. I would seek, of course, all appropriate means of cushioning in advance the shock of transition which, in my opinion, will be very strong, very rough. If it were impossible for us to immediately accept independence, please let us avoid becoming involved in any process of constitutional and political reform. Do not play on the nerves of the people. Let's stay where we are. Let's stay fixed in the status quo if we cannot see it through. I have one last note, Mr. Chairman. My short brief must be seen as a basis for future negotiations. I could remain firm on certain

points, be more flexible on others, making further claims; all this, of course, is for discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Dion. We'll now go on to the questions. I'd like to remind all the members that the shorter and more to the point the questions, the shorter the answers. Mr. Brassard, the representative of the Official Opposition party, will begin the question period.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you. Mr. Dion, we are of course very happy to welcome you to this hearing. I must tell you that it's not an accident that you are the first expert to speak. I think that this comes from your role and place within what we might call "Québec's intellectual elite". Mr. Dion, you described yourself some years ago as a tired federalist. I don't know if you have now become worn out or, as my grandmother would say, dejected. We'll try to see this in the course of this very short hour.

In your brief, there are two main themes; this is what I think I have seen. The first main theme is that the constitutional mechanism, provided in the Constitution, does not work. This is almost an assured failure. You speak of the awkwardness of the structure of the constitutional conferences and, obviously, the failure of Meech is an exemplary illustration.

Second main theme, you opt, as you have just mentioned, for what we call a particular status for Québec: many powers, including exclusive jurisdictions with respect to language, among other things, which constitutes what the Pepin-Robarts Commission, which you participated in, called an asymmetrical federalism. How are we to get there, to this particular status, since the negotiations mode leads to failure? How are we to get there?

Your reply, in your brief, is that we have to force English Canada's hand, this is on page 1. On page 9, you say: "We must push them into a corner". On page 10, you say: "They will only give in if they have a knife at their throat". These are the expressions that you use. So, we need a threat to free the constitutional logjam and obtain a particular status within the present federalism. And the threat that you propose is the threat of a referendum on sovereignty.

Mr. Dion: On independence.

Mr. Brassard: On independence, that is right. So, my question is the following: After having, you will agree, cried wolf for 30 years, and again very recently during the Meech negotiations, Mr. Mulroney, Mr. Bourassa, Mr. Rémiillard cried wolf. I have newspaper articles here: Mulroney brings up the spectre of separation. He told Newfoundland that the Meech

Lake Accord was designed to avoid another referendum in Québec.

So, after crying wolf for 30 years, you say, we should try crying wolf one last time, by threatening a referendum on independence. My question, very simply, why do you think, Mr. Dion, that this time English Canada is going to believe that there is a wolf, and why would the threat have any effect now?

Mr. Dion: Thank you, Mr. Brassard. Since 1962, I have been saying that I was not afraid of Québec independence. I'm not afraid of it either. What you say is also true for federalism, which could be renewed in depth to a point where the real status of Québec would be unique and, of course, more asymmetric than provided for by the Pepin-Robarts Commission. It could also be sovereignty-association, but in both cases, we may very well be faced with a refusal to negotiate. Do you agree?

This is why, whether we opt for the first process, that is a reform like the one I propose in my text, but probably better worked out, better designed, or we opt for sovereignty-association, it is possible, and I believe even probable, under the present circumstances - which may however change in six months - that English Canada might say no. I say that before starting, one way or the other, we must be very sure that if they say no to us, we will dare proceed to independence. Do you agree? Or else, we should not move.

I would not like us to play with the nerves of the people of Québec again because if, for the third time in 10 years, we come back empty-handed from negotiations where we travelled throughout the country, well, people would not allow it. This is the reason for what I call the lightning rod, the ultimate weapon. I will not propose independence at the beginning, at least for the moment, but I will keep it in mind, and I would have to say that if either of the two initiatives which, in my opinion, may be chosen, do not work, Québec should agree to plunge into independence with all the risks that this may involve. But we accept them in advance and are prepared for them.
(11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Brassard: But, Mr. Dion...

Mr. Dion: I don't know if this is clear in my text, but it is clear in my mind.

Mr. Brassard: But, my question is also the following: Why take the risk of being humiliated for the third time in 10 years? This is what you say on page 1. There is a risk of being humiliated for the third time in 10 years. Why take this risk of being humiliated for the third time in 10 years, because there is a risk? You say, on page 9 of your brief: "Unless we push English Canada into a corner and, even if we do,

it is very possible that they will choose to agree to the departure of Québec rather than give in to its demands, which will certainly be more than the simple demands of 1986."

And you also say on page 10: "English Canada will only give in – and even this is not assured – if they have a knife to their throat." So, there is a risk of humiliation for the third time in 10 years, since the threat that you want us to brandish of a referendum on independence, even with this threat, the risk of being humiliated still exists. Why do you want us to take this risk again?

Mr. Dion: Well. If we propose a referendum on Québec independence and the result is negative, we run an even greater risk. If, moreover, we propose a referendum on sovereignty-association, defining what we mean by association and we are refused the aspects of association that we propose with respect to the questions that I raise in my text and of others, well, at this point, we proceed to a second referendum. And this one, with a negative return as we would have, the population, I think, would be much better prepared to accept an affirmative vote on the complete independence of Québec. I don't know if you understand what I mean.

In other words, this may take place in two steps, and I don't know if in six months English Canada would not be prepared to negotiate what, in my opinion, would be simplest: an association of the type proposed perhaps in the 1979-1980 White Paper, but greatly modified or, again, federalism, remaining in the country, if you like, with the Canadian Constitution, providing ourselves with a Québec constitution. Either might be acceptable to me. But, never without being willing to see it through. If you say to me why not see it through right away? This is your question.

Mr. Brassard: Yes, this is my question.

Mr. Dion: Well, I say that this is risky.

Mr. Brassard: You take the words out of my mouth, Mr. Dion.

Mr. Dion: This is risky. If we do it, as I say, I'm not afraid. But, still, we should closely examine everything that would arise during the transition period. In my text, I only raise the matter of culture. There are hundreds of millions at stake here, and so on. We must warn the people, and warn them properly, of all the risks which are going to result, for a short period at any rate, during a transition period, because we must be frank with them. This is why I think that if we act in two steps: first a referendum on sovereignty, but proposing to the country an association, not only economic, but also on other aspects. If this is refused, we can proceed to a

second referendum. This is my present position.

Mr. Brassard: You would agree that, for example, this Commission propose that the government hold a referendum on sovereignty, accompanied by a proposal for economic association with English Canada.

Mr. Dion: In my mind, if it were possible for this Commission to reach a consensus on either of the two aspects: in-depth renewed federalism but again really in-depth, and I propose... Imagine my proposing that we suppress the federal Charter of Rights and so on...

Mr. Brassard: You are going very far. You are going very, very far.

Mr. Dion: Well! You come to a consensus, here... You are a Parliamentary Commission, so the National Assembly will recognize it. The two party chiefs will be able to advise their members and perhaps very soon, in spring even, we could have an act of the Québec National Assembly on either of the two. It doesn't matter to me which, I'll tell you frankly, because this is a quantitative question. With respect to the quality of being a country, this is an extraordinary symbol, but I know at least 50 countries which have this symbol and their situation is rotten.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now go on to questions from the members. We'll try to get to everyone, and we'll begin by reducing the five minutes to four minutes, with everyone's approval, of course. Please ask your questions as quickly as possible to allow the greatest number of replies. Mr. Béland then Mr. Beaumier, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Dufour. Mr. Béland.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will go quickly. I think, Mr. Dion, that you really bring us to the heart of the problem, because you bring us to the strategy, and this is something that we all want to discuss for several days.

When I agreed to come here, it was because I felt that we'd reached the point of exasperation. Mr. Bourassa's speech, in June, impressed me a lot. He said: Now, let's decide for ourselves. And I said to myself: To decide for ourselves means that we are doomed to act by ourselves, because deciding things while depending on others is not, I think, deciding for ourselves.

Don't you think that at this time we have reached this limit where we respond to the Premier's invitation to decide for ourselves, and to act by ourselves? Because when you say that we must not play with the nerves of the people, for some weeks, we have been hearing many people, here, who come to tell us that the

present situation plays on their nerves. I chaired the Forum on employment and I heard from nervous people who said they could no longer do anything if we continue to duplicate. You spoke, in your introduction, of exclusive provincial jurisdiction. People come and tell us that there is no longer any exclusive jurisdiction in the real world. So, don't you think we have come to the point where we must decide and act for ourselves?

Mr. Dion: I don't doubt it, but what I want to tell you with all the strength I can muster is that we should not act while in the grip of exasperation. You say, I'm exasperated. It's not like this that we should act. As a businessman, you do not act like this. You must act with your reason, which requires reflection and time.

Mr. Béland: But this is an exasperation...

Mr. Dion: Since 1963, Mr. Béland, I...

Mr. Béland: Yes, but this is very reasonable exasperation, I assure you.

Mr. Dion: Ah! Listen, we are now at a turning point which, in six months, will perhaps be very different. I believe that we must... Reason must always prevail when it's time to take major action, and this is of supreme importance. It wouldn't be wise to be guided by exasperation, believe me.

Mr. Béland: Forget the word "exasperation", we say, at the limit.

Mr. Dion: Since 1963, I've been working in this area and I try never to be exasperated. When I'm exasperated, I don't take action. I take action only when I'm in possession of my faculties, and I know exactly where I'm going and how far I want to go. This is why I would very much like this Commission... like the authorities which eventually have to decide how to proceed, on the strategy, to do it in the most reasonable manner possible.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. Mr. Beaumier, then Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Dufour and Mr. Larose.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 9 of your brief Mr. Dion, you say, "Once more, we could very probably count only on ourselves. This condition must dictate a suitable process to guarantee the success of our action." You've partially replied to this in your answer to Mr. Brassard when we say that we must keep an alternative or a way out. I'd like you to draw for us, in the four minutes that I have, a process or a procedure, a path, a road that we

can explore to arrive at solutions in time for the report that the Commission is to produce.

Mr. Dion: I must repeat what I said. If this Commission is capable of reaching a consensus that is acceptable to both political parties, the Parti québécois and the Québec Liberal Party, if it is put forward in the National Assembly and becomes law, and if we go to English Canada with this law, well, this is a process which is very properly undertaken. But as I say in my text, I doubt - and I know you rather well - that we will reach such a consensus. At this moment, the two parties are taking all this in hand and are both going to come forward with their own positions.

One of these positions, which will probably be that of the Québec Liberal Party, will be a federalism, which I think, is drastically renewed to the point where we will perhaps no longer speak of federalism but of another concept. Or else we will proceed to sovereignty-association, and I say that qualitatively, of course, there is a difference. Quantitatively, everything depends on the demands which are made. And at this time, I'm waiting to know how to decide. Suppose that these initiatives fall through in English Canada. At that time we will hold the ultimate weapon, we know, we tell the people, and I think that they will be, then, sufficiently exasperated, and justifiably. We will proceed to one last referendum which this time will be on the complete independence of Québec with the risks that this could involve and which, I think, are serious. This is how I think we should look at things.

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

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Dion, I'm also very happy to welcome you to the Commission. You argue for reason, and against excessive emotion, I agree. It seems to me also that the first prerogative, the first demand of reason is logic. With all due respect and deference, it seems to me that there are perhaps some aspects of your reasoning which lack logic. First, you say that we must establish a process which will guarantee us success. These are very strong words. A process which will guarantee us success, an impeccable, perfectly failproof process. And here, the only force you suggest is the force of threat, a referendum.

English Canada is going to bet on the referendum. We have already lost a referendum. They will think that we may lose a second, they are going to think that Mr. Dufour, Mr. Poissant, and Mr. Ouellet will again convince Quebecers to vote no. The threat of a referendum is not something very strong, when the federal Prime Minister himself announced that there would be a break-up of the country if

Meech Lake were turned down. This does not appear to be an assured success. So, here, there is a question of logic.

Secondly, you say that we must not, absolutely not, expose the people of Québec to another humiliation. We do not have the right to do this. But, at the same time, you say that it takes something else to convince them again to vote yes to sovereignty. So, at bottom, it will take another humiliation to convince them to see it through. This is approximately the meaning of your process, as well.

Thirdly, you say the assurance we need that the people of Québec will see it through is very important, it is essential. But then, the assurance that the people of Québec are prepared to see it through, isn't it by a referendum that this is obtained? Aren't they the ones to ask? Aren't they the ones who must decide whether they are prepared to see it through? And for this we need a referendum.

Fourthly, you say on page 9 or 10 in the text that the desirable result of the work of the Commission will be to show the existence of an overwhelming consensus among the people of Québec. Who is going to show, who is going to establish the consensus if not the people of Québec themselves? How can the work of the Commission reach the conclusion that there is a consensus among the people of Québec, if we do not ask the people of Québec, Mr. Dion? We must ask them. The Commission is not the people of Québec.

Mr. Dion: May I interrupt you? I'm for a referendum. I don't see your question; I'm absolutely for a referendum.

Mr. Bouchard: But right away, after the Commission.
(11:45 a.m.)

Mr. Dion: This is a problem to be examined. I think that at present we don't have all the details which would allow us to say that tomorrow morning we're going to hold a referendum. On independence, I mean. I'm not speaking of a referendum on sovereignty-association. This is something else. But if we proceeded by means of a referendum on sovereignty and association, it is quite certain that we would need a referendum. And that this referendum, if there were a refusal, would be followed by a second referendum.

If we come, moreover, to the conclusion, after having studied the question in perhaps greater depth, that we can do it here this morning, that it is impossible that English Canada would ever accept even the slightest change, because there is the problem of regionalism, of provincialism, of multiculturalism. And there is an enormous fear among English Canadians that Canada is falling apart. We're far from the prediction of Sir Wilfrid Laurier that

the twentieth century belongs to Canada. We're far from that at the present time.

Consequently, it is possible that they will be unable to accept any change at all. I think even that a federalism... asking for just very, very partial adjustments would be as difficult to obtain, if not more so, than asking for a lot. Still, for the moment, this is what I propose.

If we come to the conclusion that this is final, that English Canada will never be able to listen to the language of reason... which would be very useful for Canada, that is, an association with the country, whether it take one form or another, once more, but an association which, in my opinion, would be vital - I'm not speaking only of the currency, I'm speaking of all the rest - at that time, if we come to this conclusion, yes, let's go to the referendum on independence. I have nothing against it. But before proposing that to you, I want to give myself time to observe, to look and to see if there is no possibility of obtaining what, in my opinion, would be more advantageous for Québec, and certainly also for Canada, that is, position two or three, that is, sovereignty-association or the very new federalism and federalism with a very new character.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, then Mr. Larose, Mr. Holden and Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Dion. This period of renegotiation that you are suggesting and with which, of course, I am in agreement, about how long would it be? Two years...

Mr. Dion: Less than three years.

Mr. Dufour: Less than three years. But between zero days and three years?

Mr. Dion: You know, this is a question, here again, to which I dare not reply, because I would still like to consult our friends. We do have friends in Canada. Mr. Parizeau was in Toronto yesterday. I don't know what his frame of mind was when he returned, but we are still seeking to preserve links with Canada. Of what nature? This must be discussed. First in Québec and then with them. If it is impossible - I keep coming back to this - at that time we will have the choice. We remain what we are or we head towards independence.

Mr. Dufour: ...On this, Mr. Dion... is very clear, but you say: a referendum, unless there is a consensus of the Commission, is not a valid, short-term proposal.

Mr. Dion: The referendum on independence.

Mr. Dufour: Yes, yes.

Mr. Dion: A referendum on sovereignty-association, of course.

Mr. Dufour: You say on page 11, Mr. Dion, and I think that I would like to hear it from an outside observer, you speak of the Parti québécois. If I understand properly, if the Bourassa government were incapable of this boldness, it would be better for them to abstain. Sooner or later, the Parti québécois would come back into power. This party - I imagine that you are referring to the Parti québécois - does not appear to me to be up to it either with respect to its constitutional program.

Mr. Dion: ...

Mr. Dufour: We had the impression that this was clear.

Mr. Dion: No, it isn't that clear. It was clear at that time. In my opinion, this was unsatisfactory, 1979-1980. I said it. And it is certainly so. We're still going to have to know better... I ask a single question in my text, I could ask several others, on culture.

We have very close links with existing cultural institutions at the federal level and we have numerous research projects and programs with several federal departments and crown corporations. At present, these could be evaluated in hundreds of millions of dollars. And there is an exceptional know-how, which has been acquired over many years, in which, I must say very humbly, I have played a large part. There are also grants, especially from the Canada Council, of several hundred million dollars, that they use in addition to what the federal government gives them. There are at present hundreds of research teams and researchers who receive grants from these organizations. And for Laval University, this is \$60 million, and 70% comes from the federal government, from these organizations and so on.

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

Mr. Dion: We have very few private laboratories here. So we must have a transition period if we wish to recover the whole area of cultural institutions. I'm not speaking of a policy of culture, I'm speaking of cultural institutions. Because, otherwise, if these teams were left without any possibility of continuing their work, imagine the loss to society, because as I said at the beginning of my text: What is most important in a society is science and humanism. We cannot let this tie be cut without providing at least a safety line.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larose, then Mr. Holden, Mr. Turgeon and Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You said, in your introduction, that you had all of time before you...

Mr. Dion: ...that my time is timeless.

Mr. Larose: ...that you were in the realm of the timeless. We must recognize that, in the debate before us, time is not neutral. Interests are at play, costs are involved, and if we must be frank about the plan for tomorrow, I think that we must be frank about the reality of today, and if Mr. Dufour and Mr. Poissant argue so fervently to gain time, I think that this shows the extent of the interests involved. They won't be able to tell me that it is going to depend on the credibility of one or two persons who are going to negotiate. There are those in the field, and yesterday there was a practitioner, who has practised at a very high federal level, who told us that there is an objective situation in Canada, which means that in 1990 we can no longer think about our future in terms of the old model of the two founding peoples, and if there is a break-down at Meech, it is this. So, I find that if we want to gain time, this is apparently to attempt to rebuild something else. Second thing, and this is the question: if for you, you still want to have time, I would like us to note that around the table, but especially in Québec over ten years, a great deal of reflection has taken place. All important groups in Québec society, including in the world of business, with the exception of the Conseil du patronat, if I take the Chamber of Commerce, the CMA, everyone has reflected deeply on the stakes involved in proposing a model. So, the people of Québec have reflected a great deal, and what the businesswoman who preceded you told us is that Bernard Derome, in explaining Meech to her, was very clear. Listen, like a union that says: Boss, if you don't settle, we're going on strike. If the union doesn't go on strike, they can't try that again. At Meech, we said that we were going on strike. Everyone around the table said that we were going on strike. All the businessmen said that we were going on strike, we won't be able to say to them: Listen, we're going to go on strike. We will be laughed at.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larose, you no doubt want to leave a little time for Mr. Dion's reply.

Mr. Larose: So, this is because he proposes not coming back empty-handed, and he proposes on page 9 that we go and get a second slap in the face. I want us to understand the very

precise process of this act of trying one last time.

Mr. Dion: It seems to me that I have tried to say this several times. To begin with, I must say, timeless applies to my presence here today, and not to the constitutional process. I'm convinced, after 30 years of reflection on this question, that we are very far from being able to take a final position on the political and constitutional status which would be suitable for Canada. We still have a great deal of reflection to do on all aspects, and we must, I think, accept this. This could take a long time. I forget what your question is. What is your question?

Mr. Larose: Why elaborate a proposal...

Mr. Dion: Yes, yes...

Mr. Larose: ...when you tell us on page 1 that we must not indulge in this exercise?

Mr. Dion: Listen, I take it for granted that the Parti québécois is for what it calls sovereignty with association, sovereignty-association. If I'm told that this is no longer really true, I'll put it aside. But I take it for granted that this is still their position. It's up to them, in the coming weeks, the coming months, to define what type of association they will propose to Canada. And then, we'll see. If it is sovereignty-association, they may, if they go for a referendum, very well win it in Québec, but they may find the door to English Canada closed. They must not come back saying: Well, listen, we've failed. They should come back saying, I repeat for the tenth time what I said this morning: We proceed immediately to a second referendum; this time on the independence of Québec, we have no other choice.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Holden, then Mr. Turgeon, Mr. Hogue, Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mr. Holden: Mr. Chairman, I have been following Mr. Dion on television for a long time, and I have always admired his reasoning, patience, everything you have said today, I have always thought that you are a very reasonable man, and your presentation today only confirms that.

You ask for patience and calm, and all of a sudden Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Larose react with a bit of emotion. But talk to us, Mr. Dion, about the other side, about English Canada. Because they must also be calm, patient and reasonable. Do you have any ideas about how the Québec message can be transmitted to the rest of Canada without also provoking an emotional reaction?

Mr. Dion: At the moment, their reaction has also been very emotional. I think the entire Meech Lake experience - Mr. Rémiillard could tell us more about it - has shown that it is currently extremely difficult for English Canada, given the condition in which it finds itself, to propose any kind of change. First, we will have to come up with a credible interlocutor.

It has been proposed that the 11 First Ministers hold a conference on the Constitution. I say this will never produce any results. I think, as a first condition, we should set up another negotiating structure, so that we could have a more reliable voice. At present, we have seen many First Ministers change their minds in the course of the negotiations, and some have been replaced.

Thus, English Canada is in a difficult position, I would say English Canada is afraid. Afraid for its own survival. And I think we must try to understand that. I think, this time, we must go to English Canada not with anger but with reason and perhaps we will be able to bring it around to more reasonable positions than those held so far, but this time we should be prepared. We should admit that with Meech Lake and the five Québec proposals, we were barely prepared, because we had no alternative. We must go to the negotiating table this time with an alternative, a decisive one.

This is how I see the process at the present time, while hoping, because I do understand that English Canada will also have to think this over and we can help in this endeavour, in the final analysis, that it will agree to one of the two formulas we propose, namely, an entirely new form of federalism, which could even be given a new name, or sovereignty-association, the type of proposal being made by the Parti québécois. If not, we will have to go ahead with our own plans...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Turgeon, followed by Mr. Hogue, Mrs. Campbell Steer and Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a little difficult to grasp your point, Mr. Dion. Your statements and arguments contain ideas that sometimes appear paradoxical and, sometimes, it seems that they are contradictory.

Right. You talk, for example... Right away you raise the entire cultural issue. Very well. I agree with you when you express regret that artists, humanists, and scientists are not adequately represented on the Commission. But you also say that these are the people who set the tone, in the final analysis, for all social actors. These are the people who give a society its real colour. And you suggest that Robert Bourassa's cultural sovereignty of 1972 will have to be discussed.

Therefore, what I gather from this is that, as far as you are concerned, it does not really matter what route Québec eventually takes as long as one thing is not on the table, namely, everything related to its culture, its fundamental characteristics. But, you say in the same breath that, for now, you are in favour of Québec's continued participation in, for example, the Canada Council, the National Film Board, and even the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. I must admit that I'm a little surprised by that, because I cannot understand how someone as vigilant as you has not noticed, and I'm referring more specifically to the areas that concern me, the arts, culture... I cannot understand how you could not have noticed how the federal government has cut down, not just since last week, but for more than a generation, into the heart and into the actual meaning of what you call institutions. I'm not saying this out of exasperation, I am talking about reality.

(12:00 noon)

So, first of all, I'd like to have answers to the following three questions: Given the current climate, how do you think we can share, because if English Canada is afraid for its survival, we are also afraid for ours, how do you think we can share the jurisdiction in an area as fundamental and intimate as culture, even to save some furniture? Concerning the constitution in particular, you indicate that your choice will depend on the quality of the options and the credibility of the persons involved. Should I infer from that, to use a known expression, that special interests come before the country? And third, you are suggesting an ultimatum and, as a last resort, a referendum. And, if we take your scenario, it is at that moment that Quebecers will vote out of exasperation and as a reaction and, at that moment you will be forcing them back to a hard-line independence option, something that nobody wants. Why reduce that expression simply to a threat when the expression could at the present time serve as a beautiful way of affirming ourselves without posing a threat to anyone?

Mr. Dion: I have nothing against that. Absolutely nothing against that. However, I would like to say that, as far as culture is concerned, Québec's experience is hardly a happy one. I told Mr. Bourassa this in 1973 and I'll say it again today. The situation has not changed very much. And regarding the councils, the two I know best, the Canada Council and the Humanities and Social Sciences Council, well, Québec, proportionately, receives by far the most grants, year after year. We don't have... I'm quite active on these Councils, especially the Humanities Council since it was split up about ten years ago, we have an extraordinary presence there, and the Humanities and Social

Sciences Council - I am not at present as familiar with the operations of the Canada Council - isn't bilingual, it's French, it belongs to Québec as much as to Canada. We don't have any problems with that council. I would say that we currently have more problems with FCAR than we do with the Humanities and Social Sciences Council regarding the whole procedure for obtaining grants and so forth. Consequently, that is why I say we have to exercise caution in these matters. We cannot claim that culture is exclusively Québec's affair. We certainly do have a Québec culture, a culture which is different from English culture, but we are talking about an institution which distributes funds and the question to ask is whether the distribution of funds is carried out in a way that might result in the alienation of our culture, our cultural background. I think that so far this has not been the case. And it is...

Mr. Turgeon: Including the arts.

Mr. Dion: Well, the arts, I said I was not as familiar with what has been going on there for about ten years but...

Mr. Turgeon: For us it's not the case.

Mr. Dion: It may not be the case, but we don't have anything in Québec either.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Hogue, then Mrs. Campbell Steer and Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Hogue: Mr. Dion, thank you for coming and for being so generous. I hope you will be as generous should we have the privilege of having you here again. I would like to ask you a very short question, Mr. Dion, and another one which might take a little more time. So, let's try not to take too much time with the first question. I go back to page 9 of your text where you say that it would be just fine if the reflection currently taking place in Canada made our process easy... Right. You admit that you are sceptical and in the next three lines you say that once again we can probably count only on ourselves. You understand group dynamics, you understand the dynamics of life in a group. Don't you think that group life will in any case influence, and does influence, either unduly or minimally, and I would like to have your opinion on that, this interdependence which, whatever position we adopt, or is adopted, will continue to be a factor in such influence? If this one is answered very quickly, I'll have another.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's deal with this question first, Mr. Hogue. Mr. Dion?

Mr. Dion: I don't know what to say, other than what I've already said. And certainly I'd like, for example, to see something good come out of the Spicer Commission, but unfortunately I don't see it coming to anything. For a start, we can count only on ourselves. It's up to us to take action. It would have been preferable, after Meech Lake, for English Canada to become aware of the difficult position it has placed us in and take the initiative of making proposals to us. Well, it wasn't done so. And that's what I want to say.

Mr. Hogue: Can we go on to the second question?

Mr. Dion: When I say by ourselves, I mean among ourselves, among Quebecers, to begin, even if it means that, eventually, we would be able to enter into a dialogue if possible.

Mr. Hogue: Mr. Dion, you are talking about an in-depth renewed federalism. Without playing with words, I could refer to it as an in-depth renewal of federalism. And based on this distinction, which might on the surface seem tenuous, do you think that a more radically asymmetric federation than that which appears in Pepin-Robarts, for example, is possible? A more radical asymmetry, such that the participants would really know where they stand and in which we would no longer play hard to get.

Mr. Dion: Pepin-Robarts is not that asymmetrical. It is, only from a linguistic point of view. If you take a look at its economic proposals, you'll find that it is extremely centralizing, even more centralizing than Canada is today. Therefore, the extremely weak issue of asymmetry which has been proposed, Section 133, has to be taken even further, so that Bill 101 can be applied in its entirety in Québec. And I agree with that. But if you look at the rest of Pepin-Robarts, at all its proposals concerning the economy, you'll find that it is very centralizing. Asymmetry would have to be taken much further and this is why the status that Québec would acquire, if it doesn't want to proceed to sovereignty-association but rather remain within a Canadian constitution in some way, even if it meant having its own constitution as well, there would probably at that point have to be something more like a confederation, or in any case a change of name.

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

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dion, I'd like to call your attention to something that struck me. You state that there is never, or that there can never be a great culture or society with deep roots or

prosperous regions without a solid economic base. It struck me because I was thinking, our ASDEQ friends have told us that Canada could survive without Québec and Québec could survive without Canada and also be prosperous.

But if we were stuck with negotiations during periods of disagreement, it could be very long and very painful. I just wanted to make sure I understood correctly. Did you say that no matter what constitutional status we choose, either sovereignty-association or some form of in-depth renewed federalism, we should negotiate anyway? Does this imply that it would perhaps be better for us to negotiate in a situation that's the most... without any possible resentment?

Mr. Dion: That is my wish. And if we find out it's not possible, I suggest we should not get involved at that time. We either stay the way we are or proceed to independence. But I agree with those who said here this morning that we'll have to be careful; if we're certain that a referendum on sovereignty-association would be completely rejected, if we know that in advance, we don't need to go ahead with it. But we'll have to know that in advance. I think that at the present time, we're not in a position to say so, because Canada's situation is as unstable as ours.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Do you think...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge, who will be followed by Mr. Campeau first... Yes, Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Do you actually believe that another round of negotiations is possible?

Mr. Dion: I can't say for sure. If we find out after examining the situation, after consultation, that we are headed for rejection, I say we shouldn't get involved. And at that point it will be up to us to choose the status we want. Either we maintain the status quo because we're afraid to proceed to independence, or we go in the direction of independence, while obviously trying to protect ourselves as best we can, because there will certainly be transition problems.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge, who will be briefly followed by Mr. Campeau and then Mr. Rémillard, for a final question.

Mr. Laberge: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dion, I must indicate quickly, since the debates are televised, and all that, that I am not in favour of what you just said. If I had to take the message to my 450 000 members that I agree with what you said, that you have all the time

ahead of you! Of course, you are fortunate – when I say fortunate, I mean that in a positive sense of the word – you do not have the mandate of a meeting, you are on your own. You can take your time. A referendum, yes, but we mustn't get excited. Less than three years, but more than two years. I'm putting my neck on the line, I won't have any more time. Therefore I...

A voice: ...

Mr. Laberge: Well, it's because I didn't understand you correctly. It's what you said just now.

Mr. Dion: No, no.

Mr. Laberge: If I misunderstood, so much the better.

Mr. Dion: I said less than three years. I said nothing more.

Mr. Laberge: That's it, less than three years. Well, I didn't completely misunderstand. Mr. Dion, you know English Canada as well as I do. I have done business with them for the last 45 years. We in the FTQ gave ourselves statutes, and it quickly became obvious that the CLC was ready to continue negotiating with us for 100 years. But while waiting, obviously, we had to follow the CLC statutes and so we said no, it's not possible. So we turned to our own statutes and began to apply them, and were then ready to negotiate with the CLC for 100 years. Don't you think that holding a referendum now... By the way, you said a referendum on sovereignty, yes, of course, but it must be approached with confidence. Don't you think that your referendum on sovereignty, by developing a wide consensus among this commission, a referendum which will clarify, either sovereignty or something else, don't you think that it might help us in our negotiations?

Mr. Dion: On the other hand, I would like to clarify a point. It seems to me, Mr. Laberge, that, like everybody here, you are representing yourself. You are not representing the FTQ.

Mr. Laberge: Except that, at some point, I'll still have to go and face them.

Mr. Dion: Well! You can go if you wish, but as an individual who is a member of a commission, and it is your decision, your choice, you do not have to go back to the people you're accountable to. This is not a negotiation.

Mr. Laberge: Like you do, when you sit on a couple of Arts Councils.

Mr. Dion: Of course.

Mr. Laberge: Thank you.

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

Mr. Campeau: Mr. Dion, I would like to come back to the subject of fear. If my understanding is correct, you mentioned that, in your opinion, Canada is afraid for its survival. If it's so afraid – afraid of splitting up – how can you explain the fact that Meech Lake was rejected? Is it because Canada thinks Québec will never dare assert itself; that Québec – to quote Mr. Larose and Mr. Laberge – will never give a strike mandate to its government; that Québec does not have, has never had and will never have any backbone? What do you think? Do you think that Québec has a backbone? I'm referring to all of Canada. Is Canada saying to itself: No, no, they're not serious?

Mr. Dion: I would like, if you allow me... Mr. Laberge has raised a very important point. It's when he was talking...

Mr. Campeau: It's still my time.

Mr. Dion: I'll come back to you. It's very important that I mention this. He talked about the difficult relations between the FTQ and the CLC, 100 years of negotiations. It's very true. What works best in Canada in terms of associations, ordinarily, are the so-called parallel associations – junior chambers of commerce, etc. – which have links with other national associations... It's very common in scientific associations and elsewhere. And I think this model could be applied to politics. There is absolutely no reason why... I agree entirely with Mr. Laberge. As for Mr. Campeau, I think I have a backbone, and I think Québec has a backbone, and Canada as well. However, we'll have to go through some very difficult situations. And currently, the return of Meech Lake... I'll tell you frankly that I'm very happy that Meech Lake failed, because it allows us to go in the direction we really have to follow. I think if we proceed reasonably, we can lead the Québec population in the direction they must go, in order to ensure that the political status of Québec reflects its socioeconomic and cultural conditions.
(12:15 p.m.)

Now, the question is how we are going to proceed. I have a suggestion. You think, Mr. Laberge, and perhaps others too, that it will take some time. Perhaps. Because if you want... at least to give the other side the chance to say no, or to say maybe, or even to say yes, I think we should at least realize that its present situation is probably more difficult than ours,

because the problems of multiculturalism, provincialism and regionalism in this country are appalling. An American has just published a book on Canada; he can't understand how this beautiful country, Canada, is falling apart. Obviously, at that point, Québec becomes a thorn in the flesh of Canada. It would like us to be quiet. That way it could solve the multiculturalism problems in Western Canada, etc.

But we can't afford to be quiet, we have to shake things up. If we have to shake them up a lot, let's shake them up a lot. That's my position.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall now move on to the last speaker, the representative from the Government party. Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Professor Dion, I'm very pleased to welcome you here as the first expert witness to appear before this Commission, and to me, this is very significant.

Your message to us is one of reason, of wisdom. As I read your brief, I remember all those hours we've spent together over the past 15 years, discussing Québec and its future. In your brief I can see the great principles that you always taught me; there is one in particular that you've mentioned several times since the beginning of your presentation: reason must take precedence over passion.

Knowledge is the first step towards liberty. You clearly state in your brief, moreover, that we of the governing party should bring our position on the constitution up to date, and the Opposition, the P.Q., should also update their position to reflect the reality of our society and certain subtle points that may emerge.

You recall us to our duty, and you're right to do so. In your brief, you tell us that everything will be much easier, and I quote you, on page 9, if we could reach a consensus, here, in this commission. Do you really think we can reach a consensus? You've observed our work, you've followed our work closely, do you think it's possible for us to reach a consensus? And how do you visualize such a consensus?

Mr. Dion: I would be very pleased if there were a consensus. That would show that there is consensus in society as well. But I don't think you can reach a consensus, and I'd prefer that there be two or even three different reports, but that they truly express the ideas of those who put them together, instead of having a single report that would be the result of searching through all the positions in order to arrive at the lowest common denominator.

Mr. Rémillard: That is why...

Mr. Dion: If there were a consensus, as I say, it would be the best way to proceed quickly.

Mr. Rémillard: That is why you advise us to exercise caution, for example with respect to a referendum; you are very clear. You tell us not to rush things. A referendum should build Québec, build its strength, not weaken it.

Mr. Dion: That's right.

Mr. Rémillard: And if we rush it, and if we take the risk that this referendum is not accepted, it would dangerously weaken Québec. I do understand very well why you have reservations regarding the various options, sovereignty-association or renewed federalism; you tell us that, for now, you're watching, you're looking at the different alternatives. I'd like to refer to page 4 of your brief, at the bottom of the page, where you state that Québec should have exclusive jurisdiction over a series of areas; you speak, among other things, of health, manpower, and immigration; I could mention several others, communications, which was also emphasized a few minutes ago, and which is a very important field, for Québec and for federalism. On page 5, you mention that even the CRTC should create a parallel organization made up mostly of Quebecers. Indeed, on page 8, I think, you also state clearly that, in the cultural sphere, we could keep the Canada Council, the National Film Board, and even the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Sciences Council. These are elements in an association or union which is much more than a mere economic association, it goes much further than that. For my part, you'll allow me, with all due respect to your reservations, to call it a renewed federalism, renewed in depth. And in that context, you call on us to follow a certain approach: you tell us, first of all, to state what we want, completely, based on what you write for us. Let's tell the rest of Canada what we want as exclusive areas of jurisdiction, what we are willing to share, what we want as a whole, and if it doesn't work — you then use the term "ultimatum" — then we proceed to a referendum. Is that really the way you see things?

Mr. Dion: Yes, yes. If you opt for the position of a federalism that is renewed in depth. You left out criminal law. I think the effects of science and high technology on the application of criminal law, especially at the level of the Supreme Court, have to be looked at closely. I'm coming to the conclusion that the federal Charter of Rights is superfluous, and that's already a big step. It's not useful, it forces us to have recourse to the notwithstanding clause, and then we are called fascists

about twice a year, and so on. And I go even further. Is this renewed federalism? I don't know. It's certainly... It could be done within Canada, if English Canada, if the provinces were willing to give Québec this unique status, I insist, not special but unique status, and it stays the way it is, that would be marvellous indeed. Under those circumstances, we would be a federation with a province, call it what you like, an entity, which though not a full-fledged State governed by a treaty, would have a status which would imply a totally different constitution, or at least different from those of the other provinces.

Now as far as the Parti québécois is concerned, given the new agreement, I don't know how far they have really gone in their current thinking. It's clear to me that the Parti québécois will also have to rethink its options, because there is much more than just the question of the bank, the question of currency, which is very important and which by the way has not been completely settled in this White Paper, in my opinion. But there are also all the other issues I've raised, which the Parti québécois must also consider.

I think at present we agree that we're about to enter what I refer to as a world society, a world economy, a world culture, world politics, etc. and, consequently, this implies that we view our constitutional and political status differently from the Fathers of Confederation in 1867 and even from those who repatriated the Constitution in 1981-1982.

Mr. Rémillard: So if we follow the approach you propose in your brief and say to English Canada: This is what we want and if you don't agree, we're going directly to a referendum. In that context, do you think... Because you referred to that concept, just now, on several occasions, you talked of the recession, of the economic difficulties we're facing. Do you think it can modify the perspectives of federalism in some way? What I'm saying is that, take for example the debate now under way concerning health care, with Québec wanting to carry out its own health care reform. After all, Ottawa doesn't know how our hospital emergency rooms should operate.

Given the recession and the financial problems of the federal government, with a deficit of more than \$350 billion, are we not seeing the end of a federalism that has gone on for the past 50 years, which was founded on the basis of similar living conditions across the country from sea to sea, and should this end not be part of our discussions as we negotiate what we have to negotiate?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your last reply, Mr. Dion.

Mr. Dion: In my brief, I make it clear that we should not go by the 1867 Constitution. It no longer corresponds to the conditions of life as they are today. And, consequently, I have arrived at the following proposal, that we should negotiate something completely new and if this is not possible, I would like to conclude on this note, Mr. Chairman, that if we realize that the negotiations aren't acceptable to the other party, at that point we should either declare Québec independent, or stay where we are because we don't dare go ahead with it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Dion. We always thank those who appear before this commission, but you deserve special thanks, because you didn't just volunteer to come before us. We invited you as an expert. I would remind the Commission members that we may still hear from Mr. Dion, depending on our needs during the closed hearings. I would also like to remind you that there is still one person to speak this morning before lunch time, and the sitting will be suspended only for a few seconds, a few minutes, so that we can thank Mr. Dion and make room for the others.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:26 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:29 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would ask the Commission members to please take their seats. We are now going to hear, although we are 30 minutes late, and we apologize for that, we are now going to hear the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau Brunswick. I would like to remind the Commission members that they should take their seats if we wish to finish before lunch time.

Mr. Gervais, please introduce your group. Then, as you know, you have five minutes to summarize your brief and, finally, we will go on to the questions. You have the floor, Mr. Gervais.

Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick

Mr. Gervais (Réal): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce, to you and the members of the Commission, Norbert Roy, who is executive director of the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick. First I'd like to thank you for having invited us to appear before the Commission. I find it especially important, in the current political context, in the Canadian political environment, that natural allies such as the Acadians of New Brunswick and the people of Québec hold a discussion to properly identify our common areas of interest. I'd like to assure you that our presence here

this afternoon isn't, in my opinion, intended to create any obstacles to your work or interfere with your effort to define the people of Québec. Rather, our goal is to make the people of Québec aware of our situation and our will to cooperate with them. The SAANB recognizes that Quebecers are free to chart their own destiny, determine their political status and ensure their economic, social and cultural development. How could it be otherwise, when we have the same objectives in our own territory?

A few words about our organization. SAANB was founded in 1973, 17 years ago. Its objective is to promote the economic, social, cultural and political development of our community, in addition to defending their rights. We maintain fairly close ties with the other Acadian communities in the Atlantic Provinces through the Société nationale des Acadiens, which is a federation of the provincial associations in the Atlantic Provinces, and the Fédération des francophones hors Québec. And we hold a cooperative forum for Acadian and Francophone organizations, more than 30 organizations that we've created over the past 10 years. We hold a working session at least five or six times a year and we also hold a forum. SAANB has about 5 000 individual members and also corporate members. It's also recognized by the various governments as the official linguistic spokesman for the Acadians of New Brunswick.

The Acadian community in New Brunswick. It's true that geographically the Acadian community of New Brunswick is hard to define. The Acadian community of New Brunswick, some have tried to define it by drawing a line through New Brunswick. But we, we say that our work, that our activities have to affect all of New Brunswick. From the demolingistic standpoint, the Acadians of New Brunswick represent 31.9% of the population, or 223 675 people, almost double the population of Prince Edward Island. The assimilation of the community is still quite worrisome, standing as it does at about 7%. It is currently stable, however. A very encouraging statistic for the Acadian community of New Brunswick is that, for young people, in other words people up to 18 years of age, assimilation has fallen to 3%. These are the benefits that come from the Acadians' of New Brunswick having justifiably claimed and obtained duality from the Department of Education, complete duality for the community.

From the economic standpoint, the modern Acadian community of New Brunswick has in recent years created 30% more small and medium-size businesses than the Canadian average. In recent years, the community has proved, through the Acadian cooperative movement and companies such as Assumption Life, that it can do business in French. The vitality of our business community, combined with a provincial law making the two official

linguistic communities of New Brunswick equal, combined with duality in terms of the Department of Education and independent organizations in the community, has led us to conclude that the Quiet Revolution, which began in our community in the 1960s with the Government of Louis Robichaud, is indeed bringing our community to the threshold of what for you is national affirmation, and what for Acadians is greater autonomy.

From the political standpoint, the Acadian community relies on its homogeneous organizations to achieve its objectives, as I said just now. One thing for sure is that in New Brunswick the requests made by organizations are several years ahead of government action. For example, the duality we're seeking in terms of all the administrative and political administration, we've already achieved with our social organizations. I won't list all the sectors, but in education and business and in terms of women's, youth and political organizations we have homogeneous organizations.

The Acadian community of New Brunswick and Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): May I suggest that you start to bring your presentation to a close? The five minutes is almost up.

Mr. Gervais: Fine, thank you. The SAANB agrees with those who say that the constitutional status quo is a thing of the past. A new path is necessary. Your work is very important to the Acadian community. We too have to prepare our vision of the future. So in the next few weeks we'll be announcing the creation of a Acadian political commission for the Acadians of New Brunswick.

As I said just now, by appearing before your Commission, we have no intention of claiming any moral obligation from Québec. Québec knows its obligations and will find ways of fulfilling them. The SAANB recognizes and requests, in addressing you today, greater collaboration with Québec, in other words that the Québec government, regardless of the option it chooses, should not hesitate to go beyond agreements between governments and conclude agreements with communities.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll begin the questions, beginning with the members in general. Mr. Beaudry, who will be followed by Mr. Proulx and Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank you for your interesting brief. Contrary to what we've been told in the past by certain organizations that have appeared before us, it seems that, formerly at least, the assimilation of Francophones outside Québec was quite rapid. But, if I've understood your brief

properly, especially on page 3, you say that, in any case at least since 1980, assimilation has slowed to a certain degree, and you say the specific reason is complete educational duality. I'd like to know what percentage of this duality, in terms of education, French represents in your schools. In what proportion is French taught?

Mr. Gervais: In what proportion is French taught in our schools?

Mr. Beaudry: Yes.

Mr. Gervais: When we talk about complete educational duality in New Brunswick, we have entirely French schools administered by French school boards. So...

Mr. Beaudry: Completely?

Mr. Gervais: Completely.

Mr. Beaudry: Completely. Does English also represent a percentage in the schools in terms of teaching or is there no English?

Mr. Gervais: No, because what happens at the level... The Anglophone community has its schools, its independent school boards. So we function independently.

Mr. Beaudry: And if I've understood properly, your pupils, who are bilingual of course, or they must be, in any case, up to a certain point...

Mr. Gervais: You're right.

Mr. Beaudry: ...Their education is in French only, but it's simply as a result of the influence of the people around them that they become bilingual. But their education is completely in French.

Mr. Gervais: Yes, exactly. But Acadians also have a second-language program within their school programming...

Mr. Beaudry: Yes.

Mr. Gervais: ...In that sense they learn English. But you made a very interesting comment, namely that, yes, the Anglophone cultural impact of the Anglophone community of New Brunswick, but also the cultural impact of all the Anglophone media in our community, is so great that Acadians are bilingual no matter where they live.

Mr. Beaudry: What I find interesting in your brief is that because of the changes made to your system, which has slowed down assimilation, you say, on page 4 for example,

that the figures for this duality, which is working, show that assimilation is less pronounced from the age of 0 to 18 despite the fact that you live in a province that is mainly English. I find that quite interesting because in the past we've been told, as I said at the beginning, that the fate of Francophones outside Québec seemed to be almost complete assimilation.

Mr. Gervais: Just the same I'd like to...

Mr. Beaudry: In...

Mr. Gervais: ...if you don't mind?

Mr. Beaudry: Go ahead.

Mr. Gervais: I'd like to add that if you look at the statistics for people a little older...

Mr. Beaudry: Yes.

Mr. Gervais: ...from age 18 to 35, for example, the assimilation rate is 8.9% and from 35 to 60 it's more than 12%, which leads us to also believe that when our people live in a homogeneous, dualistic environment, assimilation is less pronounced. But when they enter the job market, for example, where we have no linguistic policy promoting work in French, then the community's anglicization problems increase.

Mr. Beaudry: Right. But there are measures, there are remedial measures that can be taken to correct those situations, which maybe aren't easy...

Mr. Gervais: If the political will is there...

Mr. Beaudry: ...But that can be put in place. The other question I'd like to ask you is on page 10, because you say at one point that it might be quite useful to create a well-defined cooperative structure between Québec and the Acadian community and, for that matter, with other Francophone communities too, and you even say it's essential. And you add: Are we not ultimately natural allies, brothers and sisters in the struggle to ensure that the French language has a place in North America?

The question I'd like to ask you is this: Do you think you'd be better protected if Québec were sovereign and gave you the support we've talked about during these hearings, the support Québec wants to give you? Do you feel you'd be better protected in a context like that, or do you think that, with an organization having the structure you're now suggesting, you'd be better protected in terms of language, in terms of your culture, within renewed federalism that gave all of Canada linguistic protection?

Mr. Gervais: Obviously, regardless of the option Quebecers choose, the next day the Acadian community of New Brunswick will in any case have to live in Canada, what you call English Canada.

I think the best guarantee for the survival of our community is the Acadians themselves. If we seek educational duality for ourselves, but in the government structure, it's precisely because we've identified what we need to slow down, to stop assimilation and to promote the development of our community.

And I think the Acadians themselves are the ones who can do it best. But regardless of the option Québec chooses, what we're saying is that we want greater collaboration with you. I think it would be good. Maybe we shouldn't wait for Québec to become sovereign to establish greater cooperation between Québec and the Acadian community.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to Mr. Proulx, followed by Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've always had a lot of trouble – as soon as I leave Québec, in any case – I have trouble believing there's been an improvement. That there's been an improvement and that there's less assimilation. I'm going to tell you honestly, I have a lot of trouble believing it. I have to travel a lot and I go to New Brunswick and Ontario and the other... Maybe it's because I'm not bilingual. Maybe that's why I'm more sensitive to it and I always feel trapped when I have to speak English because I don't speak it very well.

I'd also like to tell you that you're pretty lucky it's only 7%, because last night I was watching "Le Point", and in Manitoba it's a different story. They said 50% of the population had been assimilated so far – the Francophone population – and that among people up to age 20 more than 50% no longer knew, no longer spoke French. So for sure it could be because you have more people, more people speaking French, and because of the proximity of Québec, the assimilation is less pronounced. But it still exists. And you have to admit that even 7% is very dangerous. Fine.

So what did you come here to tell us this morning? Apart from saying we should get to know you? But we already know you. You know we know you, and all we want to do is help you out. But the thing is sometimes we can't because of the large country we're talking about.

You've come here, you want more cooperation? Yeah, it would be great to speed up this cooperation. Right now we're doing as much as we can to help organizations and help you, but at the same time respecting your distinct character too, because you're not Quebecers. But that's fine.

So ultimately what have you come to tell us, to tell the Commission? Have you come to tell us that the ideal thing would be a sovereign Québec, and that on either side of Québec, all the northeast and the Acadian coast, with eastern Ontario, that would make a pretty good country?

Mr. Gervais: I think that in the first or second paragraph of my brief, if you'll recall, what we've come to tell you is that we'll respect whatever decision Quebecers make about their autonomy. That's the first thing we've come to tell you.

(12:45 p.m.)

The second thing, as I said just now, we're obviously natural allies, but we have to understand each other, we have to talk to each other to achieve better communication and greater cooperation. That's the second thing.

The third thing we've come to tell you is that, when we talk about work between the two communities, we're talking about, for example, sector-based exchanges. I think the Desjardins cooperative movement is an excellent example, with what's happened with the Acadian credit unions in our community.

In that sense, I think we're ready to do business together. So that's what we're here to tell you. Regardless of the decision you make, rest assured that you have a sister population next door to you that's dynamic, that was anything but responsible for the failure of the constitutional accord, and that we're alive and well, and making progress.

Mr. Proulx: Would you agree with me that to preserve our interests, and to preserve your interests, the ideal situation would be for us to have complete power, that Québec have complete power?

Mr. Gervais: That's for you to decide. In our community, we've said exactly what I just told you. What our community needs is greater autonomy, and we've identified a way of getting that greater autonomy.

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

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You say in your report – I'm referring to page 9 in particular – that we have to continue and step up our cooperation in cultural, educational and technical matters. You also talk about economic links. From your perspective, does this mean the Québec government takes calculated, planned action to promote such links or does it mean simply creating a climate of public opinion that promotes such exchanges?

Mr. Gervais: In my opinion both are

essential. We can't have cooperation without the right climate. In that sense we obviously have to create the right climate for exchanges between the Acadians of New Brunswick and Quebecers.

When we talk about structured dialogue between the Acadian community of New Brunswick and the other Francophone communities and Québec, I think the mechanism still has to be defined. We have an example we could suggest. Over the past 22 years the Société nationale des Acadiens has had a special relationship with France. Over the past 22 years we've signed agreements with this foreign government regarding, for example, exchanges involving scholarships, internships and so on. I should also say that in recent years we've been seeking cooperation within this agreement. For example the Association des pêcheurs professionnels acadiens recently signed an agreement with a French Insurance company, L'Alsacienne, to insure the fishing boats of New Brunswick.

And we've realized that these agreements aren't one-way streets. They involve cooperation, and that's what we want to develop with Québec.

Mr. Nicolet: In the same vein, on page 10 you go even further. You talk about a cooperative structure between the other Francophone communities of Canada and of Québec presumably. Do you mean an organization that would be established by the Québec government? And if it were the Québec government, who would represent it? Would it go beyond the provincial governments concerned? Would it be with the communities directly, and how would the communities decide who represented them?

Mr. Gervais: I think that, for the Acadians of New Brunswick, the situation would be a little easier because we have more than 30 sector-based homogeneous organizations that look after the community's interests, such as, for example, the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick, whose members are Acadian and Francophone businesspeople from New Brunswick.

In that sense, I think our community has mechanisms that could speak exactly, municipalities that could speak with the representatives of the Québec government.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to a representative of the Government party, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams: Welcome to Québec. I'm very pleased to welcome you as the first group from outside Québec to appear before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission.

I'd also like to commend you on everything you've done for Acadians. I'm thinking of the

long list you submitted and also what you've explained to the Commission. It implies that you too are taking your destiny in hand.

We each have our own interpretation of attitudes outside Québec regarding what's happening inside Québec. If I recall, your position during Meech was quite evolutionary. I'm going to ask two questions at once with four parts, but I think they'll be fairly simple.

Mr. Gervais: I'll take notes.

Mr. Williams: Would you describe the position of the SAANB and that of your government, of Mr. McKenna, before Meech, during Meech and after Meech, now, before the Commission? And also, fourth, if we adopt the position that we've just discussed, Mr. Dion's position, how would New Brunswick react to this matter?

Mr. Gervais: How would New Brunswick react to what? To the Commission?

Mr. Williams: The Commission now, and also if we took a position similar to the one Mr. Dion just presented, if we began negotiations after holding a referendum. Is it clear? In five minutes.

Mr. Gervais: I'm not a university professor but I'll do my best.

Mr. Williams: I'd like a general answer.

Mr. Gervais: Fine, fine.

Mr. Williams: How would New Brunswick react?

Mr. Gervais: I'm going to be very direct and honest with you, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams: Thank you.

Mr. Gervais: The position of the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick prior to the failure of the constitutional accord, originally was that, yes, we recognized Québec's five conditions for returning the constitutional fold. I'll be brief. We met on February 10, 1989 to ask our members precisely whether they would unconditionally support the Meech Lake Accord. So our whole membership supported the Accord unconditionally on February 10. So there you have it.

If you ask me today: How will New Brunswickers react to what's happening here in Québec? I think they would be divided again, because New Brunswick society isn't homogeneous. There's a Francophone community, there's an Acadian community, and obviously we see things differently. Right?

So, in that sense, I can't answer for the entire community of New Brunswick. What I'd like to say, for example, is that I can say on behalf of the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick that we're obviously going to respect the decision made here and we're going to evaluate how to shape our future as a function of that decision. That's why we too have decided to set up our own commission, to identify what we want and also how we're going to react to the new structure that will undoubtedly come out of all the deliberations here and across Canada.

So I can tell you this for my organization: We'll respect what you decide. But we'll definitely try to protect the interests of our community.

Mr. Williams: Do you think your Premier's attitude will be the same as yours? Will he respect the decision made here?

Mr. Gervais: Well, obviously you'll have to ask the Premier of New Brunswick. I can't speak for him.

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

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I had a little more time, I'd ask Mr. Hogue what he meant when he said he didn't want to put on airs and play the fine lady. I suppose that means he puts on airs and plays the fine gentleman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I asked you not to ask him that in public.

Mrs. Blackburn: I suppose that means he plays the fine gentleman. But I'm starting to wonder what the difference is if all the women on the Commission play the fine lady. But some people are acting like the bogeyman and not very successfully at that.

First I'd like to say, Gentlemen, that I read your brief carefully and enjoyed it very much, and that it's very compact and well done. So I'll go straight to my questions because I have at least three I'd like you to clarify somewhat.

On page 1 of your brief, you recognize the right of the people of Québec to self-determination. You say you understand and respect us, and you say: "How could it be otherwise when we too have the same objectives in our own territory?" And on page 7 you talk a bit about giving government bodies and Acadian organizations the ability to achieve this type of linguistic duality. Are you claiming the right to self-determination for the Acadian people? Would this status give you much the same advantages as the Anglophone people here in Québec? Not the people, but Anglophones.

Mr. Gervais: Obviously our community has evolved, and what we're looking for right now is greater autonomy. In recent years we decided that autonomy for the Acadians of New Brunswick meant seeking greater duality within the government framework, and setting up mechanisms that would permit our development and taking control of political decision-making levers in our community. So that's what we've identified for the time being. What we've done for the future is we've... why we've set up the Acadian political commission to evaluate the situation and evaluate our political options for the future. So I can't predict what conclusions the Commission will draw before it's even created.

Mrs. Blackburn: You say that, depending on the option Québec chooses, you'll have to adjust to the option. How do you think... How would it be different, if we were still in the federalist framework or sovereign? Would there be advantages if we were a sovereign people in terms of the links we could forge with the Acadian people?

Mr. Gervais: Obviously once the Canadian Confederation has been redefined or Quebecers have decided on an option, as I said just now, regardless of the outcome we'll have to live in English Canada. So in that sense your political option will certainly have an impact on our community. That's why we're saying today: Yes, let's increase our cooperation immediately; let's not wait three years to increase it. Because we're natural allies. We're natural allies in the struggle to protect the language and promote the French language and our individual cultures.

Mrs. Blackburn: On page 10 of your brief, you suggest that our Commission should propose that this structure be established in cooperation with - talking about a new structure in Québec - the Francophone community of Canada. I'd like to know a little more about this. You contemplate a certain number of measures that would maintain and strengthen the links with Francophone communities in North America. The working hypothesis that will be on the table involves a real policy on relations with Francophone communities, establishment of a branch within the Québec government, relations with Anglophone communities, the ability to establish scholarships or access to educational establishments: universities, colleges and so on. From that standpoint, for everyone involved, everyone I've heard discuss the matter, relationships with Francophone communities are advantageous not just because of the cultural and linguistic aspect but also - I would say first and foremost - because of the economic advantages. Because the establishment of

correspondents, if I can use that word, throughout Canada and the United States could be a definite economic advantage. Especially since you, like everyone we'll be hearing this afternoon - Francophones from Ontario - are reminding us that Francophones are increasingly dynamic and very much involved in the business community. So what should the Commission conclude? What should the Commission's report say? Various elements... in more detail... Could you tell us?

Mr. Gervais: I started to answer that question just now. Obviously we're looking for greater collaboration, yes, greater sector-based collaboration. And I'm saying that the Acadian community of New Brunswick has created homogeneous, sector-based organizations. So I think that if we establish a new structure, those partners will have to identify just how they see the new structure. And we'll have to do it in cooperation with the organizations.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): By consensus.

Mrs. Blackburn: One last brief question, because I was rather intrigued just now, and also when I read your brief. You recommend that the Québec government negotiate directly with the Acadian people.

Mr. Gervais: Yes.

Mrs. Blackburn: So you realize that it would be government to people...

Mr. Gervais: For us the concept is nothing new.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes, I know.

Mr. Gervais: We started it 22 years ago with France. And I must say we've had a special relationship with France for 22 years, and it functions very well. I've just come back from negotiations in Paris and I must say the French are very interested in increasing their collaboration with Acadians, because they recognize that it's in France's interest to do so. In that sense I think it's also time we did things with our natural allies, our neighbors.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'd like to thank the Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick. Apart from the Conseil de la vie française, you're the first group of Canadian Francophones from outside Québec that has appeared before us. We'll have several others before the end of our public hearings. I'd like to thank you for having come all this way, for having sent us your brief and having answered the members' questions. The

sitting is now adjourned. We'll resume at 3:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 1:01 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:35 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll now resume our work with a presentation by the Council of the Huron-Wendat Nation. Grand Chief Max Gros-Louis will introduce the people with him and make the presentation. Mr. Gros-Louis, the floor is yours.

Council of the Huron-Wendat Nation

Mr. Gros-Louis (Max "Oné-Onti"): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Messrs. Co-chairmen, members of the Commission, I'd like to thank you on behalf of the entire Huron Nation for giving our message a hearing. Before I go on with the presentation, allow me to implore the Creator to give us the will and wisdom to unite our voices as we try to lay down the foundations of our future relations.

If I may, I'd like to introduce the people with me: to my right, Mrs. Rayne Lainé, vice-chief of the Huron-Wendat Nation, also to my right, Mr. Raymond Gros-Louis, the chief in charge of culture. To my left, Mr. Luc Lainé, advisor in governmental autonomy to the Huron-Wendat Nation Council. Mr. Roger Vincent, director of education to the Village des Hurons; and Mr. Gérard Fortin, anthropologist and ethnohistorian, who specializes in the Iroquois culture.

I know that you already have in hand the brief we presented. It might be easier to sum it up and perhaps refer to certain pages as I make my presentation.

I'm sure you've had the opportunity to read our brief attentively. So instead of rereading it together, I propose to use my own words to tell you about the main ideas that we, as a nation, wish to communicate to the members of this Commission.

I'd like to make a very specific point here; please understand that we are speaking on behalf of the Huron-Wendat Nation alone. We do not have a mandate to represent all the First Nations of Québec or other nations in Canada. This Commission is a good opportunity to think about the future of Québec and its relations with Canada in a new way. It could also have been an exceptional opportunity to reconsider your relations with the first inhabitants of this country, those who welcomed you, cared for you, fed you, transported you and guided you through our land.

Given the circumstances, our decision to meet with you was not one that gladdened our hearts. I think Quebecers should be ashamed of the situation, and I know that several

commissioners are indeed ashamed.

That said, we felt we had a responsibility to bring you our message. With your permission, within the framework of your Commission's objectives, we will now do so. I have no intention of describing in detail the history of our relations. However, it is very important to point out that we have always taken great care to develop and maintain close relations with our neighbours. We have long been the hub of international trade between aboriginal peoples at the heart of the North American continent. At the mouth of the St. Lawrence, the gateway to our territory, we welcomed the first Europeans in search of a new continent. We established important trade relations with your ancestors.

Throughout those long years, marked by periods of peace, epidemics and wars, our people has always considered itself an aboriginal people with ancestral rights and sovereignty over the management of its affairs. We have always refused to be assimilated into the Canadian or Québec melting pot and to disappear as a people. To this day, we refuse assimilation, advocate coexistence and with all our heart wish to find a solution to those elements of coexistence that seem to pose a problem.

For generations we have kept saying that what we want is to work together, in a spirit of equity and justice for our peoples. We are not against new developments in Québec, nor are we opposed to Québec's autonomy. That is primarily your concern. However, we want to make it clear that we will never accept any development or autonomy that goes counter to our own development and our own autonomy.

The future of Québec cannot be built without the First Nations who live here. We will continue to live in Québec, alongside and with Quebecers. We are not an ethnic minority and our rights are not privileges. I have enormous respect for ethnic minorities, but our rights as first inhabitants of this country must not be confused with privileges. Why wait for a new Malouf, Sparrow or Sioui judgment to join us in designing a political system that will be fair to all and respectful of our collective rights, our rights as a people?

Our intention is not to work against Québec, on the contrary. But we want to work towards our cause, and hope that no one will hold that against us. We have always talked with the French crown and the English crown as equals. Today, and as long as there is no constitutional change, the seat of legitimacy of these crowns is the federal government.

You should not be surprised that we deal principally with Ottawa, which, by virtue of Section 91(24) of the Canadian Constitution, is responsible for the management of aboriginal affairs and is the guardian of our interests. We are willing at any time to sit down and dialogue

with Québec but under no circumstances will we do so if it reduces our own sovereignty or rights, or negates the guardianship role of the federal government, especially if it means having imposed on us, unilaterally, total provincial jurisdiction and its general application regulations. The section I refer to, of course, is found again in the Indian Act, Section 88.

We are willing at any time to harmonize our legitimacy with that of Québec. We have no intention of concealing our blueprint for society from you. We want you to recognize our autonomy. We must get out of this situation of dependence and "partnerism", and assume our responsibilities, but we can only do so if we have the resources we need.

We do not want to be forced, with every morcel of autonomy we want to gain, to declare the type of war that we have seen for the past decades between Québec and Ottawa. Québec must assume a consistent overall attitude towards our people, it must affirm a clear political will, based on the recognition of the same sovereignty for aboriginal peoples as it seeks for itself. Let's not be afraid, either, to consider some of the avenues that Mr. Bob Rae of Ontario recently talked about.
(3:45 p.m.)

We must work together to define a social contract. This will not be achieved as long as there is prejudice, mistrust, vengeance and ignorance. We must do what is necessary to put our relations on a new footing. As spokesman for my nation, I have been trying for at least 25 years to explain this message on different podiums, in Québec, in Canada and abroad. Québec must now face, head on, the unequivocal recognition of the right of our people. You can set up all the commissions you want, all the conferences and forums imaginable, and vote any number of recommendations in any charters, acts, motions, regulations or decrees to assuage your conscience, it will all be to no avail if, behind all this, there is no sincere political will to address the aboriginal issue with justice.

Thank you for listening so attentively. We're ready to answer your questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Gros-Louis. Let's start with the representative of the Government party, Mr. Sirros.

Mr. Sirros: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. Gros-Louis and representatives. We'll have a chance to spend a few hours together, tomorrow, when I visit you. Right now, I'd like to thank you for your presentation and let you know that I found your brief clear and lucid; it shows... I think you referred to 25 years of grappling with this particular question. Your brief echoes many aspects of issues that are particular to the Huron-Wendat Nation, but that

also apply to, or in any case that can be found in, the concerns of several other aboriginal groups.

I wanted to make a couple of comments first, one in particular because I thought it would be worth clarifying. In your brief, in a reference to the assimilation of aboriginal peoples, you make the analogy with an ethnic minority or a cultural community. I'd like to take this opportunity offered by the Commission... I don't know whether this is coming up again because of my recent nomination, but I'd like to take this opportunity to put an end to any doubt, if it ever existed, as to the approach the government is taking with regard to aboriginal nations. I am in total agreement with what you have said about the distinction that must be made between aboriginal nations and cultural communities. Being the product of a minority group myself, as is my predecessor, in fact, we are perhaps in a good position to know the difference.

There is, indeed, a difference. Which leads me to my second point, which might illustrate the difference, something which you also brought up, when you said that the approach to this issue must not deal strictly with the needs of aboriginal peoples; it must also address the rights of aboriginal peoples. There are rights specific to aboriginal groups, and these rights are at present entrenched in the Constitution of 1982, which contains the recognition, in Section 35, I think, of the existence of ancestral rights or rights acquired by treaties. You are in a good position to know this, after the decision you referred to. You're perfectly right to say that this is an issue specific to aboriginal peoples. You also spoke of the need to... I think you said: Let's create an adequate political system together. This is what I'd like to hear more about from you. Are you among those who think that, in a relatively short period of time, we can agree on certain things like, at least for the moment, an objective assessment of the aboriginal situation, of relations with non-aboriginals, and identify the problems involved, if I can put it that way, in the aboriginal issue? Do you think we're capable of this? Do you think that, in the not too distant future, we can agree between aboriginals and non-aboriginals on this aspect, on defining the problems, so that we can at least lay the groundwork for an agreement? Are you confident that this can be done?

Mr. Gros-Louis: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I am grateful, and reassured, that you can make the distinction between an ethnic group and an aboriginal people. This is something I must definitely thank you for. We had read certain things... We had begun to believe that we were no more than ethnic minorities among all the other ethnic minorities of Québec and

Canada. But I must say again, your statement has reassured me and the Huron Nation. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Secondly, yes I believe that we can start discussing certain things, but first we may have to put out a few fires that threaten to grow day by day. I'm talking about small fires that one encounters nearly every day; hunting and fishing are a couple of examples of areas where friction is a common occurrence. There are also certain things that have to do with taxes. It is absolutely essential to kill the myth that the Hurons, that all Indians live on welfare and don't pay taxes. It must also be said that we provide work for some 300 Canadians, 300 Quebecers who work among us and who do indeed pay a lot of taxes to Québec and Canada, but the Hurons don't reap any of the benefits.

All these things need to be explained carefully to people. People should no longer be led to believe that the Hurons, that all Indians live off taxes, live off the money of taxpayers; this is absolutely untrue. There may be some, like everywhere else, but I can tell you that, among the Hurons, there is no such thing.

Mr. Sirros: I gather you are still quite confident that, in the near future, we will be able to identify the problems between government and aboriginal peoples, and then approach the whole issue by exploring various avenues, among them the Constitution, an avenue that we should explore together, given the situation you mention, where you say, I think, that on no account must we forsake federal jurisdiction in an eventual transfer of powers if this means a reduction in the current status. It is clear that you have an immediate interest in the constitutional issue and that once the parameters of these problems are established, together we can take a look at various items, like the Constitution, and the economic development to which you referred earlier.

On that subject, two things, a two-part question.

First, your brief talks a lot about government autonomy and in certain places mentions sovereignty. Your nation lives very close to an urban centre; of all the First Nations yours is probably in the most direct contact with the rest of society. You also mention that many of your members have government jobs. In any event, there is a great deal of contact. As a result, you do not live in isolation. I imagine that you don't want to see government autonomy developed in a vacuum. Could you tell us a bit more about how you see these things?

Mr. Gros-Louis: Well, when we talk of a constitution, the first thing is, if Québec separates, if Québec had its own constitution, well, what we already have in the Canadian Constitution, that at least should be kept.

Second, we don't want the role, we don't want you to assume the role currently played by the federal government of being the guardian of Indians, of being the guardian of the Hurons. We're a little tired of playing the role of little children, of... We've attained majority, one would think, at the age of 99, when accompanied by our grandparents. Things like that must stop and I hope that, in the development of a new Québec, you will have a totally different option when it comes to the autonomy and sovereignty of the Hurons.

To your question about what we mean by sovereignty of the Hurons, I'd like to answer that we mean full sovereignty; jurisdiction over our own institutions, as you can see I am well... We must have territories large enough to work and live on, access to natural resources, control of our development tools, access to certain capital, decision-making powers, and our own autonomous government. Of course, to do this, we'll have to develop good-neighbour agreements. There will be certain divisions of responsibilities. We'll negotiate on an equal footing. We're not here to settle all the things we need to discuss or negotiate, but we can still give you an idea. There will be land, tracts of land, which are already recognized or which we believe to be ancestral lands that belong to the Hurons. We could have a portion of these. We could exchange some of them for land elsewhere. On these lands, we would be autonomous. We could also share certain lands and, for the rest, you can do as you see fit.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go on to the questions of the Official Opposition party representative, Mr. Perron.

Mr. Perron: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I'd like to thank Chief Max Gros-Louis for being here with his colleagues. I have two comments to make and then I'll have several questions regarding your brief, which I read attentively and found extremely interesting.

First, as regards the presence of aboriginal nations before this Commission, you already know my position; I even defended aboriginal representativity at the National Assembly, in an amendment that was proposed during study of the final draft bill on the Commission. On this particular issue, the government had decided, at the time, to say bluntly: If there is an aboriginal presence, there will have to be another liberal representative.

Second, regarding your refusal to be treated as an ethnic minority, I can tell you, Mr. Gros-Louis that, as far as I am concerned and as far as the members of the Opposition are concerned, we are perfectly in agreement with your position. Having been brought up among Algonquins - one of the nations of Québec - I

had, from an early age, the opportunity to recognize this group as a nation, not as an ethnic minority. I think we can say that, at least this time, we can be glad that the government has made its bed with regard to the recognition of aboriginal nations and that it makes a clear difference between aboriginal nations and ethnic groups.

(4:00 p.m.)

First question. In your brief, you talk about the accession of Québec to sovereignty. You don't seem to harbour any fears as to how this will affect the Huron Nation. Do you think that the aboriginal nations, through negotiations and tribunals, can achieve the autonomy you have longed for all these years within the current system? You mentioned the Indian Act: I have a good idea of what you think of it. I also know what I think of it. That was my first question, Mr. Gros-Louis.

Mr. Gros-Louis: If I may, I'd like to take the questions one at a time.

Mr. Perron: Of course.

Mr. Gros-Louis: When you speak of obtaining recognition through the courts, I would much rather, or we would much rather sit down before going to court because, we have said this from the beginning, in a court decision you have a winner and a loser. That's never a good thing. Before being forced to go to court, we should sit down, discuss and negotiate certain things, and if we can't come to an agreement, well, then I think the next step should be to take it to the courts. But even when you resort to the courts, even with these judgments, we have found that, as things stand, these judgments are not respected as they should be. We're starting to think that what we've got, or what we're heading for is anarchy.

Are court judgments going to be respected, or what? Even after these court decisions, we still have to sit down and discuss and try to negotiate some more. And if that doesn't work, well, we're sorry to have to say this - and I don't like to refer to this, you understand - you know what happened last year, in several places; things like that can happen again, which would be a pity. But when your own judges, your own courts rule in favour of the aboriginal peoples, the judgment must be accepted. The need and will to negotiate on an equal basis must be respected from the start.

Mr. Perron: Fine. In a sovereign Québec, which, for me, is imminent, precisely because the courts must settle certain disputes, what would your position be on forming a joint standing commission, with equal representation, that is, as many whites as aboriginals, to settle disputes arising from treaties or agreements?

Mr. Gros-Louis: Mr. Perron, you may find the answer to the first question unpleasant, but it must be said. Before Québec becomes sovereign, you'll have to ask the Indians. You can't achieve sovereignty without the participation and agreement of the Indians.

Mr. Perron: To participate in the Constitution and the wording.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Exactly. We would be willing to participate in this Constitution you wish to build, on condition that we have an equal say in its wording. But you must realize that... Here, I don't want to scare anybody, because it's always misinterpreted. When we say that a certain percentage of the Québec territory belongs to Indians, or that Indians still have deeds or even rights, well, this is true, and the question must be settled before taking any position whatsoever in a new Québec. And when you speak of a commission, of a group, I think we agree that this group must include representatives of aboriginal peoples and, I would hope, a strong participation by Hurons, so that this constitution can be written together and so that we can agree before it is accepted.

Mr. Perron: Mr. Chairman, another question. The sovereignty of aboriginal nations, as you see it, does it mean a division of powers and responsibilities which would take place within the framework of Québec legislation?

Mr. Gros-Louis: This is clear from the start. I must tell you that, on certain territories, we want our autonomy, we want our sovereignty, we want jurisdiction over our own institutions.

We want total sovereignty over certain institutions; in other cases, there may be a division, we could share. We could share power in various things. In judicial proceedings, we know very well that there would have to be a certain division of powers, this we know very well. We also know that there may be a thousand different formulas for autonomy, but it must be understood that, if we work together, if we work as partners, we must also decide as partners and respect each other. Your autonomy will begin where ours ends, and ours will perhaps begin where yours ends. There are definitely areas on our territory where we want complete autonomy.

Mr. Perron: Mr. Chairman, this leads me to another question which concerns the Commission. The Commission decided not to form any special forum on aboriginal nations, as it did in the case of the Forum jeunesse for young people. Could you tell us your opinion on this decision of the Commission?

Mr. Gros-Louis: Look, I haven't received a lot of information on that subject. I've been in

the forest for a month and a half. To me, this is something new. I don't know much about it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): With your permission, before you answer, Mr. Gros-Louis, it is both true and somewhat inaccurate, since the Commission, the Steering Committee of the Commission, responded to a request it received; it had not contemplated organizing a forum, since it already had a full program, but it said it would come back to this question at the end of January. This is what was in our communiqué. It is not completely correct to say that there won't be any, but it is not totally incorrect either, for the time being at any rate. I hope this information was useful; go ahead with your answer.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Thank you. I'd like to ask Mr. Luc Lainé, who knows more about it...

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

Mr. Lainé (Luc): Perhaps, just a little more. I think the Chief has given our answer. Of course, if we're invited to sit down and discuss issues, we're open to any invitation. The idea of an aboriginal forum seems interesting and exciting, but we have to make sure from the start that we'll be dealing with the right people, the people who are close to power, who are close to the decision-making process; and that this will be a forum in which we will be given the opportunity to express ourselves openly and clearly, as equals, not one in which the decisions have already been made and where we would be invited to digest what has already been decided. We don't need that kind of invitation. But if we're asked to sit down and build something together, that's the type of invitation we can't refuse.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Lainé. That takes us to the end of Mr. Perron's time. You can be assured that the Steering Committee of the Commission shares your concern that such a forum should be a real one, capable of helping solve problems, not something which, although useful, would be lost in the context of other issues.

That said, let's go on to the questions of the members. Mr. d'Anjou, followed by Mr. Laberge and Mr. Beaumier.

Mr. d'Anjou: Good afternoon, Mr. Gros-Louis, good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. I read your brief with great interest. I know that these are difficult problems to solve because they involve coexistence, and, as you mentioned earlier in your presentation, coexistence on the same territory.

Obviously, you have territorial claims. I realize that the territories you claim are still part of Québec and Canada. Am I correct? They're still part of the same country, the same province. You want jurisdiction over certain territories that you propose to occupy in toto. Will all Quebecers be able to coexist on these territories? For the rest of the territories, coexistence, as we currently know it, is possible, without any discrimination. But this may be part of the difficulty, since the public may not understand territorial claims in relation to the territory of a country or a province. Are these separate territories or are they part of the country or the province?

Mr. Gros-Louis: I think that was quite clear. If we have lands, they are Huron lands, they're not Québec lands and they're not Canadian lands. If you're talking about a Québec country, you're talking about a country that belongs to you, not a Québec-Canada country. You say you want to be Quebecers; we want to be Hurons, on territory that is truly Huron territory, a sort of Monaco, if you will.

Mr. d'Anjou: So, it would be a real separation between...

Mr. Gros-Louis: Exactly. That's what we want.

Mr. d'Anjou: OK. That's what I wanted to know.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Of course, if some people want to come and live on Huron lands, we can always look at the possibility, since we'll have jurisdiction and everything we need to give them Huron citizenship, if they want it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge. Not necessarily about your own citizenship, but it's your turn.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: Here we have Ti-Louis speaking to Gros-Louis!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That's it.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: Chief...

Mr. Gros-Louis: But standing up, size-wise, we're more or less equal.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: As you know, the union

movement has long been in favour of full recognition of the rights of aboriginal peoples, the rights of nations. As far as we're concerned, that's settled. But there is one thing, I think, on which we should agree. The way things are at the moment, with two levels of government jurisdiction, the problem just gets tossed back and forth.

Mr. Gros-Louis: With the result that nothing gets done.

Mr. Laberge: The sooner this situation is settled, the sooner things will get better for everybody. Don't you agree?

Mr. Gros-Louis: But that's not what's happening; nothing gets settled.

Mr. Laberge: No. Let's get this thing straight and then we'll go on from there. This is the way we union people see it.

Mr. Gros-Louis: That's the way I see it too.

Mr. Laberge: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's go on to Mr. Beaumier.

Mr. Nicolet: He isn't here.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I beg your pardon?

Mr. Nicolet: Mr. Chairman, may I take over since he isn't here?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Sure, go ahead. You're more than welcome. The municipal brotherhood will take over.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Nicolet: This gives us an opportunity to welcome Mr. Gros-Louis and his colleagues. As a substitute for my colleague, I assume he would have asked a question about page 8 of your brief, where you state your reluctance to being imprisoned and "reduced" by the logic and the prerogatives of cities, regional county municipalities, controlled zoning, outfitters and other public or private sub-contractors to which Québec has delegated its authority. You go on to say that this would only dilute your rights and perhaps cause you to lose your soul. You add: "We are sure you can see our point".

It is obvious that the more Québec develops, the more the territory becomes difficult to manage, and the more we'll have to face the problem of coexistence.

In certain regions – not specifically with you but with the Attikamek, for instance – municipal authorities, in particular the RCMs, have had to deal with aboriginal peoples on questions of territorial planning, land use and protection of a way of life. We wonder whether it would be possible, despite this rather rigid position, to contemplate consultation mechanisms and ways to live together as good neighbours. Your brief also asks whether it would be possible to join forces in furthering concerns held by both sides on better development and planning of the territory in the medium and long term.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Yes, this is the basis of our brief, what it comes down to is sharing and working together as good neighbours. Of course, it could also include... The point is, these things will not be settled here. Our brief was meant as a starting point for discussion and debate. We might consider three types of territories, as I said earlier: a completely Huron territory; a shared territory, managed by both parties; and a territory that Quebecers would manage as they see fit. The territories themselves remain to be determined. But as you yourselves know, the division of responsibilities is becoming more and more...

I'd like to remind you that, on a territory measuring a quarter of a mile by half a mile, 400 metres by 800 metres, the Huron Nation has shown that it is capable of assuming its responsibilities. This is the only place in Canada where nobody lives on welfare. It's the only place in Canada, on such a small territory, where we employ hundreds of Canadians who work for us. This is the only place in Canada where, on reserves, there are houses that are habitable. As you can see, we have assumed our responsibilities. We have proven that we were capable of doing it. We could just as easily do the same in other areas, especially if there was a division of power. I can tell you that the protection of the fauna has been among our foremost concerns. The other aspect – I had occasion to listen to the people who take care of conservation say so – is to be able to derive something to eat from this fauna. This, of course, is the very essence of the Huron way of life; we're talking about hunting and fishing.

(4:15 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mr. Beaudry and Mr. Larose.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. Mr. Gros-Louis, in Sept-Îles, two weeks ago, we heard presentations from some Montagnais representatives dealing with more or less the same issues. If I remember correctly, these Montagnais representatives also made a claim for sovereignty, recognition of their culture, their

traditions, their survival as a nation; however, they also recognized that, in organizing autonomous states, the claims of aboriginal peoples – that is to say, theirs and not necessarily yours – would not compromise territorial integrity. There was to be a single territory in which you would have specific parties or rights which would be recognized and managed by aboriginal nations. I don't want to distort their statements but, in the main, they stressed that a division of rights and recognition of rights between whites and aborigines should not affect territorial integrity. In the claims you make today, it seems to me that you depart from the proposals made in Sept-Îles by the Montagnais. Am I right?

Mr. Gros-Louis: This may be the position of the Montagnais. You know that there are 11 nations in Québec. When I say nations, I mean different nations. Every nation is a distinct entity. Now, if you're talking about the integrity of the Québec territory, I'd like you to start talking about the integrity of the Huron territory. Because if you're talking about a wall-to-wall Québec, this means the abolition of our own territorial integrity. I remember what my father and grandfather used to tell me. They used to say: The white man will never be satisfied with the land he owns. He'll never stop until he owns it all. And when he does, brother will fight brother to control more land. I must tell you that what we want is complete control of a specific territory which will not be... In fact, this has been the problem from the very beginning. We were not given recognition as Canadians, nor as Quebecers. It was only in recent years that we were offered the right to vote. Even today, if you look around, how many aboriginals are there in the Québec Parliament? None. It stands to reason that if we're not Canadians, and we're not Quebecers, but we have territories, well, it means that we're an autonomous, sovereign nation. And we have never relinquished our sovereignty. This means that our territories are sovereign and that they belong to us.

All the same, I'd like to... Maybe you recall a study that you did in recent years on the integrity of the Québec territory, as part of the Henri Dorion report. It's an interesting document. Those who have not read it would be well advised to take a look at what integrity of the Québec territory and of the aboriginal territories in Québec means.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Larose and Mr. Holden.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Along the same line as Mr. Bouchard, I'd like to point out that you, as one of the 11 First Nations, have had occasions to meet with others

to discuss territorial integrity. This was given coverage on television, in newspapers, on the radio, etc. People were told that the 11 First Nations of Québec considered that they owned 85% of the Québec territory. I'd like you to tell me if these proportions were grossly exaggerated or whether these figures were in fact discussed among the First Nations and how this fits in with your views on the subject?

Mr. Gros-Louis: I'll just tell you something briefly because I think there are others who want to have their say. To go back to this study on the Québec territory, which was done in the 1970s, 1969.. 1970, the Henri Dorion report, there was something about 85%. It is completely wrong to tell people, to tell Quebecers, that the Indians want to take 85% of the territory and drive out Quebecers. This is not our intention at all. This is not what we want. What we want, what we're saying is that we have certain rights over these territories and that we want to sit down and negotiate these rights.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, but in your brief, Mr. Gros-Louis – and I assume this applies to territorial integrity – you tell us, on page 9, that you don't want a repeat of the wars that have taken place between Québec and Ottawa in the last few years on the issue of autonomy. My question is: Does your idea of autonomy also apply to the territory? Would it be reasonable to say that, today, your claim does not involve 85% of the territory, but perhaps 25%, 10%, 15%, I don't know, or if, basically, you're still convinced that it involves 85%... To go back to the question asked earlier by Mr. Perron: Do you believe that sovereignty can be achieved in Québec? To which your reply was categorical: No, not without the participation of the First Nations. So if you start from the premise that territorial integrity, in your eyes, is essential and, furthermore, that you don't want to be forced to negotiate on a piecemeal basis, it may be necessary to sit down at some point and define what territorial integrity means for you, and what proportion of Québec should be granted to the First Nations. This is what I am asking you.

Mr. Gros-Louis: You're quite right, Mr. Beaudry, quite right. Personally, for the past 25 years I've been saying we should sit down together and discuss territorial integrity, and what we Hurons should administer, what we could administer jointly and...

Mr. Beaudry: That's what you said earlier.

Mr. Gros-Louis: That's right. But I'd like to repeat it.

Mr. Beaudry: But you spoke of the book

published by Henri Dorion...

Mr. Gros-Louis: Look... I can't come up with a percentage right now. We haven't begun to discuss it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry, I think you'll have to be satisfied with that answer. Your time is up. Mr. Larose, followed by Mr. Holden and Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Just to conclude, if I may. It takes a certain attitude, a certain political will just to be willing to sit down and discuss it in the first place.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you.

Mr. Larose: Mr. Gros-Louis, I think you're the fifth group of aboriginals to meet with the Commission. If I may go back to Mr. Bouchard's question. Throughout all this, what I have gathered is that all aboriginal groups have told us: Listen, settle your own problem as Quebecers; we'll settle our problem afterwards. Or something of that nature. You settle your problem and, we'll settle our own sovereignty problem. We have been told everywhere that the kind of dependence and federal authority that reduces aboriginal nations to the status of children must be done away with. Also, that ancestral rights and territorial rights must be recognized, and that Amerindians must be given greater autonomy, among other things. In short, that what needs to be done is to carve a place for Amerindian sovereignty inside sovereignty itself. Nobody told us that they wanted to have a territory where they took charge of their own national defence and postal system... There were even references to... This is what I would like to understand. Do your claims follow the same pattern as other groups, or is this something different? This particular question is one I asked, I think it was in Sept-Îles, because, personally, I agree that, in light of the Constitution, of a redefined Québec, all these rights must be recognized, there must be means whereby these things can be settled. But are we to have 11 different clauses in the Constitution, or will there be a framework agreement whereby all Amerindian issues can be settled?

Mr. Gros-Louis: To your first question, since you have two or three questions there, Mr. Larose, when you say: We'll settle our own problem, then we'll sit down and see what we can do with you. No, no. This is something we'll look at together, not afterwards. We have been told for years: We'll do things this way, then we'll go and see you. We'll have no more of that. Let's do it together. If we want to write a

new constitution for Québec, for a new Québec, why not do it together? Or would you rather continue to have the same problem over and over again with the First Nations? Because that's what's going to happen - you're going to have the same problems with the First Nations over and over again, forever.

Secondly, yes, each nation will decide on what it wants. There are 11 First Nations in Québec... What I'm trying to say is that we Hurons, as I said earlier, are speaking on behalf of the Hurons. The Hurons will represent the Huron nation. If, on certain issues, we want to get together with other aboriginal groups in Québec, with all the nations in Québec, the First Nations in Québec, we can do so on certain points, but in specific areas each nation will make its own decisions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Holden, followed by Mr. Turgeon and, lastly, Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Holden: Thank you. Chief Gros-Louis, do you belong to the Alliance autochtone du Québec? No?

Mr. Gros-Louis: The Alliance autochtone du Québec is made up primarily of Metis and aboriginal women.

Mr. Holden: In any case...

Mr. Gros-Louis: As well as non-status Indians.

Mr. Holden: The reason I'm asking is that I have a copy of a letter, and I'd like to ask you whether you agree with a paragraph in this letter by the Alliance autochtone, which says: "To this day, our nations are not represented at this type of roundtable. Who, then, will voice our views or defend our opinions? If we have no voice, who will understand our needs and our cultural contributions?" Do you have any comments about the representation of aboriginal peoples on the Commission?

Mr. Gros-Louis: This is the Alliance autochtone.

Mr. Holden: Yes, but do you agree with them?

Mr. Gros-Louis: Look, if the Alliance autochtone wants to be represented, they should have asked for it, they're a fairly well structured group. I can't decide, I can't make that decision, I have no mandate to speak on behalf of the Alliance autochtone, but if they want to get together with us, I'm willing to work with them.

Mr. Chairman, if I may...

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

Mr. Gros-Louis: History has repeatedly said that Hurons are immigrants to Québec. We may have been immigrants 300, 400 or 500 years ago, I don't know, but if I may, I'd like Mr. Gérard Fortin to tell us where we Hurons were before the non-Indians arrived.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Do you agree with this, Mr. Holden?

Mr. Holden: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If you can keep it short, Mr. Fortin, without distorting the reality, please go ahead.

Mr. Fortin: That's easy. Jacques Cartier met the Huron people on his arrival in Stadacona. Max's ancestor is Donnacona. They later helped the white man survive during the first winter, providing him with appropriate remedies.

Mr. Holden: Mr. Chairman...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have time for a brief answer, Mr. Holden. (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Holden: Thank you. We are a small parliamentary group, but, even before the Official Opposition, we were... We tried to obtain a place on the Commission for aboriginal peoples. But on your brief, on page 9, you speak of a declaration made by Bob Rae in Ontario. Could you tell us exactly what Mr. Rae's views are on aboriginal peoples?

Mr. Gros-Louis: OK. I was there when Mr. Rae made these declarations, and he said, at the very beginning, that he was in favour of sitting down and negotiating, and that he recognized the autonomy of aboriginal peoples.

Mr. Holden: Did he mention territories, or...

Mr. Gros-Louis: He did not discuss territories, but he did mention that he had visited aboriginal territories. I presume that if he spoke of aboriginal territories, it is an indication that he foresaw that there would be aboriginal territories. However, he did not go into detail.

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

Mr. Gros-Louis: But there was a political will that was declared, throughout Canada, because all the chiefs, from all over Canada, were there.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Gros-Louis, you're right when you say that we're not going to settle these things today. I think that, basically, the problem is to determine the place of each in relation to the others.

My first question is: If there is a referendum on sovereignty, are you going to vote?

Mr. Gros-Louis: I'll speak for myself and for 95% of the Huron people. We have never voted in any provincial election, nor have we ever voted in any federal election. We are neither Canadian nor Québécois. And I'd like to make it clear, furthermore, that I belong to no party, be it liberal, PQ or conservative; any party you may have is going to be a Canadian or Québécois party, and I am a Huron Indian. None of you come to vote in my elections, which means you are neither Indian nor Huron.

Mr. Turgeon: Very well. You claim that the trustee of your interests - Mr. Bédard could tell us what a trustee is, it is in fact a guardian - the guardian of your interests is Ottawa. It's not Québec.

Should there be a referendum, and should the answer to sovereignty be positive, we'll enter a phase of negotiations with the rest of Canada. Who will look after your interests during that time?

Mr. Gros-Louis: It will still be Canada until we have a new constitution, as we said in our brief.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you.

Mr. Gros-Louis: And in this constitution, which... I assume there will be a Québec constitution. This constitution, we definitely want to write it together, to make sure we have a clear understanding...

Mr. Turgeon: At that time!

Mr. Gros-Louis: Because if you do what Canada did, which is to push aside the First Nations, well, this is probably one of the reasons Canada does not work today. The First Nations have been pushed aside from the beginning.

Mr. Turgeon: OK. Assuming that Québec does not attain sovereignty, for one reason or another, it will not be able to grant your claims.

Mr. Gros-Louis: No, but we'll still have to... You know what's happening with Canada at the moment. Their back is also against the wall, to be able to revise the Constitution, and define - I repeat, define - what to put in the box, which may be full or empty - I'm referring to Article 35 of the Constitution - which says

we have ancestral rights, rights arising from treaties, and... But these rights will have to be defined; right now the box is empty. The time has come to get the job done.

Mr. Turgeon: Can you tell me...

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

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Did you have another short question, Mr. Turgeon?

Mr. Turgeon: I wanted to know whether, as things stand, if it would be just as difficult for you, or just as easy depending on the case, to negotiate with Ottawa or with Québec?

Mr. Gros-Louis: That depends! It all depends on the political will of each group. At present, it's quite difficult with Ottawa, there's no question. I must tell you that we don't know, because we've never sat down with Québec, or with any party, to discuss this. Now, when we start, we'll see; it might be really difficult, it might be better. I hope it'll be better.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Hogue?

Mr. Hogue: Chief Gros-Louis... Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Mr. Dion said to Mr. Laberge this morning, I'm speaking on my own behalf. But I am also speaking on behalf of what I represent, and I must congratulate you. What you have said is clear, straightforward, it has a human dimension; this is a sound basis for deciding our positions; once again, thank you. Obviously, you have enough respect for us to tell us exactly how you feel. If we take page 7, page 8 and page 10, three paragraphs... On page 8, "An approach which would consist..."; "Québec has no moral right...", and the paragraph before this statement, in boldface; and on page 10, the last paragraph, in boldface. I assume that, in these three passages, you sum up your position. I'd like to go back to that. I would also like to know in what way this echoes the concerns of Mr. Turgeon. How will you harmonize your legitimacy - that of the Huron nation - with that of Québec, while respecting the trustee responsibility, currently in force, of the federal government?

Mr. Gros-Louis: I think we have answered that question. At present, in the Canadian Constitution, Section 91(24) says that the federal government is solely responsible for the aboriginal peoples of Canada. If we enter into an agreement, and our position is well defined in the constitution of Québec, if Québec separates,

that is, if Québec becomes a country, we'll have to work with Québec. This does not mean that ties will be completely severed with Ottawa right from the first day. But there will certainly have to be certain agreements... We believe that the Canadian government owes a lot to the First Nations and a lot to the Hurons. And all this will be settled before we come and sit down with you.

Mr. Hogue: You're serious, aren't you?

Mr. Gros-Louis: Quite serious.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Our time is up, we'd like to thank Chief Gros-Louis...

Mr. Gros-Louis: Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, go ahead, please.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Before we go, I wouldn't want to have my head chopped off when I get home...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Is there something you promised?

Mr. Gros-Louis: You know... No I hadn't...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Gros-Louis: ...I hadn't promised anything but, as you know, we have a matriarchal law which still exists... I know it also exists in your society, although you don't like to admit it...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Gros-Louis: ...So, I'd like the Vice-Chief of the Huron Nation, Rayne Lainé, to be able to say a few words, please.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): By all means.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lainé (Rayne): He had promised not to put me on the agenda. As vice-chief and a product of a matriarchal society in which women have always played a prominent political role, I'd like to point out that the message delivered today by our Chief, Max "Oné-Onti" Gros-Louis, is clear. We are a sovereign people in body and soul; the recognition of this innate right to self-determination is our sole objective and must be recognized by all, including the body in session

here. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Lainé. I'd also like to thank the entire delegation...

Mrs. Lainé: ...including, of course, by the body in session here. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Lainé. I'd like to thank the entire delegation of the Huron-Wendat Nation Council, and Mr. Fortin for his assistance, as well as Messrs. Raymond Gros-Louis, Luc Lainé, Roger Vincent, Mrs. Rayne Lainé and you, Chief Max Gros-Louis, for this presentation. It will be most useful in our work. It will also, I hope, contribute to settling the problems you have brought up. Thank you.

Mr. Gros-Louis: Thank you very much.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:41 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:44 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Come to order, please!

We resume the sitting with the presentation of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. Please sit down, Mr. Gagnon, or else the camera won't see me. Good.

Mr. Guy Gagnon will introduce the group and begin the presentation. Go ahead, Mr. Gagnon.

Conseil permanent de la jeunesse

Mr. Gagnon (Guy): To my left, Mr. Sylvain Tanguay, vice-chairman of the Conseil; to my right, Ms. Hélène Gagné, Conseil member, and Ms. Marie-Andrée Bertrand, here to my right.

To begin with, we would like to thank the Commission members for agreeing to hold a Forum jeunesse sur l'avenir du Québec next January 22 and 23. Thank you on behalf of young people.

The organization we represent here, the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, is an advisory body with a mandate to advise the government on all matters relating to youth. It is made up of 15 members elected by an electoral college of young people from various regions and sectors of activity in society.

The Conseil members have taken the initiative of speaking here on the political and constitutional question, because any talk about the future is inevitably talk about the future of today's young people and the generations to come. In this brief presentation, we will discuss fields of shared jurisdiction that affect young people, the endless constitutional debate and

our aspirations for the Québec of tomorrow. A number of speakers have appeared before this Commission to describe to you how the duplication of jurisdictions holds back Québec's development, whether it be in manpower vocational training, employment, postsecondary education or regional development.

Let's take manpower vocational training, for example. We find a certain opposition to change, as a result of the squabbles over jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments. These squabbles lead to delays in the development of appropriate manpower training measures and programs. With the globalization of markets, it seems vital to us to take consistent, effective action in the field of manpower training and adaptation.

We currently have the feeling that everyone is passing the buck to someone else, that while one side is trying to turn the unemployed into welfare recipients, the other is trying to convert those welfare recipients into unemployed. The game of catch created by this dual jurisdiction does nothing to help integrate young people into the workforce.

Full repatriation of the jurisdictions inherent in vocational training and employment would allow Québec to plan its own manpower development and training policies. Furthermore, these powers in the area of employment would allow us to consider developing an active policy on labour, aimed at taking concrete action to fight poverty, poverty of the young, among others, which has grown considerably in recent years. In this regard, we refer you to the position of the committee sponsoring the Forum pour l'emploi which we belong to.

In the field of education, a sector under exclusive provincial jurisdiction, the federal government intervenes at the postsecondary level by funding established programs, subsidizing research and providing student aid. In recent years, we know that the federal government has instituted a series of cuts in funding to established programs. According to the Ministère des Finances du Québec, these cuts would effectively cancel out, within seven years, the federal contribution to postsecondary education. In addition, and most importantly, the Canadian government's significant power to spend in terms of its own goals, in such areas as research subsidies, study grants and research contracts, undermines Québec's autonomy in postsecondary education and in research.

In our view, education and research are too important a foundation for Québec's development to let the federal government set their goals and directions. Along another line of thought, many Québec young people are concerned with regional development. Their concerns are of an economic, social and cultural nature, particularly since these regions, which are strongly rural, are experiencing a major exodus of their young

people to the big cities.

In the regions where you have held hearings, regional and local speakers have demanded more powers for regional development. To achieve this decentralization, we believe the powers must first be repatriated from the federal government to the Québec government. After that, these powers can be decentralized in the regions. In the light of these few examples, and with respect to all fields of jurisdiction which have been demanded for Québec by a number of speakers appearing before the Commission, we note an emerging consensus on the primacy which Québec must have over nearly every sector of our collective life.

However, the present constitutional amending formula leaves us very little hope of obtaining these powers. Recent political history has proven, once more, how incompatible Québec's aspirations, even the minimum ones, seem to be with the vision held by the rest of Canada. In this context, we consider it quite unrealistic to believe that it is possible to renew Canadian federalism in a way that suits Quebecers.

It is our view that the present political impasse, caused by the failure of the Meech Lake constitutional accord, demands that Quebecers quickly reach a decision on Québec's political status. Consequently, the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse recommends that the Commission accept Québec sovereignty as the political option likely to foster the full cultural, social and economic development of Québec society of tomorrow. The Conseil further recommends that this option be submitted to the people in a referendum.

We demand the referendum route because the importance of the stakes involved makes it imperative for the people to be able to give a clear verdict on this question all by itself. In this way, the results will not allow any other interpretation as to their true meaning.

With respect to sovereignty, we are convinced that a great many young people share the position of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. In fact, various studies and surveys carried out over the past 10 years clearly show young people's continuing support for this political option. In an IQOP survey done in March 1980, the Yes response to the referendum question received the support of 57.3% of people aged between 18 and 34. In a Léger & Léger poll conducted in late October 1990, 69.5% of young people aged 18 to 24 backed Québec sovereignty. Among those aged 25 to 34, 76.2% said they were in favour of this option. Furthermore, the referendums held this fall in several Québec cegeps confirm this trend. In these surveys, 82% of students said they were in favour of Québec sovereignty.

The sovereignty choice even transcends

political allegiances. We know, in fact, that young people in both major Québec political parties support it. In the light of this information, we must acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, that the broad consensus which you are seeking seems to have been reached by Québec young people.

Mrs. Bertrand (Marie-Andrée): Québec's attainment of sovereignty must be based on the social values we have long adhered to. We therefore reiterate our attachment to democratic values and human rights and freedoms. We also reiterate our attachment to the French language and its status as Québec's official language, while respecting the acquired rights, in cultural, linguistic and institutional matters, of English-speaking Quebecers.

Québec must also remain a country open to immigration. Efforts must be made in this area to facilitate integration of newcomers into Québec language and culture. This integration must be accomplished in a spirit of respect for their culture and values. We want to live in a society that accepts and respects differences between people.

Furthermore, a sovereign Québec must sit down with representatives of Québec's aboriginal nations to define the rights and powers of these peoples. We want to live in harmony with Québec's aboriginal people and we are firmly convinced that we share this feeling with young people in those communities.

For the members of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, building on the base of sovereignty is a thrilling challenge that calls for the contribution of all Quebecers. We wish to develop, together, a society that is trying to achieve full employment of its human resources; a fairer and more equitable society that is energetically battling poverty; a country that rejects the economic and social dismantling of its rural regions, by restoring to the people living there the powers they need to prosper; a society that makes respect for the environment a top priority, by applying a philosophy of economic development based on sustainable development. We have faith in our living strength, in this valiant, educated youth that is seeking its place, in order to stop being the coming generation and become the active generation, a generation participating in building a new country. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Gagnon and Mrs. Bertrand. For the Official Opposition party, first question, Mr. Boisclair.

Mr. Boisclair: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Gagnon, Mr. Tanguay, Mrs. Gagné and the other lady whose name I don't know, Mrs. Bertrand, welcome to this commission. Congratulations on

your presentation. Let me tell you how happy I am today! Because I recognize myself in the comments of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, being a young person under 30 myself. You are the people who represent us within the government apparatus and, in that capacity, I believe your participation today will be much appreciated by the Commission members.

I also recognize what the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse has always managed to demonstrate since it was established a little over a year and a half ago. Mr. Chairman, the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse speaks out clearly and unequivocally on sovereignty. Allow me to recall, on page 26 of the brief of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse: "The Conseil permanent de la jeunesse recommends that the Commission accept Québec sovereignty as the political option likely to foster the full cultural, social and economic development of Québec society of tomorrow. The Conseil further recommends that this option be submitted to the people in a referendum."

Here, Mr. Chairman, is a clear proposal, and also a courageous one. And I believe that your proposal is all the more important, and all the more legitimate, since the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse has been able to show, throughout its existence, to what extent it is a council plugged into the community, close to the daily realities experienced by young Quebecers. The work you did in writing the "Noir sur blanc" report, which provided somewhat of a review of the status of young people in Québec, was most eloquent in this regard. I believe that your participation is all the more relevant since your experience in the endeavours of the Forum sur l'emploi has led you to progress and has led you to understand and reach the conclusion that only sovereignty could allow us to take on the challenge of full employment. Consequently, if only for those two points, I believe your brief is entirely legitimate.

There is another important point which you raise in your presentation: unlike some groups that have come to testify before the Commission, you consider that a blueprint for society is not to be built or ensured before sovereignty. For such a blueprint, the values that characterize our society are solid enough for us to be able to build on them, once we have defined our constitutional status. I can't tell you how strongly I agree with this assertion. First and foremost, I believe, as many young people have understood, that we have to fulfill our desire to be, before we can say what we want to do, and that this recommendation will find a receptive audience among the members of my political party, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to ask you one question. You have clearly shown, throughout your brief, and shown convincingly, that the future for young people seems more and more compromised by

federal constraints, at a time when young people also represent lessening demographic weight in Québec society. You make it clear that the situation is urgent, to adopt the term you used in your brief. I would like to ask you: How do you define this urgency? How urgent is it? Do you put time limits on it? Will there be a point of no return? Have you set a timetable? And to what extent is there a point of no return? I would like to hear your views on this question, and ask you what your position is regarding the urgency and how you define it.

Mr. Gagnon: I am very happy that our comments are echoed by your aspirations as a young man. That's very fine.

Mr. Boisclair: I'm mending my ways.
(5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Gagnon: As for the timetable. For us, the urgency is relative, since we consider that after the Commission's proceedings, we will have to seriously, collectively embark on the thought process which we have already begun, as well as translate it into a referendum. In our view, that's important, because the instability we are now experiencing causes harm to young people. We need to build a country. We need a vision of the future on which we will be able to build for the future. So, urgency, yes, urgency for the next generation, urgency to give Québec young people all the means they require for their full development. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Roger Paré. So now we have his father.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

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

Mr. Paré: ...Unfortunately, we don't have much time. I would also like to welcome you and I must say that you are very representative, because everyone will recall the public hearings which you held in 1989, and which enabled you to publish the report "Les couleurs de la jeunesse... noir sur blanc". It described the needs, the concerns and the hopes of Québec young people. It ran along much the same lines as the brief you have presented today, even though, since it didn't relate to the constitutional debate, you didn't go as far, except for the accomplishment of the objectives it contained. There is no other choice, in my opinion, than to reach the conclusion you have reached today.

Let me get back to that. In "Les couleurs de la jeunesse... noir sur blanc", the first concern we noted was employment. What young people are asking for above all else, and above all other concerns, is jobs. And you have

respected what young people have expressed because you were present at all the forums on employment. My question arises out of that. Since employment is, ultimately, the goal to be reached, the main point for young people is to be able to work in order to then be able to acquire something else, and a policy of full employment is possible, if we look at the experience elsewhere in the world, only in populations comparable in size to that of Québec, or a little smaller, where people have proven themselves able to establish various kinds of solidarity. In your view, if we do not recover all powers from Ottawa, is there any way to solve such problems as the ones you consider most important in your report on youth, such as vocational training, and establish a real policy for full employment in Québec?

Mr. Gagnon: I'm going to let Mr. Tanguay reply, because he chaired the public hearings on youth.

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): Allow me to thank you for hearing us. What I would like to say, when we look at young people's concerns as a whole, particularly in the area of jobs or vocational training, we note, in the brief we submitted, the dual jurisdiction, especially in the area of vocational training, in the area of government intervention to promote young people's integration into the work force. We realize that there are, indeed, some difficulties because there is no overall planning of those policies, so that young people enter one channel rather than entering and leaving one channel and then entering another.

We said, in the presentation we just made, that we feel that one government is passing the buck to the other by turning its unemployed into welfare recipients, while the other tries to turn its welfare recipients into unemployed. But within this process, there is also a whole set of measures that are offered to young people. We clearly believe in, and are thinking of, repatriating those powers, particularly for vocational training, but also for employment, because it's very closely related, because manpower planning through vocational training must inevitably lead to possibilities of entering the workforce for those young people. The fact of repatriating those powers also gives us the opportunity of establishing policies that will allow us to meet our people's needs. If we want to achieve full employment, it is clear that we must control all powers relating to manpower planning and labour policies. Otherwise, we will have to wait for another government or the federal government to set itself the goal of achieving full employment in Canada. At that point, such a federal goal could eventually have an effect on Québec policies, but that puts us once again in the position of waiting for

others, when we have the opportunity, today, with the present political situation, to make a clear decision, to establish a country for ourselves, to take back the powers we need to establish policies our people need, Québec young people need to work and to be... to live with dignity in Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go to the questions of the other members. Mrs. Pagé, followed by Mr. d'Anjou and Mr. Dufour.

Mrs. Pagé: Good afternoon. Mr. Boisclair just said that he recognized himself in your brief, which didn't surprise me because he's young. I don't know if it's because I want to kid myself that I'm still young, but I have to tell you that I, too, saw myself in your brief. Because of the clear option you defend, of course, but also because of all these progressive social values present in your brief.

In this regard, you tell us you are very representative in your constitutional option. You give us surveys in support of that. But I have to tell you that, for myself, all the young people I've been able to meet in recent years always talk to me about exactly the same things you bring up in your brief. They talk about employment, unemployment and poverty. They talk to us about education, necessarily; they talk to us about human rights and freedoms, environmental protection, sustainable development. They are quite a bit more open to immigration than Quebecers of other generations. And, of course, they talk to us about family policy. Maybe because they are more of an age to experience the reality of being both young and parents, something we're a little past, aren't we?

That being said, I won't go back over your constitutional option; it's very clear. But these values you would like to see affirmed or see flourish, we have to acquire means to achieve this. And I would like to know if you have given some thought to the constitution of this sovereign Québec, elements which, in your opinion, should be guaranteed in a Québec constitution. And, have you also thought about the means we should provide for ourselves in order to agree upon, or to work out, a Québec constitution that would allow the concerns of young people to be taken into account, along with those of cultural communities, aboriginal people, women, and so on?

Mrs. Bertrand: What I can say about that is that yes, the Conseil as such has already given a lot of thought to that, has not presented in full detail all the recommendations we would like to have. Certainly, as young people, we have very high ideals.

Mrs. Pagé: If you don't have them when you're young, you won't have any at all when you're old. So it's just as well to have a lot of them when you're young.

Mrs. Bertrand: But the Conseil didn't consider it advisable to immediately go into all those problems, what we could call social problems, in depth in the brief, here. Because that's something we wanted to debate in a forum. And I think that may be where we're heading, in other words, trying to find out really what we would like to advocate as a Québec society, etc., as values. We have touched on them here. Certainly, for each of these points, we have good ideas, and we hope to put them forward at the forum that's going to be held.

Mrs. Pagé: Fine.

Mr. Gagnon: There's also... may I add something?

A voice: Yes...

Mr. Gagnon: You know, the values we listed there are settled as far as young people are concerned. Values that are important for us. As you see, you're in educational surroundings, the young people you meet also express those values. So, what you are also being told is to have faith in youth, and have faith in young people, in their conveying those important social values. Because those values are truly part of us: values of peace, values that are expressed here in our brief. I wouldn't like to list them, because I might forget some. But I think you must have faith in young people, the young people you meet in your surroundings.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. d'Anjou, followed by Mr. Dufour.

Mr. d'Anjou: Good afternoon, then. It's a very interesting brief, very well done. I read it with a great deal of interest. Have you taken your thoughts further, namely in regard to the type of currency you would like to have, the economic space you favour, Québec's future relations with its neighbours? Do you favour one economic space over others, precisely for the future of young people? Because, really, you're the ones who will experience the major changes that will come. Have you taken your thoughts further?

Mr. Gagnon: The basic standards are the globalization of markets. So, as we said, we want to have a Québec that is open to the world, a strong economic Québec that is open to all markets. I think that's important. As far as a common currency, I think we must mainly deal

with the question, among others, of the central bank. It's important, in our opinion, to have greater control in Québec, in fact, over monetary policies. Actually, that's a question that is important for Québec because... Sorry, I forgot what I was going to say. Can you take over, Sylvain?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): What it may be important to mention here, is that, from the perspective of a sovereign Québec... Today, we are in a federal context with a Canadian currency. Depending on the interest of both countries, it's not inconceivable for us to be associated with respect to a monetary policy. It's not inconceivable as long as we have our say on the setting of interest rates. Because we know how hard the interest rates have been on Québec in recent years, on the Québec economy. But it's clear that we have to start with a declaration of sovereignty. Association with the government of Canada or with Canada is something that will have to be negotiated afterwards, as long as we have to negotiate such things as sharing the debt and other points. What is important, to begin with, is to declare ourselves a sovereign nation, to be open to association, which could be with Canada, perhaps, as a first choice. It's our immediate neighbour. We are closer to those people, historically. It's conceivable for us to have types of association that are important for both countries. I think that that's what's important to consider, whether it is to the benefit of both parties.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, followed by Mr. Béland.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to also thank the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse for its well organized, well done brief, even if I don't always agree with the analysis, especially in the conclusion. On page 21, you identify a problem which is, moreover, very, very real, and which we have also heard about on two other occasions, I think, and that is the migratory movement - which you describe very well here - of young people from the regions to the cities. We also had the phenomenon with immigrants, where we were told that it's just about impossible to keep immigrants in the regions. The big cities are an extraordinary centre of attraction. And in the case of young people, you say that the economic dynamics are definitely affected by this, and that it's hard to develop an economy in a region when the manpower is aging or relatively uneducated. I know that in the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, at your summits, etc., you have tackled an enormous number of issues.

Has the problem of keeping young people in the regions been discussed at those summits?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): You mean, the way...

Mr. Dufour: By what...

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): ...to manage to keep young people in the regions?

Mr. Dufour: Yes, for immigrants, well, we talk about structures for welcoming them. For example, we talk about organizing a number of things around immigrant investors. Has that problem been identified? It is in your brief, but have solutions been proposed?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): To keep young people in their regions, it's clear that they have to have access to educational services, first of all, because from an early age, we know that young people have to start leaving their communities to go to school. But on the other hand, for young people, when they grow up, to have a desire to live in their regions, they must first be able to live there, as we say, with dignity, by performing some sort of work. We know the economic situation in a number of regions in Québec. We could talk about the Gaspé region or the lower St. Lawrence region and other regions, too. Employment is at the heart, it's clear, of the possibility or the capacity of regions to keep young people in them.

(5:15 p.m.)

Mr. Dufour: That's absolutely right, that connection, to keep young people in the regions, of course, there have to be jobs. My question is: How would a sovereign Québec offer more jobs in the regions than is now the case?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): What we may also ask is how it would offer less in some places and more in others?

Mr. Dufour: We are already familiar with the present situation. It's a tough one, and the unemployment rate is especially high among young people. You are the ones who will make the Québec of tomorrow, you are the ones who will find solutions to these problems. So, what can we offer young people that will do just that, make it possible to keep them in the regions because there will be jobs in a sovereign Québec?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): I would first say that repatriating all regional development powers to the Québec government and allowing a decentralization of those powers to local or regional authorities, we won't settle that debate here. Already that would allow people in their communities to take over responsibility for

developing their communities, developing employment for the young people growing up there, developing themselves culturally, too, because we mustn't forget that it also takes assets like that to keep young people in their communities, it's not only jobs, it's cultural development, it's economic development. We think that the ability to bring to the regions the powers inherent in development will allow employment to develop, with a strategy for job development in the regions, and not a strategy of waiting for the provincial government or the federal government to arrive with its big bucks to develop a breakwater at the edge of a pier or something. Rather than finding ourselves in a situation of waiting, to have the ability in the regions, the necessary powers, we could go so far as considering the notion of spending power in order to be able to develop in terms of the community's capacity, the community's strengths, and I would go so far as to say the community's human potential.

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

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to talk to you about jobs, too. I find that you are consistent with respect to this concern, because I remember very well that Mrs. Lepage, your chairwoman, was very active in the forum on employment, and I would ask you, Mr. Gagnon, to give her my best regards and my wishes for a speedy recovery. My question, and I don't want you to feel trapped, but there are a lot of people who have come here and said to us that we mustn't imagine that sovereignty is instantaneous, that it's instant happiness, that while it's true that we can take off on our own, there may be turbulence at some point, we know that. Do you talk about that, you young people, when you take a position like the one you have announced to us today? Are young people ready even to face such turbulence and to make sacrifices to win sovereignty? I would like to hear your views on that.

Mr. Gagnon: Yes.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Gagnon: Clearly. In fact we expect that there may be a little turbulence. However, there are questions. I am putting young people in a perspective in which we consider ourselves judges, good judges who would be more objective and neutral on this issue of sovereignty, able to make a choice, because I consider that young people don't necessarily have all the acquired baggage, all the prerogatives in society that would cause their choice of achieving sovereignty to be distorted, for example, by special interests. So what I'm telling you is that, well...

There will be a time of turbulence, in fact. However, young people are ready to live through it.

Mr. Béland: But you do talk to one another about it.

Mr. Gagnon: We talk about it, yes. Go on, maybe you're more comfortable than I am. I'm having trouble right now, I'm having incredible difficulty, it's the stress, excuse me.

Mr. Béland: I understand.

Mrs. Bertrand: If you'll allow me, I think that yes, indeed, we are very conscious of that, the period of turbulence that Québec will have to go through. Not only young people, young people will go through it the same as adults will have to go through it. Now, we're also aware of the possibilities that it can open up for us and that federalism doesn't necessarily give us right now, that is, when we say there is a lot of duplication of jurisdictions, that affects us a lot. So we imagine that yes, we are ready to live through this turbulence in order to reach our goals. We hope that, finally, we say to ourselves that even if we go back to negotiate with a Canada, etc., we're going to waste still more years, that we are prepared to live with instability for a few years in order to achieve a stronger, better established Québec which can, precisely, be passed on to its youth.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go on to a representative of the Government party. Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Gagnon, Mr. Tanguay, Mrs. Bertrand, Mrs. Gagné, thank you for being here with us today. Mr. Gagnon, don't be nervous; do the same as us. For six weeks now, we've been travelling all over Québec, and when we talk to you, we're still nervous. So we understand your state of mind very well. We will listen to what you have to say in the coming minutes.

We have read your brief, but during the past six weeks, we have heard a good many young people. I have to say that among the briefs that have perhaps struck me the most, there have been young people, there have been many young people. There was one in Matane, the one from the cegep, who was outstanding, the one on the left who told us his father was a farmer, that he hoped to be able to take over the farm eventually.

We had one young man who came from the New Democratic Party in Sept-Îles. We had a young aboriginal man in Hull, who seemed to me to be a future leader of that community. We had a young Anglophone in the Eastern Townships

who told us he had a farm that was in its sixth generation of McKinnons. We had a young man who came from a cooperative of young workers in the same region. We have met many of them. They all had a clear, precise message. They wanted us to hear them before building the Québec of years to come. Every time, I recalled that when the last decisions were made in 1980, none of these young people were there and none of these young people could vote. They were there, but they couldn't vote.

One of these young people told us... I'll give you the exact quotation. In his brief, he said, and you're the experts, you, young people, the people of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. Today, we heard the experts. So, I take it for granted that you are experts in young people. That young man, the one from the cooperative movement, he told us, in Sherbrooke, that the Québec government provides the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse and its chairman with significant, real powers. I've always understood that the Conseil permanent was supposed to be an advisory body to the political authorities. Does what that young man asked us run along the line of thinking of what you would like?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): Certainly, when we talk about a council, we're talking about an advisory body, we're not talking about real power. Moreover, that's the main question that was raised, when the Conseil was created, by youth organizations taking part in discussions of the bill that established the Conseil. When we talk about real power, I don't think we're talking about a council structure. We could think of a youth department structure if we were thinking of real power, power to move things forward. That's not ruled out of the discussions we have in the Conseil, but we've never taken a position on a question like that. Certainly, for Québec young people, it might be valuable to have a government body, a government department that has to make decisions and provide means for young people in a real way and not only in an advisory way, although consultation is also an important means.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Gagnon or Mr. Tanguay, on page 26 of your brief – and that may be the only page, in the end, where I don't agree with you – the rest is pretty good in the brief. When you say that we first have to establish sovereignty and then we will find a blueprint for society. If I recall another time when I wasn't there, you weren't there in 1980, but in 1960, when they created the Quiet Revolution, that was devised from 1955 to 1960, if I've got it straight. There are people who thought it up, there are people who wrote about it, and Jean Lesage, in 1960, decided to make the Quiet Revolution. There was a plan.

What I say is that it's all very well to establish structures, but what are we going to do with these structures after that? Shouldn't we first decide what blueprint for society we want to establish and then set up the structures, or are we going to do both at the same time? But isn't it a little utopian to think that we will give ourselves a container and then we will decide what we're putting in it?

Mrs. Bertrand: Listen, I think whether we proceed one way or the other, both ways will lead us to the right result. Certainly, it's preferable, in our view, to find out from the people whether we have to rethink the whole thing or not. And in any case we won't rethink the whole thing. There are many things on which we agree. I mean that when we think of a blueprint for society, we mentioned values. Those are values that are close to our hearts as young people, and that we want to discuss thoroughly, and that we are attached to. Now, we can talk about them before, we have no problem with that. But we want to be sure that the rest of Québec wants to follow along with us and wants to fall into the same line. So, whether we do it before or after, it's of the same importance to us, as young people. In other words, it's important to discuss it, to discuss it at length and seriously.

Mr. Benoit: On pages 21 and 22 – and I apologize if I'm going back over questions you were already asked, but I want to look at them in a little more depth with you – you talk about the depopulation of the regions, a phenomenon which we have been experiencing for six weeks, and which some of us, coming from the regions, were already very aware of. You tell us how in some regions the villages are becoming empty because the young people want to go and get an education and find jobs outside. And you also tell us, on those pages, that the regions are left with an aging, relatively uneducated work force. Don't you think that that should be the most important project, ultimately, for Québec society in the coming decade? The phenomenon of the aging population, the falling birth rate and this depopulation of the regions? Shouldn't that be the most important project which your generation could decide to carry out?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): That is, indeed, an important project to carry out, calling attention to the aging of our population, taking an interest in the birth rate, taking into consideration all the issues involved in regional development and depopulation of the regions. All those are things to be done. When we say we want to build on the basis of sovereignty, it's clear that if we wanted to talk about a blueprint for society, we would be free to do so. But then, everyone will say: "Sovereignty, yes, but on

condition that..." or "Sovereignty, yes, but on condition that..." It gets tremendously complicated because each and every one of us has his own ideas and interests. It's clear that there are major issues which we will have to tackle, and tackle as quickly as possible. When we think of the regions, it's a matter of national urgency, and it didn't just happen overnight. For years and years now, people in the regions have demanded more powers to take responsibility for themselves. For years, people in the regions have talked about the exodus of young people. But it's as if, today, we were finally realizing the economic impact it has on regional development, all that exodus of the work force. Those are all issues on which we will have to work very hard in a sovereign Québec.

Mr. Benoit: In your brief, you say that the nationalist or autonomist feeling is especially present among young people, whatever their political allegiance. To draw a connection with that: you know that Québec has been strong, in his history, when it has been united around a leader, an idea or a common goal in Québec. With the depoliticization of North America... We all know, for instance, that in the last American election, the president was elected by about 15% of Americans; 30% of the American population turned out to vote; 15% voted for the president. Do you think we're able, we in Québec, to repoliticize an entire population around a common goal, or is this just a dream of mine which is impossible to fulfill? Can we, tomorrow... I know 82% of you voted at the cegeps; that's very good. But there were only 200 present when you announced the results, and it wasn't on their premises, then. Are we able to repoliticize an entire population, in order for it to pursue a common goal?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): If they are comfortable within the idea of sovereignty, it seems that, more and more, Quebecers see it as stating the obvious. I think that, actually, for young people, this collective plan for building a country will mobilize them politically. We know how important taking part in elections is, taking part in democratic life. We live democratically in all our small organizations. I think that, in fact, if young people... If the people as a whole can grab hold of a collective project which, in our view, is the project of building a country for ourselves... We're talking about a fair and equitable country which makes it its duty to fight poverty. I think that, in fact, if people rally around a plan of that scope, they will take an interest in political life.

Mr. Benoit: One last question. You knew we had Mr. Léon Dion this morning, who appeared before us. In Mr. Dion's brief, there is a sentence that particularly impressed me, when he

says: "There has never been and there can never be any great culture without a solid economic base." You young people, what is that solid economic base, in your opinion?

Mrs. Gagné: It's obvious that economic development in Québec is not something that's the special domain of young people. In other words, young people are not at the centre of Québec's economic development. However, and maybe it's to get back to the question of the general blueprint for society which young people want to establish within a sovereign Québec, possibly... What I mean is, among other things, that young people are not just waiting for a blueprint for society. Already, in spite of the fact that young people have little economic security, young people are now having children. In spite of the fact, as well, that they have little security in general, some young people are taking responsibility for themselves, creating their own jobs, starting their own companies. So young people are not waiting for someone else to take responsibility for them, either. But all young people today have a desire to provide themselves with means of economic development, and also means of cultural and social development.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, people of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, thank you for submitting this brief to the Commission and for replying to the questioning so valiantly. I now ask you, if you will, to leave the table by heading towards the right, so that the people who want to pay their respects to you can do so, and so that, at the same time, we can receive at the table the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:32 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:35 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario. Mr. Tanguay, the president, will introduce the members of his delegation. I ask the Commission members to note that the list we provide does not have all the titles correct. Mr. Tanguay will indicate them when he introduces his delegation. Mr. Tanguay, you have the floor, and afterwards, you will take five minutes to present the main points of your brief.

Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): As I am making the introductions, I will simply give each person's

correct title. The list you received is not quite correct.

Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, before beginning our dialogue with you this afternoon, I am pleased to introduce the members of the Franco-Ontarian delegation under the leadership of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario. Mona Fortier is a student and is provincial vice-president of the Fédération des élèves du secondaire franco-ontariens. She represents 25 000 members. Line Michaud is provincial president of Direction jeunesse, an organization grouping together 110 000 young people between the ages of 15 and 30 in French-speaking Ontario. She represents Ontario on the national commission on assimilation. Daniel Saint-Jean is director general of the Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario. He was previously director of the Centre français in Sault-Sainte-Marie. André Lécuyer is president of the Fédération des aînés franco-ontariens, with 12 000 members. Finally we have Fernand Gilbert, who is director general of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario.

There are six of us. Not to repeat what Mr. Beauchemin already said, we represent over half a million Franco-Ontarians, the largest concentration of French-speaking people outside Québec. French Ontario realizes that the Canada of yesterday is no more, and the Canada of tomorrow is seeking new structures that will reflect the aspirations of its citizens. For this reason, it was imperative at this moment in our history that the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario send you its brief and ask to be heard. We all know that since the beginning of colonization, we have trodden many paths together. As you read our brief, you no doubt appreciated the fact that our community has had some difficult moments, but that, despite the underhanded maneuvers of Lord Durham and others, French Ontario is doing very well, thank you. Today French Ontario is more dynamic than ever; more alive and more a reality than our ancestors could ever have hoped. French Ontario is humming with activity and accomplishments in all fields of endeavour.

At this crucial point in our history, it is normal that we should be concerned for our collective future. What we want to tell you today is that we believe that the present political conjuncture should bring our two communities closer together in every respect, and that this should translate into a new partnership. We would like to know whether this desire exists in Québec. French Ontario wishes it, and in order to achieve it, we would first suggest that our two communities sit down together and formulate a true long-term policy on relations with the French-speaking people of Ontario. Second, that we work together to develop strategies for institutional exchange in French between

corporations and professional associations in the non-government sector. Third, that Franco-Ontarians be given easier access to higher education in Québec. Fourth, that Québec adopt a minorities code which it could use to negotiate reciprocal agreements on minority language rights with the English-speaking provinces.

Québec has always stood out as a leader of French-speaking communities in Canada, North America and even the world. How could a Québec seeking to be a leader among French-speaking communities of Canada, North America and the world benefit from the strength and vitality of half a million Franco-Ontarians? And I'm not counting the other half a million people who speak French in Ontario. We believe that this renewed partnership between our two communities will nourish our respective aspirations. Indeed, no matter which way we look at the question of Francophone solidarity in Canada, so far we've been unable to find any advantage for Quebecers to be the only people speaking French in America, or not to encourage the development of French in Ontario and Canada as much as possible. It's in the interest of Québec as well as in our own interest to join hands and support each other while respecting our differences and our individual development. Thank you. If you have any questions, we have six Franco-Ontarians full of vitality who are ready to answer.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Tanguay. Of course there will be questions, there are several people who wish to speak. I would ask each of them to be as brief as possible so that the answers may be brief as well as numerous. First on the list is Mr. Poissant, followed by Messrs. Larose and Beaudry.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we begin our questions it always sounds good to say, "I read your brief once and liked it." When we want to be a little nicer, we say we read the brief twice. In my case, let me say that I liked your brief, but it's you people I really like, the fact that you're here. It warms my heart, and I understand your apprehension about what will happen in Québec. And even if nothing happens, you're still telling us you want a partnership. In my experience, I've known people, students, who left Québec for Western Canada in 1975-76. And more recently, in the past five or ten years, Francophones haven't been so ready to move. I find that hard to accept. It means enormous education costs for Québec, and then when those people leave for the West, it's kind of... It's not only my economic wealth that's leaving, it's my wealth of brain power, skills and intellect that's leaving.

Now I see in your brief... I'm glad to learn that it's bearing fruit. You have 8000 businesses

in Ontario controlled by Francophones, I think that's wonderful. But I'm going to ask you a question. And I saw in a little document we received yesterday that the French-speaking population of Ontario has increased over the past 15 years, and I also find that wonderful.

But I'd like to ask you this: If something happened with the Québec constitution, and I think something will happen, I don't know just what yet... Would that have a positive or negative effect on the French-speaking population as a whole? Not only in Ontario but perhaps in the rest of Canada? I'll give you an instance. I read in the paper, or maybe in one of the briefs - but now I've read so many I don't remember where I got this idea - that perhaps the separation of Québec would mean that Canada would no longer need bilingualism and it could just be English. And if that were the case, would there be such a great demand for French outside Québec? That's my question.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): First let me add a second question to...

Mr. Poissant: To mine?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): Yes, you spoke of young Quebecers going West and the brain drain, etc., the vitality of young Quebecers who leave Québec, sometimes. Don't forget that these young Quebecers become diplomats, like my father when he moved to Ontario in 1910. They become ambassadors for Québec throughout Canada and the U.S. Wherever they go in the world.

To answer your principal question, in terms of what the impact might be: we are all aware, and not just we Franco-Ontarians. All of English Canada and French Canada are asking themselves questions. But on the other hand, we'll have to live with the reality of tomorrow. And I'm sure that Franco-Ontarians will continue to live with their heads high and a sense of dignity in Ontario.

Mr. Poissant: Yes, I'm sure of that. You've still... Last question, Mr. Chairman. You speak of a partnership on page 5 of your brief. In what context do you see that? Because I can already see that within your organization you have two real Quebecers anyway, two of whom are here today. What do you... How do you see this partnership in the eventual context of Québec, whatever that may be?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): If I may, I would ask Mr. Gilbert to answer.

Mr. Gilbert (Fernand): Thank you very much. First of all, a partnership could take the form of agreements with Québec the community. For example, a program for lending resource persons to various organizations. Second, it

could also express itself in the broadening of the Québec-Ontario commission, which could include some of our young entrepreneurs. We have a chamber of commerce in Ontario. We have several businesspeople's associations, and it could be beneficial if these had some link or exchanges with yours. You have trade unions, which are well represented here. We also have trade unions. Again, there could be better exchange and understanding of our respective projects. There is the cooperative movement, which thanks to the Desjardins Movement has already made inroads into Ontario which - although as you all know, we have other cooperatives in Ontario - could rely more on your expertise. We have a whole network of students and professors who could also rely on your resources of the same nature. But we could also bring our talents in these sectors to Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larose, followed by Mr. Beaudry and Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very pleased to meet you. And I think it must be said right off the bat that the more we talk about Québec, the more we talk about the situation of Francophones outside Québec, the more we talk about the composition of Canada, it seems to me that some elements are taking shape and I would like to check this with you. It seems to me, when you describe your vitality to us - and this morning it was the group from New Brunswick - I think there's great vitality wherever there are significant numbers of Francophones. And it's manifested chiefly in the development and control of all types of institutions: economic, educational, cultural, youth; you represent this. But at the same time, shouldn't we give up on that famous dream of Canada being bilingual and bicultural "coast to coast", and get back to the reality of the collective rights to be ensured for our minorities? I don't know if I'm making myself understood but it seems to me we're letting go of that dream and trying to stick with building our society from the ground up. Am I off base here?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): If I may, I could start with a few comments, if any of my colleagues would like to add something. It's true that in Ontario, in French Ontario since that's where we're from, there is absolutely unbelievable vitality. It's because, for the first time in the past ten years, we're starting to have the tools. And you know that when a carpenter starts to get tools, he uses them. In the Ontario education system especially, we're getting more tools from one day to the next. In some cases we can at last run our own high schools and school boards. For example, we've opened our first college, the

Cité collégiale. You have to understand that at some point, people have to take care of their immediate affairs, but on the other hand, French Ontario has never forgotten about the collective rights it needs. Every day we have to make demands. We don't do it for Jean Tanguay or Line Michaud, we do it for the Franco-Ontarian community. This applies to the community of Québec as well.

Mr. Larose: You spoke of a minorities code. I'd like you to tell us what that would look like. You've already identified the language aspect. Is that the only aspect such a code would have?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): When we Franco-Ontarians speak of minorities, we're referring to the Franco-Ontarian minority, but we know that any society has several minorities. In our case, we're speaking of a linguistic minority. So whatever your constitutional choice, we believe that we should start dealing with the Canadian reality, whether in terms of minorities outside Québec or minorities inside Québec. And at this point I'm referring to the Anglophone community in Québec. Let me make a comparison. For the past 100 or 150 years, the English-speaking population of Québec has had three universities: McGill, Bishop's and Concordia. In Ontario we had a press conference on Monday or Tuesday to put out the idea of a French-language university in French Ontario. So perhaps there are inequalities for certain minorities in Canada, for example in terms of universities. Perhaps a reciprocity code would enable us to emphasize certain achievements that should exist.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Larose: Thank you.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am especially pleased to meet people from Ontario, since I myself lived in Vanier for ten years and was involved in Franco-Ontarian organizations, including the Association française de l'Ontario, which at that time was the ACFO.

I also think you appear to be alive and well, despite the statement we heard from somebody to the effect that Francophones... No doubt when you mentioned just now that you are alive and well, you were responding to certain remarks that were made before this Commission.

My question has to do with testimony we heard when we were in Abitibi - Val d'Or, to be exact - and a certain André Richard, with whom some of you are no doubt acquainted, said to us - and in fact I knew him too - that his experience in Ontario had been full of frustration and exasperation, and that his rights

as a French-Canadian had been undermined by all sorts of laws and systems.

You say you are alive and well, and I know from having read the papers and followed the events in Ontario - because I still have relatives there - it would seem that enormous progress has been made in terms of French-Canadians in Ontario, particularly Bill 8, which was adopted three years ago. Earlier you spoke of a French college opening recently in Orleans. I'd like to hear your response to the comment that the rights of Franco-Ontarians have been diminished by all sorts of measures, laws and regulations adopted in Ontario. I'd like to have your comments on that testimony.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): There are still places in all the provinces and all the American states where injustice exists. Now, in terms of injustice towards Franco-Ontarians, if this is the case you are speaking of, yes, there is still a lot of injustice. But on the other hand, if you compare the situation of Francophones in Ontario in the 1940s, since you mention it, although I'm younger than that...

Mr. Beaudry: I'm younger than you are. It had me worried. Ha, ha, ha! Go ahead.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): Actually, during the 1940s, I remember going to the public library in Sudbury. Could I have a book in French? The answer, in English, was: "We do not have any French books here." Today, they have thousands of books in French because we little Francophones, at that time, we were... Let's just say it was a case of injustice and there are thousands of cases like that. Even in Québec today, perhaps towards the English-speaking minority sometimes. Mind you, I acknowledge that the English-speaking minority in Québec is very well treated compared with the French-speaking minority in Ontario. And I don't hesitate to say so. I know they've come to Ontario thousands of times to help us and we greatly appreciated it. But even so, to live in French in Ontario in 1990... I hope that my smile, my presence, my confidence in my province and my community are enough to convince you that there is injustice but that there is more than...

Mr. Beaudry: So what you're telling us, in effect, is that your lives as French-Canadians, or your ability to live in French in Ontario, has improved a lot over the years.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): Yes. Thanks also to the support of Québec.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, yes, yes. I understand that. Now to the second question I wanted to ask you, namely: in the context of a sovereign

Québec, do you think your situation in Ontario could be worsened, or affected negatively or positively, or not at all? Supposing Québec decided to leave Canada, could it affect you?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): It's very difficult for the people of Ontario, myself included, to see into the future. There will be reactions all across Canada. On the other hand, there will be restabilization because I believe that all Canadians, whether English or French, are proud of their country, as Quebecers are proud of their country and Ontarians of their province, and so on. We'll have a few minor shocks here and there, maybe a few major ones, but...

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

Mr. Gilbert: If you'll permit me...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Quickly.

Mr. Gilbert: Yes. Do you think that Ontario's 300 French schools will disappear? Do you think Ontario's 30 French day-care centres will disappear? And its 8000 businesses? Not at all: they're the foundation. A foundation so solid that it will influence Ontario in the direction of our interests.

A voice: Yeah...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Proulx now has the floor.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Reading your brief, I had the impression you were saying, "Don't leave us, don't leave us. We're doing fine, but if ever you opt for sovereignty, it could be dangerous for us." I can reassure you because many people have said, both here and outside this commission, that the best protection for minorities is the federal government. So even if we leave, Ottawa will still be there for the other nine provinces. So that should reassure you.

I have three short questions and one comment. First I'd like you to tell me... And I'm very pleasantly surprised to hear that there are 8000 businesses run by Franco-Ontarians - what is the language of work in those businesses?

Second question. On page 3 you say that young people are more and more aware of their Francophone roots and so on... Personally, I like images. I'd like someone to give me a picture... This is not a trick question, it's really... Just describe to me a little how that is expressed. Is it just quaint tradition or is it more than that? (6:00 p.m.)

And the third question is this: Do you know the percentage of Franco-Ontarians... What

percentage live and communicate in French most of the time? And I'll make my comment after your three answers.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If you have any time left, Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Proulx: Then I'll do it now, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, do it now, it will be quicker.

Mr. Proulx: With all that enthusiasm... Isn't there some way you could spread some of it to Manitoba, because they're really disappearing over there. OK, now please answer my questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): All right.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): If I may, with respect to the language of work, it's not perfect yet. Often you hear, "Amène-moi your wrench, OK? Right now, s'il vous plaît." I can live with that. We're developing a whole new society in Ontario. We didn't have the tools before, and now we do. Look at the young people who are here, they're fantastic! Our new community college that just opened in Ottawa, the Cité collégiale... Listen. Everyone told us, "You'll never get 800 students in that college!" ...2300, and we even turned some away. OK? Is that enough?

In terms of vitality...

Mr. Proulx: Your children are wonderful, I find them wonderful too, but that still doesn't tell me what language is used in those 8000 firms.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): The language of work in many of our businesses is French, but English is used too. When a mechanic has English customers, he addresses them in English. When I go to the garage, I say, [French] "A quart of oil, please." I mean, a litre of oil.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Proulx: A quart of oil is more French-Canadian.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The quart is an old French measurement. It works anyway.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Proulx: Watch your French.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): If I could just add... I was reading in *L'actualité* yesterday on the plane

that when small Québec businesses deal with points outside the province, eight times out of ten they deal with Ontario. Hell's bells! Why don't you deal with Franco-Ontarians? We would be first-class intermediaries.

Mr. Proutx: But they usually talk to us in English.

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): Well then, Sir, you should be giving us more encouragement. I have a nephew in Ontario who is almost assimilated. He's now rediscovering the beauty of his culture. Young people, I give the floor to you.

Mrs. Michaud (Line): Regarding young Ontarians' awareness and sense of belonging, I must say that our young people are becoming more and more politicized. The same thing wasn't true ten years ago, but now, they're really coming back to politics. I look at the 1986 Ontario French Language Services Act: young people played a big part in that. I look at when the Cité collégiale opened its doors... But now we young people want a French college in the north and south of the province as well. The Bourdeau Commission tabled a brief just three weeks ago. It's young people who are in the front ranks of the battle for a college in northern Ontario.

What our young people are living is not at all quaint tradition. Look at our artists: people like Paul Demers, Ontario Pop, it's not just woven sashes and pig's knuckles. The culture of young Franco-Ontarians is very alive, modern and public. Our young people are not just surviving in French; they can live very well in French. And in terms of work, summer jobs, education from elementary school to university, with a Franco-Ontarian university we hope in 1995, so I think that the political awareness of young people... They're assuming their place very well and of course our culture is very modern.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll proceed now with a question from a representative of the Government party, Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Tanguay, I'm very happy that you've appeared before the Commission, which will probably make recommendations on the political and constitutional future of Québec at the end of March, but I'm even happier to note that you are not a still-warm corpse, because that was the statement made to this Commission a few weeks ago. You are very much alive, and not only alive but prosperous. My question - I think a lot of questions have been asked but I'd still like to... On page 3 you say, "As much as French Ontario needs a strong Québec, Québec needs a strong and prosperous French Ontario." I'd like

you to elaborate a bit on that, and my second question is based on the hypothesis that Québec will take an approach such as that proposed by Mr. Dion this morning, first to establish a consensus, let's say for example a major repatriation of federal powers to Québec, and then negotiations in which it is declared in advance that if the negotiations fail, there could be a referendum on the independence of Québec. What would be your position on this possibility during the negotiations? As you recall, Mr. Tanguay, your association, with regard to the Meech Lake Accord... At first it did not agree with the Accord, but later, before the special committee of the House of Commons, it switched horses, so to speak. And it gave very concrete support to the Meech Lake Accord in its original form. So according to you, could we know what your position would be regarding the possibility of negotiation with the rest of Canada?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): My position regarding negotiations with the rest of Canada, that is, with the federal government, is that of the ACFO and of French-speaking Ontario. I think it's up to you Quebecers to decide how you want to do it. If Mr. Dion's suggestion this morning... Sorry, I've had a long day... It's really unfair for you to ask me, as an individual, because I've heard about 50 different options regarding - I say 50, maybe I'm exaggerating, maybe there were only 48 - but... The Commission at some point... It's up to Quebecers, at some point, to decide which option they want to negotiate with Ottawa.

Mr. Maciocia: I understand perfectly, Mr. Tanguay. And I should probably be asking the question differently. Let's say the Québec Government decides to ask Ottawa for repatriation of certain powers - for example immigration, employment, vocational training, regional development and others - would you agree with Ottawa's position or would you support? I think it's very important for us to have support, not only from inside Québec but from outside too, especially from Francophones outside Québec, for Québec's demands. If the situation I've just described were to come about, could we expect the AFCO to support Québec's demands in that area?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): Let's say that the only assertion I can make tonight is that the ACFO would support Québec's decision, at some point, to make its choice now, support any proposal. With power on the right and power on the left, it's impossible for us here at this time. It's a question that can't be answered tonight.

Mr. Maciocia: I understand, do... Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think that's the end of your time, Mr. Maciocia. A small one? We'll end the day with a small one, too. Go ahead.

Mr. Maciocia: A small question, right? Do you think it would be easier – you spoke of a partnership earlier – for the ACFO to have a partnership with a Québec still connected to Canada, or a Québec completely separate from Canada?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): It doesn't matter in the least. We could have agreements with Germany. What's important for us is that we share the same culture and language. We want to see how... Do you want it? Do you Quebecers want to establish a durable and special relationship with other French-speaking Canadians?

Mr. Maciocia: I probably misphrased my question. I mean, do you think it would be easier? You know there will have to be negotiations if Québec separates from Canada. Do there have to be negotiations? You know that Québec has a deficit in its balance of trade in comparison with Ontario. Do you think the province of Ontario, given that you live there, would allow you to have a commercial partnership with the ACFO, without regard for the situation?

Mr. Saint-Jean (Daniel): We can't foresee what the political climate will be if Québec one day decides to become sovereign. You're asking us to read the future. All we're saying, and I repeat what Mr. Gilbert said, is that we're ready now. We've been waiting for you for a long time. So come and see us, get to know us. You don't know us and there are times when we wonder whether you even want to. We could start right now. The Government party is right here. Let them come and see us, make contact with the ACFO, and, whether inside or outside of Canada, let's finally start to develop a little more healthy relationship, which we haven't done so far, for all sorts of good reasons. You have good reasons and so do we; we had good reasons for being belligerent within Canada, sometimes. We want that to stop and whether or not you remain in Canada, we want to establish the friendliest and most productive relationship possible with you. And it can start right now, with all sorts of exchanges, perhaps more direct ones, between the Québec Government and the Franco-Ontarian community.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): As the last speaker for this presentation, a representative of the Official Opposition, Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: I'd like to thank you on behalf of all my colleagues who won't have the opportunity to do so themselves. And I want to say it very sincerely, thank you for coming to meet with us. Reading your brief, I said to myself, "The time for regrets is over." And the liveliest part of your approach is that you tell us you're not a losing minority. You fight battles and you win a few, you don't win them all but you'll keep fighting. And what you're telling us, especially on page 6 of your brief, is that you have a favourable bias towards Québec whatever its decision, but that your native land is Ontario. And you say that clearly. And on that basis, you won't hold it against Quebecers if they decide to make their native land of Québec into a country. Am I going beyond what you said in your brief?

Mr. Saint-Jean: I agree with you.

Mrs. Harel: Actually it's exciting because... Does the Chairman wish to add something?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Pardon me? Did you want to add something, Mr. Tanguay?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): French Ontario loves you.

Mrs. Harel: And you want it to be mutual. Not out of duty, condescendence or anything like that. You want it to be mutual because in spite of everything, we'll always be fellow French-Canadians, for those of you who have those roots, even if we choose to become full citizens of Québec. And on that basis, you say it's in your interest. That's what you've just told us. We're allies but we can be partners. And it would be in your interest to see us not as a minority on the road to extinction but as people who are here to stay, who are involved in all sorts of economic and cultural activities, and you should accept us as special partners. Is that what you're telling us?

Mr. Tanguay (Jean): If you'll allow me... I said just now that French Ontario loves you, but French Ontario loves its province too.

Mrs. Harel: Right. Yes, yes, I understand perfectly. So you don't doubt your vitality or your ability to keep asserting yourselves, even if Québec opts for sovereignty. You say you have confidence in yourselves.

Mrs. Michaud: Exactly. I think we're very confident. I mean, when you look at our accomplishments, we're not a minority. In relation to what? Numbers. A minority in relation to... I look at the quality and quantity we have. We have institutions in economics,

education and health, we have Bill 8 which means we can receive service in French from all the provincial ministries. So a minority in terms of numbers, maybe; but the quality is definitely there.

Mrs. Harel: There is a France-Québec bureau that arranges cooperative exchanges and closer relations between people, particularly young people under 35. Do you think a sovereign Québec, for example, could consider some sort of bureau for Franco-Franco relations, I don't know what we could call it, but a bureau for this sort of cooperation and exchange of teachers, students and trainees?

Mr. Lécuyer (André): I think it's absolutely essential for all levels of society, old as well as young. And, speaking as an older person and president of a seniors' association, I think it's essential that Québec and Franco-Ontarians strike up a dialogue and talk to each other on a regular basis, not just in times of crisis.

Mrs. Harel: You were introduced as coming from Sault-Sainte-Marie.

Mr. Lécuyer: Not me.

Mrs. Harel: No. Oh, sorry.

Mr. Lécuyer: I've been through there. I left some money there.

Mrs. Harel: Did I understand correctly when the mayor of Sault-Sainte-Marie justified himself by saying it would be unfair if he introduced bilingualism in his own language for his fellow citizens of Italian origin, who were more numerous than French-Canadians. And that made me wonder about multiculturalism. How do you see this question of multiculturalism, what effect has it had for example on the Franco-Ontarian community? The fact that the bilingualism and biculturalism recommended by the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission were rejected in favour of multiculturalism, what effect does that have, and do you think it could have a negative impact in the immediate future?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This will be the final answer for this presentation.

Mr. Lécuyer: I believe that aspect is more dangerous for Anglophones in Toronto than for Francophones.

Mr. Saint-Jean: I also think that biculturalism is experienced differently depending on where you live. Sault-Sainte-Marie is kind of the antithesis of Lac-Saint-Jean in Québec. Do we wonder how Anglophones live in English in Roberval? It's a bit the same as wondering how

Francophones live in French in Sault-Sainte-Marie. Indeed, multiculturalism and the whole multicultural dynamic of Sault-Sainte-Marie have a great impact on the language crisis. It's obvious because for Anglophones in Sault-Sainte-Marie, Francophones are only one ethnic group among others and, of course, one of the smallest.

Mrs. Harel: Mr. Chairman, I'm sure you too would like a few more explanations regarding the remark that it was Toronto Anglophones who would suffer from multiculturalism...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I found it quite clear, given...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I understood that, since there are now many more ethnic minorities in Toronto than previously, there is a rapid decrease in the Anglo-Saxon majority, whereas in regions with a French majority, multiculturalism is no more dangerous and exerts no more pressure than the presence of Anglophone groups earlier. Perhaps it's because I'm familiar with Ontario that it seemed so obvious...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

A voice: Mr. Chairman...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Perhaps the time also helped, Madam.

Mr. Lécuyer: Mr. Chairman, having lived in Toronto for 19 years, I can assure you that this is true.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So we agree. Then all that remains is for us to thank you, representatives of the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, Mr. Lécuyer, Mr. Gilbert, Mrs. Michaud, Mrs. Fortier, Mr. Saint-Jean and the president, Mr. Tanguay, for having had the good idea of sending a brief to our Commission and accepting our invitation to come and testify and answer our questions. Thank you.

The sitting is now adjourned. We will resume at 7:30 p.m. with the Université du Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:20 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:37 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll continue our hearings by welcoming, this evening, the Université du Québec. Mr. Hamel,

please introduce your colleagues and then take 10 minutes to summarize your brief. The entire presentation is limited to one hour. The floor is yours.

Université du Québec

Mr. Hamel (Claude): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left, at the end of the table, Mr. Alain Soucy, directeur général of one of the branches in the Université du Québec network, the Institut national de la recherche scientifique. On my immediate left, Mr. Guy Massicotte, who is vice-président de planification at the Université headquarters, and on my right, Mr. Jacques Parent, who is recteur de l'Université du Québec in Trois-Rivières.

The Université du Québec thanks the Commission for allowing it to express its opinion on what it considers the major stakes for Québec's future. Of course, its mission does not authorize me to take sides on constitutional matters, but the Université is too intimately involved in the cultural, economic and social life of Québec to remain on the sidelines of a debate that calls into question the whole future of the society it serves.

Our brief affirms the need for Québec to exercise full and complete jurisdiction over higher education, including basic financing and financing of research. In our opinion, the distinctive character of Québec's society and the role universities are called to play to support economic, social and cultural development, especially in its territorial dimension, justify this direction.

Québec is a distinct society and its distinctiveness expresses itself primarily in its cultural identity, which has the education system as its indispensable guarantee. This has led Québec to jealously guard its jurisdiction over education in general, and higher education in particular. Québec has always resisted federal government encroachments on the universities. But despite this, the federal government has succeeded in setting up ways of intervening which have upset the development of Québec universities and stripped the Québec government of the means to better coordinate development of the universities with development of society.

Educational institutions, especially universities, have become essential tools for promotion of the individual and the community. To meet today's needs, they must have the means to grow, to do their job properly, as much by how widely they deploy their resources as by the quality and relevance of their activities.

We can't imagine a developed society that doesn't rely on university potential, both from the standpoint of cultural development and basic training, and in more immediate support for

economic and social development of the community.

If the State hopes to respond to public demands for economic, social and cultural development, it cannot neglect this lever, the education system, in particular postsecondary education, where state-of-the-art research and training are carried out. The federal government's determination to meddle in this jurisdictional domain demonstrates this clearly, even though it is up to Québec to be in control of educational and cultural development and, in a general way, of community support. Our brief shows how dual jurisdiction over universities constitutes a source of grave injustice to Québec, but most of all, a major obstacle to the full realization of the potential of higher education for Québec's development. For example, the federal government's insistence on establishing national objectives for postsecondary education, to justify its presence in the basic financing of colleges and universities, raises fundamental questions about the respective jurisdictions of the two levels of government.

Moreover, its unilateral decision to progressively reduce transfer payments to the provinces is unsettling and produces inconsistencies, as we saw once more last spring. The federal government prefers to allocate its funds to university financing and research where it can control the direction and priorities through national strategies. This is what it has done in recent years, both through tax measures and through specific programs at the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency and the National Research Council of Canada. The network of excellence centres, theme grants and those called matching, the National Research Council's programs for technology transfer are also examples of the federal government's interest in developing scientific activities in the universities related to Canada's development priorities. Everything indicates, moreover, that these are the development strategies that will be called to take on an ever greater importance in the future. Québec is trying to adapt to these new requirements. On the one hand, it has established its own agencies to support research and university researchers. These organizations must take the existence of federal agencies into account, and try, for better or for worse, to coordinate their activities to complement them. Québec has also adopted tax incentives for investment in university research. In certain fields – especially in computer science and exploitation of the biomass – the government has created research companies that encourage interaction between the needs of business and university research.

In an age in which research is a strategic factor for a society's development, we have to

say that Québec in general, and the universities in particular, are not receiving their fair share of federal research money, that Québec doesn't have the necessary resources to adequately support society's scientific and technological development, and that overlapping jurisdictions weaken the impact of investment and divide the energies through too many and badly coordinated, competing priorities.

Over and above the problem of fairness, which remains a large one, is the problem of Québec's ability to support its development and the question of effective use of public funds. In effect, if we want to ensure an optimum return and minimize the inconsistency of government interventions, we must have a single authority within a given territory. The agents of development — individuals, businesses, community social organizations, communities in the territory — must have a designated government contact to act as their official spokesperson in dealings with supranational, Canadian or international agencies.

In turn, Québec must emphasize decentralization to local and regional institutions to free the latent energies that exist there and to stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit. People in the communities will no longer deal with two governments, often at variance; strong with new powers, they will work together in harmony with the powers that be over the policy in their area.

Elimination of the dual jurisdiction in higher education will encourage development, not only by charting a common course, but by encouraging the decentralization essential for any strategy based on interaction between socioeconomic and sociocultural agents and dependent on contributions from local and regional educational and scientific institutions.

We believe there is a Québec identity that has made itself felt in research, as in other sectors of activity. Québec's culture, and for the majority, its language, has been a definite handicap in an evaluation process that is dominated largely by English-Canadian researchers. The more Québec affirms its identity, the greater the distance from the rest of Canada, and the more Québec's research community is faced with a dilemma. Either the researchers give up their identity to become better integrated into the dominant system, or they risk becoming somewhat marginalized, which means they exclude themselves from competition or their results are disappointing. Looking at the question of responsibilities shared by Ottawa and Québec, the Commission must be very attentive to this effect of allocation of research funds on university development and on collective and individual opportunities that result for Quebecers, because Québec now has the necessary expertise and infrastructure to fairly and effectively allocate research funds to the

universities.

Lastly, our brief advocates adoption of a real policy for scientific and technological development that is open to the rest of the world and based on socioeconomic and sociocultural forces, including the educational institutions. A policy which should reflect the image of the future Québec, whatever its constitutional arrangements turn out to be. L'Université du Québec, a public institution created by the government over 20 years ago to support social development in the context of the strong forces of modernization during the 1960s, is made up of 11 establishments located throughout Québec and represents one of the most important tools Québec has to bring about such a policy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Hamel. We begin with questions from the Government party. Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Mr. Hamel, Gentlemen, I am pleased, first of all, to welcome you to the Commission and to thank you for having agreed to come before us. You will permit me also to salute the work you, and those at every level, in all the branches of the Université du Québec, are doing. We have just ended a tour of the regions of Québec and could see the energetic work being carried out in the regional universities through the work of L'Université du Québec, and I want to acknowledge it for the record. In your brief, you stress the problem of overlapping jurisdiction. This is a hot issue because, today, we argued about health services. It's easy to make comparisons in health and education, fields that are left to the jurisdiction of the provinces according to the Canadian Constitution, but we've been claiming full jurisdiction in these areas for 30 years because we've recognized the needs of our people and we're capable of bringing in programs or corrective action and policies to satisfy these needs.

You highlight problems that overlapping jurisdiction causes. However, we recall that in this very domain of universities, it's a special domain because in the 1950s, at the end of the 1950s, there was the famous debate on grants to universities in which, a rare fact in his political history, Mr. Trudeau stood with Mr. Duplessis, fighting with him against Ottawa's grants to the universities. And Mr. Dion was in favour of grants to universities. That was another era; things change. That's how it is.

I'd like to ask you the following question: You say, and obviously we know, that you're not receiving your fair share of scientific research, research contracts. And we've done a lot as a government to try and get these research contracts that come from Ottawa, from the

various agencies in Ottawa. But the answer we get at times is that our researchers, our universities aren't aggressive enough, they don't go after this research enough with research projects. How do you react to this reaction by Ottawa?

Mr. Hamel: Look, before I answer that question, perhaps, if you will allow me, I'd like to comment on the first part of your question, where you referred to a parallel with health. In the presentation I just made, I alluded to a difficulty we experienced last spring, related to the problem of overlapping jurisdiction. When Québec decided to increase fees in order to improve university financing – and we know how difficult the debates were – at the same time, the federal government was unilaterally cutting back on existing postsecondary education programs. And when we were calculating how much of this \$220 million would be passed on to the universities, we arrived at an amount almost equal to the increased revenues from the increased fees. So, there was clearly a contradiction here.

To come back to your question about research, Mr. Minister. I think that there was a time, a few years ago, when our professors, and possibly for the cultural reasons we referred to earlier, our professors were less inclined to submit requests for financing from the federal bodies, preferring instead to turn to provincial bodies such as our grants for professional development of researchers and research assistance, FCAR. But I think that the proportion of our professors who today apply for research grants from federal bodies is no doubt almost the same as it is for other Canadian universities.

We must keep in mind, on the other hand, that the structure of our postsecondary education in Québec is very different from the ones in the other Canadian provinces. Our university undergraduate level is only three years because of the Cégeps, while in the other provinces, the undergraduate programs are four years. This leads to a larger student population in universities in the other provinces and also a greater number of professors. This has to be taken into account.

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

Mr. Dauphin: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Well then, good evening, Gentlemen. I'd like to refer you to page 11 of the brief, where you speak about opening up to the world and you make a reference to research grants from supranational bodies. You produce the example of Europe as offering a good example of international cooperation to support the aims of the Community. I'd like you to be more specific on

this aspect of your brief and to indicate, if you can, the steps to be taken to enable Québec to get on stream.

Mr. Massicotte (Guy): Yes, Mr. Chairman. In fact, what we're trying to say is that we don't want, because Québec is the authority or has sole jurisdiction in higher education, this to prevent our researchers from participating in research programs, be they Canadian in a new context or international. Neither do we want this to prevent Québec – which would be truly disgraceful – from joining other countries or international bodies in setting up large research programs meeting the interests of our community.

What we're saying is that the Québec government would have to be the negotiator for the research institutions with respect to such programs, ensuring that the programs truly meet our priorities, take our priorities into account, and give our researchers a fair chance, so they can compete fairly with American researchers and those from other countries.

Mr. Dauphin: If I may, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Dauphin: How is it that "supranational" bodies, in quotation marks, are able to consider the interests of their members, while today, the federal authorities seem unable to take Québec's particular needs into account?

Mr. Massicotte: Because the programs are defined by the agencies... Let's take the case of the European Community, for example. The power structure inside the European Community allows countries, through their representatives, obviously, to have a big say in defining the programs, and as well, in identifying the priorities. While in Québec, the financing programs are drawn up unilaterally by the federal government; the Québec government has practically no say in the cost of programs or in their priorities.

Mr. Dauphin: The same logic, if you will allow me, Mr. Chairman, must apply when you say at one point that the federal grants for research based on so-called national priorities aren't necessarily in Québec's interest and not necessarily because of language. What other factors are not necessarily in our interests?

Mr. Massicotte: In fact, once again, I think there's always room for compromise. If we agree to participate in a supranational program, we must expect that the entire program won't coincide perfectly with our objectives. We know this, but we would be right in expecting to have

our say so that the programs would recognize our priorities, at least to some degree. But right now, the federal programs serve the Canadian reality and obviously don't consider the interests of each region of the country. A truly supranational program resembling what we see, for example, on the European scale, would better realize, would be more the sum of the interests of the member states or societies. In fact, the communities supporting the program.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you very much.

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

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Mr. Hamel, Gentlemen. I must tell you, you can rest assured that I appreciated fully the fact that you chose to come before us. I could do no other than appreciate it.

I'm looking at a line in your brief, on page 6, where you say: The universities need adequate resources and a great deal of autonomy to strive for the development of knowledge and to educate people for change. And this led me to think about the following: If we, in our civilization, recognize the need to give the universities more autonomy and greater academic freedom as well, it's to enable them, and their students to get involved in contentious debates. I say this, I appreciate your presence and I'm distressed that our great universities, publicly chartered, didn't choose to do as much. Right now, that's where you are.

You make a very harsh criticism of the costs and the particularly injurious effects of the dual jurisdiction. Since you didn't read your whole brief to us, let me highlight some of the harsher but just criticisms. You say that the federal authorities, who decided to cut transfer payments because they are unconditionally granted to the provinces, therefore to Québec, invested instead in research because the research could be directed. In directing the research, the federal government set the priorities, it also directed the universities a little, a lot. And you say also that Canadian priorities are established without negotiation, obviously, and there is no concern for regional development. Then you speak about the creation of Canada-wide research teams, which have recently dissipated the energies of our best researchers. Obviously you have other, I would say, better, criticisms. But you tell us, among other things, that this dual jurisdiction weakens the impact, divides energies because the priorities are too numerous and badly coordinated.

(8:00 p.m.)

And on page 12 of your brief, you go even further when you speak of biased federal political structures. Could you explain some of

the effects of biased federal political structures, the effects on research? And also what this can mean, the underfunding of research in our Québec universities, that is to say, the relative share we should receive as federal research grants?

Mr. Hamel: What we were mainly referring to, it's always in the field of research, are the statistics, most of which show that Ontario is highly favoured, not only in financing and research in the form of direct grants, but also in terms of the installation of research facilities. I'm thinking of laboratories, of the federal research centres, which have tended to be set up in Ontario rather than Québec, perhaps because the national capital is located in Ontario. And it's only very recently that we in Québec have merited several installations which we must acknowledge, the major one being the Institut Maurice-Lamontagne for oceanography, located in the Rimouski region, which for once, constitutes an infrastructure that rounds out a state-of-the-art sector we developed at our branch in Rimouski.

Mrs. Blackburn: You take Québec's side in advocating that it has all the maneuvering room it needs to invest in the universities, make its choices, and set its priorities. You remind us of the importance of education as a lever, as a factor in economic development, and at the same time, and what's very important and interesting - I myself am from the regions - the importance of the Université du Québec branches in the regions with respect to social and economic development. You say that Québec should have full powers. Because the capacity to develop obviously rests on the powers you are given, on the budgets you are granted. And on page 6 you talk about powers over environment, health, education, higher education, science, culture, and regional development. And you advocate decentralization. You say that it would be a good thing for Québec, and you hope to be consulted when priorities are being set, that you are willing to be and capable of being a wise and effective partner. And you advocate regionalization. In other briefs, the regions came here mainly to advocate decentralization of powers. And, like them, you are very attached to the setting of priorities. Do you think the regions have the dynamism, the capacity to take charge of certain spheres of activity, that is, as far as responsibilities, and obviously, the budgets to manage them are concerned? Do you have an idea of the kind of structure that could result from decentralization?

Mr. Hamel: We referred to various domains by way of example without wishing to go deeply into the matter. Because to our mind, when speaking of regionalization, of decentralization,

it's always our domain that interests us... postsecondary education, and research. What we wish to say is, that in our opinion, it's entirely possible and entirely desirable to develop research by regions, state-of-the-art research and research that contributes to the economic and social development of the regions. That's what we're trying to say and we're very aware that there's a debate on the issue, even inside Québec. We often hear criticism that the greater Montréal area wants to concentrate all of Québec's state-of-the-art research, especially technological research, in its own region. But we, particularly the Université du Québec through its regional branches, have already proved that it's possible to develop high-quality research on a regional basis, to fill the particular niches in which we are achieving remarkable standards of excellence. I don't want to go into it any further here, but we could provide examples from the pulp and paper sector in Trois-Rivières, in oceanography in Rimouski, and so on.

Mrs. Blackburn: And isn't this leading to the idea of decentralization? You talked about decentralization, but you haven't identified the structures that could support this decentralization in the regions.

Mr. Hamel: No, we haven't identified them.

Mrs. Blackburn: No. Fine...

Mr. Hamel: As far as we, the Université du Québec, are concerned, the infrastructure is there: it's our branches.

Mrs. Blackburn: It's the Université. But for decentralization. Because I would remind you that on page 6 of your brief you talk about a series of powers that should normally be decentralized. I'll name them for you. Yes, here they are. You have environment, health, education. But you haven't elaborated.

Mr. Massicotte: In fact, Mrs. Blackburn, in our brief you've probably noticed a veiled blueprint for society in the background, where we deal with scientific research and education, we see it in a central position on other aspects of economic, social and cultural life. We think Québec should centre its development on regional development of its human resources and of knowledge, that is, by trying to develop all of Québec's potential to the maximum, not just the potential of the big cities, of Montréal or Québec City, but the potential of all our regions. And that's why we talk about decentralization without going so far as to propose models or formulas. But we told ourselves that a development philosophy centred on human resources, on knowledge that got the most from

the full potential of Québec and not just the large centres, would be interesting for Québec's future.

Mrs. Blackburn: Fine. One of the fears, here...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédanger): Mr. Parent would perhaps like to add something by way of an answer.

Mr. Parent (Jacques): If you will allow me, as rector of an institution located in the regions, in Québec's heartland, you will understand that Mrs. Blackburn's question interests me highly. I would like to use this occasion to provide some concrete examples of how these things are experienced in the regions. And as was emphasized earlier, what is interesting and very instructive, I think, is that the Université du Québec, through its branches, is identified with each of the regions. Let's take the example of Trois-Rivières - because I know it best, but I could also talk about other branches - this is the pulp and paper domain. This is completely logical, given the region. Your question, Mrs. Blackburn, asks if we have the structural capability, the critical mass to enable us to take on whatever responsibilities this decentralization would entail? Because this is the important issue. You're aware that at this university there is complete vertical programming. At the undergraduate level there is chemical engineering of paper products. There is a master's degree in pulp and paper and pulp and paper science. And just last week, we launched the first PhD completely centred on the subject of pulp and paper. Thus, complete education and training. It's the only one in Québec, and probably in Canada. All this goes with a research centre and membership in the Canada-wide network of excellence centres in the pulp and paper domain. So you see, there is a structural capability. I believe the important thing right now - and it's what we want our document to show - is to be in a position to stimulate business, the entrepreneurial spirit, and to go for the maximum, to get the maximum return from the enormous possibilities that exist in most of Québec's regions.

Mrs. Blackburn: Question, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédanger): A short one, Madam.

Mrs. Blackburn: One of the often-expressed fears we've heard is that in any future sovereign Québec we'll be isolated. There are even some who think we would have to keep the large Canadian grant-giving bodies in an independent Québec. I still have a lot of trouble understanding how we would handle that, but

that's another problem. On page 11 you're suggesting - and Mr. Dauphin asked about it earlier - that it's possible, that it happens elsewhere, that high performance research teams are offered the chance to participate in research teams outside their countries, and you cite an example. Do you have examples in your universities of the capacity of Québec universities and their branches to be part of foreign joint ventures? I personally know of one.

Mr. Hamel: Look, Madam, in general, the universities have a very long tradition of collaboration and involvement on a national scale mainly in research, but also in development assistance to other countries. Today, our Québec researchers are part of the Canadian network which has been set up over the last few years. What we're proposing is that Québec have full powers over research funding, particularly for university research. But we aren't proposing that Québec researchers isolate themselves either. I think they'll always want to be involved in national and international research networks, and we hope, it will be the same for the quality of university research.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We continue now with questions from members of the Commission. Mr. Nicolet, who will be followed by Mrs. Campbell Steer and Mrs. Pagé.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think my questions are going to be mainly about one of the issues Mr. Massicotte referred to earlier as a veiled blueprint for society in your brief.

I'm looking at page 4 of the text, where you refer to local entities, and so on. The RCMs, the regions, are at the heart, along with businesses, and community organizations, of Québec's new policy for regional development. Thus, you're going beyond the strictly university concerns you referred to earlier in your speech.

And so my question is to ask, when you talk about regional development, whether you're talking about policies coming from the Québec government or whether you're referring instead to the practice which we see developing, of a close collaboration between specific communities, organized structures, coordinating bodies, municipalities, and so on.

Mr. Massicotte: What we're aiming at is what we just told you, that is, our concept of development, and, in particular, of regional development, rests on the complete and total involvement of the communities concerned. We think that education, particularly higher education, is one of the tools. These resources will encourage the regions to take responsibility for their problems in order to be able to identify and implement solutions.

At the end of our brief we say, and it's our stand, that returning some of the powers to Québec is going to encourage regional decentralization. And obviously we consider this should be done, and that it be done as part of the blueprint for society. Decentralization in the regions shouldn't be viewed as a transfer of responsibilities within the government apparatus, but rather as a transfer of responsibilities to the institutions, to the organizations that operate at the local and regional levels.

Mr. Nicolet: Yes, in fact, you've anticipated the second part of my question and I refer you specifically to page 20 of your brief which says that you like to dream of the impact that a unified strategy for support of higher education could have at the regional level and on regional development. Do you think that the bridge that must be built between higher education, and so on, must come out of direct government action, or is this something that should be left to the community to develop, the interactions, on a strictly local and regional basis?

Mr. Massicotte: Look, I'll answer you. I have a... an old principle in mind, and I've often tested it. And I think both are needed. When governments try to build something, or install something without support from the local and regional levels, it doesn't work. And very often, when an initiative is taken locally without support from public authorities or big business, very often, it doesn't work either.
(8:15 p.m.)

Our big successes in regional development have come when there was a partnership, an alliance with a local force, a grass-roots movement which was taken up by government support. I think that L'Université du Québec is for me, the best example of this. It wouldn't have worked if there hadn't been groups in the regions taking command of university development projects; and it probably wouldn't have worked without the Université du Québec network, either.

Mr. Nicolet: During our sessions, we have met with many groups that doubt the willingness of certain Québec government authorities to decentralize. In the context of an evolving constitutional framework for Québec, do you think that we would have the opportunity to rethink the balance between central Québec and the regions?

Mr. Massicotte: I personally think that Québec can't manage if it relies only on Montréal and Québec City. I think that's too small a base. We're going to succeed as a society if we seek out all of our potential, and all of our potential obviously includes every one of our regions, together, interacting with the centres,

and that will of necessity... I think the government has no choice. It's going to have to develop a blueprint that will extract the most from all our potential resources across the province, and thus, it will have to envisage the ways various parts of the territory will interact, and how the various officials at the local level or higher will interact.

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

Mrs. Campbell Steer: First, I would like to thank you for your brief and your eloquent request concerning the decrease in federal spending on research and development, and the need to further increase the amounts invested by the two existing levels of government in research and development, because it's really an area that interests me. And I would also like to discuss in a little more depth the impression your brief gave me that the federal government is biased in favour of Ontario, and the impression that McGill University, my alma mater, is also favoured. On page 16 you said that in effect, as the CREPUQ brief shows, in spite of McGill's exceptional performance, the Québec universities' share has not changed in 10 years. You continue, saying that Québec share of NSERC grants remains at 20%, while Ontario continues to improve its position, increasing from 41% to 43%.

I'd like to know if when we look at page 6 of the CREPUQ report, doesn't it tell us that we already enjoy a share slightly above the Canadian average in the biomedical sciences and the social sciences and humanities, with the Armand-Frappier Institute, with the Sheldon Biotechnology Centre at McGill and also with the Institut de recherche en biotechnologie? Isn't it the infrastructure we're missing in engineering and the natural sciences? Someone already suggested that the Université de Montréal Polytechnique was pretty new to the university scene. Was this a less bad move than something that duplicated what we already have? I don't know if I'm making myself clear, but that's what I want to say. Could you give me some details about this?

Mr. Hamel: First, we didn't want to repeat the statistics that the Conférence des recteurs presented. I think that the Conférence gave a very clear picture of the issues facing us, especially in research, and the reference that you're making, for example, to the Medical Research Council of Canada funding in the biomedical sciences is accurate. Québec's performance with respect to the granting councils for funding of basic research is very good in the biomedical field and very good in the social sciences and humanities, but much less good in the natural sciences and engineering.

There are several reasons for that. One is that the research tradition in our Québec universities is younger in these disciplines. Another reason is that the natural sciences and engineering require large amounts of money that we don't always have in Québec, and when we compare the situation of Québec with Ontario's in this regard, there are large gaps, as indicated in our brief.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Not because we're lacking infrastructure, rather because...

Mr. Hamel: We're gradually building up the infrastructure, and we're making significant progress. But I would say that in Québec we're behind in these sectors, especially in Francophone universities. We're still in a development phase. I wouldn't dare say we're emerging; that phase is over.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes.

Mr. Hamel: But we're still in a development period. And what concerns many of our university colleagues today is that in the scenario in which the federal government could at a moment's notice cut back its financing of Canadian grant-giving councils, the councils' selection criteria could become more and more elitist. And the first universities affected by such a policy could be Québec's Francophone universities. And for us, that's a very unsettling prospect.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: We could also ask... Please go on, I don't want to cut you off. What... I was going in a different vein. I congratulate you for all the regional challenges that you've already met. But about your wish to attract researchers to the regions; I'd just like to talk a little instead about an analysis we recently completed with businesspeople and researchers related to a science and high-technology park for the region. When we talked with the researchers, saying: Look, what prompted you to move here or to start a business? They said: First, it's the funding; we need money, someone who's ready to finance us. Second, we need a qualified pool of labour in the area. And most of all, they also wanted a community of researchers to work with.

I know that Québec has already committed a taxation plan to paper and that they've created something I find very attractive, the two-year tax holiday, as well as tax credits on existing investment. But faced with world-wide competition for such researchers, do you think that it's going to be an even bigger challenge to attract them to the regions?

Mr. Soucy (Alain): Well, in answering your question, I would perhaps like to go back a bit

to the problem of infrastructures that you mentioned.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes.

Mr. Soucy: Let's say that if we tallied the results for Québec universities in recent years, we could say that Québec universities show a very good performance. They have as good a performance as the others, all things being relative, of course. It all depends on the number of applications made in relation to the success rate. It's fine to talk about the amounts obtained, but the success rate is also important. The current success rate of Québec universities, in any case for programs with peers, shows just as high a performance.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes.

Mr. Soucy: There are just as good researchers in Québec, and the capacity to do research in Québec is just as good as elsewhere, as in Ontario or the rest of Canada. And in some sectors we even exceed Canadian successes.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: That's for sure.

Mr. Soucy: Let's say the problem doesn't lie only there. It lies in the special programs that are set up, often pretty much at the last minute, or in sponsorship of research, which comes from different government departments, about which information gets to us very late. That's often the problem. Everybody else knows something about it in advance...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes.

Mr. Soucy: ...It gets around, and when it arrives, with all the applications involved, we are already a good deal behind schedule. Anyway, that's a mechanism which has been operating for a long time now, and which is still operating. It results in our inability to get in at the right time on certain special programs that are set up pretty much at the last minute. There is also another factor, because you're talking about structure, which you have to be aware of in Québec. There are no very large companies in Québec that do research. So there is a weakness in industrial research.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But...

Mr. Soucy: That's the first point. The second point is that government support for research in itself is marginal. Of course some things do exist, but it is marginal. On the part of universities, there is thus a filling of gaps that the university has to provide and often does provide, without having all the internal systems to do it. So there is a definite structural

weakness in pure and applied research in Québec. Agencies have been created to fill the gap. CRIQ is an example.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes. But there are also laboratories as investments...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This will be the last question, Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Oh! Excuse me. Continue your...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You prefer a longer answer to a shorter question. So we'll let the answer continue.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I think I am here to listen rather than to talk.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Wise choice, Madam. Go on.

Mr. Soucy: We must thus realize that to support a stronger infrastructure and strengthen our research infrastructure, and, at the present time, come out ahead in a number of programs, especially if we are talking, as we are talking in this brief, about moving in the direction of supranational programs, what we should do... We mustn't forget that with globalization and all the other phenomena taking place, it's the Americans who are going to wake up tomorrow and notice us and the Americans whom we will have to address to demonstrate our performance and say that we are doing serious things in research and that we are competitive on an international scale. That's the context in which we are going to have to be working.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: May I just add one thing? I really think we also need a bigger...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But that means you're going to have the last word.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: That's right. It's the business world that must invest more, perhaps by funding chairs, as Canadian Pacific does at McGill, in biotechnology. Because that's a sphere in which I have already worked. But it's a commitment that needs to be made that we are also lacking. It isn't just the two levels of government.

Mr. Soucy: Such programs exist, and are currently working well. I think we have to continue encouraging this. But all of it must be supported by a consistent scientific and technological policy in our society. We know that, recently in any case, with jurisdiction divided, with science on one side and technology on the other, this is not likely to

create anything very strong, in any case in the sciences, in the way of a scientific and technological policy in Québec, despite the fact that we have succeeded in channelling enough energy and creating that technological development fund, which in my opinion is a valuable instrument.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The last questioner of the evening will be Mrs. Pagé. Not of the evening, of this presentation. The evening is still young.

Mrs. Pagé: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to say that I think it's significant that the Université du Québec is appearing as a witness before the Commission, because I believe it is a living example of a certain concept of regional development. When Québec decided to extend its university system into the regions at the same time it opted for accessibility of higher education, it was simultaneously opting for regional development. Because public institutions in the regions are poles of development, and when you talk about research, researchers working with business, I think you are a living illustration of it.

Often, during the proceedings of the Commission, questions are asked for the purpose of determining how much sovereignty is going to cost us. I want to tell you why I liked your brief. Because it told us how much federalism costs us in the sectors of research and development and postsecondary education. You talk about it on page 7, when you say that the federal government uses national priorities to guide the actions it takes. And you continue on page 8, saying that these priorities will not be subject to negotiations with the provinces.

You go on on page 12, where you say that the Canadian political structure has continually worked to the advantage of Southern Ontario. You talk about the share of contracts granted to Québec, which has fallen by half. You have other figures that speak for themselves on page 15, where you tell us that perhaps not only does the share correspond approximately to the population in Québec, but when we look at the share of the individual universities, we see that McGill is particularly favoured in comparison with other universities. On page 16, you show how Québec's particular characteristics work against us to a certain point, for example our younger university system, our special cultural characteristics... You discuss this on page 17.

I find that this brief is very eloquent in explaining that at the very least, federalism costs us something and it costs us something in a crucial sector. I do not want to induce you to say more than you want to say, but at least, for the sector we are talking about, you are very eloquent in illustrating the tools we lack in order to take action. My question is in regard to

pages 9 and 22. On page 9, you talk about a certain number of agencies that exist, created by the Québec government; I'll give you the acronyms, it's quicker: FCAR, FRSQ, CQRS, CORPAQ. And on page 22, in addition, you say that you have developed excellence centres in the regions; there is the Institut national de la recherche scientifique. What I want to ask you is the following question: in the case of a sovereign Québec, as in the case of a renewed federalism in which everything concerning us in postsecondary education, research and development would be repatriated, are there other agencies, in your opinion, that should be set up to give us efficient dynamism in research, development and postsecondary education?

Mr. Hamel: First, a comment on your introduction, before I attempt to answer your question. As far as the division of jurisdictions and responsibilities for financing postsecondary education goes, it is very interesting to note that the Auditor General of Canada, in his latest report on the year that was ending, I don't know, in March or April of 1990, reproaches the federal government, in his analysis of the Secretary of State Department, for not having clearly stated national objectives for postsecondary education in Canada, and insists that the government do so immediately. We know that this debate has been going on for 10 or 15 years at the Canadian level, and the different Secretaries of State in their turn have tried to accomplish this, and Canadian universities have of necessity been part of it and have on several occasions been, I would say, torn apart by these debates; in any case, Québec universities in the Canadian forum. But this insistence by the Auditor General indicates a trend that I don't think is about to be reversed.

Insofar as agencies are concerned, in Québec, on the day that, subsequent to a process that it will be up to you to decide on, Québec assumes full jurisdiction over postsecondary education, as regards both basic financing and research funding, I think it will be necessary to review our current research funding agencies. For example, FCAR should be reviewed from a completely new perspective, since at present it has become progressively more defined in a perspective that is complementary to federal agencies. I think that we would also have to review, and Mr. Soucy alluded to this just now, our Conseil de la science et de la technologie, which could prove to be, for the Québec government, the centre, the locus of a fundamental debate on Québec's scientific and technological policy, in the context of a strengthened, clarified, and unified policy for Québec as a whole. I think these would be the two main elements I would envisage so that we could assume this responsibility.

Mr. Soucy: I could perhaps add, Madam, because you referred to page...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Quickly, Mr. Soucy.

Mr. Soucy: Just a brief word. I agree. Just to add, since you alluded to page 22, where we are talking about the Institut national de la recherche scientifique. This is a unique structure such as exists nowhere else in Canada and which has a very impressive record. INRS researchers in national programs perform above Canadian averages. Just one last example, the NSERC strategic grants have just come out, with a 46% success rate for INRS, compared with a national average of 23%. There is something that was created in Québec 20 years ago, called INRS, but it got overlooked to some extent. It is an instrument that can be implemented throughout the regions, as a complement to the universities that already exist there, in collaboration with government agencies that have needs to express, and that can serve as a network, if you like, and as a backup structure to attract what we were talking about earlier, a critical mass that will mean that our research activities will be significant in scope. It exists, it is called INRS. Unfortunately, through lack of policies, foresight, and a clear strategy for research development in Québec, we have forgotten the instrument that happens to be the one that is currently functioning the best in the Canadian system.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): These are words that will serve very well to conclude this presentation. You are finishing on a high note. Thank you, on behalf of the entire Commission, for accepting our invitation to come and defend your brief. Thanks to Mr. Parent of Trois-Rivières, Mr. Hamel, Mr. Massicotte, and Mr. Soucy. We are going to break for a few minutes before replacing you with the Conseil de la Coopération du Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:35 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:39 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now welcome the Conseil de la coopération du Québec. If you would please introduce your group and then take the 10 minutes allotted to one-hour presentations to present the main points of your brief. You have the floor.

Conseil de la coopération du Québec

Mr. Simon (César): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleagues at the table include Mr. René Houle, on my right, who represents the Fédération des coopératives québécoises en milieu scolaire at the CCQ, and on his left, Mr. Yves

Michaud, who represents the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec. On my immediate right is Mr. Garry Lavoie, who represents the Fédération régionale des coopératives d'habitation du Québec, and on my left is Mrs. Juliette Bonneville, director general of the Conseil de la coopération. On the far left is Mr. Jean-Claude Guérard, who represents the regional development cooperatives.

Mr. Chairman, the Conseil de la coopération thanks you for giving it the opportunity to explain the main points in its report. As you have seen, the brief contains no opinions or recommendations on the specific constitutional framework to be proposed for Québec. Remember that the CCQ is composed of various organizations that have in common a shared recognition of cooperative principles, which they seek to promote through the Conseil. Furthermore, most of our members consist of province-wide cooperative organizations. These cooperatives possess a great deal of independence, and act accordingly. Therefore, each organization has its own structures through which it acts and expresses itself. For this reason, the CCQ decided that it was better to allow its individual members to express themselves on their own, if they chose. This approach seemed preferable to trying to reach a consensus, since the groups represented could not be fully consulted owing to the timetable involved.

The CCQ's brief to the Commission testifies to the socioeconomic force of the cooperative movement in Québec, which was built in our Québec environment within a purely Québec legal framework. Our report presents a brief sketch of the major players in this movement. The cooperatives in question indeed play a key role in our society. Cooperative principles inspired the founders of these organizations, and still govern the conduct of the same cooperatives today.

More important, firms built on the cooperative system are still being established. This system is based on personal respect and responsibility, and thus it is particularly worthwhile for those who wish to take charge of their own socioeconomic development. Although cooperatives are being created in every region, the phenomenon is most striking outside the large urban centres. This type of enterprise is particularly suited to regional development.

The primary importance of the individual in the cooperative system is reflected in the equality of its members; members are treated the same regardless of the amount of capital contributed. The overall interests of members are taken into account in decision making, and since members have deep roots in the community, there is reason to believe that they will take the common good into account. Such grass-roots ownership also ensures that the organization

will be a stable presence in the community. Although these firms obviously do not escape the forces that shape economic activity, their ownership and decision-making mechanisms ensure that the interests of members and the community will not be forgotten.

In the current context of economic globalization and the free circulation of people, capital, goods and services, it may seem naïve to sing the praises of tiny firms whose horizons are limited to a neighborhood, a village, or a region at best. However, this underestimates the extent of the movement and the dynamic nature of our cooperatives. They have equipped themselves with structures and connections that allow them to make progress in their chosen field of activity. To do otherwise would be to retreat into one's shell, which doesn't work for very long in today's world, as numerous examples testify.

So, Mr. Chairman, this is what the Conseil de la coopération would like to stress in its report: the remarkable richness of the cooperative system for men and women who seek to assert themselves on the basis of mutual respect. That, Mr. Chairman, is the summary of our report.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Simon. We'll start with the questions from Mrs. Harel, a representative of the party of the Official Opposition.

Mrs. Harel: Good evening, Mr. Simon, and everyone else from the Conseil de la coopération du Québec. I must say, Mr. Simon, that I've learned a lot from your presentation to the Commission tonight. I now have a better idea of what the Conseil de la coopération is and the groups it represents: 2 500 cooperatives including major groups such as the Desjardins movement and the Coopérative fédérée, among others. Moreover, while I was listening to your presentation, I thought that, since our Commission deals with the political and constitutional future of Québec, I should ask you what message you would like to convey to us on this question.

Mr. Simon: Mr. Chairman, the Conseil de la coopération has no direct message to convey on behalf of its members on this question. As I've tried to explain, the Conseil de la coopération is made up of various groups, which are themselves decentralized. Therefore, it's difficult, in an organization of this kind, to express the members' viewpoint without speaking for them. The approach we took was to tell our members that, if they believed it was appropriate, they should take the time to study the question, hold any consultations deemed appropriate, and present the resulting viewpoint to the Commission.

Mrs. Harel: It's certainly a sound way of doing things, but why have you chosen to appear before the Commission to tell us this?

Mr. Simon: Because we thought that the cooperative system in itself constitutes a great resource for the community. For me, it's a little like the leaven used to make bread, which makes it rise regardless of the kind of flour you use. It's important for the community to know that there are means, there are tools, that can be used to achieve its chosen goals. The community, however, is left to decide which goals it wants to pursue.

Mrs. Harel: Therefore you provide a tool, or a number of tools, that Quebecers can rely on and will be able to rely on even if we have sovereignty. Is this what you mean?

Mr. Simon: In fact, cooperatives in Québec have been developed within a Québec framework, in terms of both geography and the legislative apparatus. The current situation doesn't seem to have been an obstacle to the development of the cooperative movement. Is there any reason to believe that a different framework would be an obstacle? I don't have the answer to this.

Mrs. Harel: And, very quickly, do you think that after the Commission has finished its work, Quebecers must be consulted on its recommendations?

Mr. Simon: The word "must" bothers me a little, but I must say that, as a representative of the cooperative movement, where people are of primary importance, I believe that the Conseil de la coopération could only agree that the main people concerned should be consulted.

Mrs. Harel: And this consultation could be held in the form of a referendum, to be more precise?

Mr. Simon: Well, my expertise in this area is pretty limited, really. But it's one way of doing things.

Mrs. Harel: Do you have any others to propose? Would you prefer an election?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Simon: I'm not in a position to answer that question, Madam.

Mrs. Harel: Mr. Chairman, if I have a minute, I'd like a little more information on cooperatives in Northern Québec, on page 5, and particularly in the second paragraph, where you talk about revenues of over \$50 million. You say the cooperative movement in Northern

Québec is the largest employer of aboriginal workers in the region, as well as a major force in the economic, social and political self-determination of the Inuit people in Northern Québec. This gives me an idea of how the economic self-determination of the aboriginal people could be achieved. Have these cooperatives been in existence for a long time and are there plans to establish cooperatives for other aboriginal nations in Québec?

Mr. Michaud (Yves): Well, the cooperative movement in Northern Québec began in the late fifties. A federation of cooperatives was organized in 1967 and they've continued to flourish since then. They're involved in almost every sphere of development, in every area that affects the community in Northern Québec. As far as socioeconomic and political development go, which were also mentioned, cooperatives are also involved in the region's political life. They express their opinions on questions of regional government and aboriginal self-government. For the second part of your question concerning plans for cooperatives among other aboriginal groups, this we'll have to see.

Mrs. Harel: Is my time up?

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

Mrs. Harel: My colleague from Taillon would like to have a little time to ask some questions.

Mrs. Marois: One quick question, Mr. Chairman. There are representatives from various federations at the table here. I am thinking in particular of the housing sector, as well as other sectors such as workers' cooperatives of various types. You must have certainly experienced, at some point in your activities, problems of duplication due to the presence, and particularly the action, of the two governments. Among other things, I'm thinking in particular of housing cooperatives, obviously, because I am a little more familiar with them, but the same thing must be true for workers' cooperatives. Could you identify some of the difficulties you've experienced or didn't this seem very important in your activities?

Mr. Lavoie (Garry): Well, as far as the development of housing cooperatives is concerned, since 1975 and particularly since 1980, both levels of government have obviously been involved in the development of cooperatives through development or financing programs. Of course, because there is duplication on both levels, this means, in practice, that when we have to lobby, we have to do it at both levels.

It's clear. But it's been mainly in this area that we've experienced difficulties, I would say.

Mrs. Marois: Did you sense that there was dialogue between the two levels of government in this area or rather competition?

Mr. Lavoie: Well, maybe... In certain cases, there was some dialogue. It depended on the period; at certain times there was some dialogue. At other times, there was a little less, but as far as competition goes, some competition did exist. I think that we've always sensed that there was competition between the provincial and federal governments, particularly in jurisdiction over housing but even so, for the last two or three years, several so-called Québec-Canada agreements have been reached that have led to...

Mrs. Marois: ...better coordination.

Mr. Lavoie: ...better coordination. It's obvious that it doesn't solve all the problems, because it doesn't prevent, in practice, the funding of some housing cooperatives by the provincial government and others by the federal government. In other words, two separate programs have been set up, if we can say this, to aid in the development of cooperatives.

Mrs. Marois: OK. That's fine, thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now go to questions from the members. Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Mr. Chairman. You tell us that the phenomenon of cooperation is an original product of Québec, part of our heritage. It's a product of Francophone Québec, but I think we also have to stress the fact that it's a popular product, in the sense that it belongs to the people. And if we want to give it a political label, it's also a progressive product, in the sense that it involves the values of equality, community, sharing, etc. You don't want to take a stand. I respect your values wholeheartedly. A few co-ops have testified before the Commission, in fact. Your federalist contingent hasn't been very talkative, since no one has come before us on that basis.

Could we say, perhaps, that the cooperative movement flourishes both in good times and in bad times in Québec? Don't you think that, in recent months, we in Québec have had bad times, economically speaking, and good times, politically speaking? Don't you think that we have an exceptional opportunity to develop the cooperative movement, particularly in the area of workers' cooperatives? Just today, at noon, I met with two groups who wanted to start separate workers' cooperatives. Aren't we in an

exciting period as far as the cooperative movement goes?

Mr. Simon: Mr. Chairman, the point that was emphasized is very well taken. It's both reassuring and disturbing for the cooperative movement. It's great that the public recognizes, or is aware of, the existence of the cooperative system at a time when Québec is undergoing difficulties, to be more precise. It's true that right now there are glaring economic needs. This means the cooperative system will no doubt experience a renewal of popularity.

However, the public must not lose interest in the cooperative movement when the economy improves. This means more than just a resurgence in economic activity. We must also recognize the growth of cooperatives under these circumstances and not dissociate these cooperatives from their roots just because they have grown. It's true that new phenomena are experienced which perhaps appear to distance the expanded cooperative from its base. You have to recognize the truth of this, up to a point. However, you also have to recognize that it's a fact of life that once you expand, of course, people won't have the same information that they had, say, when you were on a very local level.

(9:00 p.m.)

So, Mr. Chairman, I think it's appropriate to underline the importance and relevance of the cooperative system as well as to recognize that the cooperative movement and cooperative firms are a permanent force in Québec and make an important contribution to society as a whole.

Mr. Larose: I'd appreciate it if you could tell us about the primary motivating forces behind the creation of a cooperative. In our debates, when we speak of sovereignty, people say that some risks and problems may be involved. I have the impression that when you form a cooperative, there are also risks and problems. The feeling I get, however, is that the expected benefits and expected collective experience usually prevail over peoples' fear of risks or problems. I don't want to be partisan but it's somewhat similar to when we unionize a shop. The boss may not be happy about it and may call us names. We put up with this in the short term since we know that afterward we can work to distribute resources throughout the firm. Could you tell us a little about the motivating forces behind the creation of a co-op?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You didn't want to suggest that there's name-calling, Mr. Larose. You didn't want to suggest that there would have to be name-calling.

Mr. Simon: The primary motivating forces

behind the creation of a cooperative, Mr. Chairman, are both the perception of a need and the confidence in one's abilities to meet that need. Not only the confidence in one's abilities but also the will to provide the elements necessary to the search for solutions: in the form of work, in the form of capital in the case of an economic enterprise, but also, where the goals include the social expectations of the persons involved, improvement in the quality of life in the community, the maintaining of jobs in the region and other similar things.

This is when the cooperative is being set up. Obviously, once the cooperative has been created, it will have to exist in the economic environment in which it has chosen to operate. From that point on, there will be exchanges with the surrounding economic community. When you grow tomatoes, if you decide to do so in a cooperative way, well, you aren't the only one growing tomatoes. You have to face competition from other growers who have adopted another form of business. So, from this point of view, cooperatives do not escape the prevailing market rules and conditions in the environment in which they choose to operate.

Mr. Larose: OK.

Mr. Simon: Perhaps Mr. Lavoie would like to add a few things.

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

Mr. Lavoie: I would just like to add one thing, when you asked what the primary motivating forces behind a cooperative were. If I may speak on the basis of the housing cooperative experience and also, I think, for many other sectors, quite often the leaven, as you say, that led to the creation of housing cooperatives was often during extremely difficult economic times for Québec or for certain regions of Québec, when people realized that they only had themselves to rely on. It's often at such a time when they begin to... when certain values come to the fore, such as solidarity and mutual aid in the community. These are the two fundamental values of cooperation, in this respect, solidarity and mutual aid. These two values are found. Often the tools for cooperation are found as the result of a situation of need. Often they are the tools that best meet the need in the context because they promote solidarity.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Next, we will proceed to questions from the Government party. Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Gentlemen. I read your brief with a great deal of interest. Unfortunately, I found it a little thin. I would have liked it to have more substance, because, beginning on page 11, you speak of tools for the future. Your ideas and way of expressing them are extremely interesting, but there are only five pages. So, I will use my questions to go a little further, and then, if you will allow me, I will save a minute at the end for my colleague Dauphin who is dying to ask you a few questions as well.

So what I find interesting, first of all, is your extremely encouraging picture of the cooperative movement in Québec. First, you draw up an extremely exhaustive list of all the cooperative movements, which for me was an eye-opener because, although I was aware of it all, sometimes you forget some things. I must tell you, among other things – and I'll take this time to do a little promotion because these people deserve it – about the housing cooperative that was created in my neighborhood from a low-rent housing development. It's a large complex; there are 13 different cooperatives involved and the results are absolutely extraordinary. The place is completely different now. The crime rate has gone down, the place is cleaner, you wouldn't recognize it any more, the atmosphere... These people really took things in hand and the results are absolutely extraordinary. In the future, forget the low-rent housing, I'll take cooperatives any day. They're clearly much more dynamic and much more worthwhile.

That being said, you also state in your text, in the last sentence on page 16 at the end, where you stopped and I wanted to have more. You say that, more than ever, it will be to Quebecers' advantage to work together in solidarity to ensure their well-being and development and that, more than ever, the cooperative system offers them a reassuring avenue as well as what appears to be an invaluable tool for meeting the challenges that will inevitably be added to those they've already surmounted, fairly well when all's said and done. This statement is fairly optimistic, and when I look at the current situation, things aren't going too well in the shop. I think I can say this. The federal deficit is pretty horrendous, and in Québec we're suffering the consequences. In short, we're caught in a situation that will require us to devise more imaginative schemes to provide the same level of services at a lower cost.

There is also the problem – I'm going to include lots of things in my question since I have just five minutes – we have just been around Québec and, in every region, people have told us that they have specific problems and want more powers. Certain regions are even

asking for exclusive powers to solve their problems. Some young people just told us that we must find a way to keep young people in the regions and you said at some point that you have a way to keep young people and stimulate growth in the regions. You present a blueprint for society which could be very worthwhile in the future. I would like to hear you expand on it a little because you haven't really explained it in your text.

Mr. Simon: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I dare make the comparison but, at a certain point, when you are in a bad spot, you are a little like the goalie in a hockey game – there's no one behind you. So you have to use your own devices, in fact, and ask yourself what you can do to help yourself, and this is how the seeds of a cooperative are sown. It's similar: what can you do to help yourself because, all in all, if you wait for help from the outside, it might come, but maybe it's more reassuring if you can rely on your own initiative and responsibility. This gives you the following advantage: when you try to solve your own problems, in any case, you are usually the one who knows them best. You don't necessarily know what's best to solve them but you can go seek advice at some point about solutions or technical aspects that may help you arrive at a solution.

It's in this way that the cooperative system, which tells us to take a look at ourselves, roll up our sleeves and work together, allows us to find the resources to get ourselves out of a bind. But, once again, as I said to Mr. Larose, we can't just count on this system in the bad times, we must also recognize its usefulness in the good times. I was very pleased to hear you talk about the housing cooperative in your neighborhood. Perhaps Mr. Guérard, who is associated with the regional development cooperatives, may be able to add some useful information on this subject.

Mr. Guérard (Jean-Claude): When things go badly in your shop, they're going well in mine. In other words, to get back to what you were saying, it's true about the rise in popularity of cooperatives. It's not always the best solution, perhaps, but it's there. Movements like this are often born in emergency situations. We don't realize it at the time, but 50 or 75 years later we discover that, in fact, something went by us without us realizing that it had existed, and then it becomes a real force in Québec. As a general rule, government aid doesn't provide much help. It's people who, in the face of despair, I would say, decide to join hands in solidarity with one another and take charge of their own fate. When there's government aid, it's usually "by chance."

For example, we wanted to develop social housing, so we created housing cooperatives. We wanted to face the economic crisis in the 1980s,

so we developed job creation organizations to help create more jobs, which led to the development of workers' cooperatives. People in the cooperative movement are shrewd and imaginative and, through the movement, have succeeded in building a way of life and a Québec that are to their liking. But, sometimes, they would like to have a little more support.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): If you'll allow me, I'll stop you here because I want to leave time for my friend and I have a brief comment to make. You say on page 13 that, because of the rule that all members are equal, cooperation means the combined intelligence of many people. I hope you don't start forming governments. Ha, ha, ha! So, if you will allow me, I will give the floor to Mr. Dauphin.

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

Mr. Dauphin: Well, first I'd like to thank my friend Bélanger for letting me ask you a question. In the same vein as my colleague Bélanger, I, too, have many housing cooperatives that are working extremely well. I also have six caisses populaires. I also have two branches of the National Bank, Mr. Chairman.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I can't do anything about it, I'm retired.

Mr. Dauphin: They're all doing very well. The Caisse de dépôt... I'm getting to it. It's all going very well. Although you don't take a stand on Québec's constitutional status, I've noticed your brief states that Les Coopérants believes that the growth it's experienced in Québec may become even more pronounced in a specifically Québécois environment, as long as we maintain national and international business connections. I would like you to clarify what you mean by the statement that Les Coopérants may grow even more in a specifically Québécois environment.

Mr. Simon: Mind you, I don't want to stick my neck out too far in interpreting the statement in Les Coopérants' presentation except to say that, if I am not mistaken, Les Coopérants is an insurance institution that went from a federal charter to a provincial charter. And, as we know, in the area of financial institutions, Québec has been a forerunner in what's known as the deregulation of financial activities. Moreover, there have been several instances of insurance companies switching their jurisdiction to take advantage of the opportunities presented by Québec legislation. I don't dare go so far as to say that this is what Les Coopérants implied, but it's an example, in

short, of the fact that a jurisdiction can encourage development and growth. As far as the international dimension goes, Les Coopérants also does business in the United States and no doubt in other provinces in Canada, so you must understand its concern for protecting the possibility of doing this kind of business.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I, myself, would like to perhaps ask some additional questions, since we have a little time left. You state that, with the globalization of markets, the cooperative system can work even better. Or you imply it somewhere in your text. Please excuse me for not having the page number, I can't remember it. What do you mean by this? And how will you achieve it?

Mr. Simon: I am trying to relate it to a particular passage in our report.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Mind you, perhaps it's an inference on my part, in my analysis of the report, since I did do it on the weekend.

Voices: Sure, sure.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): There are parts that aren't as fresh in my memory. Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Simon: In any case, in certain spheres of activity, the cooperative movement is evolving in a market with international dimensions. The GATT conference has just finished. Canada was there, Québec was there, the UPA was there, too. The Coopérative fédérée obviously must defend the interests of Québec farmers. There is the Coopérative des producteurs de sucre d'érable, which I won't say is a total monopoly, but is a quasi-monopoly in Québec in this area. Furthermore, cooperative firms that sell most of their products to outside markets are confronted, like any other firm, with the globalization of the economy, customs duties, agreements on tariffs, subsidization and all the rest. It can be said that cooperatives... In any case, there aren't any divisions, I would say, between the members and the company. Cooperatives will certainly be able to defend the interests of their members, and will do so first, perhaps, before defending their business interests as other types of businesses would be inclined to do. So, in this sense, I believe it's pretty obvious that co-operatives in Québec better reflect the interests of their members in discussions, including those on an international scale.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Unfortunately, that's all the time we have, thank

you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If you have just one more very short question, go ahead, because we are a little ahead of schedule.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I still have lots of them.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Just one, then.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I'd like you to expand on... I didn't really catch your answer a while back on how the cooperative movement can help keep young people in the regions, which we know is one regional problem. The regions are losing people to the large urban centres, which are more attractive for young people and also have more jobs. Unemployment is generally higher in the regions, or in certain regions. How can we keep young people from leaving? Do you have any concrete examples of success stories?

Mr. Simon: How, in fact, cooperatives... Statistics show that, in proportion to the population, more cooperatives are created in the regions - I don't want to be misinterpreted - outside of the urban centres than in the urban centres themselves. Therefore, more cooperative-type firms are being created outside the urban centres. We know that small businesses are big creators of jobs, in terms of numbers. In the equation, the creation of businesses equals the creation of jobs. And since firms are created in the outlying regions, jobs are created in the same regions. After that, we have to assume that these jobs will be held by young people. But I think it's legitimate to believe that young people will get their share of the jobs created by businesses in their communities.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There are no more official questions on the list, unless you have something to add, Mr. Simon, or Mrs. Bonneville?

Mrs. Bonneville (Juliette): I would just like to...

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

Mrs. Bonneville: ...cite the example of workers' cooperatives; Mr. Larose alluded to them a little while back. We have seen, for example, people out of university or CEGEP, with university or CEGEP diplomas, who can't

find work but who form cooperatives to create their own jobs. So, in the outlying regions, these people stay in their region and create cooperatives that are in tune with their capabilities, skills and specialization, with the help of advisors or other people who can help. In several regions of Québec, we have seen cooperatives, workers' cooperatives being created by interior decorators; there are others for graphic artists, engineers, and various other professions, people who get together in workers' cooperatives. The firm belongs to them, on the same basis of equality; in other words, one worker, one vote. Therefore, everyone has the same share in the company, which is a basic principle of the cooperative movement.

There is another process involving the takeover or inheritance of firms by workers, when the owner no longer has a son or successor to take over the business. In some cases, the workers may purchase the company, or purchase shares in it and then take it over entirely at a later date. This process is becoming increasingly popular in Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): One last word, Mr. Guérard?

Mr. Guérard: Along the same lines, in terms of local development, we spoke a lot about the regions but we shouldn't forget certain neighborhoods in Montréal. They have problems, too.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There are "centric" neighborhoods just like there are "excentric" regions.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Guérard: Of course. But the important thing, of course, is that, first, cooperatives are established in the regions. Since cooperatives are inalienable, permanent and perpetual as long as their business is thriving, I think we must be able to use them as a driving force behind regional development, a force to build around, usually in accordance with the distinctive entities in the region; we must be able to use them as a force to build around, to create economic synergy around the existing cooperatives. I'm not talking about financial cooperatives, which are an instrument. I'm talking specifically about forestry cooperatives, workers' cooperatives. Certainly, the movement is just beginning in this sense, we must allow it to grow. This strategy is extremely important.

The other thing I wanted to bring up was that, when we speak of cooperatives, we give the people in them responsibility. The members of a cooperative, who are close to the cooperative, learn to take responsibility. The

problem, in the regions... I remember that someone – from time to time, I watch the proceedings – said that there is a tendency to treat people in the regions like children. This is true. This means that we encourage people in the regions to take responsibility, to assume responsibility but then, sometimes, we treat them as if they were incapable of assuming responsibility. I think this is an important element. In other words, the cooperative movement allows us to do this, to train and educate people, to make people responsible, to allow them to satisfy their economic needs which in turn allows them to satisfy their social and cultural needs. Basically, we came to testify to Quebecers' ability to take control of their own lives.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Bonneville, Mr. Houle, Mr. Michaud, Mr. Lavoie, Mr. Guérard, Mr. Simon and the Conseil de la coopération du Québec, for the brief you've submitted, and for accepting our invitation to defend it before the members of the Commission. We are going to adjourn for a few minutes to allow you to leave the room and then we will hear the Mouvement Québec français.

(Proceedings adjourned at 9:25 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 9:29 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we will proceed to the Mouvement Québec français. Mr. Guy Bouthillier will introduce the people accompanying him and then, since this is a 30-minute presentation, he will have five minutes to present the key points in the brief. Mr. Bouthillier.

Mouvement Québec français

Mr. Bouthillier (Guy): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, if you don't mind, I'll start by introducing the members of my delegation. Denis Grenon, president of the Alliance des professeurs de Montréal; Claudette Chailfour, representing the Association québécoise des professeurs de français; Danielle Gagné, representing the Mouvement national des Québécois; Michel Rioux, representing the CSN; and Gérard Turcotte, secretary-general of the MQF.

I believe that you've already realized that the Mouvement Québec français is an organization which is, in fact, a meeting ground, a common front, composed of 10 groups, 10 groups from various sectors of society. And this is why it can be said that the Mouvement Québec français is, in some ways, a place of convergence. It in fact includes the sector of the central labour bodies, the FTQ, CSN, and

CEQ; the educational sector, the Alliance des professeurs de Montréal and the association of French teachers, as we said moments ago; but also the farmers – the Union des producteurs agricoles is one of our founding members, and even provided our first spokesperson, Albert Alain, in 1971 – the Union des artistes and the Union des écrivains, therefore, the sector including performers and writers, the intellectual sector; as well as the national, nationalist sector, the Mouvement national des Québécois, and the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal.

Our organization is one of convergence, but I also believe, and you've realized, that it's an organization firmly rooted in Québec society, since the members of the 10 groups represent 900 or 1 000, or probably even 1 000 000 people. I believe it can also be said that it's an organization which, I suppose, it can be said without bragging, has credibility because – in any event, this is one example – because five presidents, five of the ten MQF member organization presidents, are members of your Commission.

If we are here today, of course, you suspected as much, it is to bear witness to the language, this front on which we have done battle for the last 20 years. This front on which we have done battle for the last 20 years with the idea... I think that the basic idea is the following: the stronger Québec is, the stronger our language will be. And in addition, of course, the opposite is true: the more blows Québec sustains, the more it declines, the weaker the language will become.

The position which we've developed over the last 20 years of struggle, which we've detailed and clarified over the last few months, is precisely that. Using the logic of "the stronger Québec is, the stronger and healthier the language will be", we reach the conclusion that sovereignty is, in fact, the key to our language, the key to the future of our language. What does sovereignty mean? First of all, full powers. What does full powers over language mean? It means that finally, if I may say so, the only government, legislative, judicial and administrative authorities which will have to take charge of and be responsible for the language will be Québec authorities.

And because all powers will be in the hands of the same community, the representatives of the same community, there'll finally be an end, an end to stumbling-blocks, competition, the jealousies of federal authorities, the covetousness, the Supreme Court's refusal of imprimatur, also an end to the quarrels, the bickering about language because of the language imposed by two governments, two wills, two types of nationalism, two different peoples, bickering which always takes place, of course, at the expense of our language and also at the expense of Quebecers, regardless, furthermore, of their original

language. All powers finally assembled under one roof, those which we exercise at the moment, but which are at times challenged or contested, those which have been taken from us over the last ten or twelve years or so, and finally, I would almost say above all, all those which we have never exercised and which we'll at last exercise for our language, once sovereignty is obtained.

But sovereignty is not simply new powers. It is that and that is important, but it's not only that. Between the current situation and the situation of sovereignty, there's not a difference in degree, but a difference in type. There's a complete change of scene. There's a complete change of scene, a complete change in perspective; things are seen in a different light. The language seems different to us, we see ourselves as Quebecers regardless, furthermore, of our different origins; we see ourselves differently.

I draw your attention to the fact, for example, just as an example, that under such sovereignty, there'll be first of all for the language an element as important as that of new citizenship. Clear, sharp, defined Québec citizenship to replace the other kind. There'll also be a new, clear, detailed, indisputable and unambiguous idea about what the majority language is in Québec. Whereas even today, everyone knows this well, there is, depending on the viewpoint taken, according to the Québec viewpoint or according to the pan-Canadian viewpoint... After all, ambiguity is possible in the situation of sovereignty and ambiguity is also, and this is very important...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You're about to use up your presentation time, Mr. Bouthillier...

Mr. Bouthillier: ...a new presence in the world. The outcome of this sovereignty applied to a broader area: more clarity in what we have to say, more efficiency in the action undertaken for the language and above all, finally, finally, linguistic peace attained, peace over the language. French will no longer be a subject of contradictions, a subject of disagreements. We'll finally see the day when French has become an instrument of unity and an instrument of fraternity between all Quebecers, and it is for this and about this that we come before you today, Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The floor is now open to members with questions. Mr. Turgeon, you have the floor.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bouthillier, I'm hearing you speak for a sovereignty centred on full power for language.

Does this mean that you're talking about partial or complete sovereignty?

Mr. Bouthillier: I don't know whether the notion... I don't even know whether the notion of partial sovereignty wouldn't be a contradiction. Could there be such a thing as partial sovereignty? In any event, for the language...

Mr. Turgeon: Does this mean full power for communications as well...

Mr. Bouthillier: It's full powers... In fact, the three elements found in our plan are the following: the powers which we exercise at the moment are challenged by the federal Bill C-72, or by other sources. These full powers, of course, are there and are there, in fact, with no competition, but in addition to these powers are the important powers we used to have and which were quickly taken from us when they were needed by others. And this is the story of the last 13 years, ever since the passage of Bill 101, in 1977. Look at everything that's happened on the federal level. Remember what happened when the Constitution was patriated. Remember the arbitrary decisions of the Supreme Court. All the powers which were taken from us. Fine! We'll get them back! And also, an opening, and an access, if I may put it that way, to all the powers we've never exercised, that we've never even thought of being able to exercise under current circumstances, over communications - because I think you mentioned this - but over everything which is currently under federal authority. The federal domain, in other words, the administration, ministries, public companies which belong and report to the federal sector, the armed forces, everything with the ability to act, all of the means of action which the federal government has at its disposal, all the budgets, actually, the Québec share of federal budgets. All of this is included, if you like, finally patriated to the ancestral family home, in the service of the common cause, and the common language, French.

Mr. Turgeon: There are many concerns, Mr. Bouthillier, when the possibility of Québec sovereignty is discussed, with regard to the fate of Francophones outside Québec. Today once again, we had two groups which dealt with this very subject. And there's Mr. Chrétien who's getting around a lot these days, and who says that Québec can't abandon one million French-speaking Canadians to their fate. And he says that, therefore, the fate of Francophones outside Québec rests on Québec and that Québec, therefore, should sacrifice itself by not making the decision it must make with regard to sovereignty, and that it should think instead about the family ties it has with others. What do

you think about this? Perhaps the political interests of Québec and the French-speaking community outside Québec will differ, but is this any reason, all the same, to leave them in the lurch?

Mr. Bouthillier: The conclusions, I take it, of this gentlemen you mentioned earlier...

Mr. Turgeon: Mr. Chrétien.

Mr. Bouthillier: Don't leave, don't leave. Well, you know, we won't be leaving. Regardless of Québec's constitutional system, regardless of the degree of autonomy or independence, imagine a completely independent Québec. Where is it going to go? Is it going to plant itself in the moon? Is it going to plant itself somewhere between New Zealand and Australia? It's going to stay here. It's going to be here, in the exact same place it has been for the last three centuries, that is, in the St. Lawrence River Valley. It won't move, and there are 6 million or 7 million inhabitants. Where are they going to go? They're going to stay here. And, not only are we not going to leave, we're going to be here. And we're going to be stronger than ever. We're going to be stronger. We're going to have more power than ever. And I'd also say the following, and I believe that this is what is most important: we're going to be here, and we're going to... In fact, I myself believe - and I think that all of us here are secretly convinced - I believe that the day Québec has fulfilled its destiny, the day when it takes its place in what is commonly called the family of nations, that day, the prestige of Québec, that day, the prestige of our language will increase. Our prestige will be greater including, including, in the eyes of those who've been watching us for two centuries: in the eyes of the Americans, in the eyes of the Canadians, in the eyes of the British. These people, who were used to seeing us treated as provincial minority, more or less capable of this, more or less happy with this morsel of bread, etc., will see us emerge. Almost a miracle, if you like. It wasn't thought possible, especially after May 20, 1980, that, all of a sudden, this society would find its dignity. This prestige will be reflected on us and it will be reflected on everyone who speaks our language, including, I was about to say, first of all, our Acadian brothers and our brothers outside Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your period of time is up, Mr. Turgeon. Mr. Libman now has the floor, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read your brief with great interest, Mr. Bouthillier, and I'd like to begin with the question of minorities, the various components of

our society.

Québec minorities, who represented approximately 18% of the population in 1990, have adapted to the French fact and want to help protect it and they want to remain in Québec, regardless of the constitutional status. That is the reality of 1990. But when I read a brief such as yours, I'm saying this in all sincerity, I'm saying in all honesty that the message it sends is disturbing to Québec minorities. I'm saying this very sincerely, very honestly, without being alarmist. This is the truth and that's how we feel.

There is a sort of inherent paranoia and this message interferes with the desire of minorities to remain in Québec. You talk about opting out of Article 133, Article 23 of the Canadian Charter and even of opting out of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

My question is the following: could you explain more clearly, to the members of this commission, your notion of the place and role of minorities in a sovereign Québec? Would it be possible to think of them as a blessing, really as a blessing, as the blessing of diversity? And why do we need to be homogenous in Québec? Why can't we live side by side while respecting our neighbours? This is a question which will be fundamental when Québec is deciding to attain sovereignty.

Mr. Bouthillier: If you have a solution for making Québec homogenous, let us know because we don't think it's possible, or even desirable. Québec will never be homogenous, but Québec will be what it is, with its identity, with its language which will be a common language; and this common language will be, by definition, shared by all those who'll agree to make Québec their homeland.

Mr. Libman: And the people who don't want to agree to make Québec their homeland... I want to know your idea of the place, the idea of minorities in the society you envisage.

Mr. Bouthillier: They'll be Quebecers. They'll fully participate. Not only will they fully participate...

Mr. Libman: But educational rights...

Mr. Bouthillier: ...I'd even say the following: they'll participate even more than they do now, because there won't be any more of this so-called cold war between Francophones, Anglophones and Allophones. We'll all be Quebecers and will no longer really be interested - I tell you, it's true - in knowing where this gentleman comes from, where this lady comes from, where this young man comes from. We'll no longer bring up origins; this so-called obsession with origins which is the one of

the disagreeable characteristics of our community life, our social life, our political life, and which is rooted in our system, probably since around 1830 or 1840. Normally, all of this will disappear. We're going to be in a republic and you'll be asked, as one is asked in any republic, not: where do you come from? but rather are you part of the republic or not? Are you a Quebecer or not? You'll be asked...

(9:45 p.m.)

Mr. Libman: So, in this republic, there'll be no fear for guarantees of school boards or guarantees for certain services in this language. In this republic, there'll be these guarantees which will allow minority communities to have some of these rights, I presume, in your analysis?

Mr. Bouthillier: But of course! Of course! I'm very surprised by your question. I'm very surprised by your question because it leaves the impression that there could be... Whereas, if I refer to all sorts of documents, including... You read our brief, look at it. The footnote - I can't even remember the number - the documentation, the text by Pepin-Robarts, in 1979, not the limited, watered-down, etc., Bill 101, the real, authentic, pure, first Bill 101, what does Mr. Pepin say? What does Mr. Robarts say? And they aren't militants from the MQF. They say: now we have proof that Québec is perfectly capable of protecting its minorities. You're asking us a question, we didn't ask these questions, you aren't asking the question. The entire world, at this moment, is seeing Lithuania take flight...

Mr. Libman: OK. I'm reassured.

Mr. Bouthillier: ...Are we taking the time to ask ourselves... Are we asking ourselves...

Mr. Libman: I'm reassured, but let me ask my second question.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Libman: Now I know I'll be able to sleep the night that we proclaim the sovereignty of Québec. Secondly...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your second question.

Mr. Libman: My second question, Mr. Chairman. Are you advocating the concept or the ideas of certain people who talk about splitting up the territory of Québec, should Québec attain sovereignty, in light of the territorial demands of Native nations, for example, Rupert's Land, the Cree and the James Bay region and even

territorial demands by the federal government which may take place during negotiations for Québec sovereignty? Have you thought about this possibility, the concept of territorial negotiation?

Mr. Bouthillier: If I were a partisan of such ideas, I'd worry about how good a Quebecer I was.

Mr. Libman: But in light of these negotiations, do you acknowledge the possibility that certain other communities inside the larger Québec community could try to reclaim their territory, and especially, as I said, Native nations?

Mr. Bouthillier: We're constantly hearing that these other groups are Quebecers. Why would they demand to move away from a sovereign Québec? They're Quebecers, why would they be any less? Why would they refuse to be Quebecers when Québec has finally become sovereign?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is up, Mr. Libman. Mr. Beaudry now has the floor.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bouthillier, hearing you answer Mr. Libman's questions, I almost feel like skipping my turn!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Are you making the Chair an offer, Mr. Beaudry?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: But I'll keep it all the same.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: But seriously speaking, Mr. Bouthillier, I read your brief with great interest...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: It's possible! But in your brief, to be more serious, you talk about... Actually, I have two questions. On page 5, you say that if French remains precarious, it's because we're faced with a block of one quarter of a billion Anglophones, and we're in the immediate vicinity of the most powerful machine, the biggest producer of goods, the most incredible exporter of images and ideas that humanity has ever seen. This seems to bother you, and I think that you have some arguments to explain how you would go about sheltering yourselves, to a certain point, from this exporter

of images and ideas, in a sovereign Québec. That is my first question.

Mr. Bouthillier: ...other than stating that that's the way things are? I'd worry much less if I had and if we had the instruments to better regulate our relations with this powerful machine of humanity.

Mr. Beaudry: But what's stopping you from regulating your relations today with the machine which is the United States, from a practical viewpoint, which...

Mr. Bouthillier: But that's just it. We don't have sovereignty. Sovereignty is full power. It's a finally indisputable identity. It's a so-called proclaimed identity, clearly recognized all over the world.

Mr. Beaudry: OK. I understand. You're saying that at the moment, you don't have it, this power.

Mr. Bouthillier: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: Tomorrow, you're sovereign, you'll have it, this power.

Mr. Bouthillier: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: How are you going to go about stopping this exporter of images and ideas from entering Québec? That is my question.

Mr. Bouthillier: I have no intention of stopping it from entering Québec.

Mr. Beaudry: You won't stop it.

Mr. Bouthillier: But we will, if you like, reconsider, in fact, consider and reconsider and evaluate and analyse our reports. And there will be images, and there'll be other images and we too will become exporters. We have no intention of... No one in Québec is interested in or has the intention of cutting off these images.

Mr. Beaudry: So, in this context, if you have no intention of reconsidering this aspect of the exporter of images and ideas, your French, which is precarious today, even though you'd have sovereignty, will remain precarious all the same because the exporter's product is always going to enter anyway. At least on this level.

Mr. Bouthillier: You know, it is, in fact... Our relationship, with the quarter of a billion people you mentioned, is in fact a David and Goliath relationship. Well.

Mr. Beaudry: I'll tell you right now that I'd rather be David.

Mr. Bouthillier: We want to give David the instrument he needs to keep Goliath at a distance. Look at your Canada. Your Canada, I didn't say...

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, it's yours too because we're all still in it.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: I don't want it all by myself.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: No, but Mr. Beaudry, Mr. Chairman, as well... English, English-speaking Canada is also grappling with this quarter of a billion machine and it's giving itself instruments. It doesn't want to close down, it's not closing its borders, but it does have a CRTC. Give us a CRTQ.

Mr. Beaudry: OK. My second question, Mr. Chairman, on time taken from the Chair. It's the first time in five weeks that I've done this, Mr. Chairman.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: You can't let me down now.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If you hadn't said what you just said, I perhaps might've dared, but never mind.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: He trusts me!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Alright, Mr. Beaudry, on the condition that the second question be asked all at once and not in five parts like the first.

Mr. Beaudry: It'll be very short, very short. Thank you. On page 10, Mr. Bouthillier, you talk about full responsibility as well towards other languages, Native languages, also the language which earned us our annexation to the British Empire – you don't seem to be too proud of that, but anyway – and which is the mother tongue of some 400 000 native Quebecers. And here's where it gets important, you add that henceforth we will be the only legal guarantors for these people, on our territory, just as we'll be the only legal guarantors of their right to fully participate in Québec life.

My question is the following: in the context of this guarantee which you cite, do you see the

rights of the Anglophone minority enshrined in the Québec constitution, or do you see these rights being preserved by laws which could be passed by our National Assembly?

Mr. Bouthillier: I imagine that there are several formulas. I'm not an expert in such matters. I'd be prompted to say the following: rather than deciding right now, as to whether the best formula is that of enshrinement or that of laws, etc., in the end, isn't the best way, the best guarantee, moreover, the best guarantee, our very own past? What has been Québec's past? What has been the past of Quebecers, in the relation of Quebecers to other languages, other cultures, other people on their territory? And I'd say, rather than enshrining, which is a term applied rather - I mention it in passing - to dead people.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: Rather than enshrining them in a constitution, what interests me is finding out what people are feeling, what people are thinking. And, knowing Quebecers - we all know them - knowing our past, I would rely above all on our feelings to defend and recognize the right of other languages, the participation, the right to participate, which is essential, furthermore, to this entire matter.

A voice: He's going to be enshrined.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: But you, Mr. Bouthillier, you're going to die some day. And those who follow you might not have the same convictions as you.

Mr. Bouthillier: Why are you saying that? Why are you in the process of...

Mr. Beaudry: Because it's true that you're going to die some day.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: No, but, Mr. Beaudry. Look, why are you asking me this?

A voice: I'll help him if he wants.

Mr. Bouthillier: Why are you asking us this? Why are you using our children, that is, your children.

A voice: Yes, yes. Don't start stirring me up like that.

Mr. Bouthillier: ...and your grandchildren against us? When Canada became sovereign in

1931, with the Statute of Westminster, did the British say to the Canadians: we can't give you that, because you're OK., Mr. Bennett, but we don't know, there may be people here who are going to want to imprison the Japanese during the war.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: And we don't want to give you freedom, independence, because we don't know how you're going to treat the French-Canadians. You haven't treated them very well in Ontario. You haven't treated them very well in Manitoba. I think that we won't recognize your independence in the Statute of Westminster. What would you have said to that?

Mr. Beaudry: I won't answer, Mr. Chairman.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Before Mr. Beaudry responds, I notice that the time for this period of questions is up and I now hand the floor over to Mr. Doyon.

A voice: Mr. who?

Mr. Doyon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course, and welcome and thank you for your brief. All of our discussion has focussed on the delicate question of minority rights and how to preserve them, how to recognize them. But I'd like to ask both you and myself the same question. Is this entire process which is going to lead us towards the global and definitive solution to all the problems we have, which are unfortunately those which we'd all like to avoid, that is, sovereignty and salvation through the language, although in the end - and thanks to this, we'll take a big step forward - how will Québec reach this ideal, idyllic solution, that is, its sovereignty? How will this be done? Through a declaration? Through a referendum? Through the action taken by your movement? Actually, I'd like to know how you're going to go about it. Is it conceivable that Québec's self-determination, for example, could end up with something other than sovereignty? Couldn't it end up with an association, a sharing of power? Is this something that is conceivable to you, or is it something which is excluded, in the sense that, when you say true self-determination, you mean reaching independence, reaching sovereignty? How do you see this?

Mr. Bouthillier: The MQF as such has not debated the process, the method. What we have done, as you can tell from our brief, is take a position strictly on language. And we've said that fine, there you have it, to advance and to assure, if you like, to put the language on solid

ground at last, we must have sovereignty. Fine. Common situations, situations with only half-measures, situations in which the power over language is shared, are not possible. English Canada has proved - I was going to say for over a century - in any event, for the last 15 or 20 years, through its relentless, if you will, efforts to limit the first steps we tried to take towards greater autonomy for the French language. They've taken all sorts of measures; they went so far as to patriate a constitution with a total lack of public-spiritedness, as they did in 1981, 1982. It had to be. And this proves, if you will, their determination and their stubborn refusal to let go. Why? Why won't they let go? Of course, they're doing it in the name of minority rights, in the name of individual rights, in the name of universal peace, etc. That's all very nice, and there is some truth to it, but we have to know how to read between the lines of their messages and speeches. It's obvious that, from what they're doing, what interests them are political interests and maintaining the grip of the Canadian political system on the territory of Québec.

Mr. Doyon: A very practical question. In an independent, sovereign, Québec, where the French language rules, just as you wish, how... First of all, are you ready to do this? Are you guaranteeing health services to the English-speaking minority? Is this something which is thinkable? How are you doing this? Is it simply a privilege which you grant according to the good will of the people on the spot? Is this something which is recognized in the act creating the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux? How is this done in practice? Won't this create problems when you do it?

Mr. Bouthillier: But why would you like us to take this away from them?

Mr. Doyon: No, you're asking...

Mr. Bouthillier: But you're the one who had this idea, not me.

Mr. Doyon: I'm asking you how you do it? How do you do it? I just want to know.

Mr. Bouthillier: If I go to the Royal Victoria, and I've been there before, it doesn't seem to be very complicated. And I don't see why it wouldn't continue.

Mr. Doyon: Therefore, it's...

Mr. Bouthillier: Listen, there's a current reality. There's a current reality. Go to the Royal Victoria... Actually, I don't want you to get sick, Sir...
(10:00 p.m.)

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: Anyway, go to the Royal Victoria, go to English-speaking hospitals.

Mr. Doyon: I hope that you were cured when you went there, in any event. Ha, ha, ha!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: Why... I went there as a visitor, Sir.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Doyon: Ah! That explains everything!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Doyon: That explains everything! That's what I thought, too. Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: Why would this stop? Why would I, all of a sudden, want to stop Nurse Watson from helping Doctor Thomson cure Mr. or Mrs. What's their name?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouthillier: Why would I want to do that? Why not, "Hand me that surgical instrument" in English?

Mr. Doyon: Of course. What I want to know is, does this work, simply according to the institution? If I'm in the right place can I be served in the language I usually use? If I'm somewhere else, I don't get any? I can't know in advance? How does this work? Just as an example.

Mr. Bouthillier: Listen, I'm telling you, it seems to me that this works quite well. I don't see why it wouldn't continue, and I'd even add that this could even increase. This could even be increased. As of... The problem...

Mr. Doyon: Would Bill 42, for example...

Mr. Bouthillier: Bill 142.

Mr. Doyon: Bill 142...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Doyon: Generally speaking, is it something which you like or dislike?

Mr. Bouthillier: I just told you everything I think about what goes on at the Royal Victoria. I'll tell you what I don't like about Bill 142. What those of us here don't like about Bill 142 is the fact that Québec drafted it in cooperation

with the federal government. Mrs. Robic — that's her name and she was minister of such things at the time — was not capable of doing it alone, and she went to create it alongside Gerald Weiner. She was forced to sign a whole agreement...

Mr. Doyon: Completely unforgivable.

Mr. Bouthillier: ...There was a whole liturgy, if you like, of wonderful federal-provincial relations, and this was an opportunity for Mr. Gerry Weiner to chant all of his usual liturgy, when we could have easily done this among ourselves, among Quebecers. No need for help from others. No need to let — and this was even harmful, if you like — to let an outside government come and take advantage of minorities. You know, the history of the 20th century, the history of Europe clearly illustrates that one of the most harmful things was when governments began to use the minorities in the territories of others to stir up and make trouble, to create ill-feeling. The day...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I now give the floor to a representative from the Official Opposition party, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's just the problem. The problem is that Mrs. Robic agreed to have the federal government as a major player in Québec on linguistic issues. That's the problem you raise in your brief, and that you point out as the major problem. Do we agree to having the federal government be a major player on language in Québec? Depending on the answer, we either find ourselves in a bilingual society, or one which is becoming bilingual, or we find ourselves in a French-speaking society. I'd like to thank you for the brief, and congratulate you at the same time because you've succeeded in reassuring Mr. Libman, which isn't easy.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: However, at the same time, you've worried Mr. Beaudry and Mr. Doyon. And that is completely mystifying.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: Because Mr. Libman was the one who was hard to reassure...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: ...about Anglophone rights in Québec, and now, I'm happy. He'll finally be able to sleep soundly tonight. I thank you and I congratulate you.

My first question is the following:

Considering, in fact, that the federal government is a major player on language issues, with both legal and financial instruments or tools at its disposal, through Bill C-72, for example, and its general spending power, considering this and all the methods at its disposal for, ultimately, bringing about the decline of French in Québec — because bilingualism in Québec is nothing more than the decline of French — if everything stays the same, if things remains as they are in terms of language... There's a linguist, in Chicoutimi, of American origin, no less — that didn't please Mr. Hogue very much — who came to tell us that in a situation like this one, there's inevitably one language which has an inferior status and one language which enjoys a superior status. And inevitably, the one with an inferior status becomes more inferior, while the one which enjoys superior status acquires more and more superiority. It's unavoidable.

And my question: If things remain like this, how will they end up? Where are we headed, linguistically speaking?

Mr. Bouthillier: The trend, if you like, that you're talking about, that this linguist was talking about, and which has been observed in other situations, and which has been particularly remarkable here, in fact, not far from here if you like, historically in Louisiana, the problem is that languages disappear little by little, disappear slowly. If, it's a shame it doesn't work that way, but if there was, if you like, a linguistic cataclysm, we could see it coming, we could take action against it, use a seismograph and say, watch out! We have to take action against this. Don't you think?

Mr. Brassard: There's no Richter scale for this either.

Mr. Bouthillier: If you like, these are like long, slow landslides. You're from Lac-Saint-Jean, you can see more or less what I mean. These are long, slow landslides. But once you're stuck in the mud, it's too late, there's no one left, if you like, to regret it.

The day that French disappears, not in 2 years, not in 5 years, that day the Québec government will be ordered abolished, actually, what serves as a Québec government at the time, Bill 101 will be ordered abolished, Bill C-72 will be ordered multiplied by 10 over the territory of Québec, we won't be any less French, you and I, tomorrow. We won't be any less French in 2 years, in 5 years, but in 10 years, in 15 years, in 20 years, and our children, our grandchildren, well, "Mummy, Mummy," you know the song by Pauline Julien, they'll have become English, Anglophones, and doubtless they won't be any worse off. But we, as a community, we know how we'll feel. And I'd even say, I'd even

say that North America itself will be worse off. Because in the end, we're a distinctive element in North America, we're the only organized and viable distinctive culture in the territory of North America. And North America needs us.

Mr. Brassard: Therefore, we must have full, complete and total linguistic authority in Québec. Fine. But there are people who come and tell us, Mr. Dion, this morning, as recent as this morning, Mr. Léon Dion came to tell us that we could envisage repatriating, recovering all linguistic powers, and those which are in the hands of the federal government, take them away from the federal government and bring them to Québec so that Québec would have full linguistic authority. And, according to him, this could happen without Québec attaining its sovereignty.

Why have you reached the conclusion that, for Québec to enjoy full, complete and total linguistic authority over its territory, why have you reached the conclusion that we must not only envisage the patriation of linguistic powers, but sovereignty?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That was your last question, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Bouthillier: Because I'd read Léon Dion, except the Léon Dion of 1973 denounced cultural sovereignty as a chimera. He said, watch out, mister, it was Mr. Bourassa at the time, who already had a political plan for cultural sovereignty. And Mr. Dion cut him to shreds, if not him, in any event his ideas, on the theme that sovereignty is sovereignty, there are no half, quarter, eighth, or tenth measures.

And, you're telling me that Mr. Dion has changed, well, I'm taking note of it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): And on that note, we are finished... Excuse me? Briefly.

Mr. Rioux (Michel): I'd simply like to clarify that today is a historic, if the word isn't too trite, day, because 20 years ago next month, the Mouvement Québec français was formed, and this is the first time that there has been unanimity among its members, among all its member organizations, to very clearly specify that the French language, the natural way to make the French language a common, accepted, preserved and developing language in Québec, is independence, is sovereignty.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll take note of this clarification. I still have to thank Mr. Rioux, Mrs. Chalifour, Mr. Grenon, Mrs. Gagné, Mr. Turcotte and Mr. Bouthillier for presenting the brief by the Mouvement Québec français. And after a brief pause, we'll proceed

with the last participant of the day, the Fondation de l'entrepreneurship du Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:10 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:12 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now welcome the Fondation de l'entrepreneurship du Québec, Mr. Fortin, Mr. Plourde and Mr. Toulouse. Mr. Fortin, you are the spokesperson, I believe.

Mr. Fortin (Paul-A.): That's right, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Please introduce the two people who are accompanying you and who I just named, and then take five minutes to present the basic points of your brief.

Fondation de l'entrepreneurship du Québec

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Chairman, first I'd like to apologize for our chairman, Robert Arcand, who is executing the agreement between Groupe Harricana and Denis, and also Marcel Lafrance, who has gone to deliver the MIL-Davie frigate in Halifax. They're the two entrepreneurs who are elsewhere. On my left, Jean-Marie Toulouse, who holds the entrepreneurship chair and is a professor at HEC and is a member of our board of directors; on my right, Jacques Plourde, vice-president, Technology Partnership, at the Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec; he was a co-founder of the Fondation de l'entrepreneurship and is now secretary-treasurer.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to take two minutes or two and a half minutes, and Mr. Toulouse will complete the presentation. The Fondation de l'entrepreneurship is a non-profit organization created in 1980. Its mandate is to identify and free up entrepreneurial potential, provide training and help create conditions favourable to the development of entrepreneurs. The foundation's members come from all levels of society, especially the civil service, the business community, the teaching profession and various associations. The mandate of your Commission, Mr. Chairman, is to study new political structures for Québec. I don't think I need to point out the impact a political system has on the economic development of a country and the development of entrepreneurs specifically. The recent collapse of various socialist regimes is a striking example. The division of powers between the various legislators must, in our opinion, enable potential entrepreneurs, first to discover themselves and then to turn their dreams into reality. Entrepreneurship has to be considered more

feasible and more acceptable by society. It would be difficult to try to identify, here and now, all the mechanisms that might meet these needs.

Instead, the approach the foundation has taken is through the values, ideologies and beliefs that society must adopt to ensure full development of entrepreneurship. These beliefs are set out in the foundation's manifesto on entrepreneurship. In any society there are potential entrepreneurs who are unaware of their abilities or waiting for a favourable environment to do their part to meet the wide range of human needs. These future entrepreneurs have a legacy of outstanding skills and qualities. However, they need to be accepted and supported by society, in other words their families and bosses, educators, workers, consumers, taxpayers, investors and citizens at large, as well as the media, not to mention governments of course.

The foundation backs the brief submitted by the Forum de l'emploi. I was asked by Mr. Béland to take part in the Forum and I'm grateful for his invitation. We completely back the Forum's position on repatriating a certain number of powers to Québec. The foundation also endorses the analysis of poverty in Québec done by the Conseil des affaires sociales. We must step up decentralization with respect to economic development and create job-development funds in the localities. We also agree with the YMCA and the ICA, which have presented briefs to you, and their recommendation that you continue this discussion of Québec's future with smaller groups in order to add a certain type of education to the consultation. They felt that, throughout the consultation, perhaps commitments must be obtained.

In conclusion, we recommend that priority be placed on economic development, especially development of endogenous entrepreneurship.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Two minutes also, Mr. Toulouse.

Mr. Toulouse (Jean-Marie): Essentially our brief is two-part. In the first part, we draw your attention to the role of entrepreneurs in society, and we've divided our argument into five themes. Entrepreneurs and job creation. In this regard we want to remind you of something you're already well aware of: that job creation in a society is fundamentally linked with the net ratio of companies created to companies closed in a given region. Obviously, according to us in any case, job creation without entrepreneurship is unrealistic.

Our second point concerns entrepreneurs and the economic vitality of a region. What we've observed and what we want to point out is that we're thoroughly convinced that local economic development is based on local

entrepreneurship. Without local entrepreneurship, we can't hope to develop local jobs, and even less to achieve sustainable development.

Our third point concerns expression of individual talent. We'd like to remind you that entrepreneurship is what allows many people individually, be they young, old, educated, uneducated, immigrants, North American Indians, city dwellers or country dwellers, to express what they like doing, to express it in ways that vary enormously, be they individual or collective. We feel it's essential to protect this social rôle at a time when we're considering Québec's future. We feel that the Québec of tomorrow will need entrepreneurs, and Quebecers will be able to better express what they are if we create a climate favourable to an entrepreneurial society.

The other rôle is obviously product development. We'd like to remind you that, in the Québec of tomorrow, innovation and creativity will often be contributed by entrepreneurs, provided that we create structures that enable them to express themselves. And the fifth rôle is the opening-up of companies. In the past 10 years, many companies have re-examined the rôle of entrepreneurs in their operations and realized that entrepreneurship is a way of enabling employees to carry out their own projects, and it's also a way of enabling the companies to open up and experiment with new products and ideas.

The second part of our brief concerns the Québec of tomorrow and entrepreneurs. This part can essentially be summarized quite clearly. We say: The Québec of tomorrow, as we see it, is a Québec in which the activity of entrepreneurs is in practice a socially acceptable and feasible activity. We feel it's essential that the division of powers between the various parties ensure that entrepreneurial activity will become even more acceptable and feasible. In our opinion, the entrepreneurial Québec should be characterized first by free access to opportunities that arise on the market. We feel that the most important way of ensuring that projects, or the most promising way of making entrepreneurial projects feasible and acceptable, is one based on values, ideologies and beliefs. In its work, the foundation has identified the values and beliefs it considers the basis for such a project. They're set out in the text, which you've all read, so I won't go over them.

In conclusion, essentially you may ask us: Why have you come here to talk about values when we're thinking about structures? In our opinion, we believe that the way of answering questions about structures is, first and foremost, to clarify the values you wish to defend, and the values we propose are those we associate with entrepreneurship.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen. We'll begin with questions from

a representative of the party forming the government. Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to welcome you to the Commission tonight and thank you for your brief. I know Mr. Fortin quite well. Of the three of you, he's the one I know best because I had the honor of a visit from him in my riding, in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts more specifically, when he came for a business gala and spoke to us about entrepreneurship in Québec. And I found your ideas about regional development extremely interesting. You spoke that night, as you do in your brief, of the role of entrepreneurs in society, job creation, the vitality of local economic development, expression of individual talent, product development and the need for companies to be open to new ideas. In fact you also discuss these ideas in your brief, and I find that extremely interesting and important.

You also talk about the allocation of powers, which is very important to entrepreneurial activity. Would you explain in a little more detail what you mean by allocation of powers? Do you mean powers Québec should patriate from Ottawa? Which powers should we have exclusively? I'd also like to hear you talk about decentralization of these powers, once they've been patriated, if that's what you mean in your brief.

Mr. Fortin: Thank you very much, Mrs. Hovington, for recalling my visit to your riding. I recall quite well that last year, at this time, I met Mr. Campeau, who said to me: It seems to me that, after 10 years, the Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat isn't very well known. I said to Mr. Campeau: If you went into the basements of churches and parish halls in isolated regions, I think you'd find I'm quite well known. And I think you've confirmed it.

Mrs. Hovington: Absolutely.

Mr. Fortin: It wasn't a planted question. Mrs. Hovington, what we believe in is really the accountability of the people at the base of the structure. When we say there's entrepreneurial potential out there, we're convinced of it. Once a society becomes aware that, in each field, there's a certain number of people who can transform dreams, problems, opportunities into viable companies, well, people start trying to find out who these people are and what they can do to help them, what they can do so these people can first recognize who they are, gain confidence in themselves and gradually grow along with their projects.

So that presupposes that people can somehow turn to them and that they have a certain number of instruments to activate the process. That's what we've realized, for example,

in recent years. Entrepreneurship has made pretty remarkable progress in recent years, but just the same it isn't as strong a force as it could be. It's a relatively recent phenomenon. The proof is that, right now as we speak, there are 553 000 Quebecers capable of working but out of work, according to an article published last month. So that means there's still room for entrepreneurship.

Second, what we're realizing is that when there's psychological space for people to progress entrepreneurially, it's easier than when the psychological space is taken up by all sorts of debates or taken up by all sorts of concerns, or for all practical purposes people have no interest or time to conceive projects or think about doing things. So I'd say that at the same time a certain clean-up of the psychological climate could be useful, as well as a decentralization of powers and responsibilities to the lowest level possible, and I think that's the level of citizens. It's also the level of small communities and maybe the regions. But I think we should give the base all the powers it can handle before we give the surplus to the upper levels.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That concludes this period.

Mrs. Hovington: Already?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Already, Madam.

Mrs. Hovington: I see Mr. Fortin is just as eloquent as he was in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. Thank you, Mr. Fortin.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Excellent conclusion. Now we'll go to a representative of the Official Opposition, Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like to welcome you. Your brief is a very spirited argument for entrepreneurship, and I'd like to congratulate you because you present entrepreneurship in a way that's original and very new, with a vision based on values, as you say, but which is essentially very humanistic and I might even say generous and progressive. And you define entrepreneurs, be they men or women, as people who must be well anchored in their environment, in the community, and who at the same time are a reflection of the community. You also say in your document: Ultimately we have the entrepreneurs we deserve; they resemble our society. I would ask: Do we have the governments we deserve? And you, you think, or you seem to feel we don't deserve quite so many, ultimately, because you think there are too many. I'm going to take your

brief, on page 9, where you talk about definite regulatory barriers, in other words barriers that are put in place by the various levels of government and hinder entrepreneurship. A little further, also on page 9, toward the bottom, you say: "We feel that the legal and social framework for the Québec of tomorrow must be flexible and leave room for people who need leeway to experiment, take action and create projects." So what is the more flexible Québec of tomorrow that you expect? Could it mean that one level of government would no longer exist?

Mr. Fortin: Well, I'm not sure I can answer your entire question, but maybe my colleagues can help me out. Certainly, for various reasons, in my opinion in any case, politics has become extremely important in Québec. Sometimes I joke that we've got enough men and women in politics to lead two or three countries. But I also think we have a lot of qualified and competent people to play important roles. Maybe we're lagging behind a bit in other areas, especially, perhaps, economic development, where we're starting to learn how to play the game. But we're still in the learning process. We've got some catching up to do.

What I think about... We also say in our brief, and I believe quite sincerely, that there are leaders and entrepreneurs, and society needs both. But they don't operate on the same basis. In a democracy, leaders are chosen by their peers, whereas entrepreneurs choose themselves. They choose themselves when conditions are favourable and promising. Fine. But what constitutes favourable and promising conditions? Obviously you need autonomy and responsibility, and I don't think you want politics taking up too much room. And for us, if you will, for example we were very much in agreement with the Forum de l'emploi, in saying: There's a certain number of issues, a minimum, that we have to clean up and clarify. In that respect I think our organization is unanimous.

Mr. Toulouse: I'd just like to add, because on page 9 you refer to very specific points. That page refers to entrepreneurs in the marketplace, not people in politics. When we study companies started up in the marketplace, what do people say to us? They say things like: It was really complicated starting my business, because I needed five permits. It doesn't matter where you get the permits. That doesn't matter. There are five of them to apply for, one from the city, two from the regional county municipality, and so on, and it takes forever. The second thing they say to us is: Basically I had to show my credentials everywhere to start a business. The third thing they say to us is: There are government practices that make it harder to start up a business. For example, centralized

purchasing. Centralized purchasing has a fatal effect on business start-ups in Québec. The concept was created here with all sorts of good intentions. But the politicians who came to defend it at the small-business forums didn't listen to the entrepreneurs who said to them: If you do that, I won't be able to sell to you anymore. And that was indeed the case because, with purchasing quotas, obviously they couldn't do it anymore. So basically it's that sort of thing...

(10:30 p.m.)

Another thing I'd like to add is capital. You know as well as I do, because you're in a position to know, that capital is the biggest traveller around. People who start up companies in certain regions will say: It's pretty complicated to get money, because I have to get authorization from my region, from Québec City and after that Montréal, and sometimes Toronto. So that's basically what we're referring to. We're talking about the entrepreneur's daily reality. And the point is that what we believe is that these barriers, what they do is they prevent entrepreneurs from capitalizing on market opportunities that could be quite good for them. That's what we find. We have to, when we use the expression "more flexible", basically we have to find a way to change that reality.

Mrs. Marois: But if you take your reasoning to its logical conclusion... And I know that the Chairman is going to say this is my last question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The last of your last, Madam.

Mrs. Marois: If you take your reasoning to its logical conclusion...

Mr. Toulouse: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: ...with respect to employment...

Mr. Toulouse: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: ...decentralization...

Mr. Toulouse: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: ...and the description you've given me...

Mr. Toulouse: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: ...of all the decision-making levels, don't you have the impression that, if we patriated all the powers and made them the responsibility of a Québec government, we'd be better off? And wouldn't entrepreneurs in the marketplace probably be better off?

Mr. Toulouse: Well, I don't know. But I'm going to tell you basically where our reasoning takes us: We think power isn't up in the third heaven. Power is down on dry land, with people in the marketplace. And if you think like that, it means that instead of thinking that the power pyramid is like this, you turn it upside down.

Mrs. Marois: I agree.

Mr. Toulouse: So, then, if we're assuming that power comes from below, I won't go looking for it up above, in the third heaven. I'll ask the people down below which powers they want to give me. And when we ask people, ask our entrepreneurs that, they'll say: Listen, let's sit down and have a proper discussion about the powers I want to give you. Because otherwise we'll always be looking in the third heaven with the Holy Spirit.

Mrs. Marois: We seem to be ready for a referendum, don't we?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to questions from the members. First Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I too would like to congratulate you on behalf of the Bureau de commerce de Montréal. I know we very much enjoyed working in close cooperation with you and your colleagues, especially recently on our joint business-clinic project. And we very much want your cooperation to promote Québec entrepreneurship. As you say, your brief proposes more of a blueprint for a society than a constitutional framework. But, as you say on page 5 - it's sort of similar to what Mrs. Hovington said - that, according to you, you advocate decentralization of powers. To promote local entrepreneurship, is it necessary to have a sweeping decentralization of powers and infrastructure? Because I'm saying that if I had a bag of taxpayers' money - and we all know that, among other things, our entrepreneurs need money - how am I going to spend this bag of money? I have a whole bag of money for Québec and I want to spend it. How do I control the way it's spent?

Mr. Fortin: Since you've raised the question of capital, and your neighbor, he knows very well what it means. Basically what do our entrepreneurs say about capital? They say: Outside Montréal, there's no money, and that's that.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Even in Montréal.

Mr. Toulouse: No, no, outside Montréal. In Montréal the problem is different. In Montréal

what they say is that there's no small capital. It's not the same thing; let's not get things mixed up. Small capital, there's two types: there's up to \$2 million, between \$200 000 and \$2 million, and less than \$100 000, let's say projects from \$5 000 to \$50 000. That's what people tell us. But in the regions what people tell us is: There isn't any money, and that's that. That's what they say. And it's been proven. It's been proven, by certain studies, that money travels about 50 miles from the people who have it. Beyond that, it doesn't go anywhere, it's too far, it starts to miss its master. So it's obvious that the question: I have a pocket full of cash; how do I distribute it in Québec? We can't think that way. The question is: Entrepreneurs in the regions, can they find ways of getting the funds they need? And they go and find the money, and by going back to them we can get the answer to the question because it won't work with the structures we have.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But what I really meant is that when we were in the regions, people from the regions said to us: We need sweeping decentralization of the infrastructure and powers too. Do you think we need another local administrative level to spend money, to do whatever's necessary?

Mr. Toulouse: Listen, we don't want to get into talking about how many levels of structure we need. That's not our...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: No.

Mr. Toulouse: ...We're not experts on that. Except we know, in terms of the regions and in terms of entrepreneurs that people think that we already have too many structures; and especially that the ones we have are a long way from what they are or from their reality. The second thing is that, you know, I've been involved in this sort of thing for a few years, and I teach at a business school. I find it quite amusing that at a certain point everyone was talking about decentralized management. Everyone...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thought it was wonderful.

Mr. Toulouse: After that it was excellence. Now we have total quality. In each period there are things like that...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Trends.

Mr. Toulouse: Right. But essentially the trend toward decentralization of companies, companies, even the huge ones, have settled that matter. It doesn't even come up anymore. They've figured out how to manage huge complexes, taking into account the cen-

tralization-decentralization dilemma. I find it quite amusing to see that politicians are now starting to talk about it when corporations have been discussing it for 20 years. And when I say that, I'm not just talking about Québec. I'm talking about other countries too.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to Mr. Hogue, who will be the last member we'll hear from tonight.

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you don't mind, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to give a warm welcome to my colleague Jean-Marie from days past and hear what he has to say, because it really brings back memories.

It goes without saying that I've read your document. You don't take a specific position on the constitutional status of Québec, and we have to respect your position. In fact I think there's only one reference to the role of governments in the development of entrepreneurship. I also think it's a very positive document as to the ability of Quebecers, and you say on page 16, but I won't quote you, to save time...

But, as you know, on page 18 of your brief you issue a warning: "In our country, discussions about structures...", etc. I think you've provided a large part of the answer, and I'd like to thank you.

If entrepreneurship is taking off in Québec, might we say that the federal system hasn't harmed Quebecers' efforts in this area? You can answer the question or not answer it as you see fit. I think it's more important to emphasize two quotations on page 2. There's one in French and another from the Ontario Ministry of Industry and Trade, and, as an aside, it's rather surprising that small businesses are flourishing in regions other than Québec despite the fact that you cite Québec as an exceptional example in the western world. It might be useful, perhaps as a comparison, to show the dynamism in places other than Québec; and I'm hitching it to a hobby-horse I've been riding for 20 years and that my former boss Toulouse is quite familiar with: values.

You emphasize values. And I'm proud of it, that goes without saying. I'm proud of your analysis and I'd like you to elaborate, and I'd like you to, on the basis of page 2, without any theory, on page 2, maybe you can permit yourself an aside about the clash we're currently experiencing in Québec in the face of what I'd call - you're well aware of it Jean-Marie - what I call the hierarchy of values. Values, standards, institutions, means, it seems to me that in the hierarchy of the values of Francophones and Anglophones, and maybe we're getting to the crux of the problem here, there's a sort of clash and an awareness of two cultural entities, etc.

Mr. Toulouse: Well, I think that... Thank

you for your question because for us it's a fundamental matter. It's that basically the debate about structures is a debate that can go on and on and never end. In addition, we're well aware that certain companies, certain countries have been thinking about structures for years because in fact structures, they're a choice, aren't they? We choose a structure, don't we? Now the problem is: On the basis of what do we choose one structure over another? What we're essentially saying is that to be able to choose a structure, you have to have a vision, you have to have objectives and you have to have values, and in our opinion you choose a structure on the basis of values.

I'd like to add three things. First, when a company comes to me to ask - and it happens from time to time - what kind of structure I suggest for them, now I always reply: Well, what do you want to do? Why do you want these structures? And I try to see, behind the question, which values the people are trying to achieve at the company so I can help them make their choice. The second thing obviously is that values obviously - and this ties in with the aspect you referred to - basically the aspect of this clash and the studies you yourself have already done - this afternoon I reread some of the things you wrote previously - it's quite obvious that right now the problem with values is that it's not easy to define the meaning of values. At one time you could quite easily draw up a list of the values held by Quebecers. You picked up your pen and you went around the room, and everyone agreed pretty quickly.

The hard thing is to clarify exactly what we mean by values and the meaning of these values. Notwithstanding that difficulty, we know there are basic things that remain and, even if we don't like them, there are fundamental things. The values we're proposing to you are those associated with entrepreneurship, and we hope other people will propose to you other values, and there are things that we in any case feel are eminently important to complete the list of values, but those are the ones we're putting on the table.

My last comment is that it's rather amusing to see that present-day society is having some trouble with the word "values". We talk about significance, we talk about choice of structures, we talk about all sorts of things like that, but when we get involved in the realm of values, it's as if we were on a slippery slope, and I don't see what's so shameful about talking about values. It seems to me that the fundamental issue is one of values. Basically what do we want as a society, as a community? What we propose - it's our small contribution to the question of values - by saying to you, we propose that you make room, on the list of Québec's values, for the values held by entrepreneurs so there will be more

entrepreneurship in the Québec of tomorrow. And my last comment about the same matter, I'd like to point out something you might not know because it's not your field of specialization, but I've been working for entrepreneurship for quite a long time, and outside Québec and throughout the world, people think that in Québec entrepreneurship is an extremely important value. And you might not like it...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It means our marketing people are winners. They've succeeded in selling the idea.

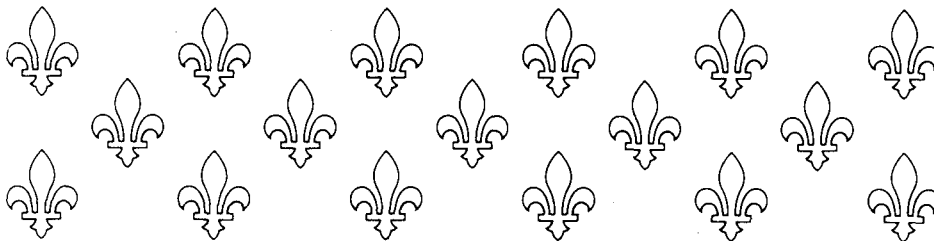
Mr. Toulouse: In any case it's quite clear outside Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, Gentlemen... One last word, Mr. Fortin?

Mr. Fortin: Yes. First, Mr. Chairman, of course I'd like to thank you for your warm welcome and perhaps apologize. Like everyone else, we define problems according to the solutions we see, and perhaps the last comment I'd like to leave you with is the following: It's that in the years to come, regardless of the choices made here or by Québec as a society, I think political debate will occupy an important place, and I think the more important the place political debate occupies, the more we'll have to make an effort, perhaps an artificial one, temporarily in any case, so there's room for the entrepreneurial viewpoint, so we emerge with a society that's stronger in terms of jobs, in terms of companies and in terms of entrepreneurial culture. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Fortin, Mr. Plourde, Mr. Toulouse and the *Fondation de l'entrepreneurship*. This concludes our work for today. We'll resume tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. I'd like to remind the members of the Steering Committee that there will be a meeting at 8:00 a.m.

(End of sitting, 10:44 p.m.)



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

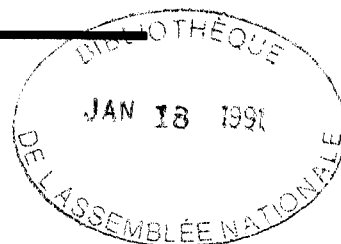
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Québec City, Thursday, December 13, 1990

No 20

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

QUÉBEC



Note de l'éditeur:

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

Editor's note:

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

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

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

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Dépôt légal
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
ISSN 0823-0102

Table of Contents

Union des municipalités régionales de comté et des municipalités locales du Québec	1335
Mr. Jacques-Yvan Morin	1345
Conseil de l'environnement de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches	1360
Attikamek-Montagnais Council	1366
Mr. Pierre Fortin	1376
Maison internationale de Québec	1389

Speakers

Mr. Jean Campeau, Chairman

Mr. Jacques Brassard
 Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier
 Mr. Guy d'Anjou
 Mr. Ghislain Dufour
 Mr. Richard B. Holden
 Mr. Serge Deschamps
 Mr. Mark Assad
 Mrs. Louise Bégin
 Mr. Lewis Camden
 Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant
 Mr. Lucien Bouchard
 Mrs. Monique Simard
 Mr. Marcel Beaudry
 Mr. Serge Turgeon
 Mr. Gil Rémillard
 Mr. Guy Chevrete
 Mr. Réal Gauvin
 Mr. Robert Dutil
 Mrs. Jeanne L. Blackburn
 Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer
 Mr. Denis Perron
 Mr. Jacques Bertrand
 Mr. Robert Libman
 Mr. Christos Sirros
 Mrs. Lorraine Pagé
 Mr. Michel Bélanger
 Mrs. Pauline Marois
 Mr. Guy Bélanger
 Mrs. Louise Harel
 Mrs. Monique Gagnon-Tremblay

- * Mr. Roger Nicolet, Union des municipalités régionales de comté et des municipalités locales du Québec
- * Mr. Richard Legault, Conseil de l'environnement de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches
- * Mrs. Ginette Paquin, idem
- * Mr. André Stainier, idem
- * Mrs. Louise Courville, idem
- * Mr. René Simon, Attikamek-Montagnais Council
- * Mr. William Matthieu Mark, idem
- * Mr. Ghislain Picard, idem
- * Mr. Ernest Ottawa, idem
- * Mr. Augustin Raharolahy, Maison internationale de Québec
- * Mr. Jean-J. Moisset, idem
- * Mr. Benabdallah Boufeldja, idem
- * Mr. Joseph Ndaye, idem
- * Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Montréal, Thursday, December 13, 1990

Hearings: Organizations and Experts

(9:36 a.m.)

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

I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open.

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, once again, the sitting will be devoted to hearing persons and organizations that have sent briefs to the Commission, as well as experts.

Our first guest this morning is the Union des municipalités régionales de comté et des municipalités locales du Québec. The hearing will last one hour and thirty minutes, and I should like to remind you of how the time is divided for such a sitting: 10 minutes for presentation of the brief, 15 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 15 minutes more for the Official Opposition group, and 40 minutes for the other members, with a maximum of 10 minutes each.

Welcome, Mr. Roger Nicolet. I think you know the people here, since you have sat on the Commission from the beginning. So, would you please introduce your colleagues.

Mr. Nicolet (Roger): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right, Mr. Éric Jacques, vice-president of the Union and, on my left, Mr. Michel Fernet, director general of the UMRCQ.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I don't have to remind you of the rules. Go ahead. I'm listening.

Union des municipalités régionales de comté et des municipalités locales du Québec

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, we are very pleased this morning to come and present the brief of the Union des municipalités régionales de comté du Québec. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the Union is an organization made up of 1180 local municipalities and 85 regional county municipalities. The Union touches, basically, covers the broad territory of the regions of Québec, as opposed, of course, to the main urban centres. These members of the Union are deeply rooted in their regional communities. They are seldom elected by a political party or through the support of the organizations of the two main parties in Québec. On the contrary, their mandate stems almost inevitably from a local

consensus arising out of local problems and issues. Their electorate, formed in terms of essentially circumstantial factors, covers a broad range of opinions on major national debates. Concern for preserving cohesion in their community requires our members, therefore, to refrain from personal action polarizing their constituents in any national confrontation that, because of coded words or concepts, is reduced to a partisan conflict.

The mandate the Union has defined in regard to the questions arising from the work of this Commission consists in presenting the views of local officers in circumstances that enable them to foresee changes of historic importance for Québec, while respecting, of course, the dynamics we have just described. Nevertheless, irrespective of the reservation and caution municipal officers must observe in their public declarations, they cannot fail to form personal opinions about the questions of relations between Québec and the Canadian whole. The UMRCQ wished to assess the nature and character of such opinions. To that end, the Union commissioned the Cossette group to conduct a survey. The questionnaire that had been validated by the firm was sent to the mayor and two councillors in each of the 1180 municipalities that are members of the Union. Two main subjects were broached: decentralization and Québec-Canada relations. Today we submit to you, in part two of the document that was distributed this morning, all the relevant information. The response rate, 32.2%, or 1141 officers, allows us to set the margin of error at plus or minus 2.4%. For the constitutional question, as was to be expected, the results are in line with the data provided by recent surveys of the people of Québec. I refer you to questions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 where the combined percentage of respondents, very or fairly favourable, comes to 74%, 76.3%, 91.8%, 88% and 64.2%, respectively. As for decentralization and the role municipal officers are prepared to play in that regard, the results are equally conclusive. They are in line with those of CROP on the subject, which are shown in an appendix to the main report that was previously submitted to you.

I shall not read you the UMRCQ report. I should prefer to take these few minutes to try to indicate its main lines. Like many other regional groups appearing before you, UMRCQ wishes to stress that the settlement of differences between Québec and Canada cannot be dissociated from a review of the behaviour of the State of Québec toward its constituent parts, the regions. Even though, in some respects, the solution of Québec's constitutional status vis-à-vis the Canadian whole is a prerequisite for truly revitalizing the regions, it seems essential

to combine it with a reexamination of the balance of power between the centre and the regions. As you have heard, the finding of all those who are concerned about the gradual degradation of whole sections of regional society is extremely serious. The behaviour of government authorities over the past few decades has engendered factors of marked destabilization of the social fabric, demographics and, as a result, the economic vitality of extensive, important regional communities.

There are many in Québec, and I would count among them some of the most eminent figures in the national political constellation, who consider that you can think well only at the centre. It would be interesting to ponder the relationship between this sort of pride, or even arrogance, and the necessity, generation after generation, of developing in Québec some counterpoise to the federal government's designs of hegemony by the resources of a constantly growing government.

This propensity of governments in Québec's administration to centralize power reaches such proportions that for regional authorities any solution to the constitutional impasse cannot be envisaged today without the establishment of new balances within Québec society itself.

The RCMs of Québec therefore ask that a new State of Québec be designed that would reestablish a balance of power more respectful of regional realities. What is the real base of the regions? The question must be asked, as shown by a number of briefs presented to the Commission. For the RCMs, the answer is incontrovertible. The municipal authorities, the local municipalities and RCMs, and in their fields, the school boards, alone, can lay legitimate claim to becoming a counterpoise to the central administration. Their tradition, their essentially horizontal, that is, multisectorial, function, has long prepared them for assuming the role of catalysts of the dynamics and coordinators of the initiatives in their communities. The brief you have received goes into the justification in detail.

In the same vein, the role of the administrative regions must nevertheless be clarified. Some claim that they should be invested with a government function and become the main regional spokesperson for the government. On first glance, such proposals have a certain attraction because they correspond to a specious sort of logic. The large sectorial government departments have made the administrative region the preferred level of deconcentration of their management function. Here it is evidently a matter of territorial scale and efficiency. Community spokespersons can then claim to play a role of liaison and coordination vis-à-vis the government apparatus in the regions. The RCMs, however, consider that these are essentially administrative func-

tions. Furthermore, as proved by the social services reform, this model lends itself more readily to sectorial relations between a particular department and its clientele. Attempting to make that administrative region a political level, that is, with intersectorial responsibility, is a step that the Union refuses to take. The regional divisions are too recent, too artificial, to correspond to a physical and socioeconomic reality of Québec.

(9:45 a.m.)

The Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, and even Estrie regions form natural, structured entities. But what about the Mauricie-Bois-Francs, the Monterégie, and in particular, the Laurentides and Lanaudière regions, which are still wondering about the advantages of the north-south division instead of an east-west division like an onion skin around the metropolis. Such territories have scarcely any cohesion and have no functional community that would enable them to develop a significant political life.

The municipal structure, on the other hand, constitutes one of the specific characteristics of Québec. It is a good reflection of the social organization of a community subject to exceptional constraints of climate, territory and population density. A long political tradition endows it with credibility and a representative character. From the point of view of a renewed Québec, it is indisputable. The significance of constitutional recognition of the municipal level is the subject of specific demands on the part of the UMRCQ. In our report you will find a proposal to create a house of the regions, or regional house, which would be essentially an advisory body, but could make decisions in the event of subsequent constitutional amendments.

In the text you received this morning there is a series of other highly concrete proposals which should, in their main lines, constitute the bases for constitutional recognition of the local level. Thank you for your attention.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Nicolet. We begin our questions with Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, Mr. Nicolet, I would like to thank you for the presentation of your brief. I think it is extremely well put together, rounded out and grounded, there is no doubt, in a solid experience of local and regional management. If there is any authority that has a good knowledge of what is going on, as we say, in the field, it is the municipality and the regional county municipality. And that is well reflected in your brief.

First, a question about the survey. You say, in your brief, that it is important to have a broad consensus. I think we are all agreed

around this table. I note that your first recommendation is to the effect... You recommend that Québec obtain full control of all the levers in economic, social and cultural matters, in order to assure its development as a distinct society. In your survey, in response to one question referring to such a formulation, approval is fairly high, 76%. And for which of the following elements would the municipal sphere have the most chances of achieving its objectives in a Québec that had its autonomy in matters... in social, political and economic development, 64.2%.

Just one question of... curiosity, pure curiosity: Why didn't you ask your municipal officers bluntly whether they were in favour of a sovereign Québec? I don't know whether I interpret incorrectly or decode poorly, but for me, full control of all the levers in economic, social and cultural matters to assure the development of Québec as a distinct society, I call that sovereignty.

Mr. Nicolet: That is what I have... Mr. Brassard, thank you for your comments. But on first glance, this is what I tried to bring out in my presentation this morning. What the UMRCQ feels empowered to say to you, is what its members have confirmed at conferences, plenary meetings and through its established decision-making authorities. We have never, as a Union, taken a stand in the constitutional debate which is currently going on... in which Québec society is taking part, for the reasons I tried to explain to you just now.

We did not think it advisable, and I think you will agree, to do indirectly what we did not do directly. This is why the questionnaire was worded in such a way as to bring out the aspirations and serious reflection of our members without implicitly involving them in dynamics which, for the moment, are still precarious in their bipartisan formulation.

Mr. Brassard: Well, I respect your decision, Mr. Nicolet. So, basically, if I understand you properly, it is up to us to decode?

Mr. Nicolet: That is what we are going to do.

Mr. Brassard: Then you will help us when you come back as a member of the Commission, Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet, with regard to decentralization, there is an important section of your brief about that, and there, unlike some, not all the organizations that have taken a stand on the issue, but some who recommend the creation of a real regional government, with all that implies in the way of autonomous fiscal resources, officers elected by universal suffrage, you simply set aside, without any ambiguity, that possibility,

and then you give a number of reasons. Among other things, you say that any creation of a regional authority in addition to the municipalities and the RCMs would place further distance between citizens and the decisions that concern them, and would constitute merely a multiplication of structures cut off from the grassroots. In a word, an additional impediment to the economic development of the regions. You are very adamant about that.

I should like you to elaborate on the matter, because your inflexibility amazes me. Even though I myself have never yet uttered an opinion in favour of a regional government, I am really thinking about the matter. But you are very insistent about it. I would like you to elaborate on the question.

Mr. Nicolet: Mr. Brassard, I think what we are trying to say is that, at the moment, from a historical perspective, Québec has established a relationship between the democratic expression of the will of the people, through institutions that are now recognized and well rooted in the community, the municipalities in this case, on the level closest to the population, and via delegation to the higher level. Whereas, from this same historical perspective there is no regional democratic reality.

Obviously, the region, the administrative region, has a reason to exist as the spokesperson for a deconcentrated government. Because the government is present at the level of the administrative region. And in fact, and this is the anachronism, it is this that we have been experiencing in recent years, a development in which the government itself has set up its spokespersons at the level of the administrative region. And it is the government that continues to provide for them both financially and from the point of view of intellectual dynamics. So it has become an artificial level, where the government is present on both sides of the table. And what we say is that, to make the dialogue really representative of an exchange between the people and the government apparatus, in the historical development of Québec, in the final analysis we have only two levels, the local level and Québec. The rest is an artificial creation and requires time. I don't say no in the medium term, but time is required to give it substance, reality and a basis in experience.

Mr. Brassard: When you speak of the local level, of course you include the regional county municipality? Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Nicolet: For us, it is a whole, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Yes. If I have understood you properly, in fact, what you say is that the administrative region may be a means of

deconcentration...

Mr. Nicolet: Yes.

Mr. Brassard: ...that is interesting, but not a basis for decentralization?

Mr. Nicolet: Of decentralization and political power.

Mr. Brassard: That should be done at the level of the municipality and the RCM?

Mr. Nicolet: To our way of thinking, yes.

Mr. Brassard: To your way of thinking. But do you not believe that, take the RCM as a territory, as a basis for the decentralization of certain powers, don't you believe that this could be insufficient both as a population base and as a territory, that there might be decentralization of certain powers that could not be done on that basis? Because it is not broad enough in demographic terms or large enough in territorial terms?

Mr. Nicolet: Mr. Brassard, I think that, there again, we must refer to a tradition of public administration peculiar to Québec. We have developed, over the generations of governments that have succeeded one another, a distinction, a division between three main levels of government activity. I am thinking, on the one hand, of health services, education and, on a third level, management of the territory proper and public services that essentially come under municipal administration.

I do not believe that the Québec people are ready at the moment to consider the establishment of decision-making horizontal ties at lower levels among these three main sections of the public administration. Therefore, in response to your question, I would say that, in fact, for services such as health services, I think this is a conclusive case, and even education, since, in the end, with the pyramid of different levels up to the university, there is a logic that corresponds more to the division of the administrative region. On the other hand, the kind of services that, traditionally, are under municipal jurisdiction, this type of service adapts very well to the scale of the regional county municipality.

Mr. Brassard: Could you give us some examples, Mr. Nicolet? For instance, you know very well that you are taking part in discussions with the government with regard to decentralization. There are even figures that were published in the papers this morning. You have a meeting tomorrow. I don't want you to talk to us about it, because it is not part of the mandate of the Commission, but examples of

decentralization, in favour of the municipality or the RCM, in matters of transport, for example, or roads?

Mr. Nicolet: Perhaps I will refer you back to certain decisions that were made at the time by the government of which you were a member, the Act respecting land use planning and development, which was, I believe, the first major step toward decentralization in favour of the local and regional level, since it recognized that regional development, a term which has, unfortunately, lost all its meaning and is now overused, but that such development really became a responsibility shared by the local level and the Québec government. This initiative, had it been followed in the same logic, would, in fact, have enabled us to constitute, at the municipal level, and I mean both RCMs and local municipalities, the beginning of an integrated, effective administration of all regional management functions, whether they involved fish and game, control of public lands, the environment, roads, or economic development, since this is one of the vectors that arise from land use planning. (10:00 a.m.)

So we saw the start of an intelligent decentralization reflecting the reality of administering the territorial complexity of Québec. This has perhaps been lost sight of in the 10 years that have elapsed and I think one of our hopes is that it could be taken up again with a clear objective.

Mr. Brassard: You would be prepared to take up the debate on the matter and move again in that direction.

Mr. Nicolet: More than ever, I think, because there is more, and we have heard in the regions, of a will to reaffirm a much more comprehensive involvement of the local political level in the management of its land.

Mr. Brassard: I am also coming to what you call the constitutional recognition of the municipalities. There is a connection with what you have just said because, as soon as there are dynamics that are set in motion, dynamics of decentralization, there is a movement, an advance, progress, development, change. From that time, don't you find that there would be disadvantages to entrenching too many things in the constitution? Because then it becomes difficult to change anything. A constitution cannot be amended like an ordinary law, it is more complicated, amending formulas are always more difficult. From the moment we agree to set in motion the dynamics of decentralization, there is a movement and there are changes that will gradually take place, isn't it dangerous, isn't it inappropriate to put too many things in the constitution? I would agree for a certain number

of things. The consecration of the existence of municipalities, I think there are certain elements in what you give as a basis for constitutional recognition of municipalities in your... It is not your brief, that is... in your presentation. There are certain elements that are interesting, but don't you think there are too many, as soon as there is that movement that you hope to see set in motion?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): This will be your last answer on the issue, Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: I hope I have a little time, Mr. Chairman, for I think after all the question merits my elaborating just a bit. In everything that Québec has experienced in the way of intellectuals who have dwelt on the problems of the division of responsibilities of the public administration in the regions, one of the accepted premises has always been the maintenance of a strong central Québec consolidating, in a manner of speaking, the vital energies of the nation in the face of the whole dynamics of Canada and of North America which we know so well.

I wonder whether, for the same reasons that, in constitutional matters, a new phase in respect to language would make it possible to free Québec from its old defensive reflexes, we would not, in management matters, be in a position to look with greater serenity at a sharing with the grass roots of Québec's powers in order to meet the aspirations of vast segments of the population in a new perspective.

Of course, we cannot tell you today where the line should be drawn in the logic of your question, but I believe we must take the necessary distance to examine the issue more thoroughly.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Now we go on, first, to Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier, who will be followed by Messrs. d'Anjou, Dufour, Holden and Deschamps.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Look, I was pleasantly surprised to see the statistics and surveys that were produced this morning. What I observe in them is that the municipal arena wants the same thing for itself as it wishes for the higher government. When 76% of it says it is ready to take on new responsibilities, that is just about the same as having Québec get a little more and recover almost the same percentage.

I read your brief twice, and there is one place where I come across a snag. It is on page 17, where you say that the regions must be made economically autonomous by increasing their

wealth, after which they will be able to make their own choice of social facilities. My question is as follows: Do you believe that any government whatsoever is prepared to decentralize?

Mr. Nicolet: Is there also going to be an embargo on the answer until tomorrow? Unfortunately, after everything we have experienced in the past few years and everything we have heard, more specifically in the past few days, at the moment I have very grave misgivings about the real will of the government to decentralize.

Mr. Beaumier: In the event that their willingness to decentralize were to change, the hand would perhaps be extended a little more. How do you see or would you suggest increasing wealth in the regions?

Mr. Nicolet: Essentially, first and foremost, by economic development. I think there is, and that has been said in every key, with every possible or imaginable orientation, during our tour of the regions, but it seems that, fundamentally, revitalization of the regions should be based on their regaining control of the local economy. With the best intentions in the world, we have deprived the regions of a fair proportion of their sustenance, and it seems to me we should give priority first of all to consideration, self-criticism of what we have done collectively as a society vis-à-vis the regions and we must, I think, take every possible measure, irrespective of progress in constitutional issues, to restore hope and substance to the vision of a Québec that is generous towards its own regions.

Mr. Beaumier: A final item. With regard to the house of the regions, what would be the method of representation in such a house? You speak of representatives of the RCMs, of the urban communities. Would large municipalities have a predominant place or would they have to operate through the mechanism of the urban communities?

Mr. Nicolet: Obviously, the regional house, in the manner in which it was suggested, is intended to be a counterpoise to proportional representation which would, in the order of things, prevail at the National Assembly. It is designed to be a complementary body, vested in the final analysis only with referral, in fact, with advisory responsibilities. You may tell me that is very little, but it seems to us to be a critical step because it would require of successive governments an openness and discipline that all too seldom, unfortunately, have they respected, from what we have experienced in recent years. The goal of such a

house is to compensate for certain flagrant deficiencies in the current way governments behave toward local authorities. As far as its composition is concerned, we have made some suggestions, of course. It could be different, but it is intended to be essentially a reflection of the geographical reality of the territory, as opposed to its demographic reality which is in turn reflected in the National Assembly. Naturally, different methods are possible, but as you know, Mr. Beaumier, the mayors of the main centres are found at the head of their RCMs. Finally, it is the municipal arena, within its own dynamics, that must find the spokesperson they will appoint to head their RCM, and sit in the regional house.

Mr. Beaumier: Aren't you afraid that it will become another Senate?

Mr. Nicolet: No, because it will not be a decision-making body. I think this is where the distinction lies.

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Nicolet.

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

Mr. d'Anjou: Good morning, Mr. Nicolet. Good morning, Gentlemen. I read your brief, with a good deal of interest, to paraphrase what we often hear.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. d'Anjou: But in particular, I listened to your presentation and, I don't know, but I have the impression that this is the first time I have heard the President of the UMRCQ recognize the existence or legitimacy of school governments. And that gives me great pleasure of course. I wish to tell you I share your view of the definition of a region, of a regional decision-making level. The school boards also entirely share this view, that is, that a regional government is a government elected by the people and close to the people. Nor do we see in the administrative region a government level for decentralization purposes. It is strictly for the administrative purposes of deconcentration. And for administrative reasons, I think we should be closer to the population. Local and regional levels, in regard to small regions, are really those that represent a sense of belonging and would make possible effective decentralization. So we are in full agreement with you.

There is one little point that separates us, the division of autonomous revenue sources. We are aware, as you are yourselves, as are the municipalities, that there are limits to taxing property and we grant you this very rapidly. Should there not be other sources of revenue

guaranteed or transferred to the local or regional levels to enable them to exercise their new functions efficiently, and with greater autonomy?

Mr. Nicolet: First, in response to your preamble. Mr. d'Anjou, of course we are already negotiating. The reality is that every good negotiation must recognize the facts, and the presence of the school community is now, I think, consecrated. As for sources of revenue that should be associated and should make it possible to go beyond the field of real estate are concerned, I think they are essential. If, for example, we speak of municipal responsibilities for transport and roads, it is neither obvious nor logical to think that the property tax field will be sufficient. Should we not be looking at, establishing for instance, a correlation that is more direct between the revenues, for example, from fuel taxes, or part of them, on the sale of fuel, to help finance the highway system? Should we not look once again at the sales tax? In the event that the local level were to become more involved in questions of environmental control, I am thinking about waste oils, and tires, would it not be advisable to provide that any surtax imposed should help meet certain administrative responsibilities? All that, I feel, is essential and should be considered.

Mr. d'Anjou: That's fine. Thank you, Mr. Nicolet.

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

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have read your brief and for the most part, I must say, on the approach, I share your viewpoint, like the municipalities, like the school boards. For a number of years we too have been advocating decentralization. We have always had the impression that the money would be better spent directly at the local level than at the provincial level; by definition, a lot of money is wasted in cumbersome, complex government structures.

I must also say that when I looked at your survey this morning, I too would have said no to question 1 and yes to question 3. In view of the basic principle that you defend, I think one cannot do other than to answer no and yes to those two questions respectively.
(10:15 a.m.)

In the brief, in particular on page 18, you say that on the level of the government apparatus, whether provincial or federal, the reality of the regions is not always taken into account. When territories are divided, there is much more concern about the central government apparatus in place and, by definition, as long as there is power somewhere, I think things will be

like that. In view of your current problems, don't you think a preliminary stage would be, first and foremost, to solve them among municipalities, school boards, RCMs and Québec, rather than to envisage, I don't say you are doing so, that this will be settled in a sovereign Québec? For one reason only, that there are going to be so many problems in a sovereign Québec, we have been hearing about them for two months, that I do not yet have the impression that the municipalities will be left on the sidelines.

A voice: Is that OK?

Mr. Dufour: I am addressing the Chair, and not my colleagues.

Mr. Nicolet: Mr. Dufour, it is undeniable that there is at the present time serious contention between the government and the municipalities. I would not say that there is a dispute of equal magnitude between the municipalities and the school boards. There is a great deal of aggravation. We find ourselves in the same field, which is always delicate and awkward. But there again, perhaps we are angry with the arbitrator, rather than the opposing party, the players of the other team.

With respect to the solution to such problems... In fact, even before speaking about solutions, we would have to talk about the nature of the problems. These problems have been created, have been generated by direct actions of the government.

A voice: Which one?

Mr. Nicolet: Our dear colleagues on this Commission.

Mr. Dufour: In other words, for years.

Mr. Nicolet: I think they have been getting worse for the past two years. This is a dispute that will have to be dealt with in the short term. The fact remains, nevertheless, that we have, for a whole series of reasons I will not repeat here, since they have been developed in other... And if we can rise above the quarrel to which you allude, I think we will have to recognize that we still have, in the medium term, to address ourselves to a vision of what territory we should manage, what relations should be defined between our citizens and ourselves, and what type of community we wish to create for them. From this point of view, and this is a factor other than the one you are alluding to, we believe that in fact, at the present time, there are a number of irritants which have combined with specific actions that the government has initiated and have aggravated the situation. We wish, quite simply,

to lay them on the table in a clear, unequivocal fashion.

Mr. Dufour: Are you, and this will be my last question, Mr. Chairman, are you generally in agreement with the mayor of Chicoutimi, who said that the federal government was possibly better for his town than the provincial?

Mr. Nicolet: I say, if I go back to the early 1980s, when the federal government was distributing with great generosity the contents of the public coffers, many municipal officers succeeded in redoing their town hall courtyard, or rebuilding an arena, or refurbishing their church square, all that with public funds, but did that... And perhaps, like a child who thanks Santa Claus, we all on occasion, and in moments of weakness, we too thanked Father Christmas. But I don't know whether it is in this way, that, in the medium term, if you ask our members to think about the sound management of public moneys, if this is really the way to lead the country.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you.

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

Mr. Holden: Mr. Nicolet, I have friends who speak about you in terms of Mr. Prefect, and I was very interested to read all your references to countries about which you say you have a good knowledge, particularly Switzerland and Germany. Your regional house, could that resemble the Ontario system... I don't know... Are they called "County Councils" or... There is a system in Ontario which, in my opinion, resembles your "house of the regions", am I wrong?

Mr. Nicolet: To my knowledge, Mr. Holden, the county councils would be more comparable to the RCMs than the regional house we are advocating.

Mr. Holden: They are not elected officers? Directly, I mean.

Mr. Nicolet: No, they are not elected directly.

Mr. Holden: But your house would be elected directly.

Mr. Nicolet: Our house would not... At first, in any event, the proposal is not to the effect that it be a house elected directly, but by delegation.

Mr. Holden: In any event, I also very much liked your presentation of the issues and I agree

with you that the problems may go back as far as the creation of Canada, because the Minister of Justice referred us yesterday to the discussions of the Fathers of Confederation in 1864. But when we come to 123 years later, with all the judgments of all the courts, do we... Because for me, I decode your message as Mr. Brassard does, I decipher that as an independent Québec. And then, I ask whether you create... You set aside one level of government to create another lower down, is that what the people want?

Mr. Nicolet: Mr. Holden, what we have at present and what we advocate, what we ask is simply that it be structured and connected to enable it to really perform its functions. We are not asking for the creation of something that is not already in the process of gestation at the moment.

Mr. Holden: Lastly, you speak of a revision of the electoral system so it would be based on... rather than on the criterion... not on the mathematical criterion, but on regional representation. We had that once before, it took us a long time to get rid of certain counties which were privileged from a population point of view. Do you want to go back to that system?

Mr. Nicolet: This is the very essence of every political system that has proportional representation and territorial representation in opposition. And what we must collectively, as a society, what we must decide as the society of Québec, is whether it would be advisable to give a reality, to recognize what we might call a regional reality, and I am talking about the small region, whatever its population density, simply because the territory is there and is part of the very essence of what we are collectively, or whether, in fact, we fall into a Manichaean system of population census taking.

Mr. Holden: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, Mr. Holden. Next is Mr. Serge Deschamps.

Mr. Deschamps: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Nicolet, my question deals primarily with the reconciliation of the interests of the development of agriculture and of the municipalities.

You are aware of the dispute surrounding the application of the Act to preserve agricultural land. There are currently several cases of confrontation between agricultural producers and certain municipalities. At the present time, any decentralization of powers, particularly in favour of the municipalities, frightens us quite a bit in the UPA and the agricultural world. I have read your work and

heard you on a number of occasions, you are a partisan of what I would call peaceful cohabitation of municipalities and agricultural interests.

In the context of the decentralization proposal you are presenting, do you have any particular ideas that could help us or do away with our fears of the excesses we sometimes identify with the municipalities?

Mr. Nicolet: I would like to say, we have always said it, and this is perhaps an opportunity to repeat it, that, as far as we are concerned, the protection of agricultural land is a national priority and it was therefore up to the State to adopt the necessary measures to attain that objective.

I believe the differences we have had between the agricultural world and the municipal sphere were related mainly to the terms and conditions of application rather than to the objectives we both seek.

In my view, I can assure you, it is not our intention to undermine this type of priority indirectly by the decentralization of certain powers. I do not know whether that is sufficient for you...

Mr. Deschamps: To reassure us.

Mr. Nicolet: To calm certain of the apprehensions to which you allude. Obviously, with regard to the administration and management of agricultural zones, we have a few reservations, and I do not think this is the place to debate them, about the general philosophy underlying the identification of what constitutes agricultural land, and the agricultural land to be preserved, especially in disadvantaged regions, in regions less propitious to agriculture, where the intrinsic value, the agricultural potential, has been replaced by a sort of vague notion of the agricultural environment which is not really founded on economic realities. And it is here that the UPA, on the one hand, has come into conflict with the members I represent.

But I think that, in the medium term, we can compromise.

Mr. Deschamps: Could I finish? The regional houses you advocate in your document, do you see them as possibly playing a kind of mediating or conciliating role in certain litigations which might occur with regard to certain disputes vis-à-vis the whole issue of protection of agricultural territory?

Mr. Nicolet: Yes, insofar as it is a tool, a political instrument more than anything else.

Mr. Deschamps: Very well, thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We carry

on now with Mr. Assad.
(10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Assad: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The key word here, Mr. Nicolet, seems to be the question of centralization; it's like a password. And in your brief you even indicate that the centralizing tendencies within the Québec government are as strong as they are in the central government. But one thing is certain, necessity makes change imperative. I was listening to you earlier, when you said that, starting with the grass roots, and with serenity, we must try to shake off the defensive reactions we've had in Québec. The language used is almost the same as what I heard when I was in Western Canada with... There was a list of different things which they found impeded their progress. So, you have something in common with that group. They have the same concerns and want to resolve them, believe me. But to keep a country like Canada united, the status quo is definitely not an option. But Québec independence and the ensuing balkanization of the rest of the country will benefit nobody, I am convinced, and will create more problems than it will solve. But a country evidently comprised of ten provinces, with two founding peoples and five geographic regions requires an enormously broad consensus, I must admit, if unity is to be achieved. But I'm convinced this consensus is possible, because necessity calls for it, if we want to keep the country united for the benefit of all Canadians.

Therefore, if this consensus is mandatory, and we take for granted that it is attainable, as I said, necessity always forces the issue. Based on the consultations you've had, would your organization support this process?

Mr. Nicolet: Mr. Assad, our members are, first, either councillors or mayor of their locality. In addition, they are associated with and involved in life at the regional level, through their RCM. And, essentially, they are Quebecers in the way they perceive the modern world and the tools which could be instrumental in their development on the world scene. For them, Canada has always been a fictitious idea, a theme one attempted to develop, to give substance to, but which has no... Which is more of a concept, than something tangible they could relate to or really identify with, except for a few isolated moments of generosity, and we spoke about that a while ago with Mr. Dufour, when the government recognized it for what it really was. And, unfortunately, instead of becoming clearer, this concept has become increasingly blurred and linked to a dynamic of rejection rather than integration. So I feel duty-bound to answer that I don't think our members would be motivated, at this time, to go back to another process of conceptualization and collective commitment aimed at rebuilding a Pan-

Canadian unit.

Mr. Assad: But it seems to me, Mr. Nicolet, that in the world as we know it, deals are made everyday. I mean, I don't see anything extraordinary... it's extraordinary, we want to keep the country united, if possible... but it seems to me that renewal and fresh solutions are always possible... And I'm asking you, if the need for change becomes imperative, would your organization not be ready at least to try and find solutions, if it sees that there is a political will to do so across the country?

Mr. Nicolet: I think that municipal officers are characteristically open-minded and willing to listen and to understand. On that score, I don't think we've ever refused to take part in dialogue or discussion on clear and concrete proposals.

Mr. Assad: Therefore, you can be expected to be open-minded about that change, if it comes?

Mr. Nicolet: Oh, I can assure you that we are not biased in any way, nor prejudiced with respect to new proposals which could be made to us.

Mr. Assad: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We carry on now with Mrs. Louise Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Naturally, I want to thank you too, Mr. Nicolet, for presenting your brief. You are aware, having been with us since the tour began, that everyone in the regions agrees in saying that decentralization toward the RCM must take place. You reflect this regional reality when you say that the population is aging, that there is an exodus of young people, and that it is largely due to increased budgets allocated to urban centres, over the regions. And you ask that, in the next constitution, the government recognize RCMs as the milieu which offers Quebecers a natural feeling of belonging, and that these same RCMs are the best suited to meeting the environmental, social, economic and political challenges facing the people, the citizens of Québec.

You also ask that the structures be reconsidered, and in that regard, I am particularly referring to electoral representation, where you state that you somewhat call into question the system of one person, one vote, because you say that, in our regions, given the aging population, the exodus of young people, our ridings are getting bigger and the vote is not as equal as the vote in an urban area. You propose a solution, a new formula, in which mathematical criteria and consideration of the

communities involved would be allied. I would like to hear your thoughts on that, because you know that Mr. Côté will be presenting a bill next spring to reform the electoral map, and I would like to know a little more about the solution you suggest.

Mr. Nicolet: Madam, in short, I for one, and I don't think I'm betraying our members on this point, we have never, as a group, advocated a change in the principle of equality on the right to vote of all Quebecers. And I would like to make that very clear and unequivocal with regard to this subject. Proportional representation is part of the acquired collective rights we defend, as do all our citizens, I would hope. What we are concerned with is the ease with which Mr. Côté, the other Mr. Côté, cut into the living fabric of communities to which the people of the regions belong. And here, I'm particularly referring to those RCM territories which found themselves divided up. I don't know if there are three, but there are several which have been divided into two electoral districts.

The consequences of this are obvious, are they not? On the one hand, the government has a duty to promote dialogue with the municipal authorities, facilitate political exchange between the different levels and compel an MNA, or rather, compel the local level to share its activities with two MNAs, which becomes absolutely crippling when it comes to carrying on even the normal relations and exchanges which should take place between the two levels. So, the same is true for districts in the urban centres. I believe that one should be more considerate of local and social dynamics when dividing districts, and it should be an added condition in the mandate of... How is he called, anyway? Not the president of the elections, he's the...

A voice: Pierre-F. Côté.

Mr. Nicolet: Yes, Pierre-F. Côté, I always forget his title.

A voice: Director General of Elections.

Mr. Nicolet: Director General of Elections.

Mrs. Bégin: OK. I understand. You know, I come from a riding which was destined to disappear. And what you just said applies very well to my riding of Bellechasse. There were two RCMs which were divided into three electoral constituencies. Except that you say the character of the communities of kinship must be taken into consideration. But, in actual fact, it seems to me that this criterion is already contained in the present law, which doesn't prevent Mr. Pierre-F. Côté, this one, from doing what he just did recently, if there had not been a bill that

declared an absolute moratorium. So, it seems to me that this is already included in the law, and you are coming back to the same thing: that the communities of kinship be recognized.

Mr. Nicolet: I'm not an specialist in law, Madam, but the law can't be all that clear and precise if Mr. Pierre-F. Côté proposed the divisions that he did. I don't think there's any doubt about that, as far as I'm concerned, the constituents that make up the fabric of the regions will have to be better recognized.

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

Mr. Camden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to congratulate you for having given particular prominence to statistics concerning the regions, especially, the loss of young people, whom we count on to bring new life to the population in our regions. I think you brought it to the fore very well, and I wanted to emphasize that from the beginning, Mr. Nicolet.

I would like you to indicate to us... You mention in your brief that the Union des municipalités régionales de comté et de municipalités locales du Québec proposes the creation of a house of the regions which would be comprised of RCM chairmen. Several principles are involved in this proposal and could pose problems at the level of organization of the government itself. First, it proposes that consultation with, or the consent of the regional house, be mandatory for all bills and regulations directly affecting the organization of community life, particularly, in the local and regional communities.

This formula is sufficiently broad that the government might have to seek the consent of this house for almost every action it takes. What status would this house have vis-à-vis private bills now submitted by the municipalities? Who would have ultimate authority? And over what subjects?

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you for giving us the opportunity to clarify our point of view. I believe, Mr. Camden, that it is absolutely essential, from our way of seeing things, that private bills concerning the municipalities be subjected to exposure of this kind. I will remind you of something which has left a black mark on the annals of the National Assembly three days before Christmas, 1987... or 1988, someone will correct me if it was 1988 instead of 1987, when, in the three days before adjourning for Christmas, the National Assembly gave the Régie intermunicipale de gestion des déchets of the Montréal Urban Community the power to expropriate and operate waste disposal sites outside the Greater Montréal territory.

This kind of thing is unacceptable and intolerable in the Québec of today. Mechanisms must be found to put an end to this kind of legislative expediency.

Mr. Camden: Also, on page 29 of your brief, you indicate: "Following this principle, the rural electoral districts are getting larger out of respect for the criterion of numbers of electors required for each MNA. The bigger the problems in the regions, the less they are represented in the National Assembly." Which is far from being untrue. We were in a position to realize and observe this more recently with the proposals for electoral division. You also say: "This situation, which runs counter to the increased importance given to the role of the MNA on Québec's political scene, must be corrected by strengthening the ties and relations he must cultivate with the people." I would appreciate it, Mr. Nicolet, if you would explain how you reconcile the role of the regional house and the almost mandatory responsibilities of its members, that is, those in the regional house, on the one hand, but particularly those who are representatives, elected officials, MNAs, how do you reconcile the obligation to obtain the consent of this new house with this increased role for the MNA? How can two comparable powers not be in competition with each other?

Mr. Nicolet: I think there is perhaps a misunderstanding. I apologize if the text is not clear. The regional house is asked to take a position. Its approval is not a prerequisite for passage of a bill. We ask that it express an opinion to guarantee that what is at issue is clear, debated, and presented to the public, and that any citizen who would be affected by this *bill, directly or indirectly, would be made aware of it, so that, at the end of the line, the legislator who votes on these legislative texts is imputable.

Mr. Camden: One last question maybe?

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

Mr. Camden: Could you also define for me, Mr. Nicolet, within the framework of foundations for constitutional recognition of the municipalities, I will take advantage of... and tell you about... the embargo between the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Québec-municipalities council... I would like you to define more fully for me, the scope of the exclusive fiscal powers to the municipalities you refer to in your brief. I would like you to define the range and size of the base hoped for by your group.

Mr. Nicolet: You are asking me to be specific about something which has not yet been

given in-depth consideration, and for which no concrete proposals have been made by the Union. What we want to point out, once and for all, is that there is a definite base. If new responsibilities are transferred to the municipalities, there will be other sources of revenue, which were alluded to earlier with Mr. Anjou, which should be made available at the local level, and these sources of financing must be clearly identified so that we avoid the kind of upheaval and upset we've experienced over the last two years.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Very well, Sir. That brings this period to an end. So, Mr. Nicolet, Mr. Jacques, Mr. Fernet, thank you for your presentation, and for discussing with us, the regional county municipalities, the local municipalities of Québec and the political and constitutional future of Québec. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:50 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:53 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now welcome Mr. Jacques-Yvan Morin for a one-hour hearing. So, I will recall the rules for the one-hour hearing: 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief; 10 minutes for the Government party; 10 minutes for the Official Opposition group; 25 minutes for the other members. Mr. Morin, you have 10 minutes in which to present your brief.

Mr. Jacques-Yvan Morin

Mr. Morin (Jacques-Yvan): Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Commission, whom I am happy to greet. It was not without hesitation that I accepted your invitation, Messrs. Co-chairmen. This isn't the first commission to turn its attention to what can aptly be called "the national problem". It's the sixth commission in 50 years. It all began with the Rowell-Sirois Commission in 1940, which is exactly half a century ago, this year. Then there was the Tremblay Commission, during which I made my debut as a researcher in the field of social legislation. And then there was the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, the Pepin-Robarts Commission, the Macdonald Commission, just recently, barely five years ago, at which I had the honour of representing the Québec government, when I appeared before it.

So it isn't the first time that this problem is aired, analysed and looked at from every angle. We can observe a certain speeding up of the commission of inquiry process. In the beginning, the average was about every 10 years. Now, it's every five years. I hesitated, and I won't hide it, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. I hesitated before coming. My initial reaction was: Not again! And then after thinking it over, I said to myself that it may

present an opportunity to take a step forward. It may not be the last commission, especially if your recommendations go the way of those of previous commissions, recommendations which magnificently adorn the shelves of our libraries today, and to which we refer so little that it's shocking. Because many of these commissions had already made very specific recommendations on the Québec-Canada situation.

So, the problems are neither new, nor exceptional. They're not new because they're as old as this country, the fundamental problem being the coexistence, within the same State, of two groups of human beings, two nations, as the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission stated. Two nations with cultures, values and interests which are sometimes, even often, divergent. This problem is not exceptional either, because as you know, there are problems of this kind everywhere in the world at the present time. And notably in federations... India comes to mind. Not to mention the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia which are systems very different from our democracies. But India is experiencing problems with federalism which are quite similar to ours, in certain respects anyhow.

So the problems are neither new, nor exceptional, but perhaps this context lends itself better, this time around, to in-depth study. In any case, this is the hope that brings me here before you, in the capacity of expert, to use your expression... That is, to tell the truth, a very big word, because when one reaches this level, it can only be in a very limited field. One cannot be an expert in all fields, as you well know, and true expertise would come from a synthesis of all learning, from all areas of knowledge, which is what you are trying to acquire, for that matter. But I am convinced that the greatest expert and only expert is the Québec people. In a certain sense, it happens at a good time, because the people are sovereign, they are the ones who will decide, and, what's more, they are the ones who will live with the consequences of their actions and decisions. This, however, should reduce the task of the experts to rather modest proportions, to a rather modest role, ultimately. And it was in this spirit that I answered the eight questions from the Commission in the document which has been distributed to you.

In this report, I emphasize two major points, which I would simply like to recall in these few introductory words. First, the question of vocabulary. I alluded to the basic problem, which is a considerable problem, which is a world problem. There are problems with vocabulary in our case too. There are problems with vocabulary everywhere. For that matter, in the Soviet Union right now, there are problems, because the republics are discovering that the sovereignty given to them by the Stalinist constitution of 1937, and by the last one in

1977, was really autonomy. For having played on words, the Soviet Union is caught in a pretty difficult situation. So I stand here before you as an advocate of clear language, of clear concepts. Because one only thinks clearly, if one has appropriate concepts, concepts which don't become confused, as, for example, sovereignty and autonomy.

Sovereignty, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the power to set, to determine for oneself the range of jurisdictions one intends to control, therefore, a power that is a faculty which certain States have, which is recognized as such by their peers. There are some 170 of them in international society.

Autonomy is not that at all. It's a political power as well, of course, but it is the power to control certain jurisdictions within the framework of a higher, predetermined frame, which is in the form of a constitution, and which is generally established by a body of which the autonomous State is a part, which is the case with Québec within the Canadian Federation, for that matter.
(11:00 a.m.)

Autonomy must not be mistaken for sovereignty, notably, when broaching the issue of superstructures; one must be very careful not to confuse things, rather than clarify them. For example, it is difficult to imagine a sovereign State which would accept a federal-type superstructure. Like oil and water, they don't mix. It is possible, however, to imagine a sovereign State which would accept restrictions. Most sovereign States in the world today accept restrictions and limits to sovereignty. Of course, they are compelled to do so because of the interdependence of States, because of the globalization of the economy, and, undoubtedly, they haven't seen the last of limits on certain jurisdictions, not abandoning them completely, but limiting them at least. The world is moving in that direction. Moreover, the appearance of economic communities and free trade zones demonstrates this almost every day. The development of these international bodies is everyday evidence of it. In addition to this, there are international organizations which are increasingly mobilizing these jurisdictions, in the name of States, on behalf of States, in such a way that a sovereign State can relinquish the exercise of certain jurisdictions, as do the Group of 12, for example, within the European Economic Community. But the moment we try setting up superstructures for ourselves, or common structures, the real problems surface. Will these structures be federal in nature, or simply confederal? If they are federal, Ladies and Gentlemen, well then, the member States are no longer sovereign, they become autonomous since they lose the power to determine for themselves the range of jurisdictions they intend to control.

It is not inconceivable that sovereign States would set up a Parliament for themselves, but I caution you, most of the time, and up until now in Europe, it's a Parliament with no real power. And even in the recent talks between Messrs. Kohl and Mitterand, who are in a powerful position in relation to the Europe of tomorrow, great care is taken to associate the European Parliament elected by universal suffrage, as you know, to associate it with the Council; the Council makes the decisions, and decisions on the future cannot be made without the Council, the Council of Ministers.

And you know that, within the Council of Ministers, at times, unanimity is required since the agreements made in Luxembourg on the truly fundamental questions, or else it's a weighted vote ruling, which we can discuss later, if you wish. So that was the first question I wanted to explore in my brief, the question of vocabulary. The second, Mr. Chairman, and I will be very brief since I would like to give everyone time to ask questions or to comment; the second is the issue of the distribution of powers between Québec and the common bodies, regardless of their nature, which it would accept with Canada.

In your questionnaire, you recognized two categories of jurisdiction: those under Québec's complete jurisdiction, those usually called, in constitutional law, exclusive jurisdictions, or again, in international law, national jurisdictions. And then you identified a second category of jurisdictions, which were the concurrent or shared jurisdictions. To these, I added a third, in my brief, once again, in my concern for clarifying concepts and notions.

The third category of jurisdictions includes those which are exclusive, in favour of the common bodies which Québec will agree to confer on itself, particularly in the economic field, in the common market field of free movement of people, goods, capital and services, and which will be indispensable. Because I am convinced that, sooner or later, Québec, with its new structures, will have to accept certain restrictions, just as Canada will have to accept restrictions. But they won't be the restrictions imposed on us now, which we can't extricate ourselves from, which we can only extricate ourselves from by way of amendment, and this, we are only too aware of since the failure of Meech Lake.

So, what I proposed, Mr. Chairman, was that there be three categories of jurisdiction: one category of jurisdictions exclusive to Québec, exclusive jurisdictions for the common bodies which we will want to confer upon ourselves, and the concurrent jurisdictions, which are truly concurrent in the technical sense of the word, that is, that the two partners, and there could be more, of course, but I'm speaking of two partners for purposes of simplification.

The two partners agree to share certain jurisdictions, not in an irrevocable way, not even for a period of five or ten years, although one can easily provide for time periods of this type, but jurisdictions, as is usually true of concurrent jurisdictions, where there would be preponderance of one of the two partners, in this case, the preponderance of Québec which could, in this way, elude the restrictions which it would see as absolutely unacceptable.

But you will have noticed that my list of concurrent jurisdictions is quite long. It is meant to be an indicator only. I am ready, of course, to discuss each point, but I would like these three lists, which I almost forced myself to make because the questionnaire had to be answered, these three lists are working hypotheses. I'm not the only expert who can answer questions on this subject. Especially when we get into the economic field, we can talk long and hard about what exclusive jurisdictions the common bodies should have.

On thing is certain, from where I sit, the common jurisdictions would not be eternal or perpetual. They would be negotiated by treaty, with all the restrictions that entails, and, particularly, with the serious obligation to act in good faith. They would be accepted in the form of treaties, either for predetermined periods, 5 years, 10 years; some would perhaps risk 15 years, although that seems a little long, but let's say 10 years, after which there would be an automatic review of the commitments on both sides. And, it's foreseeable that if all goes well, commitments on both sides would be renewed. Tacit renewal clauses can even be written into the treaty, as they usually are, meaning that the treaty holds, if, within a one-year time limit, it has not been called into question or denounced. But obviously, since it can be presumed that efforts would be made on both sides to make the bodies work, function well, the commitments made at the outset could probably last for quite a long time.

But the mark of the sovereign, Mr. Chairman, and I will conclude with that, the mark of a sovereign State, means its ability never to be trapped. It means the ability to escape from a situation which becomes intolerable. This isn't the case when one belongs to a federation where one must legally consent to go through the amendment process. We've experienced that many times. And we really got our fingers burnt recently.

While sovereign States are entitled to determine their own jurisdictions, and possibly relinquish them, these sovereign States can go very far in establishing common jurisdictions. But if, at some point, it stops working, well then, within a certain time frame, they can pull out, reexamine, renegotiate, to find the area of compromise where each can have some elbow room and can live in a way that is

acceptable to it.

And there are the two principal ideas, Mr. Chairman. I don't have time, and, moreover, I won't take time, because I would prefer some discussion. I did not go into detail in the three lists of jurisdictions which I gave you, but I imagine that, at least, part of the discussion will relate to those jurisdictions. And I thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Probably, probably, Mr. Morin, thank you. So I would remind the members that the shorter, the quicker and the more precise the questions are, the more we will make use of Mr. Morin's expertise.

So, Mr. Morin, before we go on to the question, since just about everyone wants to ask questions, take it for granted that you are thanked by each of them, that each member has read your brief, and that he or she will get to the question quickly.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, we begin with Mr. Guy d'Anjou.

Mr. d'Anjou: Good day, Mr. Morin, I'm pleased to see you again. It is clear from your presentation and from reading your brief that the status quo is called into question and that you want profound change. And you seem to "prioritize" negotiations. In your mind, is it a question of negotiations before a declaration of independence? And secondly, you seem to favour maintaining ties with Canada as well. So, those are the two questions, Mr. Morin.

Mr. Morin: Gladly, Mr. d'Anjou, Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen. Yes, I think we must negotiate, negotiate unceasingly. When the hand of the other is extended even only slightly, we must grasp it. But at some point we must decide too, because the other side, the others perhaps, can only negotiate with us if our intentions are clear. If we appear to hesitate, if we don't know where we're going, if we are deeply divided, because I imagine we'll be divided in all manner of ways... it's one thing to be divided in superficial ways, but it's another thing to be deeply divided, and if we are deeply divided, we open the door to all kinds of manoeuvring at our expense, and that is what has been going on for 50 years, since Rowell-Sirois.

Therefore, negotiate, yes. But to go out and get, at the appropriate time... I, myself don't want to get caught up in it, since I am not a political strategist. Even if I had a taste of political life, as you know, I am not a political strategist. In any case, I've distanced myself from strategy for some years now, so I am not in a position to say: A referendum will have to

be conducted at a certain given moment and not at another. But I imagine at some point we will have to bow to the fundamental rule, which is that the people are sovereign and the people will decide. So, at some point in time, a referendum will no doubt be called for. But when and how? Well, there, I leave it to the wisdom of the governments and Opposition, who will know how to debate the question. I don't know if I answered your question completely, Mr. Anjou. Would you want me to be specific about anything?

Mr. Anjou: Yes, you answered well. And the second was: Do you favour maintaining ties with Canada?

Mr. Morin: Yes, but not in their present form. I think ties are absolutely essential in today's world. We would be running counter, and I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying so, counter to everything that we observe happening in the world, despite the failure of the GATT, as you know, which is certainly a temporary setback, since everything is moving toward the liberalization of trade, and, personally, I think it's a good thing. Of course, each must get something out of it. That's where the difficulty in the GATT negotiations lies, and that's where the difficulty lies in potential negotiations between Québec and Canada, as it is the difficulty between Canada and the United States. But it would have a new basis. I am completing my answer. It would not be based on the constitution which restricts us now, which gives us autonomy, which, therefore, prevents us from deciding on our own destiny and which hampers us, which has the capacity, without even moving, by simple inertia, to get in the way of our development. So, yes, cooperation, even very close cooperation, Ladies and Gentlemen, but based on new foundations, on foundations of consensus, on foundations of acceptance by Québec of its responsibilities, as we said, in the face of international phenomena.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you.

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

Mr. Poissant: You spoke about how - you mentioned it in your opening words - how it will be negotiated. I think I agree with you entirely. I've negotiated a great many times throughout my career. And the last agreement we negotiated was quite a gigantic one which involved Americans and Canadians, and in the end... Evidently, we were always in a situation where someone wanted to sell or someone wanted to buy something, usually. And here, we are dealing with someone who does not necessarily want to sell, whereas the other wants to buy. Let's say

that we are they. And that complicates things a bit... Not many negotiators have experience with this situation. Obviously, some will have to be developed, I imagine, because people are human, politicians or not. In the end, the problem has to be well settled. What would you suggest to us... How can we approach this kind of negotiation?

(11:15 a.m.)

Mr. Morin: Mr. Chairman, I actually wrote in this report that the means were essential, the means to reach one's goal. The goal may be very progressive, as it may be less so, but one thing is certain, the means used to reach it will be as important as the goal itself. Why? Because the objective is somewhat like the horizon. It recedes as one advances. It changes constantly on the way. We've all experienced that here in Québec, over the last 30 or 40 years, have we not, this phenomenon of constantly receding objectives? In part, naturally, because we have not listened to the five preceding commissions of inquiry. You know, Tremblay was already talking about the national homeland and the fundamental political milieu of French Canada, as he called it. At the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission, Québec was spoken of as a nation. The Pepin-Roberts Commission told us that Québec should have all the powers necessary to preserve its distinctive character. Well, all that was put on the shelf. Therefore, the goals, little by little, became more, let's not be afraid of the word, radical. There are some who want independence, pure and simple, no compromise, no negotiation. I am not one of those. I think it would be unreasonable, and so, how we proceed seems to me to be vital.

So, how do we negotiate? First, we must have a certain base. We must be sure about what we want. Therefore, we must have the backing, maybe not before entering into any negotiations, but when the real negotiating begins, and according to the goals we will have set for ourselves, we must have the will of the people behind us. It's hard to imagine an alternative to a referendum. Good. And in Québec, Mr. Poissant, we have negotiating experience to spare. You know, you say: We have no experience in this type of negotiation. On the contrary, I can tell you that all Québec politicians, on one side or the other of this time-honoured House, all the Québec men in politics, and all those in business, have all had to negotiate in difficult, sometimes impossible situations. Even, I believe that around... just around this table, and even further, if we crossed over to the other side, we have an overabundance of people who have learned to negotiate, and toughly. So, that doesn't frighten me. Not in the least.

As far as knowing whether Canada would negotiate or not, we will only know that when we begin the negotiations. And for that, there

are prerequisites. First, we must know what the majority of the people of Québec want, as certainly as possible. That is the first condition. If we don't reach that stage, there will be nothing else. There will be the status quo, of course, perhaps with a few trinkets to humour us, but nothing important.

Mr. Poissant: Mr. Morin, would you agree with... First, I should perhaps correct the impression people have of me. I was said to be an indefectible federalist, that there was nothing, that I was completely... well, that isn't the case.

Mr. Morin: Well, I don't see it written on your face.

Mr. Poissant: And from the beginning, Mr. Morin, I tried, and that is the question I want to ask, and that is, before arriving at a referendum, will we not have to ask the shareholders, the Québec people, to tell them what is involved? It will still be one of the biggest commercial transactions ever, in the history of the universe. We're talking about a \$100 000 000 000 debt, if we separate. So, I think it would be useful, unless I'm the only one who thinks that way, to spell out what all this secession would mean; there's a little less in Canada. But in your opinion, would it be... I am alone in wanting to assert that Quebecers must be informed about what will take place, and I am neither for one, nor for the other, in parentheses, all I want is that we call a spade a spade.

Mr. Morin: But isn't that the role of the Commission, to some extent?

Mr. Poissant: I think it's mine.

Mr. Morin: Well, I, myself think that if your Commission can put some clear concepts before the people, and some options, maybe you will agree on an option, will you not, there may even be more than one option possible, or worth contemplating. I'm anxious to read your report, by the way.

Mr. Poissant: So am I.

Mr. Morin: Many Quebecers are anxious to read it. I will simply add that, yes, there is a colossal amount of work to do, informing people, and that is why I stressed the importance of vocabulary, that Quebecers not confuse "sovereignty" with "autonomy", and that they not confuse a superstructure among sovereign States with a superstructure among autonomous States. It isn't the same thing.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr.

Lucien Bouchard, followed by Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, it isn't the rule to comment on what others have just said, but since Mr. Poissant has just given himself the title of the only one to want to inform the Québec people about what is involved in the present situation, I should add that we are at least two, because I too, think they should be informed. What we are doing right now is very important and we will continue to do it with all the rigour it calls for. Since we are very fond of commercial comparisons, it would perhaps be good to call a general meeting of the shareholders to find out what they want and obtain a mandate. This is what you propose, more or less directly, on page 19, among others, where you say that Québec will not be able to effect major changes, if it does not clearly pose the question of sovereignty, and where you add that once Québec will have democratically expressed its will for sovereignty...

Having said that, Professor Morin, it seems to me that you are in disagreement with the intention expressed by the Prime Minister to negotiate on a one-to-one basis, because, on pages 18 and 20, you raise questions about the possibility of this succeeding, because you say that, first, it is not up to us - which you may be right about - it is not up to us to conclude what English Canada wants to do, what kind of framework it wants to give itself for negotiating. You seem to have doubts about the possibility of one-to-one negotiations, which have produced what we now have. I would like you to be more specific on that point.

Mr. Morin: Yes. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope, as do several of you, I imagine, that these will be one-to-one negotiations. I hope that English Canada will acknowledge the federal government as its representative; however, it is not our place to tell English Canada what is good for it. We intend to exert our right to self-determination, to free choice, but, of course, English Canada also has the right to outline what suits it, what is in its interest. It could decide, and there are indications which lead us to believe that this is not an impossible hypothesis, there is a possibility that certain regions of Canada will in turn want to declare that they have their own character, that they are distinct societies, and so on.

So, all I said in my brief was that we cannot rule out this possibility, which would certainly complicate the process. Still, it cannot be excluded.

How will negotiations be conducted once they are conceived, I was going to say in a sovereignist network rather than a federalist network, since this seems much easier to me? If you are in the federalist network, you inevitably

come up against the kind of amendment that is already entrenched in the Constitution and, in passing, it cannot be modified without unanimous consent, by virtue of the Constitution Act, 1982.

If you commit yourselves as a result of a referendum, or at least with enough support from the Québec people for the sovereignist network, regardless of how many partners you have, this can undoubtedly complicate negotiations. But, really, regardless of the number of partners, because you determine what you are willing to grant, which may be a considerable amount, and what you are not willing to grant, what you feel you must retain in your possession. Therefore, you see that it is more complicated in the federalist network, as we have pointed out and know from experience, than in a sovereignist network. However, Mr. Bouchard, I do not want to play down the problems faced by the sovereignist network, but, in my view, the federalist network is faced with even more.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, do I have another 10 seconds?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes.

Mr. Bouchard: In terms of the negotiating methods, because you have said that everything will depend on how the negotiations are conducted, and I think we agree with you, one of the aspects involved is: How will we prepare English Canada to receive the Commission's recommendations? How can it be roused from its sleepy state? How, for example, can we shatter its illusions? This morning I saw in a newspaper that yesterday or the day before certain English Canadians from Toronto were surprised at seeing that such a cultured, intelligent, scholarly and well-dressed man as Mr. Parizeau could be dissatisfied with federalism. So, we have a long way to go in preparing these people. What could we do to improve the situation?

Mr. Morin: That is correct. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a long way to go in getting English Canada to see things from our sovereignist perspective, even from various perspectives of renewed federalism. This is very difficult. Why? Because the two societies definitely engage in very little discourse, have always engaged in very little discourse, because, unfortunately, many of the people who represent us in Ottawa are often representatives of the federal order in Québec rather than representatives of Québec or of the other provinces. And this is a problem that will persist for some time. I think, Mr. Chairman, that there is another way, and that once your report establishes a minimum consensus, at least if one is produced, if you agree on a few major objectives, all the members of this Commission, starting with the Chairmen, and all those in

Québec society who support its conclusions, will have to circulate throughout English Canada. This is not easy, and we will not be well received everywhere. You will not be well received everywhere, but this will have to be done, because it is the only way. Perhaps also, perhaps, but I say this with much reservation, perhaps the Spicer Forum will make a little progress in English Canada. I have my doubts, but this is, in fact, the objective that was announced, and we must have confidence in it, we must have a little confidence in people when they outline their objectives for us.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now hear Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you. I would first like to tell Mr. Bouchard that, in the private sector, when a general meeting of shareholders is called, three things are apparent. The agenda is clear, the questions are clear, but, above all, the shareholders have been informed of the costs of the decisions they will be making.

A question about vocabulary. You speak of sovereignty, and you speak of total sovereignty. My question is: Is it possible to have partial sovereignty? Does the word "sovereignty", by definition, mean a monopoly of powers? And, of course, depending on your answer, I may or may not have a second question.

Mr. Morin: Well, although the comment was not addressed to me, it was addressed to Mr. Bouchard, would you allow me to tell you about shareholders, when it is suggested...? Well, this is because metaphors can sometimes lead us further than we think. When certain measures are proposed to shareholders, the ultimate cost is not always known, neither has it been ascertained whether or not something should be done. What is proposed to shareholders is what seems to be the solution destined to produce the best results.

Mr. Dufour: But, they at least have estimates.

Mr. Morin: Not always. Not always, and these are not always precise. And have you noticed that chairmen of corporations and of companies always take care to cover themselves by saying: You know, I think this is the best thing; we could very well be wrong, but we recommend you do this.

Mr. Dufour: But that is sound management.

Mr. Morin: Well, having discussed those matters, Mr. Chairman, could we go on to explain two meanings of the word "sovereignty"? First there is, and I am not the one who coined it, it was coined by a French German author by

the name of Carré de Malberg, who wrote at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, in Germany as well as in France. He studied the questions of federalism and integration and, to a certain extent, he is still somewhat in the forefront of today's doctrine. Carré de Malberg made a distinction between what could be called quantitative sovereignty and qualitative sovereignty. First, quantitative sovereignty is the sum of a State's jurisdictions. In everyday language, all of these jurisdictions are called its sovereignty. It exerts its sovereignty. So, I don't know, this could be over economic development, immigration, education. The sum of its jurisdictions. That is one meaning of the word "sovereignty", and this kind of sovereignty can be divided ad infinitum, as long as there are jurisdictions and subjurisdictions, and we can parcel them out for ourselves however we like, or just about, depending on particular needs and interests.

That is one meaning, but there is another. This is the qualitative notion of sovereignty, or the quality of being sovereign. We either have this one or we don't. If we have it, we are part of the group of 170 countries that comprise the international society. If we don't have it, we are part of another State. We are strictly autonomous. It is possible to have a great deal of autonomy, but if we do not have self-determination, or if we have to contend with a type of restrictive amendment, well, we do have qualitative sovereignty. In the German doctrine, as in the doctrines of nearly all countries, the first type of sovereignty, quantitative sovereignty, the accumulation of jurisdictions, is usually called "the jurisdictions". Whereas sovereignty, that is, the option to determine which jurisdictions we will control and which ones we won't control, what this doctrine calls sovereignty, this is a scholarly term, but I allow myself to use it all the same, it is the doctrine's jargon, is the jurisdiction of jurisdiction. This is the meaning of qualitative sovereignty.

(11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Dufour: Does this mean, Mr. Morin, that we are presently in a kind of sovereignty-association, at least in a quantitative one?

Mr. Morin: No. I must tell you this is not the case, since we are not sovereign. We do not have... We, ourselves, do not have control over the jurisdictions that we will or won't control. It is the Canadian federation's constituent medium which decides this for us, and we represent one-eleventh of this medium. Therefore, as the English say, we are not sovereign "by any stretch of the imagination". We are not.

Now, I know that the Privy Council, in the 19th century, certain colleagues around the table, my colleagues, know this jurisprudence better than I, the jurisprudence of the Privy

Council spoke of the provinces' sovereignty. This is obviously a play on words. I mean, at the time, the vocabulary had not really been established. They were actually speaking of autonomy, because as soon as you are caught in a restrictive constitutional structure, you no longer have self-determination. One must accede to the international level to have the right to self-determination.

Therefore, Québec is not sovereign. And, Mr. Chairman, another vocabulary word, two words, which often lead to confusion are "federation" and "confederation". I'll take this opportunity, Mr. Dufour, to clarify this point as well. A federation unites autonomous States and a federation is sovereign. Federation is what pertains to a sovereign State. In confederation, the examples are mostly taken from the 19th century, the member States remain sovereign and delegate jurisdictions to a common body. In the 19th century, since the vocabulary was "a little loose", the word confederation was used to refer to the Canadian federation, and also to refer to the Helvetian federation, I might add. These are not actual confederations. All the same, people would continue to talk about the Canadian confederation, and I have no doubt that this expression is still used today, although this is an illusion. It is really a federation. Even British authors, observing Canada from a distance, concluded that it was not entirely a federation. It is more centralized than a federation. There are authors such as Wheare, K. C. Wheare, who tell us that Canada is actually a quasi-federation, because there are a great many infringements on the federal principle, mainly in its initial form and in its recent evolution, especially as regards the federal government's increased spending power.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Simard.

Mrs. Simard: Mr. Morin.

Mr. Morin: Yes.

Mrs. Simard: I belong to the Confederation of National Trade Unions, with which 10 autonomous federations are affiliated. I was glad to hear you say that the only experts were the Québec people. This harks back to several statements that the experts would come and restore balance here. I would like you to elaborate on what you mention in the summary of your brief, on page 3...

Mr. Morin: Yes.

Mrs. Simard: ...about the model you are advocating, which is a model based on the European Economic Community. You say: This is certainly the model that would best suit us, that

would correspond the most to our aspirations. However, you say: It must be changed, because in our case it would be between two, whereas in the European community there are in fact more than 12 member countries. And you speak of an elective superstructure, but you say: Be careful, in Europe, in the European Parliament, they take great care not to give the Assembly real powers, although recently there has been a strong tendency for this Assembly to have powers. I would like you to expand on adapting this model, should the experts, the Québec people, quickly come to a decision and opt for sovereignty.

Mr. Morin: Thank you, Madam. If, following the example of many others, I have taken the liberty of proposing the European Economic Community as a model, which should be adapted, it was by a process of elimination. On the one hand, we no longer want to be subject to Canadian federalism's current trend of making amendments. Quite logically, this implies a form of sovereignty, in terms of the jurisdiction's jurisdiction, or qualitative sovereignty. Once we have been cornered into coming to that conclusion, we must ask ourselves, on the other hand, what system would allow us to pool the most, in terms of economic and perhaps also social resources, if we decided to do so. With regard to social resources, I am much more hesitant; however, economically, I admit it should probably be able to go far enough. You have only to consider the jurisdictions, at least in preliminary talks, that I would be willing to grant to common bodies, exclusive authorities, to realize that they are quite extensive.

So, I asked myself: Which is the most advanced model of economic integration? Which of the world's models is most likely to respond to questions of attaining sovereignty, and, at the same time, integrating into a larger entity? So, we explore what is available: the Andean pact, the free trade zones or other common markets which are struggling along. There is definitely only one that is functioning relatively well, naturally with quite a few difficulties when tensions arise, as we are currently experiencing with agriculture, still, of all the models under our noses, we really must admit, this one is the most evolved and it is continually evolving. It is in the process of evolving. Oh, the evolution will perhaps not be as quick as some would hope, but perhaps neither will it be as slow as others would hope.

To me, this system emerges as the one we should pattern ourselves after. Still again, the economic integration of 12 parties is not the economic integration of two or three, and it is not the integration we could hope for in a country where, the moment important questions arise, we are the minority. I am not talking about details; here, concessions are readily made for us. But as soon as a fundamental issue

concerning our future arises, we are always a minority and are required to remain in the present system. There is no getting away from it. The issue can be discussed from all angles, but we always come out empty-handed, as we did after Meech Lake.

So, how do we adapt it? If I understood correctly, this is what you are asking. I, for one, am very hesitant when faced with a Parliament that has real powers. Furthermore, the Europeans have thus far been very careful not to give any powers to their Parliament, and, as I mentioned a moment ago, in the latest talks between Kohl and Mitterand, which were the subject of a joint letter to the chairman of the Community a few days ago, exactly one week ago today, they were very careful to associate the Parliament with certain decisions which were actually made by the Council. The Council works according to the formula of unanimity, for the most important questions, concerning the members' sovereignty, such as with the fairly numerous provisions in the treaty. It functions according to the weighted majority, that is, 54 out of 73 votes. But the majority is accomplished in such a way that the decision cannot be made without competition among three of the four main States, those having the most votes: Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Why this distrust? Well, before I finish, I want to examine at least one institution, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine, Sir.

Mr. Morin: At least at the outset, during the first few years it is in place, I would have the strongest hesitations before a collective Parliament holding real powers. If this is a European Parliament which makes recommendations and decisions about everything and anything, from baby seals to the aboriginal peoples of foreign countries, well then... I personally have no objection. But it is not a real Parliament, the European Parliament is not a real Parliament, no matter what they tell us. Perhaps it is destined to become one, but with a thousand precautions and after a thousand transitions. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, in this respect we do not have to go faster than the Europeans, do you understand?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Very quickly, there will be two final speakers in this set of questions. Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to go as fast as possible. Mr. Morin, I think everyone at this table is trying to ascertain where we are in our research into a

solution which would enable Québec to have the right to develop to its full potential. However, I see in your brief and in the one submitted yesterday by Mr. Léon Dion, that we are urged to be cautious in choosing the methods to achieve it. You just answered Mr. Poissant, and I notice that on page 18 of your brief you tell us in other words: The means of change will be at least as important, if not more important, than the proposed objectives.

In addition, in Mr. Dion's dossier, or brief, which we heard yesterday, it says: "A declaration of Québec's political independence would not be endorsed without recrimination or intimidation on the part of English Canada. And the initial arrangements will not be made without some difficulty". And, to a certain extent, this was confirmed by Mr. Parizeau himself, who, in a speech in front of 700 people at the Canadian Club, outlined certain apprehensions. Mr. Parizeau, after meeting with about fifteen important Toronto businessmen, told this group of people that Québec sovereignty would inevitably provoke rather strong emotions, tensions and psychological reactions in the country. And when he chose the words "rather strong", these were obviously the most tempered, given his political option.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Beaudry, your question, please.

Mr. Beaudry: I am coming to it. On page 10 of his report, which you have not seen, but which I will take the time to read part of to you, Mr. Dion says the following: "The process would be greatly accelerated if the Commission formulated precise recommendations which received the approval of the government and of the liberal and Parti québécois MPs. In this case, these party leaders, after approval by their members, would have these recommendations voted on by the National Assembly, accompanied by an ultimatum: Should negotiations fail, Québec will immediately hold a referendum asking the people to reach a verdict on political independence".

Given that you Mr. Parizeau, to a certain extent, and Mr. Dion in his statements, urge us to be cautious, don't you think it would be wise to follow this recommendation, at least in the beginning, even if it means that if eventually it does not work, we would accede to independence the way you say and risk, minimize the possible risks in the present context, rather than declaring unilaterally and without delay that we are proceeding with sovereignty and negotiating afterwards? This is my question. (11:45 p.m.)

Mr. Morin: Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we are a people who have a long history and who have always been very cautious, at times maybe overly cautious. Rarely have we

lost our heads, although this has occurred, and poorly judged the rapport of strength. As you know, this happened in the 19th century. We are a people with a long history, one of the world's oldest democratic populations. Next year we are going to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of our Legislative Assembly. Granted, this was taken away from us between 1840 and 1867, but we still have parliamentary traditions, which are traditions of dialogue and of caution. Our people are very cautious, and it is a good thing they have been that way, especially since we are faced with a country which is increasingly uncertain about itself, which we must also be taken into account.

And one of the reasons English Canada finds it so hard to conceive of any change is that it does not know itself. To an increasing extent, as George Grant clearly illustrated in *Lament for a Nation*, it does not know who it is. And to an increasing extent, it does not know where it is going, because it has lost some of the memory of its historic origins. This is probably true of all young people today, in all the countries of the world, but wreaks havoc in English Canada, and perhaps a little here too. This is not the time to comment on the teachings of history, but still...

We are faced with an uncertain country, which is naturally going to panic a little. This does not surprise me. I did all my post-secondary studies in English-language universities here in Québec, in the United States and in England; therefore, I am familiar with the mentality. I also understand that this uncertain country and these very empirical people are somewhat unprepared for what they feel is taking shape in Québec. And, no doubt, they do not entirely suspect what is taking shape. So, there is going to be... no, we are going to have to be cautious, that's all. But, it will be necessary to go and talk with English Canada. And I am very happy to know that Mr. Parizeau has been there. I hope the Premier will go there, as soon as he returns, to explain some of his feelings and proposals.

The greatest precaution will be, the greatest precaution is engaging in dialogue and meeting them head on, trying to reassure and demonstrating that, in fact, what we want, supposing that we are in favour of sovereignty-association even, what we want is going to include the implementation of a few essential structures to specifically reassure English Canada. It is obviously accustomed to dominating others. It is difficult, you know, to defeat another people when one has dominated them for so long without even being conscious of this. It is a conditioned reflex. Of course, English Montrealers are the most conditioned of all to exerting this type of domination, because their economic, social and political domination has never been challenged. In the past 20 or 30

years, they have become increasingly conspicuous. And, if you look closely, a certain evolution is also taking place in them. They are becoming more and more open. Personally, I believe that the people in the rest of Canada, and I want to make this clear: they are the ones who have the most to lose, and they are the ones who have traditionally been the most opposed to any kind of evolution in Québec, they are the ones who have made it a practice to put spokes into the wheels of Québec, and they are the ones who have made themselves strong by sending Quebecers to Ottawa to really defend their interests, people who perhaps had French names, but who actually represented perhaps the majority or who, in spite of themselves, have mimicked thought patterns of the majority.

So, if we perceive an evolution in English Montrealers and English Quebecers, I think there is hope that sooner or later English Canadians will also evolve. At least of this I am hopeful, and I am ready to do my part with all of you in making it turn out this way.

I believe that the period of intimidation will not last. There will be intimidation. There will be people who, thoughtlessly, will say anything. I think of intimidation within the territory. I find this a little amusing, Mr. Chairman, but intimidation within the territory is both unconstitutional and against international law. From either a federalist or an international viewpoint, this intimidation is illegal. And I do not know if the people who uttered these threats are aware of what they have done; perhaps they did not have the time to consider it. But, a province's borders cannot be changed without its consent. This is one of the rulings of Canadian constitutional law; furthermore, in international law, if ever we became, if we become sovereign, as I was just saying, the rule of *uti possidetis* applies, which is a well established rule of international law stipulating that one enters into independence with the territory one had before. Therefore, in terms of legalities, it is an open and shut case, is it not? Unless, of course, certain thoughtless English Canadians or even, we really must say, certain Francophones resort to threats, without verifying whether they are truly capable of carrying them out, unless they are willing to break the law, but this would surprise me. I think, rather, that it is because they lack information that they use intimidation. We are going...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I am stopping you, Mr. Morin.

Mr. Morin: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Turgeon, do you have a quick question?

Mr. Turgeon: Yes, I have two quick

questions. First I want to say that we are very pleased with your intellectual discipline and that Marcel Adam from *La Presse* today will certainly be pleased with it too. Mr. Morin, you say this is the sixth time in 50 years that a commission appointed either by Québec or by Ottawa has examined the problems of coexistence and that this time, if our Commission does not go to the very root of the present crisis, we are going to wind up on the shelves like the others. So, I conclude that, for you, going to the root is much more than establishing a diagnosis. It is discovering a true remedy. And, in that sense, if this is the case, how far do you think this Commission should go, or how far should it not go? First question.

Second question. At the heels of what Mr. Beaudry just asked you, since this has been deferred and deferred, five or six times, why, in your opinion, and I am putting this question to you because you are a researcher who identifies this society's underlying movements, do we come across people in our society who are always willing to give others one last chance, every time? And here I would like, if you would allow me, to quote just a few lines of what our friend, the present Minister of Justice, Mr. Rémiillard, said, what he even wrote, on June 2, 1981. And I cite this in a friendly way. It is not a trap. He said: "Complete constitutional reform is imperative toward reaching a compromise that would satisfy the specific nature of Québec, but", and this is the important part, "in the event that such a reform proved impossible", this was in 1981, "it doesn't mean that May 20, 1980 would not have been Québec's first step toward independence". Therefore, my question, Mr. Morin, is: How is it that in our society, which was born of our strength, we always come across Léon Dions, so to speak - I would not be ready to say Gil Rémiillards - but we come across people who are always ready to leave us in that constitutional molasses, as several people say, and to make us put off until tomorrow, with more risks, what we could do today, calmly and serenely?

Mr. Morin: Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, with your permission, I will not comment on the statements made by my colleague, and friend, Mr. Rémiillard. I will not comment, because other statements to the contrary could be quoted and I would end up being a little confused. Therefore, I will refrain from commenting. But...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Morin: ...as regards Mr. Dion, I do not find it hard to believe that he proposed this way of doing things. I do not entirely agree with it, because I think things will have to be clear quite fast, unless there is to be a five or ten-

year postponement. But, it is natural that in a society... It is completely natural, sociologically, that some individuals are in more of a hurry than others. Personally, I am not at all bothered by this. I also admit that, from one class to another, interests can vary. We have only to look at the extremes. Certainly, the interests of Québec's big investors, and we have some of these now, do not necessarily correspond with those of welfare recipients or even of the middle class. This is understandable. Everybody defends his own interests. And neither does it bother me when we are told: Let's try to give them one last chance. I think that in a way the last chance was given at Meech Lake, although, as did my colleague Dion, you know, I expressed the most formal reservations on this pseudocompromise. But, for its part, Québec trapped itself a little, and this was to everyone's benefit. Québec somehow trapped itself with Meech Lake by making Quebecers think that it was THE solution, whereas it would have perhaps simply caused us three, five, perhaps ten years' respite, and then it would have started over, because it is not a solution. It was not really a solution, especially since the bilingualism criterion prevailed over the distinct society criterion. Among these criteria, I would include interpretation of the Constitution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now go on to Mr. Gil Rémiillard. This is good timing.

Mr. Rémiillard: This is good timing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Morin: Does the Honourable Minister think I was cautious enough?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rémiillard: Certainly; you have made a very interesting contribution to the Commission, I must tell you from the outset and thank you, because your brief has the great merit, I think, of being clear. And I thank you for this. In a particularly interesting way, you establish the sovereignty concepts and the autonomy concept, and you clearly distinguish between federation and confederation. Although these are theoretical statements and, in practice, as Mrs. Simard mentioned a moment ago, she is experiencing federalism in her union, Mr. Laberge could also tell us about it, or Mr. Bédard in the *Caisses populaires*, federal principles are what apply, although, in fact, national unions are sometimes called confederations and *Caisses populaires*, federations. And it makes little difference whether we refer to autonomous or sovereign components. But what you are telling us is interesting, and I think that the Commission members here have taken careful note of it.

You tell us that you have referred to the European Community as a possible model. And you propose a series of jurisdictions: jurisdictions that are exclusive to Québec, concurrent jurisdictions between Québec and the community, and exclusive jurisdictions for the community itself, a community body that would connect Québec and the rest of Canada, according to your model.

Mr. Morin: That is correct.

Mr. Rémillard: But what you are suggesting to us, Professor Morin, is still much less integrated than the European Community. There is a small budget, you anticipate a small budget, but I did not even see any powers related to imposing taxes. The common agricultural policy of the European communities is not there, the common fisheries policy they also have in the European Community is not included.

Mr. Morin: Yes, yes...

Mr. Rémillard: Policies on nuclear matters, steel...

Mr. Morin: ...that is the seventh point, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Rémillard: And the Parliament, you briefly touched on the Parliament a moment ago; you did not make your position very clear. Would you like to promote a Canadian Parliament in your model?

Mr. Morin: Well, first of all, would the Minister allow me to make an observation on the vocabulary? You pointed out, and rightly so, that in the workers' organizations the vocabulary is also quite loose. They speak of confederation, of federation, but these organizations have the right to use the vocabulary that they find suitable. What I wanted to say to you this morning is that, when we speak of a State, it is essential to use a precise vocabulary, or we confuse everyone. And we do not necessarily move toward solutions, we move away from them, and we create a lacklustre future for ourselves. So, it does not matter what terms the workers use; when examining States, it must be known whether a system is autonomous or sovereign. These are hardly ever mixed, these are not mixed. Either we have sovereignty or we do not. We can definitely have only a few jurisdictions, and therefore only limited autonomy, and even only a little international personality, as you know, because these are things we teach our students.

Now, I would like to say a few words about the jurisdictions I would concede to common bodies. This is on page 14 of my brief. I determined these jurisdictions hypothetically, for

the purpose of discussion, but drawing my inspiration from one of the basic principles of federalism, which may very well shock you, but which can be transposed onto other sectors. This is the principle of subsidiariness. Thus, I would not provide this organization with what it needs to carry out the objectives we entrust it with, which would include the harmonious development of the common market, the control of customs duties, quantitative restrictions, a common trade policy with respect to third parties, but I added with reservations the association agreements that Québec could conclude with the European Economic Community, because I would really like Québec to keep that door open and not be condemned *ad vitam aeternam* to the North American free trade zone, which has its advantages, but which should not prevent us from forming ties with the other continents, especially with the continent which you know is up and coming in terms of trade, in terms of the future, that is the European continent.
(12:00 noon)

As far as the fisheries are concerned, you will observe at point 7 of the jurisdictions exclusive to the federal government, I would in fact concede them to a common body, to common institutions, but on one condition that Québec fishermen have access to the Canadian fishing zone, because if we had to draw Québec's exact borders with an equidistant line in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Québec would get the smallest portion. So, if it continues its economic association with Canada, it must have access to the fishing zones, as it does now. In my view, this would be a fair misunderstanding. Furthermore, I think it would be indispensable, because it is the sensible thing to do.

Mr. Rémillard: Professor Morin...

Mr. Morin: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: ...on the question of nationality...

Mr. Morin: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: ...on page 12, you say this would be a concurrent jurisdiction...

Mr. Morin: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: ...controlled by Québec. This means that the Canadian community and Québec could legislate, but there would be a hegemony. In the event of a conflict, the Québec legislation would prevail.

Mr. Morin: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: In that framework, because I do not know one Quebecer who has taken out

his or her Canadian passport in a foreign country and been ashamed of it... We have always been proud to show our passports.

Mr. Morin: I beg the Minister pardon, I did not hear.

Mr. Rémillard: I'll start over. I think it has been... I spurred some reaction from the other side.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rémillard: I was saying, Professor Morin, that I don't know one Quebecer who has taken out his or her Canadian passport and not been proud. These have been a point of pride. In your plan, would there be a Canadian passport or a Québec passport or perhaps even a French and Québec one together?

Mr. Morin: Mr. Chairman... Messrs. Chairmen, pardon, you know, knowing whether or not people are proud to take out their passports seems to me... I would not dare say this is always the case. I remember one day... I am not speaking about myself, because I am very willing to take out the Canadian passport. If it gets me across the border, that's the main thing.

Mr. Rémillard: ...you're proud to take out your Canadian passport?

Mr. Morin: Now, I remember once a party with which I was very closely associated at the time produced a Québec passport. This led to absolute delirium. We had to print thousands, tens of thousands of them, and the most surprising thing was that Quebecers were appearing at borders with their Québec passports. And there were people who collected stamps from all over the world. Perhaps some of them are even around this table.

Mr. Rémillard: At the same time, you were giving the year 1 budget.

Mr. Morin: Yes, without a doubt. That was not exactly at the same time. Anyway, I don't think it is pertinent.

This must be seen in a functional way, and I think that by putting this jurisdiction on nationality, naturalization, immigration quotas and passports under the concurrent jurisdictions, I admit that this could be under the jurisdiction of the common institutions. But, I would not want us to find ourselves in a situation where the majority wanted to impose some condition or some rule that appeared to be absolutely unacceptable; if this happened, we could resort to Québec's hegemony.

I believe this could function as the jurisdiction of common institutions, precisely

because, in the capital of common institutions, we would know that Québec could always derogate and make corrections to its own legislation.

You know, a great deal is written between the lines in any sharing of jurisdictions. One of the things I feel is vital is that English Canadians, who are, I think, definitely a reasonable and rational people... I think we could go a very long way with them in sharing jurisdictions, in granting jurisdictions not to the federal level, but to the level of the common institutions, simply because there would be safeguards. But concurrent jurisdictions are safeguards.

Mr. Rémillard: But I thought I understood, reading between the lines, because you have urged us to read your brief but also to read between the lines, I thought I understood that we could go a long way in these jurisdictions. I am curious to know why we should achieve sovereignty to carry out this type of project. Given that we already have a federation, within this structure, would it not be possible to put our money on Québec's full autonomy, to use your terms, and to have something that could be very close to what you are proposing to us?

Mr. Morin: If anyone should know the answer to that question, it is the Honourable Minister. I do not know what you need... Honestly, I'm sorry, but I imagine your experience must have been quite a painful one, which has shown you what can result from working within the federal network. There is a constitution which surrounds us, restricts our jurisdictions, decides for us what we can do and cannot do, and, if we want to make any change whatsoever, even to the method of amending, there must be unanimity. It cannot be done without our consent, but neither can it be done without the consent of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Rémillard: But you are proposing...

Mr. Morin: Furthermore, you will not go very far with that system. You have just demonstrated this yourself. You would have preferred that Meech Lake be ratified, of course, but it was not. And this demonstrates that it is almost impossible to go by way of the federal system.

Mr. Rémillard: Meech Lake is ancient history, if you don't mind.

Mr. Morin: Ah!

Mr. Rémillard: We have turned the page. We have turned the page.

Mr. Morin: If the question was that old,

you would not...

Mr. Rémillard: Let us now turn to the future. Let us look at what we can do. All I am asking you... You are proposing exclusive fields of jurisdiction, and competing fields of jurisdiction between both levels of government, and exclusive fields of jurisdiction with regard to the Canadian government, what you call the community. Quite simply, you are proposing a list of 21 exclusive fields of jurisdiction. Section 92 already lists 16 with respect to Québec, and there are even more if we look around. I would like us to agree on the notion of sovereignty and autonomy. They are not the same thing and I follow you, but my question is this: Can such a plan be carried out technically in terms of law on the basis of full autonomy and still be in line with a federalist framework?

Mr. Morin: Well, Mr. Chairman, I am compelled to answer the Minister that it is not possible as his own bitter experience has shown. There is a difference... You say that we have turned the page on Meech Lake, although, if you are doing so to make us forget that Meech Lake failed, then I don't think we have turned the page at all. Meech Lake is exemplary. Why forget it? To do so would be to forget one of the most important, bitterest lessons in recent years. Meech Lake exists. It is the very reason for your assembling us here to tell us what must be done, to find out what Quebecers should do. Let us not underestimate Meech Lake...

Mr. Rémillard: No. You're right. When I said that we had turned the page, I meant that the failure was behind us but that we had obviously drawn our conclusions. In this respect I agree entirely with you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): One last remark, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: If you will allow me...

Mr. Morin: I would like to answer your question.

Mr. Rémillard: You are a recognized specialist in international law with respect to the succession of the State and international treaties. If we look, for example, at the Free Trade Agreement we signed with the United States in terms of our model, based on Québec's gaining its sovereignty, does this mean that the international agreement with the United States still obtains, or would Québec have to renegotiate the treaty? Would the United States be bound to the treaty were Québec to achieve its sovereignty?

Mr. Morin: Allow me to briefly answer the

question you put to me earlier, which I didn't have time to answer. There is a fundamental difference between proceeding within the framework of federalism to achieve the distribution of powers I outlined in the brief and achieving sovereignty. There is a fundamental difference. First, under federalism, you are compelled to proceed using the inane amending formula and will, of course, probably come up empty handed. Perhaps you'll obtain a trinket, but nothing serious. With sovereignty, you are free. You decide the scope of the jurisdictions you are going to concede. You never do so in perpetuity. A sovereign State usually commits itself for limited periods of time, for example a five-year or 10-year treaty. For 10 years, constraints are accepted and you grin and bear it. After 10 years, you renegotiate or abandon the treaty, or do something else. That is the main difference. You don't have to beg, you're not one out of 11 and you don't have to grovel. I'm not saying that this is what you have done, of course, but such could easily be the case. There is a fundamental difference between the federalist approach and the sovereignist approach. One gives you a lot more elbow room than the other.

With respect to the succession of the State, several hypotheses must be contemplated. Let us assume that Québec decides, under dramatic circumstances, to make a clean breast of it and declares its independence, and that it has no desire to associate with Canada. Naturally, that will resemble... or would resemble, because it is a scenario I do not envisage, that I do not believe possible, but it would resemble independence similar to decolonization. Under the circumstances, each player would pick up his marbles and I imagine that the United States would want to reexamine its relations with us. They would examine the question in light of their interests.

Now, if we assume that negotiations were to take place, during which the treaty continued to apply, we would arrive at institutions such as the ones I have described. You have noticed that, among the exclusive fields of jurisdiction of common bodies are such things as foreign trade and, as a result, the free trade zone. With respect to foreign trade, free trade, the free movement of capital, goods, persons and services, in this perspective the United States will be faced with a single unit, the community unit, not a federal unit, but a unit. It would still be dealing with the same partner. There would be no reason to suggest that the treaty could be called into question. It would continue to apply as though nothing had happened. In any event, as you are aware, it can be renegotiated, too, but I don't think that it's necessary. It can be renegotiated after 10 years, as you know.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank

you, Mr. Morin. We now turn to Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When passports were mentioned earlier, along with the pride one would feel in taking out such a passport, I thought that the greatest source of pride for me in other countries would be to take out my Visa Desjardins card.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Morin: ...

Mr. Chevette: No, but it does reflect one of Québec's strengths and I think that... Mr. Morin, you are aware that all manner of arguments have been put before the public. At one point it was said that economic integration was impossible without some sort of political tie or integration. In your brief, you state flatly that... you speak of exclusive fields of jurisdiction to be pooled in a common body called a commission. What do you say to those who claim that economic integration cannot be achieved without political integration?

Mr. Morin: My answer is that there are numerous examples to the contrary in the world as we know it. The clearest example is the European Economic Community in which the member States, while enjoying considerable latitude with regard to economic integration, nonetheless maintain their sovereignty. Consideration is even being given - this will astonish some people - to broadening the jurisdiction of the EEC, but in fields where many Quebecers would hesitate. Allow me to list them. At present, the least that can be said about the environment is that it would raise a number of problems. As for health and social policies, do you realize what that represents in a two-member community in light of the problems we have already had agreeing with Ottawa? Can you imagine a common energy policy at a time when we are having problems maintaining a minimum of autonomy? I don't know whether you understand what that could mean. Economic integration is possible without political integration, but we must be prepared, subject to deadlines and subsequent withdrawal when the deadlines expire. We must be prepared to grant considerable economic powers to common agencies and institutions. I, personally, am entirely prepared to do so, although I acknowledge that we must discuss the matter with experts who are better informed than I am about economic matters. The issue must be discussed with businesspeople and financiers. They perhaps have a clearer idea of how the economy functions and what it requires.

Mr. Chevette: In other words, there would be no elected government with the power to tax;

instead we could have a common structure.

Mr. Morin: You have noticed that I would, nonetheless, grant a minimum of own-source revenues to common institutions, as is the case in Europe. The European nations draw revenue from a common customs tariff and obtain 1% of VAT, which would be equivalent to 1% of the future GST here. Fine. These are arrangements which can be made, but they are not final. They may last 5, 10 or 15 years, if need be, after which they will be reexamined according to individual members' interests and the interests of the community as a whole. This is what we must keep in mind. When you are part of a community, you cannot examine matters solely in light of your own interests, because such interests are tied to those of the community. There are undoubtedly compromises to be made, provided they are not perpetual, and provided that it is not necessary to amend them through a formula which pits one member against 11, in other words, a sort of trap.

Mr. Chevette: Where you are clearer you say flatly: No elective suprastructure.

Mr. Morin: Listen, if you want to drive me into a corner, I could reply that, if you wish to create a powerless Parliament which would make recommendations to the partners, I have no objection. This would be in keeping with the European Parliament. No, why not? Perhaps we will need forums where people discuss things. But, a word of caution: if we grant powers according to the principle of subsidiarity it must not be for all time; we must not submit to legislative fields of jurisdiction which may only be modified under a federal amending process. Once again, we run into the quandary we are experiencing at present.

Mr. Chevette: One last question, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask Mr. Morin if he shares Mr. Rémillard's viewpoint that the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms is superior to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Mr. Morin: Is the Québec Charter superior to the Canadian Charter? Listen, as to political and civil rights, they are equivalent. They closely resemble each other and have the same type of dispensatory clause, formulated differently, but they are, by and large, the same. Section 52 of the Québec Charter and section 33 of the Canadian Charter have the same effect. One difference is that the federal Charter does not contain any economic, social or cultural rights. Not one. I think that my former colleague, Mr. Rémillard, and I have taught these questions sufficiently to know that the writers of the Canadian charter are part of a pure, 19th

century liberal tradition, usually a tradition associated with well-to-do people who have no economic and social problems. That is the Canadian Charter, in which individualism is pushed to its conceivable limits. The Québec Charter is sensitive to socioeconomic and cultural problems. Now, this is not really important. One can imagine a charter in a future Québec constitution. One can imagine a much more fully developed charter in social and economic terms but which would obviously prescribe types of behaviour, because it is much harder to implement obligations respecting results. There is no shortage of models, starting with the European Charter, what has been done in the German landers, in the... And in West Germany as well.

There is no lack of models. Mention could also be made of the UN pacts respecting economic, social and cultural rights. From this standpoint, I believe the Québec Charter is superior, more complete.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Mr. Morin. To the clarity... The clarification of various concepts has no doubt been useful to several members of the Commission. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That is just what I was about to say, Mr. Morin. Your brief and your testimony will surely help clarify debate and concepts, obviously for the benefit of members of this Commission, but for the benefit as well of all Quebecers. I believe that all Commission members agree that clarifying debate is one of the responsibilities of this Commission. Thank you for your contribution to our deliberations.

Mr. Morin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:22 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:25 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I would like to welcome the representatives of the Conseil de l'environnement de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches. Mr. Richard Legault, you are the... Could you please introduce the people accompanying you?

Conseil de l'environnement de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches

Mr. Legault (Richard): I'll start on my left with Mrs. Ginette Paquin, an administrator of the Conseil de l'environnement, and Mrs. Louise Courville, a member and militant. On my right are Mr. Pascal Grenier, also an administrator of

the Conseil de l'environnement, and Mr. André Stainier, a representative of a member agency, as the Conseil de l'environnement encompasses 35 agencies in the Québec City and Chaudière-Appalaches region.

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

Mr. Legault: Five minutes?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes.

Mr. Legault: Yes? Fine. Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, dear friends. As president of the Conseil de l'environnement de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches, I would like to thank the members of the Commission for this opportunity to publicly present our brief. The brief we are presenting poses a number of broad questions which are vital to Québec's future. We will perhaps raise more questions than we give answers, but it strikes us as felicitous to do so in light of current debate on the matter. Our brief focuses mainly on the environment and ecological values designed to ensure Québec's future. The CEQCA has not insisted in its brief on the appropriate political option, not because this issue is unimportant, but because we wanted to emphasize another dimension, the environment, which we feel has been overlooked in the current debate.

There are, essentially, three reasons for which we wrote this brief. The first is the environmental dimension and values inherent in the future social blueprint, as both are closely linked. This dimension is at the heart of the political and economic stakes which prevail in the late 20th century. This dimension is vital in terms of our future and quality of life. This applies to the entire planet, to Canada, and to Québec. Canada has just adopted a \$3-billion environmental plan of action, which confirms for us the urgent need to act promptly and more vigorously and perspicaciously in Québec. In our brief, we quote a number of revealing figures. Time is short and I believe that members of the Commission are aware of problems related to the deterioration of the environment.

The second reason is that the time is right. Québec is experiencing an historic moment which will probably mark a fundamental turning point in its history. We feel it is relevant to stand back from events and somewhat distance ourselves from problems which are veritable challenges for the future. These problems are social, economic, political and environmental in nature, but all of them are interrelated. Let us ponder the impoverishment of the regions or of urban areas, the deterioration of the environment caused by consumption, over-

consumption or production methods, and short-sighted management of dwindling resources. It is time to look where we are going beyond a four-year mandate, to ascertain where we are headed in terms of the quality of life and the environment, to question the basic values underlying all of our political and economic choices.

Basically, as is the case in the political realm, two options are open: either we rethink our lifestyles, alter our behaviour, and redirect our economic development, which entails rarely discussed major compromises, or we can continue to overconsume. In Québec, we consume two or three times as much water and energy as the European countries do. Air pollution from our automobiles and water pollution from our industries and farm wastes are equivalent to a population in Québec of 80 million. All of this is leading us to an environmental dead end in 20, 30, 40 or at most, 50 years. Ultimately, that is not what is important.

What we are saying, in essence, is that we have a Berlin Wall in Québec. What is in question is not so much our adhesion to federalism in Canada, but the change of course we must effect before it is too late.
(12:30 p.m.)

The third essential reason is that the very theme of ecology and values to be adopted and promoted is, in our view, inevitable. Until now, the Commission has, above all, supported economic arguments. Its deliberations have centred on procedures and the constitutional and political structures to be emphasized to ensure Québec's political future. This is fine; it is indeed a commendable initiative. This will enable us to clarify debate. In our view, it is nonetheless insufficient, restrictive and even dangerous if this is all we do to ensure our future. If we discuss economics, we must also talk about ecology because both dimensions are as inextricably linked as both sides of a coin. This means, among other things, couching discussions on ecology in economic terms, and learning to live off the interest on natural resources instead of undermining our natural capital, as we are now doing.

This is, by and large, the notion of sustainable development proposed by the Brundtland Commission and endorsed by many countries, including Canada. The CEQCA proposes that the content of this emerging social blueprint be debated. Just as Québec's cultural uniqueness centres on cultural values which are essential for its development, a number of ethical, environmental, and ecological values must be developed in conjunction with the proposed ecosociety as they are vital to ensuring a quality of life which respects rich and poor alike and their environment.

These values are the equitable distribution and preservation of resources, the decen-

tralization of powers, the prioritization of essential public services, and concrete initiatives aimed at recovering and recycling at all levels. Indeed, the values and consensuses to be established are so important that we, and numerous experts from the UN, the World Watch Institute in Washington and even NASA, feel that they are the key to the deep-seated change needed to ensure our survival on this planet.

The question we are asking the Commission, each member of the National Assembly and all Quebecers is this: While it is increasingly apparent that we possess the political maturity to take charge of our future, do we also possess what I would call an environmental maturity which is vital to anticipate and viably manage the challenges facing us in the year 2000? Indeed, will we be sufficiently provident to immediately begin discussing these questions so that our efforts are not limited to a simple exercise in reflection? Often, our efforts stay on paper. The CEQCA is proposing to the Commission and to the National Assembly that we stop talking and start acting.

I will summarize briefly.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): In conclusion.

Mr. Legault: Yes. You'll ask questions about what we want to do. We are proposing three things: A travelling forum on the values to be advocated in Québec society, thus putting Quebecers in the picture; a Québec charter of the environment, including individual and collective rights, responsibilities and duties respecting the environment; and repatriation of various fields of jurisdiction which are necessary to ensure the viable development of Québec society. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Legault. Mr. Gauvin will be the first to ask questions.

Mr. Gauvin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of my colleagues, MNAs and ministers from the Chaudière-Appalaches region, I would first like to welcome your group, Mr. Legault. Your brief proposes possible solutions. Obviously, much remains to be done, but there are already signs that we are moving in the right direction. This Commission has been set up to demonstrate and emphasize a number of points, among others, that we are no longer at the stage of wondering when our society is going to take the necessary initiatives to protect the environment, but rather how we are going to do it. Allow me to return to your brief and to ask you if you do not feel some anxiety about the proliferation of intervening parties you seem to be suggesting.

On page 12 you observe that a large portion of environmental problems result from

macro pollution and, above all, from the pollution engendered by the provinces or states around us. On page 14, you note that it would be easier to apply environmental policies, strategies and regulations in Québec if all of the powers were attributed to a single society. You propose pursuing the current trend whereby more power is attributed to local governments and to RCMs. I would like to know what you think would happen if Québec disposed of all the necessary powers in the realm of the environment and imposed its standards on all of the regions? I am struck by your remark at one point in the brief when you say that one solution, perhaps the most worthwhile solution, is to consider living in another manner. That could help solve a lot of the "how to" problems. I think this is indeed a noteworthy point.

Moreover, I would like to know how Québec should grant power to the regions, at the risk of compromising the uniform application of environmental standards. After you answer these questions, I may return to some of them, if possible.

Mr. Legault: Obviously, when we started to write this brief we analysed the advantages — because there are some, I mean, all the same we looked fairly objectively, we tried to weigh — and disadvantages of belonging to a federal system which has been completely overhauled because there is no question of accepting the status quo. On the other hand, we believe that the question of powers should be examined by people mandated by the Commission, who have the time to do so. We have some resources, but most of our work is done on a volunteer basis. In this respect, I would simply like to say that we have raised a number of questions; we have asked more questions than we have given answers in our brief. We have raised questions.

Mrs. Paquin (Ginette): I'd like to answer...

Mr. Legault: Yes, Ginette would like to partly answer the question.

Mrs. Paquin: Yes, I would like to say that, in theory, the decentralization of various powers to the regions should happen one day, and that's fine. However, in purely practical terms in the immediate future, I feel that it's perhaps not ideal from an environmental standpoint, insofar as decentralizing powers without changing values at present may be hard to achieve as I am not entirely sure that all of the regions of Québec are currently aware of the scope of environmental problems. We would need general laws in Québec to protect the environment, because we have the example of the RCMs. It would seem... I have been told that the application is not

uniform throughout Québec. Some RCMs have made progress in the environmental field; others have made little progress. There are examples of that. I believe that what is important, while we wait for values to change, is that protection be provided through legislation, that province-wide legislation provide protection.

Mr. Gauvin: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like my colleague, Mr. Dutil, minister responsible for the Chaudière-Appalaches region, to ask the group a question.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): With pleasure, Mr. Gauvin. Please proceed, Mr. Dutil.

Mr. Dutil: In your brief, you discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the current Federation. You have just said that the status quo is unsatisfactory. I would like to know whether you feel that the Meech Lake Accord would have been sufficient and, if the status quo is not good enough, how we can change it. This is the crux of the problem facing us. We did not obtain Meech Lake. How can we obtain Meech Lake plus, as this is what you are demanding in your brief?

Mr. Legault: Meech Lake was the minimum, which Canada rejected, and indeed it was the minimum for Québec. Canada rejected Québec under Meech Lake. With regard to the environment, I believe there are numerous questions which are still up in the air in Québec and in Canada as a whole. An environmental plan of action has been announced, but it has raised many questions.

Unfortunately, this morning we did not have the time to analyse what has been decided in the environmental plan of action in order to speak at greater length about it. Perhaps Mr. Stainier will have some comments on this matter. We worked on our brief, an environmental plan. Of course, you will raise points which coincide with political and jurisdictional matters, with problems related to the sharing of powers. We said to ourselves: At present, too little attention is paid to the environment. If a political change occurs, we want Québec at least to maintain what has been achieved in the past.

We won't be satisfied with less than we already have. We want what has already been achieved and much more again. We want what has already been achieved and much more again. We are seeking an ecosociety, including fundamental values which are also cultural values, I mean that they be discussed, debated and adopted in a charter or in legislation, because the charter will have an impact on regulations and legislation.

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

Mr. Dutil: You tell us what you want, but not how you think we can achieve it. This will be a problem.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine.

Mrs. Paquin: Perhaps I could add something to that. We talk about repatriating jurisdiction over the environment. As far as we are concerned, this is the aspect that interests us the most. However, we say to ourselves: What point is there in repatriating jurisdiction over the environment if we fail to change our perspective, that is, if we pursue our current production-based policies, continue to dilapidate our resources, and continue to supply raw materials to the United States? I mean, if that's the future of Québec then sovereignty is all very well, but we don't want just any sovereignty. We want a country that is aware that some resources are not inexhaustible, indeed are in danger of being exhausted at present.

Our current economic and development policies pose threats to the environment. We would like to participate actively in decision-making in the realm of economic policy, which should be reviewed, because the Québec government's economic policy is more or less worthwhile. We would not be especially pleased to see Québec achieve sovereignty while pursuing an economic development policy centred on natural resource extraction. If we take an active part in decision-making respecting the Québec government's economic development policy, if we are consulted on the matter, we would be more inclined to favour sovereignty because, at least, we would be certain to be involved in the process, not excluded from it.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Thank you, Mrs. Paquin. We now turn to Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, at the beginning of your presentation you stated that Québec is experiencing an historic moment and, like most members of the Commission, I believe, I agree with you. You feel that the deliberations and mandate of this Commission provide the ideal opportunity to establish the foundation of values which should underlie a social blueprint. For you, this means sustainable development.

On page 11 of your brief you state: Analyse the consequences of possible choices. The Conseil believes it is necessary to undertake an overall environmental assessment of the consequences of both major constitutional options on the quality of life and the environment in Québec.

I find the environmental line of thinking is often global, something of a leveller, and that it negates to some extent cultures and

nationalisms. And while I agree with you that the broadest possible cooperation is essential to protect the environment – it used to be said that clouds know no boundaries, nor do waterways, and acid rain even less so – don't you think that the first bodies interested in ensuring environmental protection, were they properly informed, would normally be local governments? Here is my question: What importance do you attach to safeguarding cultures and peoples? Do you not draw a parallel between the importance of safeguarding peoples and cultures in the same way you advocate protecting animal species?

Quite simply, I feel that if it is important to save blue whales because they would affect ecological balance, is it not just as important to save cultures, languages and peoples? If we had been more vigilant in protecting Native cultures, if such cultures had preserved more vitality, would Native peoples not have compelled us to respect the territory? I feel that your viewpoint does not sufficiently integrate various human and ecological aspects.

Mr. Legault: Mr. Chairman. I acknowledge that you are right. Fine. Our brief was, as I noted earlier, prepared in the limited time available. The Commission did not provide the group with resources, and we worked hard on the brief in the evening. All the same, we said that, between achieving the ideal and doing what we can, we did what we could.
(12:45 p.m.)

Your question is an eminently cultural one and, in my opinion, the environmental question is also highly cultural, touching among other things on environmental education. In our view, the environment is human beings living in a biological, physical, cultural, social, economic and political context. We must obviously work through and for the regions. I attended a symposium in conjunction with the agreement on regional development. It was very interesting and I let that dimension go because I feel there is an agency representing regional development; I also believe it is able to make useful, relevant recommendations. However, with regard to the discrepancy between what you say and the brief, I entirely agree with you about the environment. Among other things, I think we must consider Native peoples. We have overlooked them, and must include them in our viewpoints and keep them in mind when considering the environment.

Mrs. Blackburn: I am not just thinking about Native peoples but about Quebecers. What might their disappearance mean, in the immediate future, in terms of the equilibrium of the human race, the disappearance of a people and a culture, whatever it may be? I wanted to place it in this perspective.

Mrs. Paquin: Allow me to say that I do not believe in the disappearance of Quebecers. I think that if we take charge of the situation, that is, if there is a political force to defend our ideas, to defend what we want to defend, our culture, if Quebecers are armed, and we are increasingly so, in terms of education, knowledge, and economic and other abilities, and if we show self-confidence, and possess a political force, I don't think we'll disappear.

Mrs. Blackburn: But isn't sovereignty the most effective way to safeguard Québec culture and Quebecers, bearing in mind Ottawa's interference? I won't go into that again. Perhaps one final question, Mr. Chairman, because I know time is running out...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, but quickly.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yesterday you presented an important program to the Commission. You said: They will have to hold at least three forums, at least one of them a travelling forum and concluded that we should adopt an integrated development policy in 1991. This means that you feel that the Commission's deliberations should conclude by the end of 1991 and you didn't take a stand on the option. I repeat my question: In your view, are you drawing a parallel and would it be important that we achieve sovereignty in order to save our culture, preserve it, and help it develop?

Mr. Legault: Mr. Stainier will say a few words.

Mr. Stainier (André): In fact, I would like to return to your earlier question, which is in keeping with the one you have just asked: If there's a steamroller, it is more production-based policies and production-based economic development that is the steamroller. Concretely, here in Québec, I believe there is a very strong tie between managing the ecological environment and regional development, putting the regions to the fore and developing the regions with their differences and potential.

One of the problems, which is becoming increasingly apparent, is the growing division of Québec into two entities, the Québec of the cities, among other things, or of the centre, and the Québec of the regions. What opposes the regions and the centre, among other things, is the predominance of production-based development, while ecology-based production or conservationist production tends to focus more on another type of development which can exist alongside industrial development, that is, rural development, because, when we speak of the regions, we are speaking above all of outlying

regions, or regions without major urban centres, also called rural areas. The most striking potential of the regions is the potential of rural areas. What distinguishes rural areas? It is precisely...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Quickly, Sir.

Mr. Stainier: ...a lifestyle and method of production centred on preserving the environment, the quality of life and so on, so that one way to save the regions and achieve a more egalitarian Québec is to attach greater importance to ecology-based production or environmental production, the environment being taken to encompass not only the physical environment but the human environment, in particular the values of the residents of each region.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir.

Mrs. Blackburn: I would like to clarify one thing, Mr. Chairman, because my colleague, Mrs. Harel, will quibble with me for a week if I don't. Much is said about a Québec broken in two, in which cities and the regions are in opposition. This is not entirely accurate. I think that we should say instead that there are also undeveloped pockets in cities, which are in effect subregions...

Mr. Stainier: There are a number of dualities, but one of them...

Mrs. Blackburn: ...and which are as poor as the Gaspésie region, in fact. That is all I wanted to say, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now turn to Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, you are asking us to work together to repatriate the powers we need to ensure a viable future, and you mention employment, manpower, immigration, the environment, education, a number of fiscal measures, and regional development. I am aware of all the problems this can entail and we must find a way to repatriate these powers. However, do you think that repatriating these powers will overcome the disadvantages of federalism indicated on page 13 of your brief?

Mr. Legault: These are hard questions. I must confess that we did not have a great deal of time to review our proposals. I'm sure these questions will often be tossed back at us. Ginette, would you like to say something about this?

Mrs. Paquin: Yes. You've finished. OK.

Mr. Legault: Yes.

Mrs. Paquin: What I wanted to say was that if we repatriate jurisdiction over the environment, we want to ensure that we maintain at least the equivalent of current federal legislation, environmental protection measures and participatory procedures. Let me give you an example. At present, in the energy sector, the federal and provincial governments are passing the buck with respect to public hearings on Grande Baleine. We find this alarming. When we witness things like this, we really wonder what our politicians are doing in politics. Sometimes they have a good time... What we want is public hearings. We want an environmental assessment and public hearings, whether at the federal level for the time being, or at the provincial level.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But suppose we can round out this question with any framework we choose as a people? Don't you see another type of shared jurisdiction in the realm of the environment because - and perhaps I haven't explained it as I should have - waste is shipped without monitoring on both sides of the border. I fail to see how we can exclusively repatriate powers in the field of the environment.

Mrs. Paquin: But there, precisely... In the brief, we mentioned that we want a study to be conducted on what has been done in terms of the environment by Ottawa and by Québec, so that we can clearly ascertain what could be left in the hands of the federal government, or enshrined in agreements with what could be a federal government.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But you see, after carrying out a thorough study, some type of shared, mixed or other jurisdiction...

Mrs. Paquin: Well, agreements could be reached or...

Mr. Legault: Agreements similar to international agreements could be reached.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes, that's true.

Mr. Legault: Among others, Maine and Québec must reach agreement respecting acid rain.

Mrs. Paquin: Yes, that's very important. It think it's important perhaps because of free trade to maintain environmental links with the rest of Canada, with the other provinces, because the United States is clearly interested in our natural resources. If, at some point, we don't form a common front to preserve our

resources, we may be forced by political pressure from the U.S. government to become a supplier of raw materials. The Americans will develop their secondary sector and process the products.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I think you have raised a valid point. Thank you, Madam.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now turn to Mrs. Simard.

Mrs. Simard: Good day. In your brief, I found all these calls to change values, well... Obviously, with the adoption of the notion of sustainable development... Perhaps through education we can hope that future generations will actually be more sensitive to these questions than we were. You speak of an environmental charter as a distinct charter - I think I have understood rightly, which should be adopted following a consultation - I would like to know more about the principles underlying this charter... We can talk about an environmental charter or environmental protection, but we know that there is considerable debate about principles. Everybody doesn't necessarily broach the matter in the same way. Could you clarify your project?

Mr. Legault: Basically, the environment is an individual and collective responsibility. In our view, an environmental charter would not simply protect the environment as such. It would have to be a charter which includes the duties and responsibilities of Quebecers with regard to the environment, also institutions, companies, policies, legislation, regulations and so on. So, there is a link between... In effect, we could place rights on one side of a scale, and duties and responsibilities on the other.

We think it is perhaps something... I read up a bit on this matter yesterday and we haven't yet achieved this. I might mention that many countries have sought to adopt an environmental charter. From a legal standpoint, this is a fairly complex undertaking, because the environment is not like a human being, it is not an entity in itself. But... I mean one that can be protected legally and in the same fashion. In our view, the charter should be based on duties, responsibilities and rights. This means the rights of future generations, because we often talk about our own rights, but what will become of the environment 50 years from now?

Mrs. Simard: Mr. Chairman. So, you are saying that this is an innovative concept, it is very ambitious, very interesting. Do you not think it would be easier to achieve this end if Québec repatriated all of its powers and proclaimed its sovereignty? I am asking this question very realistically, as the scope of what

you are proposing is considerable.

Mr. Legault: Our discussions within the board of directors of the CEQCA led us to conclude — we allude to the matter in our brief — that it is indeed easier to work within Québec society in order to involve everyone in ecological issues. This in no way prevents Canada from doing the same thing. Indeed, Canada and the United States have begun to do so. Insofar as working directly on societal values in Québec, there is perhaps a potential for cohesiveness and consensus. At some point, it is also a matter of collective energy. Perhaps it is easier to work at the outset within Québec. This does not prevent us from reaching agreements with Canada and other countries.

Mr. Stainier: I think that the example of the current Charter shows us that Québec was quite capable of adopting its own Charter of human rights and freedoms, not simply rallying around the Canadian Charter. What is certain — we talked about this earlier — is that there is a considerable difference between the two, tied to values which are perhaps more prevalent in Québec than in the rest of Canada. Similarly, it may well be thought that Québec would be in a position to adopt an environmental charter based on the values of Québec society.

Mrs. Courville (Louise): I would like to add that our society, which is obviously distinct in cultural terms, should become distinct in environmental terms, through a quality of life which respects the environment.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that all right, Madam?

Mrs. Simard: Listen, you know how hard it is, under the current system, to protect this distinct culture. Do you think that, under the current system, we could adopt such a distinct environmental charter, with which I do not disagree? I am posing this question realistically.

Mrs. Paquin: But we have already answered the question by saying that the current situation doesn't clearly show that we really want to protect the environment in Québec. We need some forms of protection. The charter would be one such form. If we repatriate jurisdiction over the environment and in other areas, what we are seeking is protection through the charter and through legislation and various procedures. In other words, existing procedures are at the federal level, and if we repatriate powers and they are at the federal level, we must have equivalent procedures in Québec, that is, we must take federal legislation and analyse it to

apply it in a sovereign Québec. We want to ensure that these minimal conditions... Not much has been done about the environment until now. If we look at the current situation, in terms of... the way in which we look at Québec's environmental future, we have doubts about where our leaders are taking us in this respect. That is why we are somewhat straddling the issue: we are looking at the current situation and are not pleased with it, and at the same time, we want to support sovereignty, but we want to maintain and enhance what has already been accomplished with respect to the environment.

Mrs. Courville: In fact, when our society decides to undertake the ecology conversion, it must possess the proper political means.

Mrs. Simard: Or it must adopt the political means to achieve its social blueprint.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Your time is up. Before I thank you, I would like to remind members of the Commission that a working session will follow immediately after.

Thank you to the Conseil de l'environnement de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches, to Messrs. Grenier, Stainier and Legault, Mrs. Courville and Mrs. Paquin, for your tenacity in proclaiming the importance of the environment, obviously first and foremost for our grandchildren, for all of Québec, and for everybody. Thank you very much.

An immediate working session for members of the Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 1:03 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:34 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Please take your seats. This afternoon, we will hear the Attikamek-Montagnais Council. Welcome, all of you. Mr. René Simon, please introduce the people accompanying you.

Attikamek-Montagnais Council

Mr. Simon (René): OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left, Mr. Ghislain Picard, vice-president of the Attikamek-Montagnais Council; a bit further to my left, Chief Alexander McKenzie of Schefferville; to my far left, Chief Marcel Boivin Weymontachie; to my right, Ernest Ottawa, vice-president of the bloc Attikamek; Georges Bacon, chief of La Romaine, on the Lower North Shore. We have also invited William Mathieu Marc, an elder from La Romaine, and Marie-Elda Saint-Onge, who is representing Montagnais women for this Commission.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Simon, before making your presentation, I understand that you would like to offer a prayer.

Mr. Simon: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask Mr. Mark to say the prayer.

Mr. Mark (William Mathieu): (The witness speaks in his own language.)

(Translation) I'm going to say a prayer because, usually, this is the first invocation we offer before doing important things in life. We draw our courage from this, from this symbol of our baptism.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, we call upon the Great Spirit to give us the courage and wisdom we need to do what we so strongly desire. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, I wish you all good luck.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Excuse me, Mr. Simon, a few instructions for the members of the Commission. Does everyone have a simultaneous translation device? All right, Mr. Simon, the floor is yours.

Mr. Simon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we wanted to do this afternoon is perhaps...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Excuse me, Mr. Simon, just a minute. I want to make sure that everyone knows how to turn on their apparatus. It isn't automatic, you have to turn it on for it... OK? Go ahead.

Mr. Simon: OK, Mr. Chairman. What we wanted to do, let's say, in making our presentation to the Commission, was to speak Montagnais during the 10 minutes allotted to us. We will do so for the simple reason that this is our language. We will use both languages, Attikamek and Montagnais. We will do so because I know for a fact that certain people, certain populations, are listening to us and following this Commission on Québec's constitutional future very closely. Thirdly, I think that this is a Native concept which is very important to us, since we know full well that many comments are made about aboriginal people to the effect that several groups have lost their mother tongue. This afternoon, I think we will show that our language is still alive. Fourthly, we have come here for the express purpose of presenting our viewpoint to the members of the Commission. I think that the outcome, the results of this Commission... We perhaps wanted to show that, if the members of the Commission as such decide on a form of sovereignty, a form of independence, we believe, as Montagnais and Attikamek, that it will be necessary, I think, to negotiate jurisdictions, and negotiate in our

capacity as aboriginals, with representatives of the various levels of government and, in particular, the provincial government. I will now continue in Montagnais.

Today, we are appearing before the Commission, at this table; this is not the first time we have engaged in this exercise. When we speak here about the provincial government... We have presented briefs on several occasions to discuss our rights, to discuss our future, when our fellow Montagnais citizens were involved, and those of you who are present here today are undoubtedly well aware of this. This is why we are presenting our brief here today. We think that it is very important to hear your concept of self-determination, when you talk about government, about sovereignty as you perceive it. We have come here. We want to deliver the message that, regardless of the position you adopt once your work is complete, you must remember that we are here, that we're from Québec, and that we've been here for hundreds of years now.

When you talk about your rights, about the sovereignty you would like to achieve, when you talk about the paths you would like to follow, don't ever forget that aboriginal people are with you. Regardless of the direction taken by the government, we will always maintain our position, as we did long ago. On several occasions, we have seen this position called into question, when the governments of Ottawa or Québec were involved. Regardless of the position you adopt, we won't be able to take a position, to tell you that we're happy or unhappy with your position. But we ask you to consider the path we have followed, what we would like to become, and to try and understand what we will become in the future.

We don't want to... We aren't falling on our knees before you, but we're repeating that, regardless of the position adopted by this Commission, we would like you to say, to declare that you asked aboriginal people to present their position. This is the message I wanted to deliver to you. I now give the floor to Ghislain Picard, who is beside me.

Mr. Picard (Ghislain): (The witness speaks in his own language.)

(Translation) Gentlemen of the Commission, I too am very pleased to be here. If we look at our origins, our culture as we have lived it, we certainly understand what you are doing today... why we have always respected, in the past and still today, what you are trying to achieve, the hopes that you cherish, you Quebecers. We know full well that, for several years, ever since you've been here, you have destroyed our territories and have been destroying us, as a result.

As Chief Rémy Kurtz told you, we have had to take stock of our own situation in talking about sovereignty and the way in which

we perceive our own sovereignty. But we've also had to consider... our situation is somewhat special with regard to sovereignty. All of you present here, Gentlemen of the Commission, when you have completed your mission, when you know which direction, which form of government you will adopt... We, for our part, have known for a long time what form of government we would like to have because we have always had this conviction, and, as long as we're here, we will all try to obtain what we need to turn our convictions into reality... how to keep our land.

(3:45 p.m.)

It musn't be forgotten that we have children, that our children will have children, and that we have grown up and been educated by our elders. As far as we're concerned, there's never been any question that we should call into question the territory currently discussed by the various levels of government. We are so sure of this... we're even more convinced that we too should have our own form of government now, and our government will come from our territory and our fellow citizens.

You form a fairly large, a very large group. You have ideas and hopes and you don't have any obstacles. And I think that you're capable of understanding the position we would like to adopt, and I want you to believe us. We're telling you that, as far as we're concerned, there will not be any obstacles. Nevertheless, it's distressing to realize that the situation isn't quite what we'd hoped it would be. But this won't deter us. Perhaps it's true when people say that, for far too many years now, we've been depending on the federal government, those who gave us the tools to... And we're still using these tools today. All of them come from the federal government, regardless of whether they're good or bad. And I don't think I'm very wrong when I say that these tools have served us fairly well.

But, today, as we're here, we no longer have anything we can depend on. We can't depend on what you're now offering us, what you're presenting... What we've managed to obtain from the government to date has helped us to a certain extent. It has had a palliative effect. It might be compared to a pill that brings relief but doesn't cure. In our present situation, we hope for only one thing; we hope for a complete cure. It's by following this approach that we'll achieve self-determination, sovereignty.

Mr. Ottawa (Ernest): Thank you, René. I would first like to greet the members of this Commission in your language, in French. I recognize several of you. Some, like Mr. Libman, are newer to public life, and so I would like to greet all of you.

I would also like to address you in Attikamek for a few minutes.

(Translation) Essentially, our blueprint for

society is based on two fundamental principles: our ancestral land and our identity as a people or a nation.

As a people, we are different from you. We have our culture, our language and all the other possible components of a nation, a nation with highly satisfactory, intrinsic values which, moreover, have enabled us to resist, to date, all the attempts that have been made over the years to assimilate us in many ways. We have a territory in which we have always lived, a territory for which we have tremendous respect and for which we feel responsible. This territory possesses us as a nation and as individuals. We belong to one another. Some of us, those who have lived longer, our elders, even say that we belong to this territory.

It's on the basis of this concept, among other things, that we intend to settle this land dispute, which concerns us, with you. We're prepared to do anything to save it. If it would help us, we're even prepared to apply some of your concepts. We sincerely believe that you want the same thing as we do in this land dispute, that is, to work out a mutually acceptable social agreement. For the purposes of this Commission, I'm prepared to follow your procedure, that is, questions.

I've finished, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is it now time for the question period?

Mr. Ottawa: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will begin with the Opposition parliamentary group. Mr. Perron.

Mr. Perron: Mr. Chairman, I of course would like to welcome the Attikamek-Montagnais representatives and thank them for having presented their brief. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. René Simon, a Montagnais, on his election as president of the Attikamek-Montagnais Council. The brief you have presented to us deals with several sectors of activity: the economic, legal, political, social, and cultural sectors. Mr. Chairman, everyone and, in particular, the Attikamek-Montagnais, knows that white people outnumber Native people in Québec. But this doesn't mean that governments should continue acting as they have done for the past few, if not 25 to 30, years. Moreover, as a nation, we absolutely must conclude negotiated, signed agreements, in order to live in harmony as the nation of Québec in the future.

In their brief, Mr. Chairman, the Attikamek and Montagnais describe how the relationship between aboriginal people and their ancestral territory is threatened by development projects, in particular, hydroelectric projects,

drawn up by the various levels of government. I would like the Attikamek-Montagnais to explain – since the size of the territory people talk about varies – could you please describe the size of the ancestral territory you're referring to?

Mr. Simon: Mr. Chairman, to answer Mr. Perron, in the framework of our land claims, and I think this is also part of the normal procedure for settling the land dispute between Native people and the Government party... In 1975-1976, we interviewed old trappers about the area traditionally occupied by the Montagnais and the Attikamek. This territory covers 400 000 square kilometres. It includes the upper St. Maurice and the Gouin reservoir, continues through Lac-Saint-Jean, up the North Shore and the Lower North Shore as far as the Labrador border. And to the north, it extends toward Schefferville. The land claim submitted to the federal government in 1978-1979 covers, let's say, 400 000 square kilometres.

Mr. Perron: Mr. Chairman, I understand that, for the Montagnais and Attikamek to justify their land claim, the government, in fact, asked them to identify which areas had been previously occupied by Montagnais and Attikamek people. Subsequent negotiations will be conducted on this basis. This doesn't mean that you want to have 75% or 60% of the territory of Québec.

Mr. Simon: That's correct, Mr. Perron. I think it's as I explained to you, let's say, at the beginning of my answer. This is the procedure that we're following, let's say, with the federal government, whereby, if we want to make a land claim, we must prove to the federal government that the area has been traditionally occupied by Montagnais and Attikamek hunters. Once the federal government has completed its study, it replies, if in the affirmative, that the group may enter into negotiations with the province concerned, namely, the Québec government in this case, and the federal government.

Mr. Perron: Thank you, Mr. Simon. Another no less important question, but one that deals with the issue of rights. As president of the AMC, can you tell us, or perhaps someone else can do so for you, if you prefer, can you tell us which aboriginal rights should be recognized in the future Québec constitution? And, before you answer, before you start to reply, I'd like to point out that the white people of Québec, the Québec government, and the vast majority of Quebecers recognize that there are now 11 Native peoples in Québec.

Mr. Simon: What we've discussed, let's say,

as a group... I know that we've had around two meetings to discuss the Commission on Québec's constitutional future, two meetings with the Attikamek-Montagnais chiefs, where precisely these points came up.

I think we expect, let's say, that Québec, as I said in my introduction... if, let's say, sovereignty were ever proposed, and then, let's say, it's possible that Québec would become independent, I mean that, as people of Québec, the least we might ask of the government would perhaps be what we have now obtained from the federal government, except that the points that were submitted to the federal government, the points that have been agreed to by the federal government, let's say, in the Canadian Constitution, are points that we find very vague. In other words, practically speaking, what exactly is meant by ancestral rights granted by treaties or future agreements? I think that we find these concepts very vague.

(4:00 p.m.)

What we might perhaps demand from the Québec constitution is that these points be clarified, let's say, before preliminary talks begin. In other words, that we have a sound basis for discussion and that principles are well accepted at the government level, principles, let's say, that would be acceptable for both parties, both the Native and government parties.

Mr. Perron: OK. In that case, you're talking about sections 25, 35 and 37 of the current Canadian Constitution and, in particular, sections 25 and 35.

Mr. Simon: That's right.

Mr. Perron: OK, another question, Mr. Chairman. In the brief, considerable emphasis was placed on the question of political autonomy. Would you please explain what powers a future, autonomous Native government would have, according to the principles you have already established and already started discussing with the government?

Mr. Simon: Let's say that, as far as negotiations are concerned, Mr. Perron, as for the negotiations we have begun with the Québec government and the federal government, I think that two important points have emerged, which, in our opinion, are fundamental, let's say. There's the notion of territory. This is the first point which I think must be clarified at the negotiating table.

The second point, which is related, in fact, to the whole concept of territory, is, I think, the concept of language and the maintaining of traditions. And, for us, this is fairly important in discussing the autonomy which Native people would like to obtain.

I think that the points which have often

been discussed during parliamentary commissions or on other occasions where we have had to indicate our position, to present our viewpoint to the various levels of government... I think it's the way... At the moment, I think that the various levels of government are trying to obtain a clear definition of what Native autonomy would be, and I'm speaking in terms of the Attikamek-Montagnais people.

As far as negotiations are concerned, the approach we currently advocate... what we said is that, regardless of the form of autonomy we choose, I think that certain conditions must be established beforehand and that they must be acceptable to all parties concerned. At present, I think that it's the land issue which is most important to us. If we want to be autonomous as a Montagnais or Attikamek government, I think that we must have a territorial base in order to establish the economic and financial bases we currently lack. I mean, with all the subsidies we can obtain from the various levels of government... With this approach, I think that we also tend to eliminate all the negative approaches or points, let's say, that emerge when various people talk about aboriginal people - the fact that we're on welfare, etc.

I think that we have a territory. In fact, if I adhere to the Native or Montagnais concept, I think that the Montagnais and the Attikamek are talking about a territory that belongs to them. However, this territory has never belonged to us, precisely because of the various jurisdictions, both federal and provincial, which overlap. Therefore, what we now want, I think, is to obtain recognition for the territory we want to negotiate - I don't mean the entire territory, I think that this should be negotiated - once this territory has been recognized, I think we'll be ready, as Native people, to eliminate the tax and other burdens for which we are now criticized. I think that we're currently trying to obtain this basic condition in order to be able to develop what we have. At present, band councils have a certain degree of autonomy, but they're still under the jurisdiction of the federal government. And this is why we're negotiating.

Mr. Perron: OK. Fine. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Two specific points have been raised by what you said. The first is that, if we recognize land rights, whereby you, as a nation, become the exclusive owners, you'll be well equipped to study possible modes of funding. Since we're talking about territory which might allow the Attikamek-Montagnais to obtain a source of funding, through either economic or cultural endeavours, etc., could you give us some examples of how aboriginal people could finance themselves in this type of territory? And, a second question: Would you be ready, with regard to the rest of the territory of

Québec - which would not be included in the agreements to be signed - to participate in managing, to a certain extent, a large share of the remaining territory?

Mr. Simon: Very well, Mr. Perron. Earlier, I mentioned the approach that we advocate. I think that, as far as possible, what we're trying to do as Attikamek-Montagnais, is to break away from a notorious ghetto, where people say: OK, you're Natives, you're Montagnais, you're under the aegis of Québec taxpayers...

Mr. Perron: Legal ghetto.

Mr. Simon: Legal ghetto, tax ghetto or financial ghetto...

Mr. Perron: That's right.

Mr. Simon: We're under the aegis of Quebecers. At the moment, it's taxpayers, let's say, who support the aboriginal people. Our concept is, what we're saying is: Recognize our territories, grant us some degree of jurisdiction, or let's negotiate some degree of jurisdiction. Then, I think, we'll be able, as Native people, to collect royalties and also provide for taxes, if ever we're able to negotiate by mutual agreement or in good faith with the various levels of government concerned. We're not saying that we want to have the entire 400 000 square kilometres, but that we need certain basic conditions to work out the type of government we want.

As for your second question, it's related, I think, to what I just said. We don't want, let's say, the entire 400 000 square kilometres. We've never talked about full ownership either. I don't think there's any such thing as an Indian concept of property. It's much more a case of saying: This is Montagnais territory. Except that I think the resources located there should be shared. And we're not talking about joint management. We can talk about it... The main thing we're seeking, I think, is joint jurisdiction. Let's negotiate with the various levels of government in good faith. If jurisdiction must be shared, whether in the framework of sovereignty or independence, I think that we can do so. In that case, if we obtain joint jurisdiction - this is what we want - I think that joint management will follow.

Mr. Perron: Mr. Campeau, just one short comment.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): A very short one!

Mr. Perron: Yes. Mr. Chairman, I find it a pity that we don't have more time than this, because the AMC is really a very large

Attikamek-Montagnais organization, and many questions could be asked to clarify certain points. Nevertheless, I would not only like to thank you for the explanations you have given us, but also say that I most ardently wish that, one day, as Quebecers and white people's representatives, we will be able to sign agreements together with all the aboriginal people of Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. We will now hear Mr. Turgeon, who will be followed by Mr. Deschamps and Mr. Jacques Bertrand.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to ask you whether you make a distinction between Quebecers' self-determination and that of the Attikamek and Montagnais.

Mr. Simon: I think, Mr. Turgeon, that the two concepts are similar. I remember that, when I was young, people always talked about the concept of self-determination in their capacity as Montagnais or Attikamek. But I think that the ideology born of the sovereignty proposed by Quebecers is precisely the concept currently expressed by both Quebecers and the Attikamek-Montagnais. I think the two are similar.

Mr. Turgeon: As for the negotiations that you would like to begin with the Québec government, when do you see these negotiations taking place? Before, supposing that Québec achieves sovereignty, or do you have confidence in Québec and think that they could take place afterwards?

Mr. Simon: What we mean is that negotiations as such... preliminary negotiations are currently under way; however, they were interrupted in February of this year, in 1990, because of points that we, as Native people, found unacceptable, in particular, the whole concept of territory as defined in the proposals made by the Québec government. This is why I think that your question is very important, in the sense that we have always advocated political negotiations. I mean that, in our opinion, the negotiations we're currently conducting with the Québec government and the federal government are administrative negotiations. In other words, Québec says to itself: I have jurisdiction over territory, I have jurisdiction in certain public sectors; what do you want as aboriginal people? What do you want as Attikamek-Montagnais? I think we find this unacceptable. I think that two groups which have come before this Commission have, in fact, asked you to treat Natives as equals, as a nation, and this is what were currently aiming for.

Mr. Turgeon: Like Max Gros-Louis, is what you're asking for a bit like... is it a kind of Monaco, a little Monaco?

Mr. Simon: No, Mr. Turgeon. I don't think that this is the approach we're currently advocating. What we want is to negotiate, let's say, and, I repeat, nation to nation. The concept we have in mind is that we were the first inhabitants of Québec. Let's say that Indian peoples have been stuck, have been parked in Indian reserves; in other words, Native people have never been considered dynamic. We've never been entitled to development. I mean that the reserves granted to us by federal law, by the federal Indian Act, may be five square miles or two square miles. You don't have the right to carry out development projects in them.

And when we look outside Indian reserves... if I take my own region, the Baie-Comeau-Hauterive region - and I have nothing against this region - but I note that there are several industries, Reynolds, the Québec North Shore, as well as other forest industries, in addition to the social, recreation and tourist industries.

If we try to count the number of jobs that Montagnais have in these industries... even though three rivers were harnessed there in the 1960s, I counted two permanent positions in Hydro-Québec. How much employment has this generated? None. And, yet, we always hear the same thing from the government: the negotiated sharing of resources; you'll benefit from development; if there are any negative repercussions, we'll try to correct them. Except that for us... This is why, earlier, in presenting my introduction... I've been in politics for 15 years. I don't know how many parliamentary commissions I've attended; I don't know how many times I've raised these points...

Mr. Turgeon: This is supposed to be the last time.

Mr. Simon: I hope... The results have never been what we've hoped for. I think there's another point that's important with regard to the members of this Commission. Elected representatives are sitting around this table, that is, there's the Opposition party and the so-called party in power. What we're saying about this Commission is fundamental, I think: Let's look at the situation from a political point of view; let's eliminate political parties; let's look at Quebecers and Native people and try to understand one another. I think this is the approach that should be advocated. Let's forget about the ideology embraced by the various parties here. What we need, I think, is a political commitment from the Québec government, whether from the Parti québécois, the

Liberals or another party.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now hear Mr. Deschamps.

Mr. Deschamps: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Gentlemen. I attended the session in Lac-Saint-Jean where Chief Rémy Kurtness made an excellent presentation on behalf of, I think, the Mashteuiatsh. I think that this was the expression used by the Pointe-Bleue group. Of course, his presentation was very similar to yours with regard to the desire of aboriginal people for self-determination in Québec.

In listening to the members of the Commission, in particular, in Jonquière, I felt there was a certain consensus about this right, which didn't seem to be called into question. I adhere to this principle and, as a follow-up to Mr. Turgeon's questions, I would like you to explain a bit more fully one of the basic principles mentioned on page 5 of your document, which, of course, you're familiar with.

In item 6, at the bottom of the page, you say: "their right to fully participate at the government level, through representatives chosen by them, in the making and execution of decisions related to all questions of national and international interest likely to change their life and destiny." This is very general. Are you proposing that there be would be elected Native representatives who would take part in the debates of the Québec Parliament, or would this involve a new structure, with a senate? Can you explain how you view this condition? (4:15 p.m.)

Mr. Simon: I think, as you said, that this point was raised by the Chief of Pointe-Bleue, Rémy Kurtness. And, as you said, this point is very general. In the current framework of the discussions held during this Commission, I think that these points are very hypothetical. And I would like to go back to a point I raised earlier, namely, that if there's a political will on the part of elected representatives, the representatives of the various sectors of activity, and Quebecers as a whole to have frank, open discussions with the aboriginal people of Québec, who are, with Quebecers, the founders of this territory, I think that it will be necessary to elaborate on these points.

At the moment, I don't think we know what the outcome of this Commission will be. Will it be full sovereignty? Will it be sovereignty-association with the rest of Canada? These are the questions we're asking ourselves as aboriginal people. If we face the fact that sovereignty is indeed advocated, that political sovereignty is advocated by the Québec

government, I think that it will be necessary to sit down with the aboriginal people and discuss these points: the representation we request, the recognition of aboriginal people at various levels of government. In discussing the resources of other areas, we should say to ourselves: There are two peoples in Québec: Quebecers and aboriginal people; the points that have been brought up, that have been raised by the aboriginal people should be taken into account, and the various levels of government should realize that these points are important. And, as I mentioned earlier, I think that these are hypothetical cases, but, if political sovereignty is achieved, I would like the political question to also be discussed with aboriginal people, with the Attikamek and the Montagnais.

Mr. Deschamps: Excuse me, perhaps, for going back to this question, but am I to understand that you still haven't made up your mind about this issue and that, instead, you're waiting to see what happens so as to be able to make more concrete demands?

Mr. Simon: Let's say that the idea of having an elected representative as suggested at Pointe-Bleue... I think that these are all hypothetical situations that could be discussed. In our organization, we have proposed that an ongoing commission on Native affairs might be the best solution in the event of political sovereignty. But not a commission - I don't want to deprecate this Commission - but a permanently recognized commission that would be accepted by the government at another level, perhaps at a neutral level where, precisely, the question of aboriginal people and the government... there would be contact or ongoing discussions to settle the various grievances brought before this Commission. It's a suggestion.

Mr. Deschamps: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Jacques Bertrand.

Mr. Bertrand: Mr. Chairman, I had two questions. The first will now seem banal, since the second has already been answered following one from Mr. Perron. But I'd like to ask it anyway. On page 14 of your brief, Mr. Simon, you say that the governments are seeking to orient the negotiations towards present needs and not towards the future needs of your nation, of your nations, and on page 8 you mention the population of 12 communities, that is, more or less 4000 Attikameks and 11 000 Montagnais. Mr. Picard, in his presentation earlier, said that he had children and that his children would have children. Therefore, I became interested in the demographic evolution

of your people. I would like to know how your population has evolved in the past, and what the prospects are for the future, because I think it's important for you to establish that for the purposes of your territorial needs.

Mr. Simon: Let's say that, at the present time, what I can give you as a reference... We submitted a brief in 1983 and another in 1986, here in Québec City; in 1986, the population totalled 12 000. Here we are in 1990. There has been a 3000 increase. That gives you, let's say, perhaps not a precise idea, but at least the growth rate of the aboriginal population.

As for the point you raised earlier, I know that claim is being laid to a certain part of the ancestral Attikamek-Montagnais territory. And that, that's the point I raised earlier, meaning that in the relations, the negotiations, also with the governments, what we are trying to advance, I think, is to tell the Indians to stay where they are, and not move. You are not evolving with the times. And that, that is a point that is bothering us now. I think that these are points we shall have to have clarified with the negotiators from both orders of government. I think that what people are trying to tell us is: Stay parked on your reserves. You are not evolved people, and you will never evolve. The reserves we give you are enough for your people. Except that, as you say...

Mr. Bertrand: You see further.

Mr. Simon: ...there are generations coming forth. We are a dynamic people; we see evolution, too. We want to evolve in the same sense that Québec society is evolving. These are important points. If we refer to history, I mean the first documents that came out of the governments, there has always been mention, by Quebecers, of colonization. We have always ceded territories for colonization purposes. There have been the industrial era, the post-industrial era, and the technological era, and the Indians are told: No, stay in the fishing, hunting and trapping era. Don't touch anything that has development overtones. That is why I am saying that it is perhaps a static approach, per se, fixed in time. What we are demanding is an evolutive approach, a dynamic approach, too.

Mr. Bertrand: Thank you, Mr. Simon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if this Commission had sat last year, I don't know what our attitude would have been. Today, the collective conscience is

becoming much more sensitive, at times, because of unfortunate crises. I hope that this summer's crisis has woken us up for good. That is something that is very important to realize. Mr. Simon, I understand your apprehension at the thought of steps toward independence that many Quebecers are now taking. And, on page 6 of your brief, you ask questions that are of interest not only about the aboriginal people of Québec, but also the linguistic, ethnic and other types of minorities, in the event Québec does become independent.

I shall refer to a couple of sentences on page 6. You say: "What will happen, however, if Québec chooses its own constitutional future? What will happen to the obligations towards the aboriginal peoples that are now imposed on Québec by the Canadian Constitution?" Well, I presume that you are against, or are concerned about, certain major constitutional changes. So, my question is: If we drop out of the Canadian Federation, do you believe in the same solicitude on the part of a sovereign Québec government as at the time the May 20, 1985 resolution was adopted, a resolution that officially recognized rights for the aboriginal peoples of Québec?

Mr. Simon: I shall answer part of the question. I feel that, as aboriginal people, as Attikamek-Montagnais, it matters little what the outcome of this Commission is. We certainly do not want to presume the future actions of the government that will be elected at that time. Except that the discussion begun here, with this Commission, I think it affects all levels of Québec society, whether elected officials, the Québec people in general, or the minorities. And, for us, as aboriginal people, I think that it is an element, a questioning exercise, too, that is fundamental. And that is exactly why we decided to come and give our position to this Commission. We are asking you questions, asking you not to forget the aboriginal aspect of the matter.

It matters little what the outcome of this Commission is; it will be said, well: There are Native people in Québec, we lived through an Amerindian crisis, what solution will a future government put forward? What elements will be included in a future Québec constitution? This is the type of question we have in our minds. And there is no answer. That's why I was telling you that all these questions that can be asked here, they're all hypothetical, because of the very fact that we do not know the outcome of this Commission. Except that, what we are telling you, as the Attikamek-Montagnais Nation, is: Don't forget the Native people; don't forget the Attikamek-Montagnais. And, if there is an opportunity to sit down at a table, do it with a full political conscience, with the full commitment of elected politicians.

Mr. Libman: But the fact that you are asking these questions, that means, I presume, that the Canadian Federation, with all the advantages it offers you, with all the advantages, the obligations that exist, serves you well and you fear the possibility of losing these obligations. Is that what I can presume by the fact that you are asking these questions?

Mr. Simon: I think that, as far as the Canadian Federation is concerned, partial answers have been brought before this Commission. The Canadian Constitution of 1867, I think, specifies very well, in section 91.24, that lands reserved for Indians come under federal jurisdiction, except that there have been amendments since then. I shall go further. When we look at the aboriginal concept, I mean for us, there are no frontiers. For us there are no territorial limits, there is no cut-off point. We maintain relations with the Indians of the United States. We have relations with the Indians in the rest of Canada. That is why we tell ourselves that Canada belongs to all aboriginal people, because it's our country. Except that, in the meantime, the governments have developed, the federal government among others; the provinces indeed have developed. They have given themselves certain jurisdictions, except that these are points that will have to be clarified if ever a sovereign approach is promoted or if there is an approach that they are promoting that comes out of this Commission. I think these are all elements to which we shall have to return.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Now for Mrs. Simard.

Mrs. Simard: Mr. Chairman, good afternoon. I think that what is very interesting, reading your brief, what comes out of it, is that you know very well what you want. I think that is important to dissipate all the ambiguity surrounding the aboriginal nations' claims. In the claims for political autonomy, we can see very well that in the questioning, and in what you are stating, that can take various forms, effectively, depending on the different nations. That, too, is interesting. You also say that it is extremely important to take the necessary steps to inform people. That, in my opinion, is also fundamental, especially after having lived through what we all did last summer. Perhaps I'm wrong; tell me if I am, but in reading the brief and in listening to you, you do not seem to be afraid, to say the least, of the sovereignty option, if that were Québec's choice. You may answer me if such is not the case. At any rate, that is the impression that I got when I read your brief.

I would like you to elaborate a little on

which rights, for the aboriginal nations, you would like to see enshrined in that constitution, if there is one, in an ultimately sovereign Québec.

Mr. Picard: I feel that, speaking of rights, Mr. Simon went into them quite thoroughly earlier, as did the communities of Mashteuiatsh in Jonquière and the communities of Vashat Maliotenam in Sept-Îles. Perhaps that gives a partial answer to the question put by Mr. Libman earlier. Certainly, we shall never agree to backstep on anything that exists at present in terms of protecting those rights. On that point, reference was made to the Canadian Constitution which already provides things for the Native people. On that score, as Mr. Simon said earlier, it is still quite vague, and we need to get down to specifics. As a matter of fact, that is what we have been doing for 10 years now, from the time the CAM, the Conseil atikamek-montagnais, agreed to negotiate with both orders of government. Unfortunately, it is still a process that takes time. The proof of that is that, in 10 years, discussions have been put off twice. (4:30 p.m.)

On that point, as Mr. Simon said earlier, rights are specific to us; these are the rights to full, entire, political autonomy. This is what we want. Obviously, through the negotiation process, we will stumble over obstacles, but we can accept that; it is the very negotiation process that will make it possible to better specify these rights. This is the commitment we have made with the two levels of government. We don't like to think of the negotiation in terms of losers or winners because, for us, the point is much more to remedy something that we find has been a stumbling block during Québec and Canadian history. That is what we want, in the end.

Mrs. Simard: Mr. Chairman, this negotiation process, actually, which is on an equal-to-equal footing and that you are demanding, would you see it enshrined in some sort of master agreement, or ongoing negotiation in the end?

Mr. Picard: It's much more a negotiation that should be on an equal-to-equal footing, rather. There, I think that we have championed principles that consist, and here I'm getting to your question, in having adopted in any eventual agreement a certain flexibility, so that we, as a group, and the governments, too, can revise these agreements over the years to make it possible to readjust them according to the political and geographical situations, in fact all situations that might arise over time. That was a principle that we fostered in the present negotiations, except that I would say we didn't go far enough in the discussions to know whether that can be acceptable.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Simard. I shall turn the floor over to Mr. Sirros.

Mr. Sirros: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, in turn, should like to welcome Mr. Simon and the other representatives of the CAM. Several questions have been asked which make it possible to bring more and more specifics into the discussions, or the preoccupations rather, that are imposed on us. I must say too that both previous briefs, in Jonquière and in Sept-Îles, have just the same, I think, tamed, in a manner of speaking, the members of the Commission as regards the contents of your brief as well. I would like us to share our thoughts a bit, have discussions or exchanges on the approaches we could take to manage to liquidate, if that term can be used, the difficult points left in the air in relations between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people. Let me explain. I think that there are two levels of intervention we should establish, and I would like your opinion on that. On the one hand, there are the more specific discussions we should have and maintain with specific nations, with each of the 11 nations, if necessary. But there must also be points in common. There are surely points in common. We can see them emerging more and more in each brief that is presented, points that meet the concerns of all the nations, that preoccupy all the nations. Could you identify for me a few of these concerns, that we could call global concerns, concerns that preoccupy all the aboriginal nations, whether they are Montagnais, Attikamek, Cree, etc.?

Mr. Simon: I shall try to respond, Mr. Sirros. I think that at the level... I don't want to speak for the other nations, but if I base my statements on my experience at the meetings I've had with other nations, I think there is the concept of... it's still the concept that is put forward by all the nations, the right to self-determination. That right, I think it is linked to the territorial concept, and that, all the nations, except perhaps the nations, let's say, that have signed agreements with the Québec and federal governments, I think that, for them, it is a point that is perhaps settled, but I think that, overall, if I refer to the other nations, it is still the key point, the whole concept of self-determination that is linked to the territorial concept. The whole question, too, of the relations that we are having now with the federal government: the famous Indian Act. These are all, I think, amendments that are to be brought forward or discussed, at least as far as we are concerned, let's say, as Native people. These points are common, I think, to all the aboriginal nations.

Mr. Sirros: Will you add to that the whole

question of economic development as you mentioned earlier? Because that too, more and more, I hear it everywhere. And I must say that, regardless of the side of the House we're on, we can only be in agreement with the need for the aboriginal people to be able to participate in the economic development of their surroundings, of their regions, of their territories, call them what you will. And when you mention that there are two people from the Montagnais nation who are taking advantage of jobs in the Sept-Îles region, it seems clear to me that, independently of any great philosophical discussions we could have, we can do something at the level, we should do something, at any rate, at the level of, whether training of manpower, whether the participation of people in economic development. But is economic development, per se, also a concern of all the aboriginal nations, that could also be the object of discussions with all of them?

Mr. Simon: I think that the point I made early, Mr. Sirros, when I was speaking of territories, is linked in large part to economic development. And there I am referring, let's say, to the whole notion of the development of outfitting establishments, for certain nations that have the territories they want. I think that the primary point in that is the concept of saying: OK, are the governments ready to consider as aboriginal territories, the territories that the Native people are claiming at present? And that is the stumbling block, both with Québec and with the federal government.

The federal level tells us: You have your reserves; for the rest, prove that you have occupied these territories. And when I speak of economic development, I am speaking of outfitting establishments, I am speaking of hunting and fishing, I am speaking of other sectors. That is why the aboriginal people want to claim their land. We, the Attikamek nation, what we are claiming, we say: Recognize our territories. We want to try to escape from that tax or fiscal ghetto, just what Quebecers reproach us with, saying we take advantage of the taxpayers. Recognize our territory, and we will be in a position, on the basis of the recognized jurisdiction, to levy duties and ensure our development and our tax base. And that, I think, that answers the question of economic development. What we need is a fiscal base.

Mr. Sirros: I am going to ask you a question that I have already asked others. In your opinion, is it possible within a relatively short, I should say, lapse of time, to agree at least on the items that are of concern to all, as to the problems involved in each of these concerns? Would it be possible, in your view, for

us, because we receive claims, or viewpoints as to... and we see it here too, we should do such and such a thing, or something else.

Do you think it's possible for us to agree, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, on the basis of a process that could be quick in the coming months, on the main problems on which we agree to as the starting points for discussions with the aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, on general consultations, to arrive precisely at the whole question of applying rights that are still recognized in one way or another, by the 15 principles, or that are claimed by the aboriginal people?

Mr. Simon: On that point, Mr. Sirros, I do not wish to answer for the other nations; nor do I wish to answer for the Québec government. What I wonder is, that we, with our approach, we did accept the negotiation process. And that process has been going on since 1975 or so. Now we are negotiating. So, we have been working on that for 15 years. And I also imagine that, speaking of the other nations, and as I told you I don't wish to speak, or bring up any machinery that could solve the various grievances of the other councils or nations. Let's say that I don't have the machinery per se; I think it is up to the Québec government to recognize rights, or to come to terms with the nations making claims of that very nature.

Mr. Sirros: Just one precision. I was trying to establish a distinction between the items we could discuss, which would concern all the nations, and the negotiations such as those we can continue with the CAM as to the extent of the territory to be defined, as to how we can participate in the wealth of that territory, and so forth. Can you say that, it could be said publicly, it would be possible, in your view, within a short period of time, through a process that would involve the participation of aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, to agree on some kind of document in which we could at least state that we agree to discuss such and such a thing at a global level, without going into specific things that can concern, as I was saying, each of the nations differently?

Mr. Picard: If you will allow me, Mr. Sirros. I think that in our view the problems are obvious. In our view, I mean, there is no list to be drawn up. The list still exists; it has always existed as far as we're concerned. When we speak of process, it's that, in the end, that is lacking now. It exists precisely to permit us to proceed more rapidly with the problems of which we are speaking. Furthermore, referring a bit to Mr. Libman's statement earlier, when he spoke of the 1985 resolution, obviously, that could have constituted, or that constitutes, interesting bases for continued discussions.

Except that, if there is no basis for applicability, or measures to apply such resolutions, such motions, it is an instrument that is difficult to handle, and that is what does not exist, finally, at the present time.

Mr. Sirros: Right.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that it, Mr. Sirros? In that case, your turn is now over, Sir. Mrs. Saint-Onge, Mr. Matthieu Mark, Mr. Bacon, Mr. Ottawa, Mr. Simon, Mr. Picard, Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Boivin, thank you for coming, on behalf of the Conseil Attikamek-Montagnais, to discuss your claims with us today.

Mr. Simon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We should like to thank the members, too, for having listened to us. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:43 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:47 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Pierre Fortin. Welcome, Mr. Fortin. The hearing will last one hour as you are aware and you have a maximum of 10 minutes to summarize your brief.

Mr. Pierre Fortin

Mr. Fortin (Pierre): Yes. Thank you. I am indeed honoured by the Commission's invitation, and especially to appear after the Conseil Attikamek-Montagnais, and my jurist and political scientist colleagues who appeared yesterday and this morning. I will attempt to make remarks which are somewhat complementary to those made by Mr. Dion yesterday.

Mr. Chairman, for some time an attempt has been made to turn the debate before the Commission into a popularity contest between federalism and sovereignty. In my view, the constitutional question is being diverted and we must vigorously resist this tendency. It is not a question of ascertaining in absolute terms which of the systems suits Québec the best. Quebecers have already answered the question twice and very clearly. Ten years ago they indicated that they preferred renewed federalism in order to better defend and promote the French language and culture. Since 1987, they have given the same answer: Yes to Canadian federalism, with language legislation to protect their culture, free trade to ensure economic advancement, and Meech to provide at least some measure of constitutional security.

Sovereignty in itself has not suddenly become more attractive to Quebecers; instead, it is the terms of the alternative which have changed. Quebecers have simply realized that,

for the past year, an attempt has been made to impose on them a constitution which denies Québec even the most modest means of protecting its culture. The Canadian Charter does not offer such a guarantee; at present, it is this charter which prevails. Canadians have said "no" in 1981 and again in June 1990. We have come away from both failures deeply disillusioned and outraged by the treatment meted out to us. Outside Québec, public opinion ran three to one against Meech Lake; this is an undeniable fact.

All of this has nothing whatsoever to do with ascertaining whether the federal system as it exists in Canada is preferable to sovereignty or sovereignty-association. Federalism has good and bad points. It is adaptable within certain limits and we can always live with it while waiting for something else to come along. As Mr. Lévesque used to say, it's not a goulag. The problem facing us is a strategic one. How can we obtain the power to fulfill our basic responsibility to promote French culture in Québec while respecting the English-speaking community now that we are aware that the rest of Canada is overwhelmingly hostile or indifferent, for whatever reason? The response of Quebecers is unequivocal.

First of all, they want Québec to raise its demands well beyond those of Meech Lake. In a Canada where mutual trust prevailed, one could argue that the modest demands of Meech Lake were sufficient. Now that such trust has been destroyed, we need a lot more. Second, Quebecers deem the situation to be so serious and have become so pessimistic about Québec's chances of obtaining the necessary powers under federalism that they now favour, in a two to one ratio, political sovereignty, despite their earlier unwavering support for federalism and the economic uncertainty sovereignty has always aroused in the short and long terms.

The brief I submitted to the Commission seeks to show that, without falling into the trap of the popularity contest, the threat of political sovereignty brandished by Quebecers is entirely credible economically speaking and that it must be taken very seriously. In this respect, I would like my remarks to complement those made by Mr. Dion. This message is in no way anti-federalist. It is meant, quite simply, to sound the alarm. If a federal Canada refuses or is unable to reconcile Québec's demands with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, then the jig is up.

There are many economic arguments in favour of sovereignty-association and against federalism. First, with respect to public sector management, few domains are affected by large-scale economies and inefficiency increases with size. Second, the proliferation of levels of government always engenders more waste, incoherency, irresponsibility and bickering. Third, big States act like monopolies which pay less

attention to setbacks and are less responsive than small States to the varied tastes of consumers of public services. Fourth, access to a broad economic space is still important, but increasingly, such access is ensured by the globalization of markets and international treaties, and less and less by national borders. Fifth, in the new world economy, small, flexible states which have a business class and loyal trade unions armed with government policies serving as catalysts and finely tuned to the needs of the private sector appear to be more successful at present than cumbersome states which react more slowly and are paralyzed by disagreements between interest groups and regions. Sixth, the contrast is increasingly striking between the federal government which is sinking into financial and political crisis – the current recession is a tragic illustration – and the Québec government which is prudently managing its finances and is effectively supporting a domestic economy which is less and less dependent and more and more consensual and dynamic. Without being flippant, let us ask ourselves what security the old age pension of a retired Iron Ore miner offers when the current federal deficit is \$30 billion.

For the foregoing reasons, Quebecers, supported by 85% of Québec business people, believe that a sovereign Québec is perfectly capable of benefiting from the world economy, although they also understand that it is worth preserving the integrity of the Canadian economy and financial system through a more flexible association. The statistical analysis appended to this brief shows they are right.

Over the past quarter century, three factors above all explain the differences in economic performance in 21 big, advanced industrial nations: the effect of catching up, the size of the domestic market, and social cohesiveness. Neither a federative structure nor initial participation in the ECSC by the founding members of the EEC appear to have played a significant role. In the latter instance, the community dynamic is still too recent for its impact on economic performance to be perceptible. This does not mean that it will not have a significant impact later on.

Quebecers' unwavering support since last January for sovereignty-association has not been engendered by a new enthusiasm for this option. They have said repeatedly that they prefer a modernized form of federalism. However, what other choice does the failure of Meech Lake leave them?

Often, with regret, they have opted for sovereignty for four highly practical reasons. First, their own country prohibits them from adopting the most modest means of defending their identity. The Charter and the distinct society are irreconcilable in the eyes of our Canadian partners. Second, greater decen-

tralization of the Federation is stalled by the political impossibility of achieving constitutional asymmetry because of the political impossibility of carrying on two-way negotiations under the present framework and the refusal to do so by other Canadians, even the most regionalist among them. Take a look at Alberta, for example, and see how the legitimacy of the central State is weakened by this cumbersome amending formula.

Third, Quebecers are fed up with the fruitless constitutional talks of the past 30 years. They do not wish to experience further humiliation and want to settle the matter once and for all, and as quickly as possible. As my children said this morning, we don't want to rush, but we don't want to stay tied to the umbilical cord either. Fourth, the alternative of sovereignty combined with a more flexible association with the rest of Canada is seen, increasingly, as entirely viable and even, in the eyes of some people, as economically advantageous. It is not a question of bluffing, but of a strategic plan which can be rationally implemented.

How can we settle the matter? For all of the foregoing reasons, I am skeptical about the reformability of the Canadian federal system, in relation to the even stronger demands than those under Meech Lake which Québec would establish by referendum. In practice, I support the strategy proposed by the Mouvement Desjardins. I advocate confirming our complete political autonomy and openly, firmly renegotiating as equals our economic and political association with the rest of Canada, prudently and flexibly, but without arrogance, compromise and needless delays. The current weakness of Canadian political leadership — we must mention it because the man in question is the politician who most strongly supported the Meech Lake Accord and at no time during the attendant discussions did he abandon Québec — or a lack of preparedness on the part of the rest of the country do not in any way justify delaying negotiations.

To the contrary, Québec's proactive strategy will help the new leaders make themselves known, enable everyone to take a stand and both partners to extricate themselves from the constitutional morass of the past 30 years. Once initial emotions have been calmed, the elimination of sources of controversy will inevitably produce a healthier political climate. The common economic space will be bolstered, not diminished: Montréal financiers and Toronto bankers will make more money than ever before. In five years, people will thank us for our perspicacity and decisiveness. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Fortin. We will begin the question period with Mrs. Campbell Steer. No. Well, we'll

start with Mr. Ghislain Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to thank Mr. Fortin for his presentation. I have already said it, but I prefer it when he uses his energy to defend the GST. I would like to make one comment. This is not a question on Table 1 in which the SOM-Les Affaires survey is constantly referred to, where nearly 85% of respondents said that the long-term impact of independence on Québec's economic development would be positive. I asked other pollsters to examine this table and it's true: very positive, 6; positive, 42.5. However, that gives only 48.5%. "Little impact" can also be taken to mean "little negative impact". Now "negative" and so on. Basically, what we have is an analysis that can be taken two different ways.

(5 p.m.)

My question concerns the debt, Mr. Fortin. We know that, at present, Québec's debt is equivalent to roughly 27% or 28% of GDP. If we were to assume our share of the federal debt overnight — you say that we would assume roughly 25% of it — this means that a sovereign Québec which immediately assumed its debt, because we could talk endlessly about assets, would be carrying debt equivalent to 75% of Québec GDP. On page 13 of your brief you indicate that this would not be a problem: "Be that as it may, Québec would have no problem assuming current federal budget responsibilities, including its share of the federal debt." I'd like you to convince me of this.

Mr. Fortin: First, with regard to the survey, in my brief I did not do what is generally done, that is look at the plus side and the minus side and establish a relation between both, leaving aside the rate of impact, because, as you say, it can be interpreted one way or another. In other words, the ratio appears to be roughly 4 to 1, i.e. 48% or 49% as against 12% or 13%, which represents a negative impact, 4 to 1. But I also note in my brief that I believe Québec business people are too optimistic about the benefits that... Sovereignty will not solve our economic problems overnight.

What the survey reveals is that, in the long run, sovereignty will be extraordinary for Québec. Of course, there may be some worthwhile positive aspects, but I do think people are being rather optimistic. I wanted to comment on the matter to indicate my feeling that few business people think that sovereignty would have a very negative impact on the economy.

Mr. Dufour: All the same, we agree that not even a majority believes in the positive impact of sovereignty; according to your table, only 48% of respondents do.

Mr. Fortin: That's right. If we eliminate neutral respondents and those with no opinion, we come up with a ratio of 4 to 1.

Second question, you ask whether Québec would have more problems managing the debt. My response is that it would indeed pose problems. The federal government is experiencing problems at present, and Québec will inherit one-quarter of its problem because it accounts for one-quarter of the population of Canada. The federal debt is causing problems for Ottawa and it will obviously cause problems for Québec. What I want to know is whether it will cause Québec more problems than it is now posing in Ottawa? My answer is that this is not at all obvious. What is at stake is one billion dollars or so.

Mr. Dufour: Yes, Mr. Fortin, but we must make a distinction between paying off the debt and the debt itself. In your brief you mention that debt payment is costing us around \$200 million...

Mr. Fortin: A week.

Mr. Dufour: ...a week. We have to pay all that. For the time being, this is Ottawa's problem. However, once we become sovereign and we assume our share of the federal debt, our total debt will be equivalent to 75% of GDP.

Mr. Fortin: Yes.

Mr. Dufour: Don't you feel this is an enormous economic problem?

Mr. Fortin: But Mr. Dufour, our debt is now equivalent to 75% of GDP...

Mr. Dufour: Yes, except that, at present, I'm only paying interest, I'm not responsible for the debt. As an economist, you are flatly stating that we must pay our debt. So, we'll pay it in a sovereign Québec.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Dufour, we are now responsible for the debt. The only difference is that to pay for debt service our taxes will go directly to Québec rather than Ottawa. Nothing will change.

Mr. Dufour: Are you saying that in a sovereign Québec we'll allow the debt to remain at current levels or grow, that we'll pay even more taxes simply to service the debt?

Mr. Fortin: I'm not saying that at all.

Mr. Dufour: Good, thank you.

Mr. Fortin: I think that Quebecers will better manage the federal debt because for the

past 10 years the Québec government has better managed its finances than the federal government. This is the essence of the brief of the Québec Chamber of Commerce which stated that the problem is that Québec's finances are soundly managed while Ottawa's are poorly managed. So, if Québec repatriates its share of the debt, there is a good chance - of course this will depend on policy and the people involved - there is a good chance that the debt will not be more poorly managed than it now is, but somewhat better managed. Of course, that will depend not so much on sovereignty, but on the quality of management of public finances.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Pagé, followed by Mr. Bouchard.

Mrs. Pagé: On pages 14, 15 and 16 and the lines that follow you broach the question of a monetary union, which you feel is desirable and probable. Since the Commission began its deliberations, we have often been told, among others by the Association des économistes, that, given the frame of mind of English Canadians, it would probably be risky to talk about economic association and monetary union. I would like you to explain in greater detail how likely you think this scenario is and how likely English Canada is to accept it, despite the emotional undertow. That's my first question. If there's time, I have a second one.

Mr. Fortin: The reason is that interest and exchange rates are crazy. They're extremely volatile. If, for example, the interest rate on the federal debt rises one-quarter of one percent overnight, that means that debt service on \$400 billion will cost an extra \$1 billion a year. Somewhere, somebody will have to pay an extra \$1 billion because of monetary fluctuations, caused by uncertainty around the world about the future of Canadian currency. I will make a prediction. Busloads of financiers will come from Toronto to Montréal and Québec City to beg the Québec government and the prime minister of Québec to maintain a monetary union with Canada to prevent hundreds of thousands of people from losing hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mrs. Pagé: Am I correct in saying that economic uncertainty resulting from a partial monetary union would, among other things, increase the debt burden which others would have to assume?

Mr. Fortin: Quite possible. No, it's entirely probable.

Mrs. Pagé: It's entirely probable.

Mr. Fortin: Entirely probable, that is all Canadians, whether or not they are Quebecers, have an unquestionable interest in maintaining financial and monetary stability in Canada. That's obvious, isn't it?

Mrs. Pagé: Well yes, I... But it doesn't appear to be obvious to everyone.

Mr. Fortin: So, I see that...

Mrs. Pagé: ...that's why I'm asking the question.

Mr. Fortin: You're playing at Socrates.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Shall we move on to Mr. Bouchard? Have you finished, Madam?

Mrs. Pagé: Yes.

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

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. Mr. Fortin, you wonder about the anticipated reaction of English Canada in the event that Québec attempts to negotiate a new, less centralized constitution. On page 19 of your brief, you state very clearly that Québec's proposals would be perceived as an attempt to destroy the country and that the reaction is likely to be extremely negative. This brings you to the other branch of the alternative you are proposing, that Québec declares its sovereignty. You examine the consequences of its doing so. As you know, in the wake of your appearance before the Commission with two of your friends, or the Association, much discussion took place on the consequences.

Your colleagues engaged in a group psychology exercise. They attempted to speculate on the psychological reaction of English Canada if Québec declared its sovereignty; at present, discussion is focusing by and large on this matter. Yes, long-term prospects are very good, but the transitional period could be difficult, as English Canada will likely react irritably and emotionally, and reach decisions which are contrary to its interests and prevent it from negotiating what must be negotiated. On pages 16 and 17 of your brief, you acknowledge that there would be some degree of uncertainty during this time, but you propose a solution and state that it is possible to minimize uncertainty provided that we act responsibly, guarantee freedoms... As far as I can see, the solution proposed contains political conditions, it is not just a question of economics. I understand that it is not economic behaviour alone which is decisive, but how we behave politically.

Mr. Fortin: Yes. My colleague, Mr. McCallum is entirely right, in my opinion, to draw the attention of the Commission and the general public to the sensitivity and importance of the transitional period. In Québec, we underwent a revolution, which was dubbed the Quiet Revolution. To some extent, we already have experience managing revolutions. Aside from that... Joking aside, I would simply like to mention that there is a crisis, a transition, a sensitive stage. A priori, anything can happen. However, among sensible, cautious people, I think we can develop an approach which enables us to manage the transition, with the fewest possible consequences. I would like to be more specific about this than I was in my brief. For example, with respect... Extensive, emotional discussions will take place on the question of the debt; as I just told Mrs. Pagé, in my view this is a question which will be complex in technical terms, although there is no shortage of specialists in Québec and Canada to solve the problem. Other people will also undoubtedly have to broaden the Québec bond market.

With regard to rights, for example, we could manage the transition in a generous fashion as it affects English-speaking Quebecers and Native peoples. For example, we could make worthwhile changes in the context in which the English language can develop in Québec. We could also make more concrete proposals concerning the establishment of autonomous Native governments within Québec. Other matters could also be managed. If we had a government centralized in Québec City, we would have to manage the transfer of civil servants between Hull and Québec City. The real estate market in Hull would drop, but there would be widespread speculation in Québec City.

For example, why not tax people in Québec City who make fabulous speculative profits in order to compensate the losses sustained by residents of Hull? There are all manner of creative ways that could be used to manage the transition. It is simply a question of keeping an open mind. I also think that if we suddenly double the size of the Québec government, we cannot do so in a twinkling. Perhaps we will have to apply veritable zero-based budgeting for the first time in North America, then cautiously assess how many civil servants and how many services we need to properly satisfy the needs of Quebecers.

It is said that we would achieve savings by transferring services to Québec City, but we should seek these savings in such a way that we maintain our credibility in terms of what we promise Quebecers. There is no doubt that an emotional atmosphere will reign. We'll hear from Mrs. Francis in Maclean's and from Mr. Johnson in The Gazette. The Toronto Star will be full of letters to the editor. It will be a very emotional situation. We must not laugh about it. These

people will be hurt. We must understand them; we must not react negatively. We must let them react. When all is said and done, there will still be Ontarians and Quebecers who exchange \$14 billion a year in goods and services. Financiers in Toronto and Montréal will continue to exchange services, and it is they who will dominate discussion. They will say: We're not about to lose control and make hundreds of thousands of people lose hundreds of millions of dollars. That doesn't make sense!

(5:15 p.m.)

So, we have to make allowances, between the emotionalism of the media and the general atmosphere which prevails and the concrete interest we'll have in properly managing the period of transition. Overall, I think we have a responsibility not to react excessively or arrogantly to inevitable displays of emotionalism. My colleague, Mr. McCallum, undoubtedly witnesses examples of it day in and day out at the university where he teaches.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now turn to Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Perhaps I have misconstrued your presentation, Mr. Fortin, but it would seem that the tone has somewhat hardened between your brief and your presentation. I read your brief very attentively; it strikes me as less categorical about sovereignty than the presentation you have just made. I would like to emphasize one seemingly trifling detail, but you said during your presentation: "The current weakness of Canadian political leadership or a lack of preparedness on the part of the rest of the country do not in any way justify delaying negotiations". In the brief, you speak of "postponing indefinitely", but you simply omitted "postponing indefinitely". In other words, you do not talk about negotiations.

Let us return to your brief, where you say: Sovereignty in itself is not an end. What is important is the means we adopt to ensure that Québec develops to the fullest. That is the focus of debate. In this regard, you advise caution in your brief. For example, on page 17 you note: "Let us give ourselves two years to settle our constitutional problems, but not five years". In your opinion, five years is too long, it could harm the economy and so on.

Then you add: "We must be sensitive to the veritable concerns of our Canadian partners and seek honourable compromises where possible without betraying our fundamental objectives. We must constantly extend a hand and avoid confrontation".

I think you have clearly evaluated the situation in which we might find ourselves in Canada. The Leader of the Parti québécois also felt somewhat the same way this week when he spoke before the Canadian Club. He suggested

that Québec sovereignty would inevitably arouse emotions, tensions and fairly keen psychological reactions...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Beaudry, Mr. Beaudry, Mr. Beaudry...

Mr. Beaudry: ...In the country. I'm getting to the point, Mr. Chairman, I'm getting to the point.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Beaudry, it was agreed that brief, concise questions would be put to the experts to give everyone a chance to learn as much as possible from the expert being questioned.

Mr. Beaudry: All the same, I have to... Forgive me, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday, Mr. Dion told us that there might be every reason to say to English Canada: Here is what Québec wants, and if we can't have it, then it's sovereignty or independence. He covered all the angles you have warned us about. What do you think of this proposal. What risk would there be for Québec if it proceeded in this manner?

Mr. Fortin: First of all, I see no difference between what I have said today and the tone of my brief. As for the tone, I simply wanted to make very clear that we are talking about a strategic question, not a question of basic choice, or a popularity contest. The reason I insisted on this particular message is that I wanted basically to say that if we regard the current situation in strategic terms, the difficulties we would encounter, for instance, if we use baseball terminology for a moment, there are already two strikes and one to go, OK? The problems are such - or take the third strike - that we have virtually no choice. Look, politically, in constitutional terms, symmetry is impossible. It's impossible.

Mr. Beaudry: I am not talking about constitutional negotiations. Like you, I am aware of this question. But to take your baseball metaphor, some batters hit a home run after two strikes, it doesn't mean that they strike out.

Mr. Fortin: Right, but the other possible analogy is the one other Quebecers appear to have adopted: We've been slapped on one cheek, we've been slapped on the other cheek, and now we've run out of cheeks...

Mr. Beaudry: No, I understand. But here you're becoming emotional. You state: Let us abandon emotionalism and reason our separation. We must move away from emotionalism. We must not say that, because we have been humiliated twice that we must close all the doors

and...

Mr. Fortin: Of course not.

Mr. Beaudry: ...separate.

Mr. Fortin: You're quite right, but we must be vigilant.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, yes. Right.

Mr. Fortin: Being vigilant, in my view, means first and foremost acknowledging that it is impossible to achieve constitutional symmetry within a federal Canada. It also means recognizing that two-way negotiations are impossible. What will Mr. Wells say if Mr. Bourassa launches direct negotiations with Mr. Mulroney?

Mr. Beaudry: In this instance, for what reason...

Mr. Fortin: It is also impossible to reconcile the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the notion of a distinct society. This has been made abundantly clear to us. This is also the difficulty... Basically, trying a third time entails taking that approach. It means, for all intents and purposes, asking all Canadians to decentralize in favour of Québec, given that asymmetry is impossible.

Mr. Beaudry: But isn't that what you're doing...

Mr. Fortin: Now, if we did that...

Mr. Beaudry: ...when you talk about separation, Mr. Fortin?

Mr. Fortin: ...if we did that - if you'll allow me...

Mr. Beaudry: When you put people before a fait accompli?

Mr. Fortin: ...and allow me to finish my sentence - if we did that, there aren't many Canadians outside Québec who wouldn't realize that we are destroying Canada's soul.

Mr. Beaudry: Well, Sir...

Mr. Fortin: For all of these reasons, I believe that, if we look at the situation squarely, we have no choice. It's not for the mere pleasure of it that I say that we must gain complete political autonomy. I am as sensitive as Mr. Dion is to Canada. I probably travel more on average in Canada than anyone here and I meet these people. They are my colleagues and competitors and we cooperate. I

will lose a great deal if we burn our bridges or take a far-reaching course. We must be vigilant...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I beg your pardon, Mr. Fortin...

Mr. Fortin: ...to realize that, in light of pressure...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I beg your pardon...

Mr. Fortin: ...we cannot go... We cannot do otherwise.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I beg your pardon, Mr. Fortin. I now give the floor to Mr. Deschamps, followed by Mr. Holden.

Mr. Deschamps: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I would like to put to Mr. Fortin also concerns the procedure. Mr. Bouchard touched briefly on it. To paraphrase your children, we mustn't rush, but we mustn't stay tied to the umbilical cord either. What do you see as a realistic, desirable timetable, bearing in mind the constraints you indicated concerning strategies and emotional reactions in English Canada? What do you deem to be a reasonable timetable to accomplish what you are proposing?

Mr. Fortin: When Einstein talked about baseball, his opinion was that of a noteworthy individual, but it didn't mean much. I am not a political strategist. In terms of common sense, I feel it would be normal that a popular consultation take place in Québec in 1991. However, I don't think we can go beyond a certain point. We must give the political authorities, we must give Mr. Bourassa time to decide at some point what he must do, in light of the Commission's report, his party, the Commission's report, and in light of the political situation at that time. I cannot go further than that. I am not a strategist. There are many more negotiators of collective agreements around the table than there are on this side. That's for sure.

A voice: All of a sudden today is our day?

Mr. Deschamps: But you don't want the debate to go on endlessly for years. If I understand correctly, you would like the situation to be clarified by the end of 1991.

Mr. Fortin: We must give people time to decide, to understand the issue. I think we understand it in Québec. I also think, as I stated earlier during my presentation, in the last paragraph, that the fact that Québec, without unduly forcing debate, has a proactive

strategy to attempt to obtain a response from English Canada would help English Canadians tune into the question. It seems to me that things are going to drag, drag, drag along, and that we will needlessly delay things. I don't know exactly how many months it could take, but obviously I feel that it would be reasonable to follow the 1991 timetable.

A voice: Good, that's all. Thank you.

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

Mr. Holden: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I realize that we are supposed to ask the experts relevant, short questions, but I have two comments to make first. I don't want Mr. Fortin to take this personally, but for several days I have been receiving large numbers of expert opinions. I know some of the experts, and others I do not know. I would like to receive a curriculum vitae with each expert opinion to know more about the person who is sharing his opinion, because during my career as a lawyer I have questioned...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I must stop you. I think we have invited an expert to question him. You could put your question to the Secretariat during a working meeting.

Mr. Holden: Yes, yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): This does not apply today to Mr. Fortin.

Mr. Holden: No, but the remark I would like to make is that I would like to have known that Mr. Fortin has already served as an advisor to Mr. Lévesque, and expert opinions, all the same...

A voice: ...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Confirm it.

Mr. Holden: Yes, it's in context.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Perhaps Mr. Fortin could also have told us that he has served as an advisor to the federal government.

Mr. Holden: So much the better, I would like to know everything, because when you question an expert, Mr. Chairman, you must know the expert. This said, Mr. Chairman, I will turn to a second question. The first comment was not a question, but in your brief you talk about federal leadership. You say that at a crucial period of our history, the Canadian prime minister's credibility in the opinion polls

has dropped to its lowest level in 50 years. I would like to say in passing that Mr. Mulroney is only 53, but you nonetheless talk about the prime minister's position as an institution, and you mention the credibility and legitimacy of the federal government in a position of weakness.

I say to you, Mr. Fortin, that in a democracy the government's legitimacy depends on the people. Only after an election can we talk about the government's legitimacy. In your brief, as well, I find that you are very optimistic. You note that, "once initial emotions have been calmed, the elimination of sources of controversy will inevitably produce a healthier political climate." What I am asking you is, if this is not inevitable, if the inevitable does not occur, will we not return to the situation which you described when you appeared earlier with other economists? Won't it take a lot of time and won't it be difficult? Nobody will beg Québec on bended knee to agree to a common currency.

Mr. Fortin: Thank you for your questions. I would like to take this opportunity to point out to Mr. Beaudry that if I eliminated mention of the calendres grecques (renvoyer aux calendres grecques = to postpone indefinitely), it is because I noticed that Mr. Sirros is a member of the Commission.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Sirros: An attitude that others should adopt.

A voice: With respect to gifts as well.

Mr. Fortin: I must stress that the meaning of remarks made during the presentation of my brief has not changed.

Second, for two years I was a member of Marc Lalonde's board of economic advisors in Ottawa. I was subsequently an advisor to René Lévesque, which my fellow economists... That's why they call me the cleverest double agent of all Québec economists.
(5:30 p.m.)

Third, I have not questioned the legitimacy of the federal government. I have spoken about problems of credibility and in my presentation I deplored the fact that the prime minister of Canada bent over backward to ensure the adoption of the Meech Lake Accord. This is indeed deplorable because, if the prime minister's popularity rating was at 40% or 60%, he would be the one to help us settle the question.

Finally, you find me optimistic when I tell you that if we eliminate the source of controversy, then controversy will subside, but this observation is based simply on my experience of family life. When my children

fight over the Nintendo, I take the game and lock it in a cupboard for two days, and the squabbling stops then and there. This is exactly what will happen.

Take, for example, the health question, the manpower question, the communications question. All that is happening is that Ottawa and Québec keep tossing tomatoes and bananas at each other. If responsibilities are more clearly divided, this will stop, will it not? If we lock up the Nintendo, they won't be able to play and the squabbling will stop.

Mr. Holden: Please allow me just one comment, Mr. Chairman. There are 10 children in this instance. It will be hard to calm down all of them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Rémillard has the floor.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Fortin, it gives me pleasure to welcome you before the Commission. You're almost a regular visitor here. The first brief we received was from the Québec Chamber of Commerce, it was a very good brief, one of a number of fine briefs we have received. I believe you were a member of the steering committee that wrote the brief, is that right?

Mr. Fortin: That's right, but it was the members' brief. Yves Rabreau and I wrote the brief, but we had to rewrite it several times.

Mr. Rémillard: That's what I heard. You rewrote it several times, you made improvements to it.

Mr. Fortin: So, it's their brief, not mine.

Mr. Rémillard: But, you put...

Mr. Fortin: However, I do like it.

Mr. Rémillard: You like it? That's what I wanted to hear you say. You also appeared before the Commission with the Association des économistes. Now you are appearing as an expert.

Mr. Fortin: I'm a triple agent, not a double agent.

Mr. Rémillard: You're something of a 007.

A voice: 003.

Mr. Rémillard: My friend, Mr. Sirros, says 003. You indicated earlier that you doubt whether we can negotiate a significantly renewed federalism with the rest of Canada because, in my view, the brief of the Québec

Chamber of Commerce reflects a significantly renewed federalism. You doubt that this can be achieved within the framework of federalism as such.

One question that comes to my mind is: In the brief you are presenting today, have you used the word "sovereignty" with respect to Québec?

Mr. Fortin: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: Did you use it? I looked for it earlier. I came across "full autonomy" but I didn't find "sovereignty".

Mr. Fortin: Yes. Quite simply, the Mouvement Desjardins used the expression "full political autonomy" and, as I noted earlier, I support their brief, I used this expression, but in my brief I use the word "sovereignty".

Mr. Rémillard: Because, obviously, this morning Mr. Morin made some noteworthy distinctions between sovereignty and autonomy. We are all aware of your competence, and I wonder whether you and, probably, the Mouvement Desjardins, consciously, very consciously employed "autonomy" or "full autonomy", thus leaving the door ajar and suggesting some form of renewed federalism. That is the question I am asking...

Mr. Fortin: I spoke of "sovereignty" or "full political autonomy". At that time, I had not read Mr. Morin's brief. Psychologically, literally, I took it to mean "the ability to choose one's fields of jurisdiction", which is the meaning Mr. Morin gives it, that is, Québec itself will decide which fields of jurisdiction it wishes to preserve, obtain, or grant itself. Of course, it will negotiate with its Canadian partners, and could agree that such and such a field of jurisdiction will be shared, or to complicate matters, there could be an intermediate body between the two as Mr. Morin suggested. However, I won't go into details here as the economic facet of the question is absorbing enough.

Mr. Rémillard: I would like to understand your economic reasoning, and understand your viewpoint on Québec's constitutional status. That's why... I wonder if I fully understand your thinking if I say that the constitutional amendments you are contemplating could be achieved within the framework of a significantly altered federalism. But you are not confident that this could be negotiated.

Mr. Fortin: That's right. I think we're running into a brick wall.

Mr. Rémillard: Yes, but it could literally

be accomplished.

Mr. Fortin: And it is for this strategic reason alone that I say: We have no choice. Perhaps reasonable people will differ with me on this question, but that is how I perceive the situation. We're running into a brick wall. Basically, you don't need a degree in industrial relations to understand that a negotiator who has reached a really critical phase of negotiations won't go to the boss and threaten to seek a strike vote from the workers if the boss doesn't give in to his demands. No, he'll get a strike vote first, then negotiate. Do you see, that's... It will be hard to soften the other side's position and that is understandable. Look. That's not the Canadian way. In my view, if decentralization as extensive as what Québec is demanding is to be achieved in all the provinces, this will destroy the Canada that other Canadians want. They'll refuse. That is how I see the situation.

Mr. Rémillard: Fine. I simply wanted to clarify some of your ideas so that we can discuss economic matters, perhaps by returning to a number of questions which were asked earlier. If I understand correctly, you advocate a referendum, is that right? Initially, a referendum would be held in Québec. This referendum would enable Québec to assume its full autonomy, as you would have it. At that point, we would divide up what we share with the rest of Canada, especially the debt. Referring to Mr. Dufour's earlier question, Québec would accept roughly \$100 billion of the \$400 billion federal debt, wouldn't it?

Mr. Fortin: \$98 billion.

Mr. Rémillard: \$98 billion. Are we following international accounting procedures? Are we confining ourselves to the debt, or must we take into account federal facilities and property in Québec? Take airports, or the Plains of Abraham... Will these things also be taken into account?

Mr. Fortin: Of course. Of course.

Mr. Rémillard: How, in practice, will we go about it? Can you explain how we'll proceed? On what basis do we sit down and discuss the matter?

Mr. Fortin: First of all, the debt is fairly easy to evaluate. It's all written down.

Mr. Rémillard: Yes. Right, that's fine.

Mr. Fortin: In terms of assets, we can have independent experts evaluate buildings and similar facilities, not by me, but by assessors.

The parties concerned will consult their assessors and will agree on an arbitration procedure which may involve third parties to conduct evaluations. If disagreement on the evaluation persists, then we could take one-quarter of the assets and one-quarter of the liabilities and reach a settlement. Of course, if we end up with more than our share of the assets, we'll also assume responsibility for a larger portion of the debt. We could also conclude agreements governing the exchange or sale of assets.

Mr. Rémillard: But more than our share of assets... What is clear to me is that airports, federal property, I am thinking, for example of the Plains, of other parks, of federal government buildings. If we tote up the value of all that, we're talking about a tidy sum of money, Mr. Fortin.

Mr. Fortin: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: Roughly how much?

Mr. Fortin: I don't have any accurate figures, but if I recall correctly, at the federal level - I don't want to talk though my hat - we'd have to take away \$350 billion of the debt, at present, or \$375 billion, and \$125 billion or thereabouts of assets. I don't know what fraction lies within Québec. Let's assume, for instance, that it was \$120 billion. So, we'd calculate the value of what lies within Québec, then, if we come up with over one-quarter of the \$120 billion, we'd make an adjustment with regard to the debt.

Mr. Rémillard: So, that might mean that of \$125 billion in federal assets, the value of such assets in Québec could represent 25% of that amount, or approximately \$40 billion, \$30 billion.

Mr. Fortin: Yes, \$30 billion.

Mr. Rémillard: Now, that gives us 30... \$98 billion of the debt, and \$30 billion of the assets. Generally speaking, we could say that we'll sit down and negotiate. We'll say: Fine, we've finished. As a payment, we'll take what we have to pay the federal government, \$128 billion to \$130 billion. Is that right?

Mr. Fortin: No, that is, you take your share... If it's one-quarter, fine, if the facilities in Québec are worth one-quarter of federal government assets, then we'd have... we'll settle that quarter, and we'll also settle \$100 billion, that is, a quarter of the federal debt of \$400 billion.

Mr. Rémillard: So, if I follow you, that means that both our share of the debt and of

the assets comes to roughly \$130 billion. Right?

Mr. Fortin: You have recovered \$100 billion in debt, against \$30 billion in assets. Basically, you owe \$70 billion.

Mr. Rémillard: So we'd owe roughly \$70 billion...

Mr. Fortin: I can't vouch for what I'm saying, perhaps the Chairman could comment on...

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): I'll save you some time by saying that you derive net value not by adding, but by subtracting. You can express it in various ways. I don't know if the \$30 billion figure is accurate because the hypothesis of the quarter is noteworthy but it has yet to be proven. We'll have to see. Essentially, you could say, if you wanted to express in an unfavourable manner, that you have purchased a net value of \$30 billion for \$98 billion, a very poor transaction. Or, to the contrary, you could say that it only cost you \$70 billion in net debt. That's not expensive. You can do as you wish...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): ...but one figure is subtracted from the other.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): I beg your pardon, I didn't wish to interrupt you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Rémillard, will you continue?

Mr. Rémillard: Yes, I'll continue, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Except that you haven't much time left.

Mr. Rémillard: With the explanations Mr. Bélanger has just given... on my time. Ha, ha, ha! Based on that principle, Mr. Fortin, we'll have to assume that debt and negotiate an association with the rest of Canada. When you appeared before the Commission with the Association des économistes, the message you presented to us was: Beware, the rest of Canada could react in an irrational manner. We mustn't think they will behave rationally and say: Very well, countries are associating everywhere. Today, as an expert, you have reached the same conclusion. What might the economic consequences be?

Mr. Fortin: We spoke about emotionalism

among Canadians in a general way. I said earlier that there would undoubtedly be a number of letters to the editor of the Toronto Star or elsewhere in Canada to express a certain feeling of... well... despair over the breakup of Canada. That's quite obvious. What Mr. McCallum said the other day, based on the ASDEQ brief, is that the transition will, above all, be sensitive. We must be careful. The second thing he said was that the atmosphere would be emotionally charged, but that if this emotionalism is sensibly, reasonably managed with the habitant's common sense, we can overcome the problem in a reasonable way within a reasonable amount of time, for the reasons I mentioned earlier, especially in response to Mrs. Pagé, because there is so much money at stake in Canada that everyone has a vested interest - hundreds of millions of dollars are at stake - in making sure that things proceed in a civilized, reasonable fashion. Never mind the letters of protest in the news media. The question will be negotiated by people whose money is at stake throughout the country, by business people inside and outside Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now turn to Mrs. Marois.
(5:45 p.m.)

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to focus on a few things. Your brief contains many interesting notions. Perhaps I could start with a short remark. I think we displayed a great deal of serenity during the discussions surrounding Meech Lake; there was a great deal of frustration with regard to our demands and their rejection by the other provinces. There were aggressive acts respecting the Québec flag, and so on. I think that our reaction was always very placid. I always say to myself that the past assures the future and that we will certainly maintain the same attitude.

Your brief is compact and clear but, above all, I find it particularly interesting in that it calls into question a number of firmly rooted myths in Québec, and somewhat overturns the burden of proof. I would first like your comments on two points, then I have a number of other questions. On pages 3, 4, 5 and 6 of your brief you present a fairly eloquent demonstration in which you contrast - and I want to know if this is indeed what you are trying to show - where you seem to contrast profitable federalism with the social inefficiency of federalism. Basically, what you are saying is: No economies of scale are achieved when an organization grows bigger because the cost of distributing services becomes prohibitive. The result is social inefficiency. Am I correct in saying that you contrast this with a so-called profitable federalism and about which we are now asking a number of questions, although you go even further? That is why I said earlier that

you have somewhat overturned the burden of proof. hear you say that.

Mr. Fortin: Yes, indeed, federalism is still profitable in Canada, not to the extent that the federative nature of Canada is profitable, but simply the fact of having such a vast territory is still profitable. The statistical appendix accompanying my presentation today contains a sort of empirical proof that this is true in various industrial countries. That is why it is important for Canadians and Quebecers to preserve their economic space. In essence, what I am saying is that it is the territory that is important, not the federation as a political structure.

Mrs. Marois: It's the economic space that is important.

Mr. Fortin: Yes, precisely.

Mrs. Marois: OK.

Mr. Fortin: Second, as for aggressive acts involving the flag, I think we've also had to prevent our own rowdy characters from burning the Canadian flag on top of Mont-Royal. It's not just Canadians outside Québec who have behaved obnoxiously. Some Quebecers have also behaved badly, but we must, as far as possible, prevent them from doing so.

Mrs. Marois: I think we all agree on this matter. I would like to return to the question of the social inefficiency of federalism. Ultimately, I end up contrasting it with the effects of profitable federalism, because you show us, as far as I can see, and perhaps I'm mistaken, that the cost is so high that we have every interest in reviewing the federative structure in terms of decentralizing powers and drawing powers closer to centres of action.

Mr. Fortin: Yes...

Mrs. Marois: Centres of action and decision-making centres.

Mr. Fortin: Yes. Let me elaborate. There is no doubt that one of the points I wanted to dwell on in my brief is that there are many other reasons aside from protecting Québec's identity for wanting to decentralize. There are economic reasons, cost savings, and the greater satisfaction of the varying preferences of our fellow citizens. It is much easier for a small body to tailor its products to the needs of users. That is why we should not only decentralize power in Ottawa, but in Québec City as well, do you see?

Mrs. Marois: The regions would like to

Mr. Fortin: My argument also applies to the decentralization of provincial powers to the local level. Federalism is still worthwhile in terms of some functions, a number of functions that should still be pooled, such as the currency, for example, but also the redistribution of income among the provinces. For Canada, this is a fundamental question. The question which arises for Canada is: What is happening to the Atlantic provinces at present? What will happen to the Atlantic provinces if Québec opts out? Obviously, our answer is: We don't want to opt out, and if there are common institutions, we are prepared to be taxed so that income is redistributed throughout the country.

Mrs. Marois: Is that what you say in your brief? I don't think that is what I read.

Mr. Fortin: I didn't spell it out in the brief...

Mrs. Marois: Yes, I noticed that there wasn't...

Mr. Fortin: But I do say that having common institutions isn't necessarily federalism, but simply maintaining common institutions which enable us to display generosity toward those who are less fortunate in our country, which is important.

Mrs. Marois: But at that point we are actually entering into the type of association we'd like to have if we choose a little...

Mr. Fortin: I am saying that can be accomplished under federalism, but it can also be achieved through other types of institutions.

Mrs. Marois: Yes...

Mr. Fortin: This would be even more advanced than what prevails in the European Economic Community, whose members do not redistribute income in a significant way.

Mrs. Marois: This is indeed noteworthy. In your brief you mention powers that we could jointly review and renegotiate. There is one that somewhat astonished me, I'm trying to find the page... with regard to external relations, international relations. You advocate obtaining responsibility for external relations as they pertain to other powers granted to Québec, for example manpower, employment and so on, but you then go on to say that part of international relations should be the responsibility of a joint committee, if we opt for sovereignty or reach an agreement. I find this rather astonishing. Is it not in the interests of a sovereign State to

exercise full control over its foreign relations?

Mr. Fortin: That depends on what the parties negotiate. Actually, you could probably get more information from a foreign relations expert than from me.

Mrs. Marois: OK.

Mr. Fortin: All I can say is that I'm going to leave you with your astonishment.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Fortin: Simply stated, if sensible people negotiate some form of association between Québec and Canada, it is quite possible that a number of important matters such as the military might... Military policy is a part of international relations that could be shared.

Mrs. Marois: Fine, that is what I'm trying to grasp. What you are saying, essentially, is: If we agree to pool a number of elements, for example defense, then the joint committee will be responsible for defense-related international relations.

Mr. Fortin: To my way of thinking, foreign relations are tied to particular jurisdictions.

Mrs. Marois: Right. OK.

Mr. Fortin: There may well be international relations experts who can add to or detract from what I have said.

Mrs. Marois: But as you mentioned it in your brief, I find it interesting to be able to question it. I will now turn to the matter of the debt. Everyone is concerned about how the debt will be shared, of each party's share. What will it correspond to in terms of assets? I must confess that I, too, am concerned at present. As we do not exercise any real control to prevent the situation from worsening, my concern is that the situation will indeed deteriorate. The more time goes by, the more the situation is likely to deteriorate. I am aware of the efforts made in Québec by our government and the one that followed it to effectively control public finances, and I think we have done a good job. You say as much in your brief. However, are Ottawa's efforts to control the federal debt likely to achieve the same results? I'm not so sure, indeed I doubt it. I would like to know whether you share my doubts or if you are more optimistic than I am in this respect.

Mr. Fortin: I don't understand the question. Would you mind repeating it?

Mrs. Marois: At present, the debt

continues to worsen. The Canadian government debt continues to grow and we are unable, as we have done in Québec, to intervene systematically to tighten up management of the debt, to ensure that Ottawa tightens up management of the federal debt to prevent the situation from worsening. At present, Ottawa is adopting measures, such as the GST. Do you think the measures it is adopting are likely to alleviate its indebtedness or simply prevent it from worsening? This will affect us the moment we decide to take our affairs in hand and negotiate with regard to the debt. If the situation continues to worsen over the next two or three years, we'll also have to fork out for the additional amount.

Mr. Fortin: I do think the federal government has made an appreciable effort to curb growth in the debt. What is important is to examine the relative weight of the debt in terms of the overall economy. When the debt was increasing in 1984 at a rate two or three times... Debt as a percentage of domestic income in Canada was growing two, three or even four percentage points a year. For example, it increased from 16% to 20%, to 24%, then to 27% in 1984. Since 1984, Ottawa has succeeded in slowing its growth and has now managed to more or less stabilize it. Today, debt as a percentage of domestic output is roughly 40-some percent on national accounts and is relatively stable. The only trouble is that interest on the debt has skyrocketed and this has displaced numerous spending programs and increased taxes. In terms of spending, there have obviously been cuts in transfers to the provinces.

Mrs. Marois: I was going to say that one reason for the improved situation is the cuts in transfers to the provinces. It's not the only factor, but one of them.

Mr. Fortin: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: One last question concerning the currency. You have answered a number of questions from my colleagues seated around this table. Given a common currency and a sovereign Québec, what type of institutions do you think we need to properly manage the currency, that is, manage it within all manner of constraints, those with which we're familiar, of course, bearing in mind that we are neighbours with the United States?

Mr. Fortin: Ideally, as I clearly indicate in my brief, my report to the Commission, what I want is a stable currency...

Mrs. Marois: Yes, fine, fine.

Mr. Fortin: ...that the Canadian currency

stops fluctuating between \$0.88 and \$0.69 at a time when we're basically entering a trade war. We're going to teach all nations a lesson, then we go out and conquer the American market. It simply doesn't make sense for a country like ours to experience such extensive monetary instability at this time. Essentially, the question of a monetary institution in a situation where we have a common Canadian and Québec currency, but stable in relation to the United States, is quite unimportant because the governor of the Canadian bank or the joint Québec-Canada bank is a civil servant whose role is...

Mrs. Marois: Our leeway is very...

Mr. Fortin: ...to set interest rates at a level that stabilizes the currency. Canadian monetary policy is centred entirely on stabilizing the exchange rate. Now, in practice, we could have institutions, and I think it essential for Québec to have a one-quarter share in the central Canadian bank. It strikes me that...

Mrs. Marois: OK.

Mr. Fortin: There would be no... as soon as we decide to stabilize our currency, the power we exercise over the central Canadian bank is relatively unimportant.

Mrs. Marois: OK, thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Fortin, this concludes the period. Thank you for accepting our invitation to appear before the Commission and assisting in our deliberations on the political and constitutional future of Québec. Thank you.

Mr. Fortin: Until next time.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:59 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 6:03 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now hear from representatives of the Maison internationale de Québec. Mr. President, would you kindly introduce your colleagues.

Mr. Raharolahy (Augustin): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Mr. Jean Moisset, a member of the Association haïtienne de Québec; to my right is Mr. Benabdallah Boufeldja, administrator of the Centre culturel islamique de Québec. To my far left is Mr. Michel Mugabo, director of the Maison internationale de Québec; and to my far right is Mr. Joseph Ndiaye, president of the Association sénégalaise in Québec City.

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

Maison internationale de Québec

Mr. Raharolahy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, thank you for asking us to appear today. We represent the Maison internationale de Québec, which groups together 28 Asian, African, Latin American and Caribbean associations in the Québec City region.

The cultural communities intend to participate in building a Québec in which everyone will be happy to live. They wish to lend their voices to a broad dialogue which can only be lively and creative if everyone contributes to it. The members of the cultural communities are asking themselves legitimate questions concerning the various political scenarios elaborated in order to settle the matter of Québec's future. No one can contemplate moving into the future without comparing the future to the present.

Any changes can raise questions, and the questions being asked in the cultural communities are the same as those being asked by other Quebecers. The cultural communities wish to be fully informed about the social blueprint to be discussed, and within this social blueprint, about the role they are expected to play in the Québec of tomorrow. A more probing question is: "Is there a sincere desire to see the cultural communities play a role in Québec's future? Are the cultural communities expected to simply assimilate or integrate, or, as we ourselves would hope, are we expected to participate fully?"

By full participation, we mean the process whereby immigrants are involved to the utmost in economic, political, and social institutions at various levels, without obstacles or discrimination. The cultural communities feel that one way to effect positive change would be to look emphatically to the future and begin preparing for it now by ensuring that all Quebecers participate.

Numerous concepts are making the rounds with regard to immigration: interculturalism, multiculturalism, new Quebecers, Quebecers by birth. In fact, we are all Quebecers, but words do not obviate differences, especially ethnic differences, which explains the basic importance of intercultural dialogue, aimed at making these differences complementary so that all Quebecers can help achieve the common destiny of the Québec of tomorrow.

Our recommendations and reflections are as follows: that Québec continue to be open to all races, a pluralistic society concerned about maintaining ethnic and cultural diversity in a French-speaking society; that Québec maintain an immigration policy containing measures aimed

not only at welcoming immigrants but at ensuring that all members of society participate fully in elaborating a common destiny, using the appropriate resources, such as access without discrimination to jobs, access to equality and, above all, increased awareness among Quebecers of cultural diversity.

The Conseil des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration has stated that, "regardless of the course our society follows once it has redefined its political and constitutional future, equality as it now stands will increasingly become a widespread social phenomenon. It is a question of social justice and fairness in the economic, cultural and political sectors".

Integration through access to employment is a basic condition for ensuring the participation of one and all. The access to equality refers to the notion of equity, making use to the utmost of the skills of the cultural communities. In this perspective, a genuine immigration policy must focus on educating the public, that is, increasing public awareness. The government, socio-professional groups and the general public should be made aware of the objectives set under an immigration policy with respect to reception, and the contribution immigrants make to and their participation in community life. We must prepare new immigrants and the host society with regard to the presence of new arrivals. Immigration must be treated as a widespread phenomenon in our society.

As for the French language, we are in favour of ensuring its influence and development in Québec. It is essential for Québec society and will be even more so in the Québec of tomorrow. However, everyone must be responsible for promoting the French language, society as a whole and the government, without quarreling over jurisdiction. French courses must be available for new arrivals, adults and children; proper training must be provided in the Québec of tomorrow; all cultures must contribute in some way to Québec culture.

Québec is changing a great deal on the international scene. It has shown its maturity in several fields, such as trade and culture, knowledge and technology transfers, the French-speaking world, and so on. Québec now makes itself heard around the world, but we must remember that the world has also come to Québec, through its immigrants, new Quebecers who seek a dialogue, not a monologue, and who are contributing to the social and economic development of Québec. We cannot go forth in the world and seek recognition without first knowing the world.

To conclude, our brief is not intended to be a list of grievances or a program of action. Above all, it confirms the presence, now and in the future, of various communities which are concerned about the overall project of the Québec of tomorrow and which, by their

presence, feel bound to the common destiny that Quebecers will freely, democratically build for themselves. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Sir. First question, Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Good day, Gentlemen. As time is short, please accept our greetings and know that we are very pleased to welcome you. Without further ado, I'll move on to the questions, as we have only five minutes to question you.

Assuming that constitutional and political changes occur in Québec, regardless of what decisions are reached – federalism, sovereignty or, worse, the status quo – what guarantees would your cultural, racial or ethnic communities like to see enshrined in a charter or elsewhere? What guarantees would you like to obtain?

Mr. Moisset (Jean-J.): I'll attempt to answer Mr. Bélanger. What we want to see enshrined in a constitution is no different from the basic rights of any citizen living in Québec. We're talking about the same rights that other citizens enjoy. Now, if what you mean is that, bearing in mind differences, for example, between certain immigrants to Québec and the majority of Quebecers, such differences could become a source of discrimination, then of course, we must, at all costs, in the Québec of tomorrow... But why not in the Québec of today? Obviously, there is no question of indefinitely postponing matters, but it is now that these questions are cropping up, if indeed they are cropping up.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you for this answer. Another question has arisen in the wake of our tour around Québec. Various regions asked for more immigrants. We said yes, but how can we go about it? How, in your opinion – you who have chosen to live here – can we attract immigrants? You have come here with a particular perception of the situation, perhaps you can cast some light on the matter. How can we help potential immigrants to Québec to settle in the regions and stay there?

Mr. Raharolahy: I think that the first thing is to provide a great deal of information about the potential of each region. It is indeed important that the immigration policy emphasize regionalization. This means properly informing immigrants, new arrivals, about the quality of life and employment possibilities in each region of Québec. Regionalization and immigration are, in fact, closely tied. You see, we could tell immigrants about the potential of each of the regions. We must also create procedures for

ensuring cooperation within the regions, which draw together local and regional institutions. We must increase awareness among them, because it is very important to sensitize existing agencies. We agree that we must, basically, develop regionalization in terms of immigration. (6:15 p.m.)

Mr. Boufeldja (Benabdallah): I would like to add to my colleague's remarks. I think there is a prerequisite to all this, that is, we must all feel that we belong and that we are partners. I listened yesterday to the discussions of the Université du Québec concerning research and development and regionalization. It is important too, that we, as ethnic groups, be concerned, be partners in discussions, to ensure that we, too, contribute our scientific knowledge to cast light on regionalization, not dispersal, but the strengthening of leading-edge teams in the field of R & D throughout the region. I am convinced that we, too, are capable, not of expatriating ourselves, of moving away from the major cities to participate in development, harmonious development, especially in the realm of research and development, as I am directly involved in this field.

In order to enshrine something important with respect to ethnic groups, we must, once and for all, be considered as Quebecers, be considered as partners, so that we can confirm our participation in the development of the country, so that we, too, can express our feelings. I regret that someone said earlier that we mustn't give way to feelings; it is figures that speak louder than words. I feel that it is high time that our feelings be expressed. I don't think that an ordinary Quebecer... You're not going to convince him with figures and statistics and so on, but you'll work with him taking into account his feelings. As ethnic groups, we would like to feel deeply inside that we are partners participating in the development and future of Québec.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you. Before I give the floor to my colleague, the Minister of Immigration, who will certainly have reassuring words for you, or at least some good questions to ask you, I would like to clarify one thing. You have chosen to settle in Québec, to live here, and be productive. You are thus full-fledged Quebecers. What I am saying may seem naive, but it strikes me that it is obvious to everyone that is how it should be. In this regard, I encourage you to exercise your duties as citizens and get involved. It is not just an obligation, it's a responsibility. Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay, 15 seconds.

Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay: On page 4 of your

brief you suggest that Québec adopt a veritable immigration policy. As you know, last December 4th, I announced an immigration and integration policy. Does this policy statement satisfy the concerns respecting an immigration and integration policy that you expressed in your brief?

Mr. Raharolahy: Indeed, we have examined this policy statement which, as you know, will be discussed in the coming weeks and months. We have been struck by a number of basic provisions in the policy statement, for example the proposal concerning the full participation by the cultural communities in Québec's future. We consider the use of the French language very important. There are other provisions which warrant close examination. We deem the recently published policy statement to be a measure, a first step, in improving immigration, and I must congratulate those who prepared the statement. However, we are obviously going to discuss it in the coming weeks. It is a good policy.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now turn to Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: I am pleased to welcome you. I had the opportunity to greet you earlier before your appearance here. As you are no doubt aware, the recently announced government policy respecting immigration affects only 48% of immigrants. Under the current Constitution, entire categories are beyond Québec's control, for example the refugee category, entirely under federal jurisdiction for the time being. This is interesting because in your brief - I'm glad my colleague from Laval-des-Rapides talked about it - you have stressed regionalization. Basically, the main question which arises in the wake of the Commission's tour and which, to my surprise, in any event, took us to regions - I'm thinking, among others, of Matane - where at least 10 of the 16 groups presenting briefs requested more immigrants. They demanded more immigrants. They even spoke of organizing themselves to go and vaunt the beauty of their region and the quality of life there to attract immigrants. I found this overwhelming and exciting, to some extent, to see how open to immigrants Quebecers in the regions are. The question is, how do we ensure that, once they settle in the regions, immigrants will stay there. In this respect, I feel that we can certainly count on your expertise to help us proceed; it's already happened in the past and there's no reason it won't happen again. Now, you chose Québec City, not Montréal. Why?

Mr. Moisset: I'll do even better than that, Mrs. Harel. I have always said that I chose the Québec hinterland, as my first stay here was in

the Saguenay region. One condition strikes me as essential when, for example, we suggest to arriving immigrants that they settle and remain in the regions.

At present, I don't think the problem is much different for so-called Quebecers by blood. A Quebecer from the Gaspésie region who is unemployed and doesn't have the wherewithal, for example, to maintain a decent standard of living, will, you see, leave the Gaspésie region. He won't leave because he doesn't like the Gaspésie region, he was born there and has always lived there, and so on. You can readily understand that the problem doesn't even arise among immigrants who have chosen once to leave their country of birth. The immigrant arriving here could settle in any region provided, obviously, that there is a genuine policy governing the mobilization of human resources according to the objective of ensuring regional economic development, which should, of course, be Québec's policy.

One thing should be mentioned in this regard. We tend to insist too much on the differences between immigrants and Quebecers by birth. I would hold it against myself if I failed to take advantage of this opportunity to emphasize this point. Of course, let us recognize our differences, but let us endeavour to pinpoint our similarities and cultivate them, in terms of our potential and the problems we share. In this perspective, the members of the so-called cultural or ethnic communities will continue to feel solidarity with the destiny of Québec and Quebecers. In that respect, we are not different.

We should also try to understand that there are some similarities which are even more fundamental than superficial differences with Quebecers by birth. In other words, it is a regionalization policy and economic development policy that will enable immigrants to settle in the regions.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You have 30 seconds, Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: Perhaps I can simply recount a personal experience, Mr. Chairman. I understood the complexity of intercultural relations when my oldest daughter, who was small at the time and attended a multi-ethnic public school, was warned by her friends of Mediterranean origin to break off with her Haitian friends. I feel that an intercultural policy must also be developed among the cultural communities. This does not mean confusing relations between the majority and the cultural communities, it is an approach which must be developed in our society to promote cultural diversity and differences, and the contribution that each one of us can make to our collective destiny.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now turn to Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what you have just said is very important, emphasizing similarities instead of superficial differences. I think this point is very important.

My question centres on the following topic. Among all the countries of the world - I hope you will agree with me - Canada exercises the strongest attraction on citizens of other countries who talk about our country with the greatest esteem and affection. This is because Canada is a model of freedom, prosperity, and stability. Its citizens are proud to carry its passport, it has a diversity of cultures and it offers all the positive elements that few countries offer, to the same degree, except perhaps the temperature from time to time.

Here is my question: If Québec separates from the rest of Canada, will Québec be less attractive to potential immigrants? Do you think this will happen?

Mr. Raharolahy: This is an interesting question. In my view, when immigrants go to a country, any country, of course, they seek information on the country. If they came here, it is, first and foremost, because the qualities of Canada and its components have always been promoted in advertising.

Assuming that Québec separates from Canada, if I understand your question, would immigration to Québec decline? Personally, I don't think so. Everything will depend on what Québec has to offer. It is not because Québec separates that everything will suddenly go badly or well. Everything will depend on what Québec grants its new immigrants and the potential Québec displays at that time.

Mr. Libman: But a second important reason for which the members, or most of the members, of the cultural communities remain federalists is that they know from experience that a federal society such as Canada, through the very diversity of interests it must accommodate, is better suited to the free development of their own values and the development of freedom. Do you agree?

Mr. Moisset: This is a very complex question which obviously cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. Even in a small organization, as soon as structures and the sharing of powers are at stake, the subject is a highly sensitive one, even within a federation. However, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to frankly, clearly express myself.

The cultural communities that we are representing think - and we are hardly original in this regard - that the status quo in terms of

the structure and distribution of powers is untenable. This is really not an original idea. Everyone hopes for improvements in this realm and I share this viewpoint.

Mr. Libman: With good reason.

Mr. Moisset: OK?

Mr. Libman: With good reason.

Mr. Moisset: I hope you do, too. Where the problem lies is in the objectives and the outcome. At the level of the structures of the relationships of power, of pure power, what do we do with it? What do we do with it? It's like any instrument, isn't it? In my view, power is an instrument which can be used - I was going to say, to repeat after the others - for better or for worse, like any other tool. I believe we mustn't centre debate on the means, but we must focus more on the outcome. In this respect, I hope that most or all of you have read the brief that our cultural communities have submitted. You will notice that we have not taken a stand concerning the means. Instead, we have focused our attention to the outcome. More specifically, with regard to the Federation, there is every reason to contemplate improvements. You have said as much yourselves.

Everybody is seeking these improvements, once again, to achieve these objectives. It is these objectives which we must attempt to pinpoint and recognize and with respect to which we must mobilize ourselves, regardless of the context in which we endeavour to implement them.

Mr. Ndiaye (Joseph): I just wanted...

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

Mr. Ndiaye: I would simply like to add something. Mr. Libman has just outlined various elements or different factors which I find very accurate, which draw immigrants today to Canada. I am saying this because it seems to me that the answer is to be found in his question. The answer is in the question. I would simply like to ask him the following question. If Québec separates from the rest of Canada, does this mean it cannot adopt all of the means and elements: democracy, pride in its passport, well-being and free development? Would these elements not be guaranteed if Québec separated? What can you tell us about this?

Mr. Libman: I asked the question. At present, Canada exercises a strong attraction in the world. If Québec remains an integral part of Canada, we can enjoy the wealth of Québec and the advantages of Federation. I wanted to know

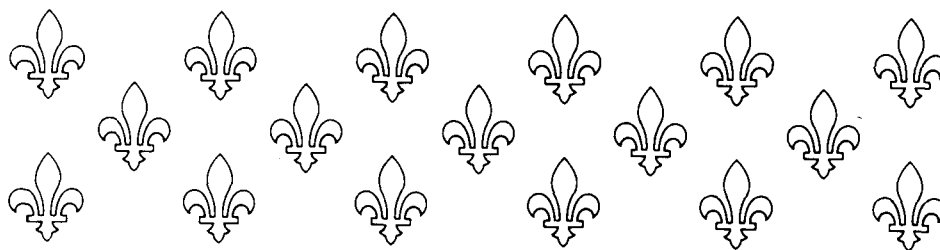
if you agreed with this point.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): And with these fine words, we end this sitting of the Commission. Do you have an answer?

A voice: No, I think not.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Thank you, Gentlemen of the Maison internationale de Québec. Thank you for joining us this afternoon to discuss the future of Québec. Our deliberations will resume Monday at 3:30 p.m.

(End of sitting, 6:33 p.m.)



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

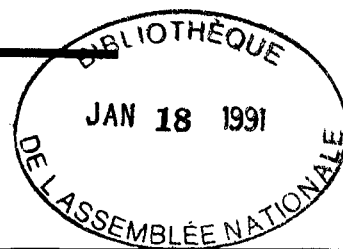
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Québec City, Monday, December 17, 1990

No 21

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

QUÉBEC



Note de l'éditeur:

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

Editor's note:

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

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

Chèque rédigé au nom du ministre des Finances et adressé à:
Assemblée nationale du Québec
Distribution des documents parlementaires
1080, Conroy, R.-C. Édifice "G", C.P. 28
Québec, (Québec)
G1R 5E6 tél. 418-643-2754

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Dépôt légal
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
ISSN 0823-0102

Table of Contents

Liberal party of Canada	1395
Mr. Jean Keable	1411
Mr. Ghislain Otis	1417
Fédération des francophones hors Québec and Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises	1421
Collectif Espace-Québec	1432
Groupe franco-militaire	1439
Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval	1443

Speakers

Mr. Michel Bélanger, Chairman

Mr. Jacques Parizeau

Mr. Marcel Beaudry

Mr. Roger Nicolet

Mr. Lucien Bouchard

Mr. Robert Libman

Mr. Gérald Larose

Mr. Ghislain Dufour

Mr. Louis Laberge

Mr. André Ouellet

Mr. Gil Rémillard

Mr. Jacques Proulx

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins

Mr. Claude Dauphin

Mr. Guy Chevette

Mr. Guy Bélanger

Mr. Jacques Brassard

Mrs. Jeanne L. Blackburn

Mr. Guy d'Anjou

Mrs. Rosette Côté

Mr. Cosmo Maciocia

Mr. Robert Benoit

Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington

Mrs. Pauline Marois

Mr. Denis Lazure

Mr. Russell Williams

Mrs. Christiane Pelchat

Table of Contents (cont.)

- * Mr. Jean Chrétien, Liberal Party of Canada
- * Mr. Guy Matte, Fédération des francophones hors Québec
- * Mrs. Claire Lanteigne, Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises
- * Mr. Aurèle Thériault, Fédération des francophones hors Québec
- * Mr. Yvon Charbonneau, Collectif Espace-Québec
- * Mr. Pierre Dansereau, idem
- * Mrs. Solange Vincent, idem
- * Mr. Bernard Cleary, idem
- * Mr. Jacques Castonguay, Groupe franco-militaire
- * Mr. Yvon Lafrance, idem
- * Mr. Jacques Chouinard, idem
- * Mr. André Gobeil, Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval
- * Mr. Pierre-Luc Desgagné, idem
- * Mr. Christian Roy, idem
- * Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Québec City, Monday, December 17, 1990

Hearings: Organizations and Experts

(3:31 p.m.)

presentation which will precede the questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Come to order, please!

We will continue this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. Let me remind you that the mandate of this Commission is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon.

So that everyone here clearly understands the context in which our Commission received its mandate from the National Assembly, I would like to quote the opening of the preamble of the Act creating the Commission.

"Whereas Quebecers are free to assume their own destiny, to determine their political status and to assure their economic, social and cultural development;

"Whereas Quebecers wish to play an active part in defining the political and constitutional future of Québec;

"Whereas the Constitution Act, 1982, was proclaimed despite the opposition of the National Assembly;

"Whereas the 1987 Agreement on the Constitution, the aim of which was to allow Québec to become a party to the Constitution Act, 1982, has failed;

"Whereas it is necessary to redefine the political and constitutional status of Québec."

And there follow other equally important considerations which I won't quote so as not to try your patience and which you can examine at your leisure by referring to the text of Bill 90.

Today, we will be receiving the following groups and organizations: the Liberal Party of Canada, for one-and-a-half hours; Mr. Jean Keable, for 30 minutes; Mr. Ghislain Otis, for 30 minutes. Jointly, for one hour, the Fédération des francophones hors Québec and the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises; then, for 30 minutes, Collectif Espace-Québec; for 30 minutes, the groupe franco-militaire; and, for 30 minutes, the Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval.

I will remind you that the times allotted for a one-and-a-half-hour presentation are as follows: 10 minutes for the Chair, 15 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 15 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group, 40 minutes for members registered with the Chair, each member having 10 minutes maximum, and 10 minutes for the presentation of the brief.

The first group to appear before us today is the Liberal Party of Canada. I would therefore like to welcome Mr. Jean Chrétien who is heading up the group, Mr. Joyal, Mr. Dupuis, Mrs. Brousseau and Mr. Fox. I would ask Mr. Chrétien to proceed with his 10-minute

Liberal party of Canada

Mr. Chrétien: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Commission, Ladies of the Commission. Many of you may be wondering why I'm here. You will recall that I wrote a book, whose French title means a Christian, or Chrétien, in the lion's den... well, here I am. I am here as a Quebecer, a very proud Quebecer. I am here as a Canadian, a very proud Canadian. For the past 25 years, I have had the privilege of serving in public office and I have seen all the progress Québec has made in all areas and, like all the citizens of our province, I am very proud of it and very happy to have contributed, in some way, to Québec's progress and development. All of the progress of which we're so proud has been achieved within Canada.

Today, we find ourselves at a crossroads once again. Over the course of its history, Québec has had to take many decisions which have affected its future. At the time of the American Revolution, we decided not to participate but to remain an English colony. Afterward, in 1840 and 1848, Lafontaine, Lafontaine reformists united with Baldwin reformists to obtain responsible government. This was another choice made by the citizens of the Province of Québec. Afterward, in 1867, although MacDonald wanted to create a unitarian country, Cartier, a Quebecer, imposed a federative system at the time of Confederation in 1867. As I said in my brief, we were 1 million Francophones, we are close to 7 million today. Later, at the turn of the century, Québec's territory, which had been 194 000 square miles, was tripled to 595 000 square miles by an Act of the Canadian Parliament and we grew.

My colleagues and I feel that, right now, Québec has a fundamental choice to make. This choice is either to leave the Federation to become an independent State ruling on all legislation applying to all Québec citizens within its territory, or to remain a member of the Federation, to remain a member of Canada. And I want people to realize that the time has come to define matters clearly, to leave behind the confusion and to clearly establish what the future and what the choice is. I concluded that we have only two choices.

I believe the federal system is the best system in modern society at present. I said as much in my brief. This is the path Europe is now choosing. Yesterday, in the *New York Times*, they were talking about what was going on in Rome, how it was moving even more quickly toward integration into the European Community,

how the constant transfer of national sovereignties to the European Community is being stepped up. All observers, news releases and reports clearly indicate that the European Community is moving toward a system giving more powers to the Community's parliamentary assembly. There is talk of establishing a European code for social programs across all European countries. It's obvious that Jean Monnet's dream of growth toward the model of the United States of America is picking up momentum. A number of people have talked about a confederative system in which States are united to form one country merely by delegating powers and from which they could withdraw at will. The history of various peoples shows us that all confederative systems which survived eventually became federations. We could cite the example of the United States and of many other countries which had almost the same choice.

I want to tell you that I chose the "Canada" route because it's the best way to ensure all citizens of linguistic and cultural security and, at the same time, economic and social progress. We have made considerable progress in this country over the past century. Quebecers have made major, fundamental contributions to shaping this country. And today, what we have become can be attributed to our having been successful at living within a system where sovereignty is shared, where the provinces have sovereignty over certain matters and the federal government has sovereignty over others. We can remain in the past, but I would rather look toward the future. And I want to tell you that it is possible to retain our differences and set common goals. We spend far too much time talking about what divides us and too little time talking about what unites us. But internationally, we are seen as a country which has overcome many difficulties, which has developed cultural and social instruments almost unequalled worldwide and which have ultimately allowed us, Francophones, both those in Québec and the million other Francophones not from Québec, to become what we are, to progress, to play an increasingly important role in this country.

I would like to see all regions of Canada find a comfortable niche in the Canada of tomorrow. The Liberal Party has always been a party for reform and I believe that reform is possible. We have to change institutions. We mustn't be shy about looking at the separation of powers between the federal level and the provinces because what the Fathers of Confederation did in 1867 was done in a context that is over 100 years old, and what we must do, together, is enable the country to continue, but in a modern manner, into the 21st century, so that we can deal with the problems of world globalization.

Collectives are becoming larger and larger, and what makes the power of these groups

greater is often their diversity in unity. Earlier, I talked about the European example, but here we are, perhaps at the cutting edge of what might be a necessity for Europe's survival. They have had problems and they will have problems. But here in Canada, we've always looked at the country with an open mind, an even temper and a generous nature. Some people haven't, but the Canadian mind-set has always favoured the human qualities we're so proud of. So, what is our challenge today? Our challenge is to work together to modernize our Constitution to better prepare Québec and Canada to face the trials of the 21st century. I believe it is a task we can carry out.

Personally, I am convinced that we can do it if everyone contributes good will, time, tolerance, generosity, the ideal of sharing between the rich and the poor, this solidarity in difficult times, this determination to be an independent country which plays an international role and a country in which we, French-speakers, have always had the opportunity to participate, often at the highest levels. I believe the Canadian adventure has only begun; it must not end.

We can't forget that throughout Québec's history, we have had to make major decisions and I think that it's perfectly normal to launch the country into the 21st century by reflecting on the challenges overcome by people like Lafontaine, Cartier, Henri Bourassa, Laurier and all those who saw the chance for this small colony to become one of the seven powers of the Western world.

I sent you a brief and, Mr. Chairman, I would be very happy to answer your questions but I would like to invite the members to think in the very long term. I, who have devoted my entire life to the well-being of my fellow citizens, have always been extremely proud to say that I am a Quebecer, that I am a Francophone, and have also always been proud to be a Canadian, anywhere in Canada and even abroad. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Chrétien, we will begin the question period with a representative of the Official Opposition group, Mr. Parizeau.
(3:45 p.m.)

Mr. Parizeau: Mr. Chrétien, in 1980, you played a key role with the then Prime Minister of Canada and the man who is now Québec's Minister of Public Security and who, at that time, was the leader of the Québec Liberal Party, to ensure that a "no" to the Referendum would mean a "yes" to constitutional reform. In 1981, Quebecers realized that they had been duped, as was shown quite clearly by the resolution passed in the National Assembly at that time.

Now, I think you have a major credibility problem when you tell us about a new reform of federalism and are no more precise than when you made your promise in 1980. I also have to add that the credibility of the brief you presented to the Commission is not necessarily assured either. Your brief contains a number of factual errors which, I think, undermine its credibility completely. I have already tried to point out some examples, I could give others.

You say, for example, on page 11: "Later, the Canadian Constitution guaranteed that there would be three Québec justices in the Supreme Court." (translation) I know that according to a 1949 act three judges were assured a place on the Supreme Court. But that was part of Meech, the promise to entrench three Québec judges in the Constitution. Meech, which you don't mention. In the 89 pages of your brief, there's not one word about Meech.

The sentence I just read is not accurate. Currently, the Canadian Constitution does not guarantee the presence of three Québec judges.

Second example, on page 77... you'll note I'm sticking to the legal aspects: "This situation currently exists because Québec chose to exercise certain rights which the other provinces do not have. We only have to think of the example of the Québec Pension Plan, or of immigration." (translation) End of quote. We know very well that, in terms of immigration, the Cullen-Couture agreement is an administrative agreement. It has nothing to do with provincial rights. But let's forget that. The Québec Pension Plan... a right that the other provinces don't have! So what are section 94a of the Constitution? the BNA Act? the Canada Pension Plan Act? All provinces have that right.

I don't understand statements like that. They contain factual errors which are, how should I say, a little staggering. Let's move on to the financial field, with which I'm more familiar. You were both... you were Minister of Justice and Minister of Finance. Let's move on to the financial field. Equalization payments, at present, do not constitute, as your brief states, 28% of Québec's budget. They represent 11.6%, say 12% of Québec's revenues, not 28%. If I thought it was 28%, rather than 12%, I could perhaps draw conclusions that I haven't drawn for some time. But it isn't 28%, it's 12%.

To estimate the debt that Québec would have to share, and God knows if in your brief, it was picked up by the media a few days ago, you estimate the national debt at \$320 billion, net assets, but only net financial assets. What about real assets? Federal government books all list their value at \$1. We also know, through federal documents, that the real assets for National Defence alone are \$18 billion, just for Defence. All other assets, like those of Defence, are valued at \$1. As for the total debt, you take it from the federal government's financial

statements, but there are elements in there that aren't shared or, in any case, not on the same basis as the current debt. I'm thinking specifically of everything dealing with pensions, of the Canada Pension Plan and the Public Service Superannuation Plan. Those aren't the real figures. I'm just giving you these examples to say that when such major issues... listen, when you talk about the Pension Plan, you're talking about the Caisse de dépôt, and there, you're talking about a number of things that are quite important. We can't play with billions like that without being a little bit careful. Most of all, we can't kid ourselves about how important equalization payments are to Québec's budget. Ultimately, they're important in terms of Québec's political leanings. OK.

Having said that, I'd like to ask you some questions, starting with this one. We're still going to try to determine what should be found in this brief and what isn't. You see, Mr. Chrétien, the federalists who appear before us - there are of course still some people in Québec who want to change the current federal system - come with shopping lists or specific changes. Even the Conseil du Patronat du Québec, which doesn't want many changes to federalism, has come with a certain number of requests. I imagine you thought about this. Do we need to transfer true, and I mean true, power to Québec for everything dealing with manpower, immigration, health and regional development? What do you think of the federal government's spending powers? Should they remain the same or be changed? These are the things that should normally be explained. We can't go back to 1980 saying: I promise to change the Canadian federal system. Let's start there. On issues such as these, will you transfer things to Québec if you're prime minister of Canada or not?

Mr. Chrétien: OK, as for spending powers, I stated clearly in a speech I made on January 16, which I can send you, that we were in favour of spending powers. This was one of the five minimum conditions set out in Mr. Rémiillard's speech in May 1986, and I said in my speech at the time that I accepted Québec's five conditions; and as for spending powers, I have always believed that we needed to find a formula to limit the federal government's spending powers without eliminating the possibility of redistribution of wealth from the richest parts of the country to the poorer parts. I have no problem with that then, it's just a question of agreeing on the terms.

In the brief I'm presenting today, I say that we have to look at two things, institutional reform and the Senate. I mentioned them earlier in relation to the four major regions of Canada. I talk about possible reform of the Bank of Canada to ensure enhanced regional participation

by regions that feel trapped by a situation where policies seem to be based only on what's happening in Toronto. I say we have to look at power sharing and you talk about manpower, you talk about things like that, I agree that we have to look at it in terms of the criteria mentioned in my brief. It is very, very important to ensure that there is mobility of manpower, mobility of capital and mobility of goods in this country. In 1992, in the European community, there will be more mobility than there is here in Canada now. If we can't ensure mobility of our citizens, mobility of capital... I am ready to look at, to try to find out how the powers should be divided to ensure this mobility, but with the greatest efficiency and not for the benefit of one bureaucracy over the other bureaucracy... for the good of citizens who do, or do not, reap the benefit. Therefore, I am very open, and so is my party, to an in-depth review of jurisdictions in light of these criteria.

Mr. Parizeau: Still attempting to clarify for our benefit what you have in mind, Mr. Chrétien, Mr. Léon Dion who appeared before us a few days ago, whose testimony was interpreted as, how shall I put it, a sort of hope for the federalists, suggested that sections 2 and 7 to 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms not apply to Québec and that the Québec Charter of Rights and Liberties apply to Quebecers. How do you feel about that, do you agree?

Mr. Chrétien: Personally, I think that it's essential that the fundamental rights of all citizens be protected in a country's constitution. It ensures fundamental equality of all people, and I didn't see anyone involved in the debate, at the time of Meech Lake, saying that Canadians' fundamental rights must not be affected. I didn't read Professor Dion's testimony, but I would like to see his arguments, but that's what makes a country great, when a country with different ethnic groups guarantees fundamental equality of people and it is protected in the Constitution. Why? Because when it's in the country's Constitution, it cannot be amended by a single level of government alone and can be administered only through cooperation between the central government with a certain number of provincial governments. This protects the Charter from the vagaries of certain legislatures. And, to my mind, that's very important.

Mr. Parizeau: One last question, since my time is almost up. It is clear from your brief that there is no question in your mind of Québec having special status. I refer in particular to page 77. There is no question either of there being genuine "opting out", a genuine right of withdrawal for Québec from most major programs, page 78. The only specific element in

your brief, things that you consider can be passed on to Québec or transferred to Québec or used to increase Québec's existing powers, is that the constitutional amending formula, based on seven provinces, 50% of the population, would have to include Québec. That's the only specific thing in your brief.

The problem, evidently, is that going from a seven-province-50%-of-the-population formula, with or without Québec, to 7-50% with Québec included implies provincial unanimity. This is a bit of a problem. That's the only specific thing in your brief. How do you intend to get provincial unanimity so that the 7-50% formula includes Québec when this is not the case? Would Mr. Wells and the others be willing to accept that?

Mr. Chrétien: I can't say it will be easy, Mr. Parizeau, but if we reform institutions, which could satisfy the concerns of the other parts of Canada, we might be able to do it. However, the problem wouldn't even exist if, in 1981, when you were in the government, you hadn't abandoned the right to veto to keep the Gang of Eight together. I always favoured of an amending formula that would give Québec a right of veto. The Victoria formula was a regional veto. Québec, Ontario, two Western provinces, two Atlantic provinces.

We are faced with the reality that the Québec veto was abandoned in 1981. I sincerely hope to win it back for Québec. I believe it's possible. During the conversations held in the spring about the Meech Lake Accord, I had the opportunity to talk with some government leaders and, at the time, only one objected to finding a way to return the right of veto to Québec. The others were all ready to do it. Perhaps... probably we would have been able to convince it, had that ultimately been the only one, I don't know. It will be difficult, because when a small province now has the right of veto, in asking it to give it back, there is a good chance that it will use it to get things that are completely unrelated to constitutional problems. But I am an optimist by nature. I am pretty much convinced that if there were only one province raising this objection, we could probably get it back.

Mr. Parizeau: One last question, Mr. Chairman. We do agree, however, that the Supreme Court confirmed that Québec never had a formal right of veto?

Mr. Chrétien: Absolutely. It was a politically-recognized right of veto proposed by the federal government. It was never in the Constitution. We wanted to put it in the Constitution. That was part of our plan, to put it in the Constitution, and the eight provinces including the Province of Québec at the time,

responded: We don't want the right of veto, we want the 50%-of-the-population-and-seven-provinces formula, and that's the day we had to give in to the request of the seven provinces plus Québec.

(4:00 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): OK, we'll now move on to questions from members. Let me remind members that they have up to 10 minutes, but since there are 14 people who want to ask questions and there is definitely not time for 14, if you could ask short questions that require brief answers, it would allow us to get more in. Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chrétien, you are proposing renewed federalism, and I know that it's an issue that concerns many Quebecers. In 1980, you were a "no" supporter, a very strong supporter. In 1982, you were Minister of Justice when the Constitution was repatriated without Québec. In 1990, you came out against Meech, and we are here today because Meech didn't pass. Therefore, my question is a question many Quebecers are asking themselves, it is: How much credibility does Jean Chrétien have today when he proposes renewed federalism? What confidence can we put in the Liberal Party when it proposes different alternatives to sovereignty or to other means being sought at present? And I think that this question, before going any further in the debate, would have to be settled once and for all, therefore, I'm asking you outright.

Mr. Chrétien: Fine, OK. To answer your last question, on Meech Lake, I'd like to mention that on January 16, 1990, I gave a speech, it was broadcast throughout the country and the Province of Québec, in which I said that the five conditions mentioned by Mr. Rémillard during his May 1986 speech were completely acceptable to me. Only we have to understand one thing. The Meech Lake Accord wasn't merely Québec's five conditions, it was much more than Québec's five conditions and, moreover, this is what Professor Dion confirmed last week. As for me, in the speech I made at the time, I proposed changes.

At the time, I clearly indicated that giving Québec a veto without giving one to Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland was unacceptable. It was far too rigid a formula to successfully deal with the reforms to come, including power sharing. Therefore, I was clear. I indicated what had to be done, and was concerned, as always, with ensuring that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was completely protected, being the one who had authored it in the Canadian Parliament, and fundamentally believing that in a modern society, encompassing many ethnic groups, it is the best guarantee for citizens to avoid discrimination, and several other technical

amendments of the same type.

Afterward, the Prime Minister of Canada struck a committee, the Charest committee, to try to find... and I suggested: Make amendments which meet Québec's five conditions, but which would allow the Accord to pass. The committee sat and the committee produced a unanimous report. Mr. Desjardins representing the Conservative Party, who is here, was on the committee. Mr. Ouellet was on the committee; it was unanimously passed by the House of Commons. No one objected and though not all the objections were dealt with, several were objections of mine. I was consulted by federal Liberals at the time because, as you know, we were right in the middle of a leadership race and most MPs supported me. They consulted me and I recommended they vote in favour of the Charest report, and they all voted in favour of the Charest report.

Following this, the Charest report was abandoned completely. There was a spectacular resignation which probably caused the death of the Charest report, and I think that's when the Meech Lake Accord died. June was simply when we noticed that the corpse was cold. As for me, I think that this spirit of compromise on the part of the Members of Parliament, after consultations in all the provinces, after having listened to everyone, would have allowed us to have Québec's five conditions in the Constitution today. Unfortunately, they aren't there. But that was my contribution to finding a compromise and I am very proud of it. I think that it was a useful contribution. I could have distanced myself from the matter, but I didn't. I played as great a role as I knew how, and many Quebecers called me at the time asking me to step in. And you know some of them. Some of them are in this room.

I did what I could, only no one really looked for a solution. I believe there was a certain desire on the part of many people to see that Meech Lake didn't pass. It would serve interests other than those of the community. And that's why I think my experience, when I said in the report that the unanimity rule was going to kill everything, when I also said that it was necessary to take into account the considerations of the other parts of Canada... I was convinced that by reforming the Senate, for example, we could satisfy Westerners' constant frustration, and, using Senate reform, constitutionally assure the Atlantic provinces, whose population is steadily decreasing, of an adequate proportion for representation in the Canadian Parliament, no matter what their population. This assurance, which these people do not have, would help us meet Québec's demands and do what I said earlier: examine power sharing so that Canada can enter the 21st century with the tools needed to confront international competition and globalization.

And looking at power sharing, earlier, I mentioned the mobility of goods, people and services which, to me, is essential and which no longer exists. In terms of compromises, we could say "no" to those that benefit only the federal government, those that benefit only the Québec government, but could look for short, medium, and long-term benefits for Québec citizens. I am convinced that we could succeed.

Mr. Beaudry: Mr. Chrétien, you responded to Meech and you gave your explanation of Meech, but I would like you to talk about the role you played in repatriating the Constitution in 1982.

Mr. Chrétien: OK, I was Minister of Justice. I was responsible for the file at that time and we repatriated the Constitution which received the approval of more than 95% of Quebecers.

Mr. Beaudry: It's not the repatriation as such that interests me, it's the fact that in 1980, there was a referendum, during which you worked for the "no" side and during which claims were made to the effect that we would have renewed federalism. And in 1982, we found ourselves with a repatriation that excluded Québec. That's what I want to hear you talk about.

Mr. Chrétien: Fine, what we did is we repatriated the Constitution. We entrenched a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the Canadian Constitution. And that wasn't all we did. There were certain adjustments. The Constitution contained asymmetrical texts which allowed, for example, in terms of the language issue, that it would apply differently in Québec than elsewhere. We entrenched the federal government's obligation to share the wealth in the Constitution, in part through the equalization program. Certain special powers for taxation, international trade and natural resources were transferred to the provincial governments. Unfortunately, Québec didn't sign. And that was as traumatizing for me as for everyone else.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Chrétien: I was there. We tried to be as accommodating as possible. Only, Mr. Lévesque, who was an exceptional man, remained true to himself. We were making, or were in the process of drafting, a new Canadian Constitution. Several of the issues on the table before us had been approved by the Québec government during the course of negotiations, in principle, without receiving a final "yes". When it came down to the wire, there was a very tough choice: Either remain faithful to his program which said, in section 1, we're for an independent Québec and Québec's separation from Canada, or, sign a new

Constitution for Canada, at which time, Mr. Lévesque...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry's time is over, if you could wrap it up.

Mr. Chrétien: I've finished... and at that time, he was faithful to his program, faithful to himself. He said: I cannot sign, no matter what's on the table. And we continued with the project to reform the country's Constitution as we had promised.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Nicolet, followed by Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chrétien, from page 72 on, to page 77, 78 of your brief, you sidestep what could be a form of renewed federalism. You even go so far as to suggest, and I quote, at the bottom of page 76: "We believe that the modernization of Canadian federalism does not necessarily confirm the principle of total symmetry of aspects, etc." (translation) So, you're wandering quite a ways down a path leading to a view of federalism which has already been mentioned before this Commission. Of course, perhaps I should specify that on page 78 of your brief, at the bottom of the page, you mention this idea of asymmetry. Nevertheless, you're going farther than your party has ever gone and certainly farther than successive positions taken at the federal level would lead one to expect. I would like to ask you, with this as a basis, to put yourself in a position where you would be elected head of a minority government, and have to lead the rest of Canada, Canada outside Québec, toward a splintered vision of what we have traditionally considered federalism. How do you think you would be able to do this?

Mr. Chrétien: In my view, the demands, some of Québec's demands at this time, are shared by other provinces. In looking at the powers, there are the powers in 91; I believe that it would be very difficult for the powers in 91 not to be symmetrical. That doesn't mean that, in certain cases, the powers in 91 can't be transferred to the provinces. On the other hand, for shared powers, I believe that symmetry isn't necessary and we've had examples over the past 25 years in which a little asymmetry has worked well. I am speaking, for example, of the Caisse de dépôt... I mean the pension plan rather than that led to the Caisse de dépôt. These are two asymmetrical systems.

Here, in Québec, we took a completely different direction and it has become a very important economic and social development instrument. It has not remained merely a pension plan in the sense that the rest of Canada understands it, where the pension of citizens in

the rest of Canada is used directly to finance the provinces, without having the same system we have here in Québec. And it can be done. I mentioned that the Constitution Act, 1982 allowed opting out in terms of language and culture, with compensation for the Province of Québec, because of obvious cultural concerns which are still necessary. We have had some on several occasions... Therefore, I would say that I am ready to negotiate.

(4:15 p.m.)

I will give you some examples. Agriculture - I see Mr. Proulx here - which is by nature asymmetrical because the problems in agriculture vary considerably from one part of the country to another. There are provinces which have almost no agriculture, like certain Atlantic provinces, I don't think there's any at all in Newfoundland. And the serious problems facing Western farmers in international negotiations right now create difficulties in terms of the position of Québec farmers. Therefore, it is by nature a field where symmetry is not necessary and asymmetrical solutions are needed. And we could study others.

Mr. Nicolet: Yes, Mr. Chrétien, I listened to you on symmetry. But you go... I concede that it's only briefly outlined, but you do go much further in your text. I refer to page 76, where you say: Having said this, the federal Parliament must be given a minimum of legislative powers, etc. And there, finally, you are limiting yourself... foreign affairs, defence, currency, as well as other powers necessary to ensure economic development and distribution of wealth. Therefore, you... There's a certain hard core the government is sticking to and, by cross-checking, we can see that the rest is subject to negotiation.

But, to get back to my original question: How would you get the rest of Canada outside Québec to follow you down this path, particularly in the event of your becoming head of a minority government?

Mr. Chrétien: When I say: Powers necessary to ensure economic development, the distribution of wealth, I am saying a lot. And... Briefly, that's what has to be determined. We will have to look at the distribution of powers in light of the conditions I feel are necessary, again on page 36 of my brief. That is, page 36 of my brief is not exactly... The goals of redistribution, where I say that when reviewing powers, we must guarantee citizens' rights and freedoms. We have to ensure that linguistic communities in the country are maintained and strengthened, we have to respect the development of Native peoples and cultural communities, thus the smooth operation of the Canadian common market.

When I spoke about mobility, earlier, I had to reach some tough conclusions because Canadian mobility is not good at present. In many professions, it's necessary... You cannot... you have to be a lawyer in Québec, you can't be a lawyer in Ontario. You have to be a dentist in Québec, you can't be a dentist in the Atlantic provinces. In Europe, however, if I understand correctly, as of 1992, professionals, I'm pretty sure, will be able to practice their profession in all 12 European countries.

Certificates of skill or professional diplomas will be recognized in other countries, which will ensure people enormous mobility. If we can achieve that in Canada, it would completely change the picture and ensure balanced economic and social progress. Because I don't want a country where there are very poor areas and other areas of Canada that are very rich. And that has nothing to do with language and culture, Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mr. Libman.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chrétien, earlier you led us to understand that I killed the Meech Lake Accord. That's odd, because personally, I thought it was you and Mr. Wells who killed it. And now that you think it's me, I'm almost afraid that to thank me, you'll hug me the way you hugged Mr. Wells.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: Nevertheless, I would like to compliment you on your brief. I think there are few enough people who will do so, but I would like to be honest enough to tell you that I particularly liked the passage on page 3 where you recognize that Québec now has confidence in its control over its own economic future. It's gratifying to hear that from someone of your experience, who knows Québec so well. And on page 19, I believe you clear up a prejudice which has done great harm to Québec's image when you say that Québec has protected its language and done so, in general, with a degree of respect for and generosity toward its English-speaking community that has rarely been found in other parts of the country.

And I thank you for recognizing it, since there are few people who have recognized it here. On the contrary, federalists have all attempted to sully Québec's image where democracy is concerned. Having said this, I would like to allow you perhaps to clear up one error that you made, possibly inadvertently, when you led us to understand that Mr. Lévesque, while exceptional, did not want to reach an agreement with you. Wouldn't it have

been possible for you to accept the agreement that Mr. Lévesque proffered in 1981, while he himself signed an agreement with seven other provinces, an agreement to repatriate the Constitution, which didn't change any powers and which would have allowed the discussion to continue in a context in which we wouldn't have suffered the assaults we have suffered since then? Weren't you the radical one who prevented the agreement, which would have been acceptable at the time?

And, secondly, my question is the following. On page 49, you have a paragraph which seems to me to be very important, the second paragraph, where you say: "It seems evident that Quebecers should decide whether they are going to become independent, or remain in Canada." (translation) I believe I understand that you are alluding to the fact that Quebecers will, in the near future, have to democratically decide on the future they want in terms of their political status. Now I know that you're a man who has never backed down from a fight, and I give you credit for that. Am I to understand that you would agree, and that you, yourself, would deem it democratically healthy to participate in a democratic debate, a referendum, on the sovereign or federalist future of Québec in the coming months?

Secondly, because you are an important man, who thinks, who even has a chance to be, in any case, who is seeking a mandate as prime minister of the country, is it plausible for you to play a critical role in the events to come? If Québec declares its sovereignty and gives Mr. Bourassa a mandate to seek sovereignty, will you cooperate with Mr. Bourassa to facilitate the transition to sovereignty from the federalism we have now? Or will you, on the contrary, attempt to fan the flame of English Canadian sentiment against Québec, or even attempt to shrink Québec's territory?

Mr. Chrétien: Bah! I said in my brief, Mr. Bouchard, that it would be very difficult to make the transition. If people are tired of constitutional negotiations, I think that negotiating separation will be very complicated, and will cause very serious economic instability for Québec, and economists last week said so. According to them, Quebecers' standard of living would suffer, and it would be the workers, the blue-collar workers, the white-collar workers, not the middle class, but the littlest and the poorest who would suffer.

If I become Prime Minister of Canada, the Constitution will not give any premier in Canada the right to negotiate territorial separation. Since, the Constitution does not allow us to create new provinces without the consent of seven provinces representing 50% of the population, the opposite should also be true.

It is possible that the provinces wouldn't

want to give the Prime Minister of Canada a mandate to negotiate Québec's separation for them because they would have considerable interests to protect. And the legitimacy of the federal government, with 25% of the population gone, would perhaps be difficult to establish to undertake these negotiations.

Personally, I am convinced that it would be extremely complicated and that, after independence is achieved... when I read briefs and listen to conversations, many people are still saying: We must not lose what we have gained, we will renegotiate a new economic agreement with the rest of Canada at that time. I'm not sure, Mr. Bouchard, that will be so easy. It's possible that certain regions of Canada, seeing the death of the Canadian dream would decide to unite with the United States. Others might maintain a sort of Canada. But all this would take time, before we could find the appropriate mechanisms.

I have worked as hard as I can to find the best solution. But the reality will be very, very difficult and, I believe that if you're going to have independence and then remarry, you don't tear down a building to redo the interior. You leave the walls standing and then redo it. That's what was done to preserve Old Québec, which I visited again with great pleasure this morning.

Therefore, I find the proposal... Am I going to help? I have every intention of being elected here in Québec in the next federal election, and I will always be a Quebecer, but I am convinced of the Canadian way. Therefore, I am, I'm going to work to ensure that Québec chooses the Canadian option.

And I would like to return to your earlier accusation, if I may, because there is a myth that I killed Meech Lake, with Mr. Wells. And the truth has to be told. Political discussions are fine, but the truth must be told. Mr. Wells was against the Meech Lake Accord, and he was against some of Québec's conditions. I was in favour of Québec's five conditions. I wanted Québec to have a veto, and not Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland. He disagreed with me. And at no time, though you talk about hugs, at that time, if you had any insight, you would realize I had just won the leadership of my party, I had won the seven counties, the seven Newfoundland delegations and he had remained neutral and I was thanking him for remaining neutral. I won 90% of the vote in Newfoundland. I don't even know if Mr. Wells voted for me. All I know was that his son had tried to be chosen a delegate for one of my adversaries at Memorial University in Newfoundland.

Mr. Bouchard: Thirty seconds, Mr. Chairman. Am I to understand that you agree that Québec should soon decide its own future by referendum?

Mr. Chrétien: What I don't like about the

idea of one, two or three referendums is that people say: We're going to have a referendum, we're going to have another referendum, we're going to have a third referendum. I wonder what the most appropriate time for Quebecers to decide to separate is if the current government is against separation, independence. They don't have to hold a referendum because it goes against their convictions, and is part of the Parti québécois' platform. Will there be referendums or a referendum? The debate isn't over yet. Mr. Parizeau steps in all the time to keep his troops in line, but I think it isn't...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Chrétien: ...I think that it's up to him to propose independence when he forms the government, to ask the people. It's not up to a government that wants to remain in the federation, a renewed federation of course, to ask the independence question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Libman, followed by Mr. Larose.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chrétien, unlike those who preceded me, after reading your brief, the first thing to be said is that you have given us a taste of reality which is very important, very timely and also very refreshing. And the key sentence in your brief is when you said that the burden of proof clearly rests on those who reject Canada outright, and that they must show that sovereignty is more likely to promote the economic, social and cultural growth of all Quebecers. And I must admit to you, Mr. Chrétien, that after six weeks of hearings, we are still waiting for this proof. We have heard enough clichés, slogans and assumptions, but we are still waiting for the real "how", and I would like all those people to read pages 53 and 54 of your brief. My question concerns the territorial issue. Two weeks ago, some groups came before this commission. They spoke about a corridor of land between Ontario and the Maritimes which would be linked to the seaway to maintain Canada's geographic integrity. I would like to ask you if you can elaborate on this issue, this possibility of parcelling out Québec's territory, which may be raised during the negotiations for Québec's sovereignty, especially as regards Rupert's Land, to which you refer on pages 11, 12 and 56, and where the James Bay developments are located.

Mr. Chrétien: Your question is hypothetical. I hope that we will never have to negotiate Québec's separation from Canada. The territorial question will probably be asked by some Canadian citizens. If they want to maintain the integrity of the rest of Canada, they must, they will perhaps demand to have a corridor to unite

the country from east to west. Some will check the history books in order to ascertain the boundaries of Lower Canada between 1840 and 1867. Rupert's Land came after and that's because, at that time, this was a transfer of these lands which belonged to Canada as a whole, and they were transferred to a part of Canada. And some people will raise this question. (4:30 p.m.)

I know that the people who want separation clearly speak about the absolute integrity of Québec territory, and they don't want to grant self-determination to any other people, except that I find in some of their speeches that they are very willing to tell Native people that they will grant them status as a people. So, is a people entitled to a territory? I imagine that Max Gros-Louis and others will raise the question: Are we entitled to a territory? What, historically, is our territory? There are countries in the United Nations which are, population-wise, very, very small. There are countries which do not have... if I'm not mistaken, there is a country which has fewer than 50 000 inhabitants. So, there will be these questions. How will they be answered? I don't really know. I would rather not waste my time on a hypothetical question such as this, we have enough problems as is.

Mr. Libman: My second question, Mr. Chairman, on another topic. On page 20, you refer to the irritants of Bill 178, but for many Quebecers, Bill 178 constitutes a serious insult and is not merely an irritant. And the fact that an official language is banned runs entirely counter to the social contract which exists in Canada. And it's also the use of the "notwithstanding" clause to create this statute in 1988, which created this specific statute, which destroyed the faith of the rest of Canada in the interpretative nature of the distinct society clause, and basically, it was this lack of confidence, in my opinion, which buried the Meech Lake Accord. So, having said this, in light of what you said on page 74 of your brief, are you in favour of abolishing the "notwithstanding" clause of the Charter? Estimez-vous que la clause "nonobstant" de la Charte devrait être abolie, étant donné que l'article 1 de la Charte comporte une clause de restriction raisonnable qui donne en fait au gouvernement du Québec la possibilité de promouvoir et de préserver la langue et la culture françaises?

Mr. Chrétien: In the very first draft of the Charter of Rights, there was no "notwithstanding" clause. Over months of discussion, we realized that not having a "notwithstanding" clause was going to create major problems at all levels of government, and we eventually agreed to the "notwithstanding" clause. I believe that application of the

"notwithstanding" clause could be made more difficult. In my opinion, at least three quarters of the members of a Legislative Assembly or the National Assembly or the Canadian Parliament could perhaps be required, but there are circumstances in which the elected representatives of the people must be able to decide, and I could give you a present-day example.

If the Supreme Court had ruled last week that the Riot Act, which is found in the Criminal Code, ran counter to the freedom of speech, we wouldn't have been able to have a law in Canada under the strictly federal jurisdiction of the Criminal Code without having a constitutional amendment, because "notwithstanding" wouldn't have existed. And I think that in a democratic society such as ours, the Supreme Court was right in saying that freedom of speech prevailed. But there could be a Supreme Court at some time in the future which would take a different view. And at that time, I am convinced that Parliament, the elected representatives would be entitled to say "notwithstanding".

The Supreme Court ruling... We want to have in the Criminal Code of Canada a statute which bans hate literature; and Mr. Borovoy, who was the director-general of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union at the time when we reached this compromise, found - I don't have the text with me - that everyone around that table showed a great deal of imagination in coming up with that solution. But I would make its application much more difficult by requiring three quarters of the Assembly, because to take away rights or suspend rights is very difficult and, furthermore, I think that the remedy should be faster, we should review it every three years so that it isn't forgotten in the statutes, because there may be discriminatory statutes which have been passed, and if we never review them, they will remain there for all time, and if we review them every three years, every five years, the problem comes up again, and if the problem no longer exists, we can simply not pass the statute again.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Larose, followed by Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to this commission, Mr. Chrétien, which is essentially made up of Quebecers. Last week, in fact, Mr. Dion, who is a veteran federalist, an exhausted one, came to tell us that the Canadian federation had to be completely overhauled. Nothing less. He proposed a rather complicated and lengthy approach, but he also said: We will have to have credible people. You have been on the Canadian scene for over 25 years, you told us so. In 1980, you were heavily involved and commanded attention during the Referendum

debate. You said many things. You certainly didn't quibble over the means. In 1981, during that infamous night of long knives, you stuck yours in Québec's back. In 1990, we supposedly misinterpreted the media, but I believe that it must be understood that you gave Mr. Wells a severe talking to for killing Meech Lake because it wasn't giving enough to Québec.

The question of credibility for a commission such as this can be asked. You said yourself that, since Québec will make its own decisions, it will need a spokesperson in Canada. Are you that spokesperson? And if you are, on what basis will you defend and promote Québec's interests? You say yourself that you are a Quebecer, which means already knowing what your position will be once Québec has decided. Will you respect Québec's decision?

Mr. Chrétien: I am a democrat and I said so in 1980 in many speeches. If we hadn't recognized that Québec could make a decision to separate, we would have acted otherwise. There were powers that we could have used. We didn't use them. I think you are asking me a hypothetical question. In my brief, I explained the difficulties that will be encountered.

I hope, Mr. Larose, that you, who represent workers, who represent trade unionists, that your main concern is the economic welfare of these workers; if they must pay the price, that you will have the honesty to say what price they will pay. I very much liked Mr. Bourgault who said on several occasions: We will perhaps be poorer, but we will be happier. That's honest. There are people who entered the La Trappe monastery at Oka for that. Others left it. But there those who entered it.

Mr. Larose: Mr. Chrétien...

Mr. Chrétien: And the workers should know that. It's for them that I want to make sure that everything is well thought out.

Only, I would like to tell you, Mr. Larose, that in debates such as this, it doesn't help to use insults. That's the weapon of the weak. I'm asking you to look after the interests of your workers, the people who will pay the price. There will be 2000 middle-class people in Québec who will benefit. Only, what will happen to those people? That's my concern, the economic and social welfare of all citizens of Québec. And, in Europe today... I spoke not long ago to Neil Kinnock, leader of the Labour Party in England, and I asked him: What did you do, Mr. Kinnock, to persuade the English unions to support England's entry into the Common Market? He told me: It was difficult, but he said: The long-term benefit, the long-term economic benefit for English workers was England's entry into the Common Market. And he was against Mrs. Thatcher's sovereignist element. It was difficult,

he told me, but he succeeded. And I ask you to do the same: to think about the economic interests of your members.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chrétien. I would like to inform you that, in the polls, the large majority of workers and ordinary people in Québec are for Québec sovereignty, and the middle-class people, with whom you are perhaps more familiar than I, it just so happens that they are against Québec sovereignty. Are you telling me...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would like to remind the people in the gallery that applause in the gallery is not permitted.

Mr. Larose: I don't like it that you used insults just when you said that the spokespersons of workers are carrying out mandates which they didn't check because, for a year, we have been checking with each of our locals to find out whether people, just so we can get out of the usual economic stagnation that we're in, if we shouldn't make this sort of choice. The workers are for Québec independence. The middle-class is against it, and you know it.

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

Mr. Chrétien: I would like to say that I don't deny that the polls show that they are for sovereignty. I would like you to tell them: Sovereignty means pure, hardline independence.

Mr. Larose: That's what we're saying.

Mr. Chrétien: Bravo! There are many who say: We will separate and we will remarry. And that's what's dangerous! And people...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, who will be followed by Mr. Ouellet, provided that both are relatively brief, if that's possible.

Mr. Dufour: If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would first like to correct an assertion made earlier by Mr. Bouchard that offended me. When you say that all federalists, of which I am one, have tried to sully Québec's image abroad in terms of rights and freedoms, well, I think that you are making an absolutely erroneous assertion.

Mr. Chrétien, I would like you to touch on two issues very quickly. The first is certainly that of power sharing. As regards the distribution of powers, I will ask you a very specific question: Québec is currently heading three areas: Immigration, manpower and health with respect to the user fee. As regards these

three areas, could you support Québec in the current debates?

Mr. Chrétien: I haven't had the time to study these issues in depth. Regarding the health question, we have always been for the principle of universality and the user fee, if it must become a fee which deprives people of the services which we believe fundamental for all citizens of Canada... Universality, in my opinion, is very important, and with our system of universal access for all citizens to health services... In Canada, we have accomplished something that is very astonishing. In Canada, we currently spend, if I'm not mistaken, 9.5% of the gross national income on health services. The Americans with their mixed system of private enterprise and public sectors spend, I think, almost 11% of the gross national income on health services, and a very large number of Americans do not have access to health services, and very often, some Americans who have access to health services, once it's over, have lost all their assets. I like the Canadian universal system better.

Mr. Dufour: Manpower, immigration.

Mr. Chrétien: Only, there may be administrative arrangements to correct some of the abuses which may exist in the system.

Mr. Dufour: Manpower, immigration.

Mr. Chrétien: As regards immigration, I agree with the demands made by Mr. Rémillard to entrench the Couture-Cullen agreement in the Constitution.

Mr. Dufour: I would just like to ask you a question about time. You said earlier: Negotiating the association with English Canada after sovereignty would take an enormous amount of time, which I agree with. Except that there is some impatience in Québec right now, and it is manifested both by sovereignists and federalists. You said that there are misgivings and we must overcome these misgivings and quickly. I'm asking you the question: With the approach you have put forward in your brief, which is to negotiate new powers between the federal government and the provinces, how much time would that take us?

Mr. Chrétien: I honestly have no idea about the time. Only that if this were done in a spirit of calm, of reflection, in search of the true solution, few people would be concerned and economic stability would remain. Whether we have constitutional discussions over six months, one year or two years in a relaxed, realistic atmosphere, well, I think, the fear would disappear.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge, who had to cancel a lot of things to be here today, asked me if I couldn't squeeze him in, so, if you would, Mr. Laberge, I'll turn the floor over to you now. I will then finish with Mr. Ouellet before going to the Government parliamentary group.
(4:45 p.m.)

Mr. Laberge: Mr. Chrétien, I don't want to dwell too long on the question of Clyde Wells, but you said earlier: I thanked him because he had been neutral during my election. How do you translate that: "Merci, Clyde, pour un travail bien fait"? For a guy who was neutral...

Mr. Chrétien: Listen, I had all the delegates. That's a "travail bien fait". If he had worked against me...

Mr. Laberge: Is he neutral or is he not neutral?

Mr. Chrétien: No, no, no, I must tell you that if Mr. Clyde Wells... no, no, no.

Mr. Laberge: O.K. Let's move on. That's not the question I want to ask you.

Mr. Chrétien: No, no. You asked it.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ask it again, Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: You said earlier: I am a democrat. Fine, I believe that. So, you recognize that Québec has the right to self-determination. You said it earlier: If it's done in accordance with the standards, fine. You know very well that the five conditions of the Meech Lake Accord were really minimal. Oh well! There are lots of Quebecers who didn't think it was enough. And unfortunately, there was no accord. And you perhaps know that today, in Québec, there are a whole lot of organizations: the Forum pour l'emploi, 28 different organizations, the county municipality councils, the chambers of commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, finally, a whole bunch of organizations demanding that a whole lot of things be repatriated, including all powers over education and occupational training, manpower, immigration, unemployment insurance, etc. How will you go about seeking that in ordinary negotiations? First question.

Second question. During the 1980 Referendum, we remember it well, there are some memories that are rather unfortunate, others that were more "fun", but... A couple of unfortunate memories... you made sensational speeches then, flamboyant even. You mixed us up a bit: A "no" meant "yes". And you even said: We

are putting our seats on the line. Fine, you fooled some!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: You fooled some since. How could you? Really... Do you really believe that there is a chance of negotiating with Canada with all the new powers that all Quebecers are demanding?

And my third question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge, could we leave some time for the first two?

Mr. Laberge: Two and a half.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: Our national leaders failed their essential task. You know that in 1980, there were what... some 44% who voted "yes", eh? The polls currently show that there are approximately 64% or 65% who say they are in favour of sovereignty. Don't you think that you have something to do there: Voting for "no" is a "yes"... in 1981, 1982 and all that. Quebecers remember. That's one of our mottos: I remember.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, Mr. Chrétien, in order or out of order, the three answers, please.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Chrétien: Listen, to answer your question, I'm talking about a global negotiation. I will ask you a question: Are you for the mobility of manpower throughout the provinces of Canada? Or do you want to keep the system of granting the construction workers in the Province of Québec absolute protection? Those are the principles that we will have to look at. If there is...

Mr. Laberge: But, that isn't it at all, you know very well...

Mr. Chrétien: No, but I'm telling you, I'm asking you...

Mr. Laberge: You are asking me a question and you don't want an answer?

Mr. Chrétien: Fine, you'll answer once I've finished.

Mr. Laberge: It's because that's a bit different, the construction business.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr.

Laberge, you had three well formulated questions. You must leave some time for the answers.

Mr. Laberge: Oh well! He isn't entitled to ask me questions.

Mr. Chrétien: No, no. I won't ask any more.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): No, he won't ask any more.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): He promises not to ask any more but he will answer.

Mr. Chrétien: I say, Mr. Laberge, that you are a negotiator. And I'm convinced, for example, that for Senate reform, which isn't being discussed here, it's very...

Mr. Laberge: We got rid of that 20 years ago.

Mr. Chrétien: I know, but in the federations of the world, Germany, France - that isn't a federation, but France has an upper house - Australia has an upper house... It's a very useful tool to ensure that the governments in place, at least with suspending power, can delay their decisions and allow the regions to participate more. If we get that, and this is very important for Québec too, because in an upper house that is elected, regardless of what happens to the population of Québec, we will always have our 25% or thereabouts of Senate representation. In the long-term, if we must remain in Canada, that's very important in order to face some of the concerns today. If a debate is held, it will be done. You spoke to me about unemployment insurance. I said one day that I was against its repatriation for a purely mathematical reason, because there has always been, over the last 25 years, more unemployed in Québec than the national average. Therefore, if it were strictly an insurance program, the workers and the bosses would pay more to get the same benefits only within Québec.

Mr. Laberge: If the taxation policy weren't creating unemployment for us in Québec, maybe we could balance the unemployment insurance books. The soaring interest rates that are supposed to reduce inflation in Ontario and elsewhere, the overvalued Canadian dollar, that takes away our jobs.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge, you are going to ask so many other answers that it'll be even more obvious that we are already short of time.

Mr. Chrétien: I agree with you on the interest rates policy, and I said in my document that we must reform the Bank of Canada to ensure that regional interests are respected more than they have been in recent years. We had interest rates of that sort because of the supposedly inflationary pressure in the Toronto region. The government should have taken means other than imposing interest rates, since they were imposed on other Canadians who didn't need them, to slow down the economic growth in the Golden Shoe in Ontario.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): One last short question from the members, by Mr. Ouellet, after that we will turn to the representatives of the Government party. Mr. Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like, in closing, to thank Mr. Chrétien, for answering the questions which were of very great concern to all the members of this Commission. I think that those who took the time to read your brief must especially pay attention to the last sentence of this brief, the conclusion that reminds us that, in light of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission report and the work which will be carried out by other groups across the country, the Liberal Party of Canada will be willing to advocate, propose and debate comprehensive reforms of Canadian federalism in order to create a new Canada. That, obviously seems to me to be entirely in line with a certain number of suggestions, demands which were made by people who testified here and who would like comprehensive changes to Canadian federalism and who demanded a certain number of additional powers to adequately respond to Québec's legitimate aspirations. Mr. Chrétien, in light of what you said in closing, are you in favour of transferring major powers from the Government of Canada to the Québec government in the future?

Mr. Chrétien: I said, in my brief, that we must modernize the Canadian Constitution and this is essential in order to face the 21st century. I discussed certain principles which should govern the analysis of the distribution of powers: the mobility of manpower, a guarantee of language equality across the country, respect for Native people. There are criteria, if we are a nation, if we are a country, that we must share. That's what's happening in Europe. They are now setting up a social charter in Europe which will establish the same criteria in Germany as in Spain and Portugal. That means that there will be many changes in certain countries because these standards will be higher for many countries. That's what is being sought, the social and economic welfare of citizens. If additional powers must be granted to preserve the French

language and culture right here in Québec, I'll go along with it. In the past, we did that. In my opinion, the preservation of the French language and culture is essential. That's what makes Canada distinct right now. So, if there is need for more, we'll do it. On sharing powers, we must also look at the institutions and the powers. And, in light of the criteria which I listed, we will analyze them to ensure that all citizens, whether they live on the Gaspé Peninsula or in Cape Breton, in British Columbia or in Newfoundland, benefit from a minimum of decency and respect for the human being which is essential in a society such as ours where we have reached a level which is the envy of many countries in the world. Whether it is one bureaucracy over another, I have been in government long enough to understand that, very often, a minister's eagerness is based on the demands of his public servants so that they can tell him afterwards: You won our battle. What must be looked after is the people's interest. We are all here to serve the people and we will share powers in order to ensure that the citizens of the entire country, especially the citizens of Québec, may be citizens who enjoy their diversity in fundamental, economic and social equality.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We have already greatly exceeded the time allocated to the other members, but there were many speakers. I would like to apologize to those who weren't able to take the floor. We will now continue with the 15 minutes set aside for the representatives of the Government party. The floor is Mr. Rémillard's.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chrétien, Ladies, Gentlemen, first of all I would like to welcome you to this Commission. It gives me even more pleasure to welcome you since, Mr. Chrétien, it is to you, to a certain extent, that we owe our pleasure in working all together as members of this Commission to find solutions to constitutional problems. We must reflect on the situation as it stands following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, and the options available to Quebecers.

Your brief - I read it very attentively - is a brief which is quite in keeping with the philosophy which has always been yours. I am sure that you could have prepared a brief that was very, very similar 20 years ago, during Victoria. You have done so now - in its general principles, I mean, in its themes - and, this time, you told us: We should make changes, major changes.

I would like to continue on along the same lines as Mr. Ouellet's surprise question. From these principles that you set forth as major changes, I am trying to find some very concrete things which would enable us to say that you

have a clearly defined intention to make changes to the Constitution, which could mean comprehensive changes for Québec. On page 73 of your brief, at the bottom of the page, you said that the target objective, in our opinion, must be a functional sharing of powers between the governments, whose point of reference would be the freedom and welfare of citizens. This is a sentence which, I'll tell you, I could make my own. But I'm repeating the question that Mr. Dufour asked you. Very recently, we asked - my colleague, Mrs. Gagnon-Tremblay, Minister of Immigration, is negotiating with Ottawa; we have been negotiating for at least three years - for a new sharing of powers concerning immigration, not simply to implement Cullen-Couture, but, also to enable us to completely integrate our immigrants into Québec society. And we are still seeking an agreement.

Very recently, my colleague, the Minister of Health, Mr. Marc-Yvan Côté, proposed a reform that was very well received, almost unanimously, and, again, we came up against this federal health statute. Also, a few days ago, my colleague, Mr. Bourbeau, Minister of Manpower, demanded Québec's full jurisdiction over manpower so that we could implement our own manpower policies.

So, I'm giving you three areas because these are three areas which are very important to us because we are faced with extremely important problems for Québec right now, for our Québec reality, socially, politically, and economically. Would you agree... Because these are three powers which, as you know, according to the Constitution, belong to the provinces. It's through its spending power that the federal government meddled in them. Would you agree, Mr. Chrétien, that Québec should have full jurisdiction over these three areas?

Mr. Chrétien: Immigration is a shared power. Moreover, no one has demanded a complete transfer of the entire field of immigration. As regards the problems that you mention...

Mr. Rémillard: The integration of immigrants, as I told you.

Mr. Chrétien: Fine, the integration of immigrants, I don't know. I'm not really up-to-date on that. I can't give you the government's answer, I'm not the government. I'll say that I agree with the concept that it is important for Québec to integrate its immigrants. We must ensure that the population of Québec remains as large as possible and if the population does not increase naturally, we must maintain an immigration policy, and the immigrants who arrive in Québec, we would like, inasmuch as possible, for them to become Quebecers.
(5:00 p.m.)

And, moreover, that's one of today's characteristics, there are many, and I would like to point that out... Many people have said that the immigrants were a danger in Québec and all that. I would like to point out that there are many rumours going around in our society right now. Eighty-two percent of Québec's population today is French, more than ever. Ninety-four percent of Québec citizens speak French. But we still hear this story that we are disappearing. And that makes me mad. Because, I remember, during the free trade debate in November, the people were saying: No, no, we Quebecers, we're strong, we'll take on the world, we aren't afraid of taking our place. And that was in November 1988, and then afterwards a film on Radio-Canada, *Disparaître*, we were afraid of disappearing. I'm not afraid that Quebecers are disappearing, that the French fact is disappearing. But we should say so to the citizens. But that isn't what is being said in our schools right now.

You see, Québec City was, during the last century, an English city. The city of Sherbrooke was an English city. The city of Montréal was an English city. There are still Anglophones there; now there haven't been any Anglophones in Old Montréal west of St-Laurent St. in the last 10 years. They're now west of Atwater St. So, we must still be realistic enough to say that this concept that we are disappearing isn't true. And if, to swell our numbers, we need immigrants, we must integrate them into the Francophone community. I agree with you completely.

Mr. Rémillard: Now, if you were to answer my question, would you...

Mr. Chrétien: Like Mr. Laberge and others, I too am taking the opportunity to express certain points of view.

Mr. Rémillard: So, if I now asked you my question on immigration, do you agree that Québec could exercise the jurisdiction that it's demanding?

Mr. Chrétien: Well, I said that I agree with the constitutional demands that you are making in the area of immigration.

Mr. Rémillard: Fine. Now, as regards health.

Mr. Chrétien: But that, you're talking about an administrative arrangement with the current government. I'm not in the government, I can't give you an answer. Maybe in two years.

Mr. Rémillard: About health, now.

Mr. Chrétien: Well, I answered about health earlier, that the principle of universality, when

we use our spending power to establish a health service, we do so with a concern for universality. And, in my view, we must maintain the principle of universality. Universal access for all Quebecers to health. The deterrent fee, or the user fee, in principle, as set forth by the Honourable Mr. Côté, really looks good. But, I wouldn't want it to become the Trojan horse that destroys universality.

Mr. Rémillard: Fine. So, Mr. Chrétien, if I understand you correctly, you want to keep federal jurisdiction based on its great principles of universality.

Mr. Chrétien: Well, the spending power was used in that matter, but in the reform that I'm proposing, it would be part of the discussion. And if we obtain mobility for people across the country and certain principles which guarantee that the poorest in the country won't suffer from their poverty because the transfers were made to the provinces, that would be OK.

Mr. Rémillard: And now as regards manpower?

Mr. Chrétien: I said, I have always said, earlier I asked a question, or I made an assertion. In manpower, we must ensure mobility. And if it promotes mobility, great. If it doesn't promote mobility, we won't have a common Canadian market. And, in my opinion, the common Canadian market, to ensure Canadian prosperity, is very, very important.

Mr. Rémillard: But I'm talking about manpower training. I'm not talking about mobility, I'm talking about manpower training.

Mr. Chrétien: Well yes, but one can help the other. You are asking me: Would I answer "yes" to the question that you are asking the Conservative government right now? I'm not the government.

Mr. Rémillard: I was simply asking you these questions to try to see if, in a practical way, we can stick practical things to your principles as they stand. For example, I'm looking at the amending formula that you are proposing. You said "no" to Meech and, among other things, you found that the formula, as Mr. Wells did, that the amending formula was too cumbersome, too difficult. And you are proposing the Victoria amending formula.

Mr. Chrétien: Yes.

Mr. Rémillard: And I must admit that we too in the beginning, when we began our negotiations with the other provinces and the federal government, wanted to have the Victoria

formula which gave Québec veto power. Now, you are probably aware that Mr. Wells doesn't want that formula. You also know that Mr. Getty doesn't want it anymore. You know that Mr. Vander Zalm doesn't want it anymore, no more than do the other premiers. How will you persuade all these premiers to accept an amending formula that no one wants anymore? This is an amending formula that existed 20 years ago, Mr. Chrétien, but now we have been able to test it during the four years that we have been discussing the Constitution. They no longer want anything to do with that formula. It isn't possible.

Mr. Chrétien: The current amending formula isn't the formula of unanimity. The problem which arose at Meech Lake is that it was said: This will require unanimity to pass.

Mr. Rémillard: But if I may...

Mr. Chrétien: You know that if the formula of unanimity hadn't been imposed for Meech Lake, four of Québec's five conditions would now be in the Canadian Constitution because the four other conditions needed 50% of the population and seven provinces.

Mr. Rémillard: Yes, Sir...

Mr. Chrétien: And you had them.

Mr. Rémillard: Yes, but Mr. Chrétien, if I may just tell you that in the Constitution of 1982, you stated in the amending formula that unanimity was required to change the amending formula.

Mr. Chrétien: Right.

Mr. Rémillard: So, therefore, you've put the key in the door, you've locked it. Who has the key now? Well, it's all the provinces together. So, if Mr. Wells says "no"... You see, Mr. Chrétien, we were told "no". Newfoundland said "no" to Meech Lake and Meech Lake wasn't passed. When Québec said "no" in 1982, the Constitution of 1982 was passed anyway and, in this context, the amending formula that is there, unanimity is required to change it. Therefore, when you propose an amending formula that dates back to Victoria, I say: That's pretty interesting, but how will you do it? How will you do it?

Mr. Chrétien: I explained earlier, Mr. Rémillard, that if you make concessions or if you... The greatest concern of the Atlantic provinces and for the Western provinces is that they want to have a Senate that guarantees them better representation in the Canadian govern-

ment, in the Parliament of Canada. I've travelled through all those areas; that's practically all that's being talked about. If we tell them: Fine, we will agree to that demand, but in exchange, we must obtain an amending formula, namely the Victoria formula, which could perhaps have been passed in the spring. That's the second formula that I mentioned in my brief, if I'm not mistaken, that said that Québec could be given veto power in certain circumstances and that's probably possible because there is a means of convincing English Canada that to ensure the preservation of the French culture and language, Québec needs additional tools. I believe that we could arrive at that. And, as regards the Senate reform that I'm proposing, I'm talking about a double majority in which the Francophones of Québec elected as senators to a reformed Senate would have veto power over government actions which could affect the French language and culture.

Mr. Rémillard: But...

Mr. Chrétien: We could ask ourselves whether we should include Francophones outside Québec, who could have elected representatives too. So, I'm talking about a double majority and a majority for Francophones.

Mr. Rémillard: You are speaking about the reform...

Mr. Chrétien: Necessary in certain cases.

Mr. Rémillard: You are talking about Senate reform. Many Quebecers attentively followed the recent events that some have called burlesque, and many Quebecers tell us that we should simply abolish the Senate after these events. You are proposing Senate reform.

Mr. Chrétien: I think that we will never be able to abolish it because the problems of the Western provinces which, under the current Constitution, are entitled to vote, they want to have an equal, elected and effective upper house. The problem which then comes up is the term "equality". For some, it's equality between the provinces. I say that to appoint the same number of senators for small provinces such as Prince Edward Island as Québec wouldn't work and that we must have a Senate which represents the regions. In the Canadian Constitution as it stands right now, the Senate was established as a house which represents the regions: 24, 24, 24 and 24.

Mr. Rémillard: But you approved the work of your federal Liberal senators. In your Senate reform, could they do the same again?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Chrétien: The senators of the Liberal Party objected to the GST and I was against it. I told the senators at the outset of this quarrel that they were committing themselves to a very dangerous path and that, in using the Senate's power for the first time in many generations to block a piece of legislation of that nature, they were running the very great risk of disappearing, because it could happen, at a given moment, that the Senate could be abolished. I warned them about that. I said: You are taking a chance, go ahead, I support you. They went as far as they could until eight senators were appointed by the Queen, whom I call the GST English senators, to pass what the Senate wanted to block. We were running the risk of having the Senate abolished. In my opinion, we showed that the Senate could be effective if it were elected. Equality still remains to be determined. When I speak about a Canada of regions, it's another way of showing that the Atlantic, Québec, Ontario and Western regions could have representation in the upper house, which is not symmetrical based on population; which is asymmetrical because an upper house must represent the interests of the majority of the population.

Mr. Rémillard: Mr. Chrétien, on page 86...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is up, but if you want to finish your sentence, you could have a one-sentence answer.

Mr. Rémillard: Just one last question. You speak about a referendum on page 86, because you want the citizens to be able to give their opinions. Would this be the same sort of thing as the commission created by Mr. Mulroney, and do you share his views concerning referendums and constitutional amendments?

Mr. Chrétien: I think that we can't hold a referendum for every constitutional amendment, because there are too many changes. I'm not sure that we should settle the constitutional problem in general by saying: We must settle everything, or settle nothing, and end up with a referendum. I said that we should have a referendum if there were an impasse, and to seek the will of the people. Because I see very clearly in this reform that some of Québec's demands, the four conditions that I agreed with from your speech of May 1986, at that time, would probably receive the majority necessary to pass, that is, seven provinces and 50% of the population, in the current context with some minor adjustments. But I recognize that, for the amending formula, unanimity may be a considerable obstacle, and, at that time, perhaps to set aside unanimity, we could use a referendum.

Mr. Rémillard: Including Québec?

Mr. Chrétien: Obviously. We're not going to hold a referendum and not ask Québec's opinion. The opinions of all the citizens of the federation should be solicited.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): With these words, I think that we must now end this presentation. We have already exceeded the time allowed by several minutes, which shows the interest that all the members had in the presentation. I would like to thank Mr. Chrétien and those who accompanied him. We will now hear Mr. Jean Keable.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:14 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:16 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Come to order, please!

I will ask the members of the Commission to take their seats. We will now hear Mr. Jean Keable, for a half-hour presentation. Would the members please take their seats? Mr. Keable, if you would begin. Surely, that will attract their attention and people will sit down. Mr. Keable, you have five minutes for your presentation, which will be followed by the question period.

Mr. Jean Keable

Mr. Keable: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, there is a theory circulating to the effect that the federal system protects our rights and freedoms. It is maintained that governments are trying to outvie each other in rushing to the aid of citizens to protect their rights and freedoms. Let's examine this viewpoint in the light of the news events of the past 20 years.

1970-1975. The October Crisis in Québec. The FLQ commits atrocious crimes. The police are swamped. They appeal for emergency powers to surround a group of some 30 people. The authorities respond with the War Measures Act. As a result, 500 persons are arrested, jailed and detained without a warrant. The lists that were used for making these arrests came initially from the Québec police and contained 35 names. The intervention of the federal government and the RCMP led to the arrest of 500 persons. For years, these people were put on file, labelled, occasionally spied on and followed, not because of anything they had done but because of their ideas and their statements.

December, 1970. The October Crisis was over. And yet, in 1971-1972, the picture that public opinion, the press and governments were getting of the FLQ was that it was stronger and more determined than ever. It was believed to be about to go into action. But that was totally false, as we later discovered. The cells were so thoroughly infiltrated that a high ranking police

officer one day declared: In 1972, we were the FLQ, or just about. At that time, other tactics were also being used: fake communiqués supposedly from the FLQ, fabricated offences, thefts of dynamite, barns burned, illegal searches, thefts of documents, to name only some.

1973. The RCMP steals the Parti québécois membership lists. One of the objects of this operation is to update the list of persons who have infiltrated the federal and provincial civil service, the armed forces and the police. At this time, the police files constitute a mass rallying point where you find, side by side, journalists, entertainers, politicians, trade unionists, notorious members of the FLQ and distinguished citizens such as the late Alfred Rouleau, President of the Mouvement Desjardins from 1976 to 1979.

In 1977, the Québec government decreed an inquiry into an illegal search. I had the honour of chairing this commission of inquiry. The commission uncovered numerous facts then ran up against some formidable opposition by the federal government and by the police forces. Québec and the commission won their cases in the Superior Court. In the Supreme Court, both cases were defeated. In the first decision, the Supreme Court ruled that, in matters of national security, only the federal government is entitled to know everything that takes place in Québec. Consequently, and as a corollary, the administration of justice hinges on the benevolence of the Attorney General of Canada and the federal authorities. In the second decision, the Supreme Court ruled that Québec does not have the authority to investigate crimes committed on its territory by police informers employed by its provincial or municipal police. All this under a 1794 rule of common law which grants them total immunity for crimes committed on our territory. Only the federal government can reduce the extent of this immunity by amending the Criminal Code.

Then, consider the years 1980-1985. Québec is preparing for the May 1980 Referendum. Québec had distinguished itself with pride since 1977. It was the first in North America to establish regulations governing election and referendum financial expenses, requiring that they be limited and accounted for. The "yes" and "no" sides each invest \$2 million in the campaign. The federal government intervenes and injects, according to the information available, \$25 million into the campaign. Then there's the three-part bid for power: the repatriation which we didn't want, the Charter of Rights which is imposed in a manner that is insulting for Québec, and the amending formula which padlocks us for the future in a sterilizing way.

1986-1990. Governments have known for several months that certain radical Warriors had stockpiled weapons and that they constitute a

threat to the security of Canada, particularly to the security of Quebecers and the Amerindian communities.

Let's go back for a moment to 1970. From mid-November to mid-December, in a single month, the Canadian armed forces – yes, Mr. Chairman, I'm reaching the end, with your kindness and your proverbial generosity – the Canadian armed forces and the Army...

The Chairman (Mr. Campeau): But, don't take undue advantage.

Mr. Keable: ...the Canadian armed forces and the Army conducted police operations to search for weapons supposedly in the hands of the FLQ. The result: 22 000 searches, 34 citizen interrogations, 185 seizures and 3600 building inspections. Then, in July, the crisis. We know at that time that the Indians are the federal government's responsibility, that threats to security are the federal government's responsibility, that the federal government can intervene through its agencies to control security on our territory and, lastly, we know that the Attorney General of Canada has the authority to replace the Attorney General of Québec where prosecutions are concerned. What happens? The federal government makes itself scarce on the pretext that the matter comes under Québec's jurisdiction.

In conclusion, the federal system offers no guarantee that freedoms will be respected in the most serious matters. In the area of national security, there is a higher government and a lower government. The existence of two levels of government with parallel responsibilities makes it possible to conceal the true responsibilities of each. They can each take turns hiding behind their neighbour. This creates a maze where the more corridors there are, the less the citizens are protected.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now move on to the questions from the members. Mr. Proulx will begin, followed by Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Proulx: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to take advantage of my speaking time to protest; I don't make a habit of it. I'd just like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that we too had to leave some very serious, very important business today, particularly as it's a Monday, in order to be present on the Commission. I can understand that Mr. LaBerge had to leave some too, but so did we. Second, I regret that our Commission is too often used to promote or test a party's future program. I don't like playing the stooge in these situations and I regret that the same opportunity hasn't been given or isn't being given to the unemployed and to the underprivileged of Québec at the present time,

who will scarcely be heard, if at all. So I can tell you, I can tell you because you don't carry all the responsibility on your shoulders, because you have a committee and that always frustrates me. I hope we'll find a way, some time during the week, to give equal chances to those who have no or little say as well as to those who have a whole team behind them to take advantage of every situation.

Having said this, Mr. Chairman, two questions. The first. Do you have the impression, Sir, from your experience, that, in the name of national security, the federal government can again resort to this secret police, or call it whatever you like, the one it has used in the past to thwart or to impair Québec's self-assertion?

Mr. Keable: I'll answer that question as follows. If we refer strictly to the lessons of the past, the answer might give cause for worry. If, on the other hand, we reckon on the effectiveness of the controls which have been set up since then, the matter is more reassuring. There is, however, a difficulty with the surveillance of police activities and of intelligence service activities. You see, the checking up is always done after the fact. And it occasionally happens that it is 5, 10, 15 or 20 years later that we find out what took place at such-and-such a time. But at the present time, we have, I think, moral guarantees that there shouldn't be any intervention whatsoever. To begin with, there are the guarantees which Quebecers give themselves by constantly asserting and repeating that their procedure is a democratic one, designed to promote Québec's interests and to show English Canada that Québec's interests are compatible with its interests. It's not a matter of a self-assertion move by Québec which conflicts with Canada's interests per se.

As well, the Québec society, which in the past has taken the wrong path at certain points, has learned from experience that violence is particularly detrimental to the cause it is supposed to promote. And I think that this question has been settled in Québec and that, whatever the circumstances and verbal provocations that Quebecers may be victims of, they'll be able to react sensibly to these situations.

Finally, there is one last factor. Despite the outbursts of impatience which may from time to time be provoked by certain inflammatory rhetoric, I think that the common sense of the people will prevail and that the democratic procedure will be protected.

Mr. Proulx: Again, based on your previous experience, you've examined in depth... Could you tell us anyway how a sovereign Québec, with the authority it will have, could protect itself

against precisely these abuses in the future? Are there any possibilities or is that a bit unrealistic to imagine?

Mr. Keable: You know, in Québec, our experience in the intelligence field is extremely limited. Governments have generally always been more or less dependent on police forces. In general, one can say that that isn't where you find the best social, political and sociological analyses. Police officers can provide the public authorities with operational information of a police nature. That's usually the extent of their powers. We'll have to develop in Québec, and I'd even say we must develop in the present system, an intelligence philosophy. And in this area, we've some way to go yet. You'll recall, at least several of you will recall, what a hoopla the press and the members of the Opposition at the time had when the old records of the analysis and documentation centre were destroyed. Many saw this as a spectacular event but it's not certain that the destruction was as useful as all that. As far as I could determine, in the course of the inquiry, what was going on at the centre was simply the gathering of information already known to the public, the analysis of this information and the evaluation of certain events according to police sources that may also have been feeding information to the Government. (5:30 p.m.)

It is therefore perfectly natural that the State should be informed of the state of the situation from the standpoint of public security, that it should gather information and that it should be ready to intervene. If we look ahead a bit into the future and think about the creation, for example, of a sovereign State associated with our Canadian friends by means of a confederation, quite obviously we'll need an intelligence service, for if we don't occupy the field, our Canadian friends or other Canadian services abroad or other foreign intelligence services will carry out intelligence activities on our territory. And our public authorities will then be entirely at the mercy of intelligence from foreign sources. We must gather this information, analyse it and determine for ourselves the appropriate decisions in all circumstances.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Desjardins, who is sitting in for Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if I'm entitled to the same preamble as Mr. Proulx, but I want to point out, to set the record straight, that I chose not to question the preceding witness because I consider that I'll have other forums for doing so and because I wanted to leave it to the members of the Commission to engage Mr. Chrétien in a discussion.

Mr. Keable, thank you for shedding light on a subject that the Commission will perhaps not often have the opportunity to discuss. A moment ago, you outlined for us some sad chapters in our history which aren't among our fondest memories. In your brief, you suggest that the clearer the democratic process which Quebecers are beginning is, the less chance there'll be of an intervention by the secret police, if I understand you correctly. My question is this. If, when Quebecers are consulted by means of a referendum, the results are very close, in your opinion, could there subsequently be destabilizing domestic factors which might create social unrest and allow the intervention you spoke of?

Mr. Keable: When we speak of destabilizing factors, I'd like to rule out, for the purposes of my demonstration, the possibility of an intervention by the intelligence services. Sometimes there are destabilizing factors in a society which are self-activating. Let me explain. For example, the constant use of violent rhetoric calls for radical acts with no consideration of the consequences of those acts. One must always bear in mind that the people who use such rhetoric are seldom capable of going into action themselves, but they incite others to do so. This is the type of situation that we must be particularly careful of. But it is also obvious that, no matter what the outcome of the referendum may be, whether there is a majority of one vote or of fifty votes, it is, to my mind, decisive.

Mr. Desjardins: On that basis, if Québec should become independent, in your view, should an independent Québec have its own secret police, its own security service?

Mr. Keable: I spoke earlier of intelligence components. Intelligence activities entail two steps, the first of which consists in gathering and evaluating information. This can easily be done from what's referred to in the jargon of intelligence as open sources. For example, coming to a commission such as this and listening to what's said and reporting it to our authorities, the federal government, for example, is an intelligence procedure using an open source. It's perfectly normal and legitimate and, personally, I see nothing scandalous about it. Moreover, Québec must, at the very least, engage in this type of basic intelligence activity. Now there's a big difference between saying that and maintaining that it must use other tactics which intrude upon citizens' lives. That's a horse of a different colour and another issue that must be debated fully at a later date.

Mr. Desjardins: I'm going to dare to go a bit further. In your opinion, should an

independent Québec have an army to protect its territory?

Mr. Keable: The Army must be considered from a different angle. In Canada, there exists an army which intervenes on Canadian territory solely for the purpose of maintaining law and order. The Canadian Army has only conducted war operations on the European continent, at the request of England in particular. So, the Canadian Army has never been at war in Canada. The majority of the European countries have armies because of a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages. That doesn't mean that, if states were created today, they would have armies.

We can also bear in mind, for example, that Japan and Germany, two countries which suffered defeat in the last war, have very minor military forces at the present time. There are those who have even seen this refusal to invest massively in an army as a contributing factor in their extremely advanced technological development. Be that as it may, to maintain law and order, it isn't really necessary for Québec to have an army. It may be sufficient to develop a specialized police force with the qualifications and skills necessary to perform those duties. Furthermore, this is one of the areas where it seems to me that Canada will be interested in having us share with it the costs of an army and in our jointly maintaining a military force abroad, for example.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now move on to the questions from a representative of the Government party, Mr. Dauphin.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to welcome you, Mr. Keable, on behalf of the Government team. I have, of course, taken due note of the two main aspects of your brief: the first, which deals with police operations in relation to a process of national affirmation, which is what you've been discussing for the past little while; and the second, which proposes a procedure for attaining sovereignty.

I have two questions. The first touches mainly on the procedure for attaining sovereignty. You see, several groups who've appeared before us, in particular the Association des économistes, have told us that, in the event of a declaration of sovereignty following a referendum, for example, as you propose in your brief, there could be a rather difficult transition period, particularly for the economy. And we've also been told that perception was an extremely important factor in our relations with our Canadian partners afterward, with respect to possible agreements. And Mr. Dion, who has also appeared before us, last week suggested instead

that we spell out exactly what we want, in a last-chance proposal, coupled, of course, with the threat of a referendum on independence, if in fact there is no possibility of a last-chance agreement. I'd like to hear what you have to say about that. I know that your brief is very clear. It mentions first a referendum on sovereignty and, second, a second referendum to ratify possible agreements with the rest of Canada, with perception, quote unquote, as a constant theme throughout. I'd like to hear your comments on that.

Mr. Keable: All right. I didn't talk about a second referendum; I talked about a referendum on a clear question and I indicated that, at the end of the discussions with Canada, there should be a ratification of all the agreements reached with Canada, without specifying whether there would be a referendum or not.

Mr. Dauphin: OK, one referendum.

Mr. Keable: But I'll address your questions in order. The first one concerns the matter of an economic transition. I may surprise several of you by saying that I don't think that holding a referendum in Québec implies *ipso facto* sweeping changes in Canadian political strategy. Once the referendum is held, in 1991 for example, we must consider the nearest election deadline, namely 1992 or thereabouts, for the next federal election. Between now and 1992, it is doubtful that the negotiations would progress very much. Consequently, it would be pointless for us to get all worked up about it.

On the federal side, who will we be negotiating with? As things stand now, following a Québec referendum, and assuming a clear win by the "yes" side on an unambiguous question, English Canada will be awaiting a leader, awaiting a political party, and, at that time, one of the key factors of the discussion will be the next federal election. What will happen? Will both the Conservative and the Liberal federalist parties agree without question to be bound by the outcome of the referendum? I was listening to Mr. Chrétien earlier and I have the impression that he hasn't fought his last battle. I think that Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Mulroney will perhaps form a common front on the essentials, like the one you've seen, to a lesser degree, between Mr. Ouellet and Mr. Hogue on this Commission. I think, then, that perhaps Quebecers will have to carefully consider their interests, in order that the results of the referendum not be diverted and in order that no one may claim, following the federal election, that Quebecers have just opted for federalism once again and that they have just chosen yet again a dead end. So much for the scenarios.

You also asked me to comment on Professor Dion's remarks. You know, in order for our

negotiations and our procedure to succeed, and I think it would be desirable for all of us to achieve this together, three conditions are necessary. First we must have a good memory, to remember what has taken place in the last 30 years. Second we need rigour, to properly identify the problem and to find the appropriate legal solution. Finally, we must have a strategy that is well defined in order for it to be a winning strategy characterized by lucidity. Looking at Mr. Dion's proposals, I find a passage - I was unable to attend his presentation - where he specifies the areas over which Québec should have control. I note, among other things, that he wants the Canadian Charter of Rights to be excluded from Québec, in general. Then he advocates increased cultural sovereignty or, more specifically, to use Mr. Morin's vocabulary, cultural autonomy which encompasses immigration, communications, culture, languages, etc.

But among his proposals, there are two which, in my opinion, are totally unacceptable to the rest of Canada. The first is, of course, the exclusion of the Canadian Charter of Rights from Québec. And the second is the establishment of a veto for Québec. Now how can anyone imagine, at the present time, that the Canadian provinces are going to be willing to grant Québec a veto without asking for one for themselves?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):

Without wanting to cut you off completely, perhaps you'd better move it along. You've already used up more than your time, Mr. Keable.

Mr. Keable: Very well, Mr. Chairman. I'll conclude with the last part of your question and by referring again to Professor Dion, this time with regard to strategy or rather the legal framework. Mr. Dion doesn't take a stand in his written text. He doesn't endorse any particular formula but he doesn't rule any out. In his strategy proposal, he suggests that Québec only threaten to hold a first referendum and that we should go back and negotiate again with English Canada. His strategy presents a difficulty, in my opinion, namely that it would mean we'd have to disregard Mr. Bourassa's important declaration that there would be no more negotiations with 11 at the table. And if we again set foot in the path of Canadian federalism, we must realize that we're going to begin by negotiating with them for a certain period of time to reach agreement on a new text, and that, once we have this new text, we'll still be in the Meech Lake scenario, which means that we're going to wait three years to find out if it's ratified or not.

In practice, what Professor Dion is proposing to you, I think, is to gain time for five years before taking a position again on the

same basic question.

I suggest instead that we be clearer and that we settle the matter quickly.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, a representative of the Official Opposition party, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I regret that Messrs. Julius Grey, André Ouellet, Claude Ryan, Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Desmarais aren't here because they have a clear message regarding your position on the protection of individual rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as compared to the Québec Charter. I think that you've shown, with the aid of highly relevant examples, that retaining the federal link is not necessarily advantageous in terms of the treatment of individual rights.

But I'd like to question you on a matter that you haven't touched on and which relates to the law. We've had a lot of groups here, who've come before us and said that it would be important to enshrine collective rights in the Québec Charter of Rights. And those very same groups wanted to see the "notwithstanding" clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms scrapped precisely because it guaranteed collective rights, and most likely to the detriment of individual rights. What do you reply to that argumentation?

Mr. Keable: Before I deal with your question, I'd like to clarify a point in your preamble. Two things must be distinguished: the protection of fundamental rights by two levels of government competing against each other, which I think I've shown to be nonexistent; and second, the protection of fundamental rights under charters. Now we have a charter in Québec which is a perfectly good one and of excellent quality, as Mr. Rémillard has pointed out on several occasions. That takes care of the preamble.

As for the heart of the question, we must ask ourselves who must have the last word in a society. Is it the Court or is it Parliament? It's normal to have checks and balances and interaction between the two, but who has the final say? Is it normal, for example, in a society to refer to a supreme court, whatever its composition, the matter of deciding if the retirement age is 65 or 70? A court decision, by whatever majority, 7-0, 6-3 or 5-4, always remains debatable. In these matters, it is really a question of the definition of political law, and the courts, regardless of their merits, must not have the role of economic regulator in a society. Theirs is a supporting role, one which complements the decisions of the elected representatives, so as to bring the elected representatives back to the fundamental questions in relation to a Charter which is a

minimum and which prescribes major orientations.

There's also something else which struck me about certain briefs tabled before the Commission. There's currently a trend in Québec to want to put everything into the Constitution. I think we should be wary of this trend. The Constitution is a fundamental law which lays down general principles, period. It's up to the legislator to carry on from there. According to certain representations made to the Commission, the Constitution should cover everything, including the right to happiness. Now I think that's going a bit too far. Everything in its place. As well, with regard to what you call collective rights, I think that there's an opposition wrongly being drawn between individual rights which may be recognized by parliaments and collective rights which are recognized by the courts.

The courts recognize collective rights when they judge, for example, what is reasonable and desirable in a free and democratic society. It's a choice of society to determine, for instance, and this is an example I'm offering, whether the Act to govern the financing of political parties in Québec meets democratic standards or whether it doesn't. It's a choice of society and it's a definition of collective rights. So to maintain that collective rights don't exist in our law appears to me to be an erroneous statement.

(5:45 p.m.)

Mr. Chevette: But when, for example, if we didn't have...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thirty seconds, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. But let's take the example of the Canadian Charter, we know we can get around the Constitution by using the "notwithstanding" clause. If we didn't have this "notwithstanding" clause, for all practical purposes, we couldn't collectively protect our language. And, based on that, you've heard Anglophone groups say: That goes against the "notwithstanding" clause, against individual rights in the area of signs, etc. The Québec Charter which would be enshrined in the new constitution wouldn't recognize, wouldn't have a special clause such as the one found in the Canadian Charter because we would be the sole masters on board, in control of our own rights and the enforcement of our own Charter. But must it include, for example, the collective rights of the English-speaking minority? That's the contrast I was trying to make a moment ago. I've seen Anglophone groups appear before us and advocate that individual rights should be respected. Then they tell us that if sovereignty ever comes about, well then, their collective rights must be enshrined in the Québec constitution. How can we resolve this impasse?

Mr. Keable: You know...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm going to suggest that you keep your answer as brief as possible, Mr. Keable.

Mr. Keable: Yes, it's becoming more and more difficult, the questions are long, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the last question that was asked, I think that there's a misunderstanding on the part of certain representatives who've appeared before this commission. You know, they maintain that their rights have been violated. We have to understand their frustration, of course, but I think that there's no violation of their rights when Québec takes advantage of a provision in the Constitution which was forced on it. How to settle the problem? It's a difficult question and I think that it's a matter which will require open-mindedness. Québec has always shown a very open attitude towards its minorities, both Anglophone and other groups, and I think that we could show initiative in this area and grant them a certain number of things that they may legitimately hope to have.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Keable. I thank you for your contribution to the work of the Commission. Mr. Ghislain Otis is the next person we'll be hearing and I'd ask him to immediately take a seat at the table. As he'll be the last to appear this afternoon, we can welcome him and congratulate him later. So, if you'd please take a seat, Mr. Otis.

As you know, Mr. Otis, you have five minutes to make a brief presentation of the essential points you wish to make to us and then we move on to the questions. The floor is yours.

Mr. Ghislain Otis

Mr. Otis (Ghislain): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, like many other speakers before this commission, I have stressed, in my brief, that the Commission must examine the process through which the new relationship between Québec and Canada will be established. Most of us would agree that the amending formula contained in the 1982 Act is a failure. The question, therefore, is whether it is constitutional for Québec to envisage bilateral negotiations, as it says it would. Can this amending formula based on multilateral relations be circumvented constitutionally?

Personally, I believe that the Canadian Constitution does allow Québec to ignore the multilateral aspect inherent in the 1982 Act. I think there are very good reasons for believing that the Constitution includes a conventional rule recognizing the Québec people's right to freely and democratically determine its political status in relation to the Canadian federation.

Thus, should Quebecers opt for sovereignty during a referendum, they could unilaterally withdraw from the federation. Of course, in practice this involves setting aside the amending rules contained in the 1982 Act which would otherwise compel Québec to obtain the consent of the federal government and at least seven provinces. Québec could then engage in those bilateral negotiations with Ottawa that it considered necessary, depending on the circumstances. And, to my mind, the federal government could not oppose Québec using the amending formula as a basis for some principle of indissolubility of the Union or integrity of Canadian territory. And, in passing, I note that even if public international law recognizes a priori the right of nations to self-determination, the constitutional legitimacy of Québec sovereignty would nevertheless be important in international opinion. I think that in eliminating any revolutionary overtones from Québec's approach, we will confer greater credibility and greater legitimacy upon our actions where international opinion is concerned, since, you will admit, it is sometimes wary and sometimes opposes the principle of territorial integrity of existing states and the right of nations to self-determination.

Therefore, the constitutional legitimacy of Québec's decision to declare sovereignty would very likely facilitate Québec's integration into the international community and international organizations. If, on the other hand, Quebecers choose to maintain their membership in the Canadian federation, their right to self-determination would, in my opinion, allow them to set the conditions they consider essential to maintaining this membership. One of these conditions could be to do away with multilateral negotiations. Clearly, under this hypothesis, the federal government would have the option of agreeing to eventually negotiate a special status for Québec exclusively and primarily with Québec, or negotiating the consequences of sovereignty.

Clearly...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is almost up, Mr. Otis. Could you please wrap up.

Mr. Otis: I will conclude by pointing out one very important aspect. This future bilateral agreement between Québec and the federal government could ultimately be subject to later ratification by the Canadian population through a referendum. I feel that the Supreme Court would have no problem or little problem backing a referendum since, on several occasions in the past, it clearly indicated that Canada's constituent authority ultimately lies with the Canadian people.

So, to conclude, whether we choose

sovereignty or a comprehensively renewed federalism, I think that, constitutionally speaking at any rate, it is possible to envisage a bilateral approach.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll start the questions with a representative of the Government party, Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): OK. If I understand correctly, the purpose of your brief is to assess the constitutional legitimacy of a bilateral Canada-Québec process despite the multilateral process dictated by the Constitution Act, 1982. In other words, is it feasible, as has been maintained, to negotiate one-to-one, Québec with Ottawa, or must we negotiate ten-to-one as is the case under the current Constitution?

Mr. Otis: Clearly, this is indeed the purpose of my brief.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): OK. Using that as a starting point then, I'd like to have you remind us of the conditions or Supreme Court ruling on repatriation. You did so very precisely in your brief. Could you remind us of the conditions for recognizing a constitutional convention and, especially, how the convention, as regards amending Québec's negotiating status, evolved and how it respects the conditions necessary for recognition?

To rephrase my questions, what I'd like to know, actually... you tell us it's possible to change the association with Canada by negotiating directly with Ottawa without first being sovereign. This is basically what you are saying. I'd like you to comment on this.

Mr. Otis: OK. With respect to your last remarks, I've postulated two scenarios and come to the conclusion that, constitutionally speaking, it's possible to envisage a bilateral approach. One of these scenarios includes the possibility of not necessarily being sovereign. And, I expect that in this case, if Québec set as a firm condition for its membership in the federation that, henceforth, its constitutional status must be negotiated with Canada, with Ottawa, this constitutional legitimacy, its right to self-determination, would make the federal government face up to its responsibilities. And I think that - and it's the only hope, as I see it, of Québec getting anywhere in the short term - it'll mean putting the federal government in a position in which it will have to show historic leadership, to sit down with Québec, to frankly and unconditionally accept the concept of asymmetrical federalism and then to ask the Canadian people if it accepts this agreement. Then I think we'd have... All the cards would be on the table. And, I think that, constitutionally

speaking, a Canada-wide referendum of this type would ultimately be validated by the Supreme Court because the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution states that, finally, ultimately, what we really want in order to legitimize a constitutional amendment, is that the Canadian people in all regions agree. The first and last principle is none other than the principle of democracy.

As concerns the current conditions for the convention's existence...

Mr. Rémillard: May I ask something? Mr. Chairman, may I?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Certainly.

Mr. Rémillard: Just to make sure I understand correctly. Are you saying that a referendum would allow us to act against the amending formula? Or what we couldn't obtain through the amending formula could be referred to a referendum? I didn't really understand the part where you talked about a referendum.

Mr. Otis: This was an aspect I didn't have time to include in my brief. However, yes, I think that if we put amendment proposals to the Canadian people without the multilateral process, and if this amending formula were backed by a majority of Canadians in all regions, I think that the Supreme Court would very likely accept this result as being conclusive because, in the past, the Supreme Court referred to the fact that it is ultimately the electorate that holds the power to define constitutional legitimacy.

Mr. Rémillard: I'm very interested in what you're saying but I must admit that I'm having a bit of trouble following you. Inasmuch as we have a Constitution, we have an amending formula. This amending formula cannot be amended in the absence of unanimity. That is, if Newfoundland said "no" to an amending formula other than the existing one, we couldn't change this amending formula. Yet, you say that a nation-wide referendum could win out even if its legality cannot be recognized since not all provinces agree. That's it.

Mr. Otis: To begin with, I think that if we closely study the spirit of the Act of 1982, we can conclude that the purpose of this formula is to ensure Canada's regions, its people, of a voice in the amendment of its Constitution. And I think that the Supreme Court would consider that the majority of the population in a given province is as valid constitutionally speaking as a resolution of the Legislative Assembly of that province. So, even technically, the technical conditions contained in the Act and the results of a referendum could be equated.

Mr. Rémillard: So, what you're saying is: Regardless of what is written in the Constitution – because your reasoning as regards the amending formula could also be applied to other areas of the Constitution – and you're saying: Regardless of what is written in the Constitution, if there's a referendum and the people decide, that takes precedence over what is written in the Constitution. Is that really what you're saying?
(6:00 p.m.)

Mr. Otis: No. I'm saying that very likely, the Supreme Court would consider a referendum to be in keeping with what is written in the Constitution, for the most part because...

Mr. Rémillard: Listen, let's make sure we understand each other. It's because the amending formula requires unanimity. And you're saying: Fine, we cannot have unanimity but if a referendum is held and the people agree, this referendum would take precedence over what is written in the Constitution, which requires unanimity.

Mr. Otis: I would say that, at that point, the Supreme Court would consider unanimity to have been reached for the purposes of the 1982 Act, given that...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry to interrupt this very interesting legal debate. Are we drawing to a close or...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I have a short question that might help clear things up. Basically, if I understand your reasoning, you are supporting on the following postulate: Under Canadian constitutional law, there is a convention under which Quebecers have the right to self-determination and, as a result of this right to self-determination, they have the right to choose with whom they will negotiate.

Mr. Otis: If they make this a condition of their belonging to the federation, yes. Clearly, Canada does not have to agree to negotiate. The federal government does not have to agree to negotiate with Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now turn to questions from a representative of the Official Opposition, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: I, too, would like to understand correctly. I agree with you when you say that in 1980, the Québec people exercised its right to self-determination, since it was recognized by those involved, including federal parties. Just before you, there was Mr. Chrétien, who actively participated in the referendum campaign, and by this very fact, recognized Quebecers' right to self-determination. I agree

with that. Mr. Turp in Montréal also told us the same thing. It has become a constitutional convention. It isn't written in the Constitution. The Constitution is silent on a province's right to secession, let's call it that. But, simply recognizing the fact of exercising the right to self-determination has become a convention.

I think that your reasoning is sound from the point where this right to self-determination is directed at sovereignty. If a majority of Quebecers decided to make Québec a sovereign state, negotiations could become bilateral. But if, in exercising their right to self-determination, they choose to remain within the federal system, as was the case in 1980, I think that then the amending formula comes into play, that it becomes applicable, and that it is the possibility or will to amend the Constitution. In this case, we must bow – at least that's the way I see things – to the amending formula and there's no getting around it. The only way of getting around it is to aim for sovereignty. Then we can get out, we can withdraw. But if we decide to remain with the federal framework, I don't see how we can withdraw from the amending formula.

Mr. Otis: I think that we can withdraw if we make bilateralism a condition for maintaining our position within the federation. Obviously, if the other party isn't...

Mr. Brassard: At the time of the referendum?

Mr. Otis: Yes, obviously.

Mr. Brassard: At the time of the referendum it becomes a condition.

Mr. Otis: Yes, it becomes a condition and, at that time, the federal government is free to refuse, obviously, but no one can force Québec to sit at a table and negotiate multilaterally. And I maintain that if Québec could get the federal government to a bilateral table, the constitutional means for implementing an eventual bilateral agreement would probably be a pan-Canadian referendum. Having said this, in my brief I give positions, potential scenarios within constitutional principles. I took no position on whether the federal government would, in fact, agree to negotiate a bilateral agreement for a special status for Québec... something I feel is very doubtful in principle.

Mr. Brassard: I feel that your idea of a referendum outside the parameters of the amending formula is, nevertheless, very dangerous. It's easy enough to imagine a warped federal government that might decide to propose, through a referendum and over Québec's head, an amending formula under which Québec

would lose out, and then have it approved by the majority of Canadians. Through this referendum, then, we would find ourselves with an amending formula that leaves Québec completely licked, under which it would forfeit its rights, where it would possess fewer rights than it does under the current amending formula and that, as you tell us, might be recognized by the Supreme Court as an acceptable, accepted amending formula. Personally, I see this as very dangerous.

Mr. Otis: Personally, I think that a national referendum on the amending formula wouldn't go either way. As I see it, there isn't enough consensus in Canada to even realistically envisage a referendum being won on that basis. Remember that if we tried to forego the amending formula through a referendum, we would inevitably have to negotiate, and we would inevitably have to negotiate because when we are negotiating the process, it's no secret, we reached this point because we have taken a position on what we want. And I think that this is a process that would be never-ending as concerns the formula for amendment through a referendum.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now move on to questions from the members. Mr. Proulx, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Proulx: Mr. Chairman, one very short question. For the man in the street, supposing we had a referendum in Québec which very clearly advocated sovereignty – because there are some people who came here to defend the status quo; this was pretty much the argument they used to counter fears that Canada or the federal government might refuse to negotiate, and then, we'd really be up a creek, even if we had decided to do exactly the opposite – in the case of a referendum which clearly... Could Canada, the other provinces or the federal government really refuse to negotiate when democracy itself has been exercised?

Mr. Otis: Clearly, negotiations would not deal with the principle of sovereignty in this scenario because, since Quebecers have the right to self-determination, their sovereignty is a given. As for negotiations regarding terms and conditions, regarding the consequences of sovereignty, clearly there exists a power relationship which will be very relevant. I think that at this point, it would be in Québec's interest to ensure that it has the upper hand because there we get into the realm of diplomacy and policy. I don't have the authority to go beyond that and, legally speaking, I don't think that Canada would have very specific obligations concerning the negotiation, for instance, of a special agreement with Québec. I understand that there are legal obligations to

reach an eventual agreement regarding association, for example.

Mr. Proulx: But don't you think that anyway... I always come back with a very clear, broad mandate, the population's very strong support, perhaps not a legal obligation, but don't you think that worldwide, it wouldn't look a bit foolish not to respect, in the name of democracy, the decision of a component?

Mr. Otis: I think Quebecers' decision will be respected. Having said this, to what extent would different arrangements be agreed to? Personally, I think that reality being what it is, clearly, sooner or later, with the well-known pragmatism of our compatriots, we would, sooner or later, be able to accommodate one another.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Beaudry: My question is in the same vein as Mr. Proulx's. Assuming that there are problems – because the question was raised; it has been raised on several occasions – and that certain provinces, for instance, are not interested for some reason in having Canada negotiate, in your opinion, could these provinces object to bilateral negotiation between the Canadian government on behalf of Canada and the Province of Québec once the latter has become sovereign or has declared sovereignty?

Mr. Otis: Clearly, this question would have to be settled between the Canadian parties themselves.

Mr. Beaudry: I understand, but once we are sovereign...

Mr. Otis: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: ...there are things to settle. Finances will have to be settled; the repatriation of powers will have to be settled. There are all the reasons for wanting to be sovereign. They will have to be settled once we are sovereign. So, who will be the valid spokesman? Assuming that it's the Canadian government, could a province like Ontario, a province like New Brunswick, a province like British Columbia say: Legally speaking, I object to Canada speaking on my behalf, because the Canada to which I belong is a Canada of 10, and we are 9, and consequently, it no longer has the mandate to speak on my behalf? That's my question. Could they object?

Mr. Otis: OK. I think that legally they could, given that Québec's departure would

maintain the current amending formula for the rest of Canada...

Mr. Beaudry: So, theoretically speaking, we could find ourselves in the dead end that Mr. Proulx referred to? I'm not saying it would happen, but theoretically, Québec could find itself with no one to negotiate with?

Mr. Otis: I think that Canada would soon get back to reality. But, there could, indeed, be problems for a short period of time.

Mr. Beaudry: "Short" is relative. "Short" for you may be two weeks; "short" in terms of eternity may be 15 years. It's always relative. But, actually, you don't know. Theoretically, someone could object... A Canadian province could object to bilateral negotiation and could as such be recognized as within its rights to do so.

Mr. Otis: Inasmuch as a Canada-Québec agreement would modify the Canadian Constitution, we would have to see to what extent an Ottawa-Québec agreement would modify the Canadian Constitution. There, the amending formula...

Mr. Beaudry: I'm not talking about an agreement, I'm talking about a fait accompli. Québec holds a referendum, the population says "yes", we want to be sovereign. We become sovereign. The National Assembly declares sovereignty. We are sovereign, we're there. With whom do we negotiate to repatriate these powers? With whom do we negotiate to find out whether there will be free movement of persons, goods, etc. throughout Canada? That's my question. Who is the spokesperson? And if you say it's the federal government, can a province, because Canada is no longer what it was when the Constitution was passed, can a province object to the federal government's negotiating?

Mr. Otis: To what the federal government's negotiating, no.

Mr. Beaudry: It will negotiate based on what right?

Mr. Otis: It will negotiate based on its right in constitutional law as a federal entity in international relations. But if the Canada-Québec agreement amends the Canadian Constitution, it will have to have the modification to Canada ratified in keeping with the amending procedure.

Mr. Beaudry: So, you're saying that even if the current structure no longer existed, it could commit Prince Edward Island, which might have different interests, in a Canada of 9 rather than a Canada of 10, just as it could British Columbia. And the federal government's commit-

ments and jurisdictions agreed to under a Constitution of 10 would commit all the other provinces, even if it fell to 9 through the action of a province that withdrew?

Mr. Otis: If the agreement between Québec and Canada does not modify the constitutional position of these provinces, the federal government has the jurisdiction to do so. However, insofar as the Canadian Constitution would be modified...

Mr. Beaudry: It has been modified. There are no longer 10, but 9. It is automatically modified. Withdrawing modifies the Constitution. Get it? Withdrawing modifies the Constitution. It is no longer; there are no longer 10.

Mr. Otis: Yes, but that doesn't necessarily affect the provinces.

Mr. Beaudry: No, but it could affect them.

Mr. Otis: Inasmuch as the Constitution of these provinces and the provisions of the Canadian Constitution, which are subject to the amending formula, are modified, the federal government could adopt a resolution ratifying the agreement. However, this would have to undergo the amending formula process.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, Mr. Beaudry, I think you'll have to be content with that answer. You can't get free legal opinions indefinitely and you'll have to ask questions elsewhere.

Thank you, Mr. Otis, for your presentation before our Commission. It brings our afternoon sitting to an end. We will resume at 7:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:15 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:33 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This is a one-hour presentation. We will be receiving jointly the Fédération des francophones hors Québec and the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises. Mr. Matte chairs the Fédération des francophones hors Québec and Mrs. Lanteigne the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises. If you would be good enough to introduce your group and then take 10 minutes to make the joint presentation as you see fit.

**Fédération des francophones hors Québec and
Fédération nationale des femmes
canadiennes-françaises**

Mr. Matte (Guy): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to introduce to you, on my left, Claire Lanteigne who is the president of the

Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises, and also first vice-president of the Fédération des francophones hors Québec. Mrs. Lantaigne is from Acadia, in New Brunswick. Marie Bourgeois, from British Columbia, is the second vice-president of the Fédération des francophones hors Québec. On my right, Aurèle Thériault, director general of the Fédération. François Dumaine is our legal counsel and Mrs. Bergeron is what we call our ambassador in Québec City, because it is she who administers the Fédération office here. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, the Fédération greatly appreciates this opportunity to present its thoughts to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. We submit these thoughts to you in the hope that they will be useful to Commission members and the Québec population, in their approach to an enlightened discussion, and we hope they will be as comprehensive as possible on the issue of French culture. The discussion currently taking place is that of Québec society. It is up to you, first and foremost, to draw up the blueprint for society and guide your government's action. Our contribution aims to be that of a group that shares countless linguistic, cultural and historical resources with Québec society. A few words, perhaps, to introduce you to the Fédération des francophones hors Québec. We were incorporated in 1975, and unite nine provincial associations from all provinces outside Québec, the official groups for these Francophone groups, in both territories, and four national, sector-based federations, the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises, the Fédération des jeunes, the Association de la presse, and the Fédération culturelle. We therefore represent, as an official group, the interests of one million Francophones living outside Québec. However, for many Quebecers, Francophones outside Québec are an unknown entity, with whose roots they are unfamiliar and whose everyday reality is a mystery.

You have already met with our two-member organizations, the SAANB from New Brunswick, and ACFO, representing Franco-Ontarians. You have therefore become aware of the reality of Ontario Francophones and that of New Brunswick Acadians, but French culture outside Québec, in Canada, encompasses much more than Ontario and New Brunswick.

You know, despite the staggering communication difficulties experienced there, you can still find, on the Port au Port peninsula in southwestern Newfoundland, a group of Francophone communities which have been there for more than 10 generations and which intend to remain there, as Acadians, for at least another 10 generations. The Acadian communities of Nova Scotia are also recognized for having set up cooperatives in several areas, such as fishing, for example, and this year they celebrated the centennial of Université Sainte-Anne. In the

contemporary history of French culture, several families from Québec, originally passing through the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, ultimately settled there. We have vibrant, dynamic communities throughout the Western provinces. Our brief gives several examples of our entrepreneurship in these various provinces.

Québec may wonder: Where are all these Francophones today? We must realize, first of all, that these provincial borders have opened up and the overall population has swelled considerably. In the West, particularly, the massive influx of immigrants has diluted the relative proportion of Francophones. Of course, there is also the assimilation factor which was particularly prevalent when Francophone academic institutions were non-existent in some regions. There remains, however, a basic fact: The Francophone population outside Québec stands at one million. One million Francophones equals or exceeds the population of 6 out of the 10 provinces. One million Francophones is 20% of the Francophone population of Québec, thousands and thousands of spokespersons for Québec, in the areas of economy, education and culture. And, from our viewpoint, this is an essential linguistic outpost of Québec society.

Francophones outside Québec are a reality of Canadian history harking back more than three centuries. We are not, as some claim, a political fable created to stunt the growth of the Québec collectivity. French culture means Québec, but it means us as well. The Quiet Revolution put an end to most Canadian Francophones' sense of belonging to a French-Canadian nation. This was when the issue of French culture outside Québec began to distance itself from Québec. This was normal, and what was often heard was: Let's get organized first. Québec found itself submerged in the whirlpool of the Quiet Revolution. And we can understand that they had enough to deal with.

Now, we are also in the midst of our Quiet Revolution, 20 years later, it's true, but at least it's finally happening. We're in the process of developing our potential. And it is in this frame of mind that we're targeting a new beginning in the relations between Francophones outside Québec and Quebecers.

We asked ourselves the following question. Is it advantageous for Québec to maintain close ties with Francophones outside Québec? We believe it is advantageous for both parties. But, for these ties to develop, we are convinced that they must be approached from a new angle, that of a partnership. And this new approach was discussed recently by Lise Bissonnette, in *Le Devoir*, where she wrote, and we quote: Whether Québec is heading toward an extremely decentralized federalism or toward sovereignty, we must build bridges other than those of simple humanitarian cooperation between Québec and Canadian Francophones. (translation).

Through which common institutions could these ties be strengthened? Which formal agreements should guarantee the rights of Francophone minorities? If the answer is yes, that it is advantageous for both parties to maintain close ties between our two communities, then it seems to me that the government, the Québec government, must develop a new political philosophy. The Québec government and its National Assembly must issue a clear statement showing their intention to develop preferential relations with Francophones outside Québec. To date, this has not occurred.
(7:45 p.m.)

This mechanism must also be transformed. This political commitment must also be transformed into a mechanism, not solely administrative in nature, but a political mechanism. Various proposals have been made. We suggest, for example, an expanded parliamentary commission including Québec government representatives, Francophones from outside Québec, representatives of the Francophones from outside Québec, who would meet annually to study the relationship between Francophone communities outside Québec and the Québec community, regardless of the political or legal status Québec chooses to adopt.

After discussing the political aspect, these realities must then be transformed into partnerships forming the basis of the interests of each of the parties. To begin with, it is obvious that, in the fields of language and culture, there are close links between Francophones outside Québec and Quebecers. We are definitely a good consumer market because we purchase many cultural products from Québec. It is also obvious that we have our own market because we send several artists, writers, and theatre people from our communities, or they come of their own accord, to pursue their career in Québec. And this is something that has already occurred; several names could be mentioned. But we want to go beyond simple facts.

We feel it is important that, in the public, parapublic and private sectors, partnerships and ties between Francophones outside Québec and Quebecers be reinforced. Why not have Québec-community agreements like those between France and Acadia, for example? Why not have agreements between Québec and the Francophone communities outside Québec? Why not have what could eventually be tripartite agreements among Québec, the provinces and the communities? And I stress the latter, communities. Because we are perhaps in the best position – not perhaps, we are in the best position – we're in the best position to determine our own needs. In the parapublic sector, we're working with hospitals. We're in the process of developing an entire health system outside Québec, in the various provinces, a French-language health system. Obviously we can't, in the province of

Saskatchewan, have an entirely French-language hospital, but we can provide these health services in another form. Why not a health and social centre? One has just been created in the heart of Toronto, a French-language centre, to provide services in French to the Francophone population. Why not share the expertise you have acquired through your CLSCs? You have expertise in various areas, and we'd like to share it with you. As concerns universities, the difficulties, at times, of recognizing diplomas and exchanges among the various provinces, we must find ways of ironing out the difficulties that exist between us.

And in the private sector, you've often heard the story of the *Fédération des caisses populaires*, with agreements in Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick. This is worth pointing out because it is a significant example of the type of partnership that exists for the benefit of both Quebecers and Francophones outside Québec. There's TVA, which wants to penetrate the market outside Québec; naturally this would be to its advantage.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Matte, I'll have to ask you to go immediately to your conclusion, we're running out of time.

Mr. Matte: Yes, I'm doing so, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to point out, in closing, that we have things in common with Québec. Like Québec, we've had to fight to get what we have today. No one ever gave us a break. We share a heritage, a language, a culture. However, it must be acknowledged that your struggle is not our own, and ours is not yours. There are differences, and we respect these differences. We will continue to belong, regardless of what happens to Canada... But I think we all belong to a Francophone entity, that this Francophone entity deserves to be developed and that the ties we have within it should be strengthened. I encourage all of us to develop them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Matte. We'll start with questions from the representatives of the Official Opposition, Mrs. Blackburn, followed...

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. I would first like to welcome you to this Commission and thank you for coming to enrich our discussion, both on the future of Québec and on the role that Francophone communities outside Québec will play in it. The major questions you first raised, having clearly illustrated the importance of Francophone communities outside Québec and their dynamism, their new-found dynamism I would say, which you say, probably with a great deal of truth,

that we are unfamiliar with, which has, over the past few years, contributed to the development of a particularly rich expertise in the various economic sectors, I find this information interesting.

You ask a broad, fundamental question, whether it is advantageous for Québec to establish ties with Francophones outside Québec. I, for one, say that it is, and for several reasons, some of which I will mention. First of all, to be a Francophone is a blessing, not a curse. It's a cultural blessing, a linguistic, cultural and value-oriented blessing, but also an economic blessing, and I'll come back to this. It's been largely underestimated in the past. The ability to speak two or three languages has never been considered an impoverishment in Europe, and it seems to me that in America, it should be considered an asset.

The advantage for Québec is obvious in many aspects. First of all, because the more people there are with whom we can communicate in French, the less tension and pressure there will be on French Québec. I think that this is fundamental. Moreover, you can see for yourself, even if it is true that we formulate partnership policies, as you call them, indispensable, precious representatives in all regions of Canada and part of the United States to establish relations in the areas of culture, the cultural industries, but also with entire sectors of the economy in a more general fashion. I'm thinking of our professionals and yours, I'm thinking of all those in the cities, on the councils for education, health, culture, I think that you're absolutely right, and we're interested.

We have also established, as concerns myself and my party, a list of elements which could make up a cooperative policy with Francophones outside Québec, including reciprocity, support for organizations, setting up exchanges, but also, I would say, the main element is the establishment of a permanent relations branch with Francophone communities, which would have to publish an annual report.

As you can see, I think that not only are we interested, but I think it's, I guess I'd call it elementary for those who are trying to determine the best way to revitalize our economy in a sovereign Québec.

You say, on page 22 of your brief, last paragraph: "It has often been said that a strong Québec is an asset for our communities in the sense that it gives, elsewhere in the country, greater legitimacy to the French fact." (translation) Where you are from, where your constituents are from, in the Francophone community, does the idea of a sovereign Québec frighten them?

Mr. Matte: Frighten them, no, because in the past, what we have achieved to date we owe to the effort of these communities. These

communities don't exist merely in theory, it's the result of their effort. Certainly, there is some fear, I mean, we can't deny the fact. For us, it would be totally denying the truth to say that Québec's eventual sovereignty wouldn't change our reality. It won't make life any easier, that we are aware of. But regardless of this reality, we won't allow ourselves to advise Quebecers, to say: Because of this, don't do it, have mercy on us. Not on your life. You must determine your aims; we must determine ours. We hope that as part of these aims, there will be some common ground enabling us to work together more efficiently to ensure the growth of all our communities.

Mrs. Blackburn: You state, also, like the Francophone groups preceding you, that the relationship between a sovereign Québec and Francophone communities should be on a community-State basis, following the European model and that of France in particular. It's more in this sense. But if certain obstacles arose among your provinces or with the federal government, would you have the power to overcome them?

Mr. Matte: We have the power to overcome them. We've already done so by taking all sorts of initiatives. For example, when we had no schools, we had to create private ones. When we had no colleges, we had to create them. When we were prevented from creating... I remember, I'm sure you all heard about Penetanguishene, in Ontario. When local authorities refused to provide French-language education at the secondary level, the students walked out of the bilingual English school and created their own in the local post office, which had been vacated for this purpose, but still, they asserted... It's important to assert oneself, and what we say is that overriding our governments, when it is to the advantage of our communities, we are certainly prepared to do so.

Mrs. Blackburn: Still in the context of a sovereign Québec, do French Canadians have... Do you have the political power - because here I'm referring to political power - to defend the possibility of maintaining your rights and even developing, preserving this dynamism with, of course, the cooperation of a Francophone State in North America?

Mr. Matte: This will depend a great deal on the reaction of the rest of Canada, of what you call English Canada, of which we are part. It will often depend on the link that is maintained, if there is a link with Québec, for example, some sort of presence with the rest of Canada or if the break is made with difficulty, with a lot of problems and unpleasantness. There are already, we can't deny it, we say, there are already a

number of groups showing their true colours, saying: Bah! If Québec is no longer there, there's no reason to have services or enforce laws guaranteeing services to Francophones outside Québec. This is something we hear in all the provinces. However, we are prepared to live with the consequences. We are not the instigators; we are merely an entity. In certain provinces, our demographic ratio, and our relative leverage, is much greater than in others. Obviously, in these areas, it will be easier than in areas where our relative leverage is weaker. But we have high hopes, and we have verified with our various groups that they will remain where they are and develop themselves where they are, despite the difficulties this may incur.

Mrs. Blackburn: You would perhaps be the ones to tell us, without a poll, to give us a more accurate impression on this question. You who live in an essentially English-speaking environment, do you sincerely believe that Canada will be able to continue refusing negotiations, an economic association of any sort with a sovereign Québec, even if it's not in their best interests? Because that's often what we hear. I feel that it's an insult to our intelligence and a total refusal to recognize the pragmatism of businesspeople and politicians.

Mr. Matte: Obviously, with regard to this issue, everything will depend on the way things are done, because we're speaking in terms of potential. If there are problems created by a separation, or a feeling of abandonment or betrayal, or whatever comes of it, of course things may be much harder and longer. Because we've often seen people and countries confronting each other, knowing full well that it has nothing to do with rationality and everything to do with emotions. So, I don't know where... this is a hypothetical question, but how long? I can't tell you. We'll have to see how things can be done, if they are done.

Mrs. Blackburn: On page 23 of your brief...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your last question, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: All right, if it's my last one I'll go a bit... to the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises. Just a minute, Mr. Chairman, till I find the brief, which is very interesting and which calls to mind the contribution of Francophone women outside Québec to the preservation of the culture and values which have made possible, I believe it must be pointed out, the survival of Francophones outside Québec. I think that you have undoubtedly played a key role. You point out in your brief that half, if I'm not mistaken, of your organizations received no federal

subsidies.

(8:00 p.m.)

Could you explain to me how such a situation can prevail where you're from, whereas here, in Québec, the minority has all the services imaginable? You know, they range from pre-kindergarten to university, health and social services, which they administer entirely. Federal authorities find a way, through Québec-Canada agreements, to give something like \$18 million for the construction of a Cégep in Hull. And \$10 million or \$12 million to redevelop and renovate Bishop's University facilities, and so on. Even if Québec devotes an equal, if not greater, share of its budget to providing services - with good reason, to the Anglophone community, English Canada adds to it. I should say, the federal government - I'm sorry, I didn't mean English Canada, I meant the federal government - adds to it. So, can you explain why it can't come up with the necessary resources to do a bit more for you?

Mrs. Lantaigne (Claire): I wish I could explain it, but I can't. The criteria, to be considered, to obtain government grants, have changed so much that our groups who didn't want to get involved actively on a political level but who wished to remain on a strictly social level, saw all their government aid cut. They must now function through activities or fund-raising, which they conduct on a regional or provincial level.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go to the questions from the members. The first, we have 25 minutes for this group of questions, Mr. d'Anjou who will be followed by Mrs. Côté.

Mr. d'Anjou: It is interesting to observe the vitality and dynamism of the Francophone communities outside Québec. It's interesting, because we've so often been told that the minorities were in big trouble and even in their death throes, in certain cases. Thanks to the presence of a number of groups of Francophones from outside Québec before this commission, we observe, on the contrary, great dynamism, renewed vigour, to such a point that anything is possible.

I find it paradoxical to note that the 1982 amendments to the Canadian Constitution - amendments that were not accepted by Québec, because Québec was not present when these amendments were adopted - to note that these amendments did have positive results, particularly with respect to educational matters for Francophones outside Québec. You make the observation, on pages 9 and 10, on the subject of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Liberties. A bit farther on, you say: Regardless of Québec's status, to maintain and establish structures

corresponding to a new association between Francophone Québec and Francophones outside Québec. Can you describe in greater detail the type of structures you're envisaging to maintain ties with the Québec government and the National Assembly in particular?

Mr. Matte: First and foremost, it's simply to... You commented on the Charter of Rights and Liberties, and I think it's correct to say that the Charter of Rights and Liberties had positive results, because Francophones went to court, all the way to the Supreme Court...

Mr. d'Anjou: Right.

Mr. Matte: ...to be able to include in the Charter of Rights what should have been included in 1982, such as: We didn't get any freebies in the provinces; such as: Ah yes, here's a new section 23! We will ensure that it is respected to the letter to entrust Francophones not just with education, but also with the administration of their institutions. This isn't how it happened anywhere. In all the provinces, we had to take the government to court. And it was the court, in the end, that decided, in the various cases, that we had the right to schools and administration. So, the positive effects have been felt only in the last two or three years, after the various recourses.

Returning to your question, as concerns the structures which should be created, we think there should be a structure set up resembling the National Assembly, and it should be a political structure. I gave you an example earlier of an expanded parliamentary commission, made up of Québec MNAs and representatives from Francophone communities outside Québec, which could sit from time to time, perhaps once every six months or yearly, to discuss the ties, the partnerships we've established, to study what could be useful in the future in both cases, to these communities. Because we have a shared interest in ensuring a permanent, long-term presence in northern North America. So this is one way. We could suggest other initiatives. Earlier, Mrs. Blackburn suggested a direction, but we mean... We emphasize the fact that it must be on a political level and not simply administrative, as is currently the case with the Ministère des Affaires intergouvernementales.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you, Mr. Matte. It's interesting to observe that at the political level - I too believe this - there are definitely important ties to be established. Thank you very much. I congratulate you on your fine work.

Mr. Matte: Thank you, Mr. d'Anjou.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs.

Côté, followed by Mr. Dufour.

Mrs. Côté: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that Francophones outside Québec are very plucky, and they are probably able to understand Quebecers' reasons for wanting to adopt various initiatives to protect their Francophone and cultural identity. And what I understand from your brief is that, regardless of the constitutional choice of Quebecers, the ties between Québec and Francophones outside Québec must be strengthened. We need, as you pointed out, a fresh start. And you suggest, on page 15 and following, certain means. I would like to hear your opinion on the means of cooperation, in the sense you mentioned earlier, on the political level, in the area of the education of Francophones outside Québec.

Second question, to the women's groups, you speak of partnership between women's groups in Québec and Francophone women's groups outside Québec. You know that there are quite a few partnerships already. And you also know that some critics of women's groups say that there must be a certain degree of solidarity. But sometimes, we in Québec need policies which are specific to Québec in order to further the cause of women. So I would like to hear your opinion on this.

Third question: You say somewhere that the Official Languages Act enabled you to develop your Francophone and cultural identity. And we have often seen that it can be a threat to the Francophone and cultural identity of Quebecers. In a sovereign Québec, what methods do you think should be implemented so that the Official Languages Act which protected you continues to further the cause of Francophones outside Québec?

Mr. Matte: On the first question, as concerns education, there are different levels there. We can approach it from a labour angle, and you know from personal experience that there's been a lot of interaction between Francophone unions outside Québec and the CEQ, among others. But if we look at it from a broader viewpoint, as concerns education systems, here in Québec there is an expertise worth sharing. You've done it, for example, through school manuals, and partnerships have been established. I'll give you one example of things that could be stepped up. The Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques, in Ottawa, is working jointly with the Guérin publishing house, here in Québec, to develop textbooks which are published and printed in Québec, for distribution within and outside Québec, based on shared expertise between the publishing house and the authors. Here you have an example of partnership and cooperation.

A second level. The Minister of Education of Québec has, in the past, at least in the

recent past, shown an interest in sharing expertise, for example in the area of computer science. Here we have a veritable burgeoning of ideas and personnel, who know how such things work and how these areas can be integrated into education. Well, the Minister of Education of Québec shared this with people outside Québec. I am thinking particularly of Newfoundland as one example.

On another level, you know, we observed – and I don't know who but someone here, on the Commission, observed – that in Saskatchewan, there is in Gravelbourg a small school that had to be created because, in that community, people didn't want to provide a French-language school for Francophones. So the parents, who were fed up with sending their children to a school where they were in the process of being Anglicized, were forced to create a private school from nothing, with no resources. So we, as Francophones outside Québec, in a spirit of solidarity, we worked to help them, to offer tangible assistance. One union in Ontario adopted this school and has promised to send it academic resources, school material so that this school can continue to exist.

Couldn't we envisage a broader partnership among Francophones outside Québec who can allow themselves this? Because now there are economic resources in certain provinces, which are much stronger; with Québec unions or the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec to ensure that the Francophones who do not have the support of their province or local school board can be guaranteed a French-language education. So here we see different levels of participation. And I'll let my colleague...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Matte, I said you had about a minute left for the other two answers.

Mr. Matte: ...finish. Go ahead, Madam.

Mrs. Lanteigne: I would like us, as concerns women's groups, to be Francophone women, whether in Québec or outside of it... We have realized and observed that our problems, our needs are the same. We have already established cooperative efforts at various levels with women's groups in Québec, whether it be sharing new horizon programs, women for cooperation, which we implemented in other provinces, and in Francophones communities as well. And we want it to continue. Our extended tour of Québec in late November enabled us to strengthen ties and make ourselves better known. And we also realized that the problems we're experiencing, whether they concern funding, volunteer work, finding the necessary volunteers to fill the positions, Québec women have assured us that they have these same problems. And even more important joint initiatives were developed as a

result of this tour, and we can benefit from several services even in the area of training in several provinces, in Francophone regions, from health centres where we can benefit from training here, where it's already well under way.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, followed by Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would first like to thank the Fédération for its brief. I have two short questions. The first, somewhat related to those asked by Mrs. Côté. Okay, you say it's essential to create new ties, based on the past, and there's part of a sentence I don't understand, this approach then, to creating ties "is more realistic than that based on legislation forcing Francophones outside Québec to return to Québec." (translation) Are there people who are suggesting this type of legislation?

Mr. Matte: Are you putting this question to us?

Mr. Dufour: Yes, well it's...

Mr. Matte: We heard vaguely, through the press, that certain people believed that the solution, the solution, for Francophones outside Québec, lay in enforcing return-to-Québec legislation. Well I mean, I understand why people might think that this is a solution that is useful to us. And I respect their reasons. However, they're not really taking reality into account. Because we are rooted in Canadian soil and we're not exiled Quebecers, Quebecers on holiday, we're Canadians rooted in our own soil and that's where we intend to stay.

Mr. Dufour: Mr. Matte, your answer satisfies me perfectly. I would like to quote an excerpt from the brief presented to us by Mr. Chrétien this afternoon, a brief of 98 pages, so of course we couldn't go over all the sections. But it's one of the only briefs that deals with this very quote unquote problem, of Francophones outside Québec. I would just like to hear your reaction to this excerpt and point out that it doesn't come from me, but it's expressed as follows: "With only 5.5 million Francophones living in Québec, can we allow ourselves to abandon the one million Francophones outside Québec? If we answer no to this question, what realistic option can we choose for these people? With radical independence, the central vision of Canada's bilingualism and dual nature disappears. The force justifying the commitment to the French fact outside Québec would, perhaps, no longer exist." (translation)

Mr. Matte: Well, first, I would have to say

that, in fact I mentioned this earlier, it is true that a complete break in the federal link between Québec and the rest of Canada won't make life any easier for us. It won't make our lives any easier. It is also true that several people will want to challenge the very bases and data of the Fédération canadienne, with respect to the Official Languages Act. This is obvious. And this is also true within many of the provinces, where there are already legislative guarantees and rights. It won't make life any easier, this must be recognized. On the other hand, we also say to ourselves that this consideration must not... we don't want to leave the message, we don't want to leave the message here: please don't do it, you'll hurt us. This is not at all our intention.

(8:15 p.m.)

Mr. Dufour: It's very clear, your intention, and moreover, you are one of the groups from outside Québec, and we said that it was up to Québec and Quebecers to make this type of decision. You have respected this very well. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Laberge, followed by Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Laberge: Along the same lines, not only do you say it well, you say it very well. I find this pretty amazing. You're not the first group to come here. The Association des francophones de l'Ontario came before us, enthusiastically, and they told us much the same thing in much the same terms. I find this pretty amazing, and it's very obvious, once again, that Québec, making a fairly drastic decision concerning its future, it's very obvious that this is perhaps not what will help you the most, but as you said it so well, we are here, we are all in Canada as it stands and, unfortunately, the relationships we would like there to be with Québec do not exist. That's right! I see in your brief, rather like the others in fact, this hope that Québec, having solved its big problem... maybe the relationships with Francophones outside Québec will be smoother, more consistent, more permanent, more regular and we'll be able to make some real progress together. Is it something like this...

Mr. Matte: I think we have to go further than that. I don't think it should be only once Québec has solved its big problems...

Mr. Laberge: No.

Mr. Matte: ...its big problem. I think that regardless of what happens when everything has settled down, in the end, that there is this political commitment, regardless of what comes of it, that there is a political commitment to ensure even closer political ties, like in the public and parapublic domain, and my colleague,

the director general, would like to add something in this respect.

Mr. Thériault (Aurèle): What I would like to add is that we don't want Québec to make its decision based on what we have to say, but neither do we want them to use us to make its decision. And this is important and I've heard statements here, before this very commission, where falsehoods have often been told with respect to the French language and culture outside Québec, to try and justify one option or another, and I think that we, as much as we want to respect the path Quebecers choose, we also want to develop partnerships, and we hope that Quebecers will respect the path we choose and that they won't denigrate us, because we may indeed have different options.

Mr. Laberge: Yes, thank you. But once again, I find the message very clear and what also brought me back down to earth was your experience with bilingualism. And I think the timing is perfect to remind us of this reality. Bilingualism... I think that all regular citizens should be able to learn two, three, four, five, six languages, but between that and true bilingualism, there's a big difference and you've experienced both. You've been forced to fight pitched battles to obtain what you have. You don't owe it to us, you owe it to yourselves. Bravo! We applaud you and I agree with you one hundred percent. You can't wait for us to solve all our problems to begin strengthening our ties with Francophones outside Québec. So once again, bravo!

Mr. Matte: Thank you, Mr. Laberge.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bouchard, who will be followed by Mr. Libman, who will be the last speaker for this block of questions.

A voice: Ouch! Businessmen... one million Francophones.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like first of all, Mr. Chairman, to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Matte, Mr. Thériault, Mrs. Bergeron and others here. I know they represent a Francophone group, I had the opportunity of working with them when I was in Ottawa and I know they represent a group of Francophones who are waging a difficult battle, a courageous battle, and I think what they do is admirable. I have no reservations about praising the extraordinary work done there daily. At the same time, we must realize the courage it took for them to say to us tonight: We don't want to be used to influence Québec's decision.

They want Québec to make its decision based on its interests, and then they want to

establish partnerships and so forth. We know very well that the situation won't be easy for these people at the dawn of sovereignty, if it is declared. We realize this. We know the federal government did a lot for them, we must acknowledge the fact. These are the facts. And this means that Québec should be able to take up the torch and it is difficult to imagine Québec gaining sovereignty, regardless of how it comes about, without a profound, almost renewed commitment, because I must say that Québec hasn't behaved in an ideal manner toward Francophones outside Québec. Perhaps for the very reason that they have too often been taken political hostage by one of the two camps during the discussions which took place, but this is the very status that must be rejected, the status of political hostage, so that your situation can in itself be considered in relation to ties of solidarity, in relation to our duties.

But if it is true that you're dynamic, that you work very hard, and Mr. d'Anjou is right to point it out, the fact remains that the cause is greatly compromised at the present time, we know full well, it's very difficult, I have figures here that show me — I hope they're correct, I don't know if Mr. Ouellet is going to contest them, I almost hesitate to quote them — but it's a publication that quotes figures from the 1951 to 1986 censuses, where we see a constant decrease in relative and absolute figures of the Francophone presence in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia; it's sad. This means that currently, these regions are headed for extinction, while elsewhere the battle is continually waging, with tenuous results. My question is the following: You refer to relationships that must be established with Québec after it becomes sovereign, in terms of partnership, in terms of structures to be determined. I am among those who believe that Canada, the form it will assume after the political decisions are made, will have responsibilities and will fulfil them with regard to its minorities. Just as we, in Québec, will fulfil our responsibilities with regard to our minorities.

Having said this, what exactly do you have in mind? Are you considering models like the France-Québec boards, like those that exist currently with France, for example? Are you considering models involving cooperation on the part of the federal government, the Ottawa government, or models established directly from non-governmental organizations like yours, with Québec? Imagination will be needed if we want the Québec mission to be carried out in full.

Mr. Matte: First of all... I will ask my colleague Aurèle to answer, but I would simply like, first of all, to say something about assimilation rates. You know that here in Québec, your Quiet Revolution succeeded when

you gained control over your institutions. And this aspect of our reality must not be overlooked. We are present in different provinces, but in varying degrees, assuming control of our institutions in the areas of education, health, social services and the community. Even there, it's not at the same level everywhere, because it depends on the resistance of the province in question, or on our relative demographic weight. So Francophones outside Québec shouldn't be stricken off the list anywhere, people shouldn't say: they won't exist in 10 or 15 years. What must be understood is that they exist now, and if they exist now, it's worth the effort to work with these groups, with these communities now. In 100 years, we don't know, there's no one who can predict the future, who knows where we'll be in 100 years. But we know where we'll be next year, in two or three years, at least we hope so, and we must absolutely work with this in mind as concerns partnership and cooperation.

Mr. Thériault: Yes, to add to this, I would also like to say that as an Acadian, twenty-five years ago in Québec, it was not at all obvious that Acadia was safe, far from it in fact. When we began in 1962-1963 with our first university, our school systems and so forth, in Québec, it was practically accepted as a fact that Acadia was finished. Twenty-five years later, I think more and more, Quebecers are accepting that in Acadia, there are infrastructures, there is an organization of Francophone society which will make possible the continued growth, progress and development not only of Acadia, but also of Québec and the entire North American continent. I think we can say the same thing, there's been a fantastic trend of development in Ontario. I feel that it's possible everywhere where there's a will, a minimum of infrastructures. This doesn't mean the struggle will be an easy one, you know this as well as we do, it's difficult, every day you have to have the determination to live in French, to develop and grow in French. This is an asset for us as Francophones, but it's just as much of an asset for Quebecers. So this is one thing. Secondly, as concerns partnerships, I feel it's obvious that Québec, if it has a veritable interest in this French culture, must develop new, creation-oriented mechanisms, independent of its political structure, to ensure more than just a financial aid program for Francophone communities outside Québec. I think that, for example, the issue of school administration, I think that Québec, independently of its structure, should without further ado declare itself in favour of, for example, school boards administered by Francophones, regardless of where they live on the North American continent. And this is not the current condition, this is not what has occurred over the past three years. I think it requires a true

commitment on the part of the government to establish infrastructures encouraging veritable participation of these Francophone communities, to develop policies in line with the will of all partners to ensure that the French fact becomes a reality not only within Québec, but outside of it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now continue with Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is quite similar to that of Mrs. Blackburn, except that it is formulated differently. You refer to an editorial by Lise Bissonnette, and I shall refer to the same editorial. She said: "To conserve its leeway with regard to Québec Anglophones, the Québec government is prepared to give in to governments that are hostile or indifferent to Francophones in the West." (translation) She was referring to the Mahé affair in Alberta.

Speaking of this leeway, as you know full well, Québec Anglophones, as Mrs. Blackburn said, have their school boards, their universities, their health care institutions, and so forth. But a recent thing, a major insult to Québec's Anglophone community, which may appear insignificant to Francophones outside Québec compared to the presence of all these institutions, is the recent adoption of Bill 178. But the adoption of this bill also had an impact on Francophones outside Québec and a backlash of anti-bilingualism in the rest of Canada; indeed, this had a major impact on Francophones outside Québec.

My question concerns what occurred in 1988, because of this affair. You are more aware of the attitude of Anglophones outside Québec, or English Canadians, than we. You have more dealings with them. You live with them. Do you believe that if Québec separates, this may cause the country to be torn apart? Do you believe in, or are you concerned about, the possibility of another backlash of anti-bilingualism, anti-Québec and anti-Francophone feeling? Do you believe that this is a possibility?

Mr. Matte: What I said earlier, essentially concerning the same question, is that of course there's a risk. A fundamental change in the relationships between the various parts of this country is certainly risky for our communities. It's a risk. It's a risk we understand, a risk we will have to live with, regardless of how we feel about it because, in actual fact, we are not the craftspeople of this reality.

What we do have to say about it is, and I repeat what I said earlier, is that you have, as Quebecers - and that includes you, Mr. Libman - you have the responsibility of determining what is best for Quebecers as a whole. We will have to work within our

communities to limit the damage, if damage there is. Or to continue the development of our communities, regardless of where we find ourselves when the dust has settled and we see what type of system we have as a country.

A voice: Does Aurèle want to add something?

A voice: Yes.

Mr. Libman: OK. A major element which may influence the final decision made by Quebecers is the issue of Francophones outside Québec, which is mentioned in almost all our briefs, or many of the briefs we have seen that mention the situation of Francophones outside Québec. Since this will affect our final decision, we must know, since you know English Canada better than we do, does this possibility exist? That's why I'm asking this question.

Mr. Thériault: Yes. Well, at least, my first reaction to your question is: First, we must stop being afraid. I think we could be afraid of every single thing the federal government, Québec and the provinces do, and we could say: Well, my God! if they take action and pandemonium results, we'll end up losing out once again. I think it's obvious that we lose out sometimes. But, on the other hand, we have to have confidence in ourselves, in our own resources. Secondly, we are part of the 2% or 2.5% of Francophones living here in North America. It's obvious that the struggle of French culture will never be easy. It's not necessarily easy in Québec all the time, either. Good heavens, we have to provide ourselves with tools and institutions and create partnerships to protect it, this French language of ours.

A voice: That's right.
(8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Thériault: In this respect, the third topic, with which I would like to conclude, on this question, is the topic of minorities. Of course we are for a society, any society, which is generous toward its minorities. There's no question about it. We think that any democratic society should be generous toward its minorities. But also, it must protect its cultural and linguistic interests. And we, in this respect, we find it completely normal that on the North American continent, in Québec, outside of Québec, steps be taken to ensure that the French language and culture are dynamic, because they make an important contribution, not only to Québec but to the rest of Canada and the entire North American continent. And instead of trying to destroy it, let's try to build it up, without taking anything away from anybody.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now,

the questions from the group forming the Government. Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Cosmo Maciocia will begin.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ah! OK.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Matte, Mr. Thériault, you have, with good reason, emphasized in your brief the importance of new ties between Québec and Francophones outside Québec. And I think you stated that Francophones outside Québec, like Quebecers, have real interests in the development of something. I think there've been a lot of questions asked on this aspect.

My question concerns page 13 of your brief. You tell us that you demand not only rights but also responsibilities. You say: "But when we maintain that Canada is a country based on the presence of two major communities, can we expect that only rights, and not veritable responsibilities, be granted to the members of these two communities, regardless of where they are located?" (translation) What are these responsibilities which you would like to obtain, and within what structure would you like to exercise these responsibilities?

Mr. Matte: First, what we are underlining in this paragraph is our commitment to assuming our own development. You know, we don't want to be organizations or communities that are dependent on social charity. We are organizations with rights, we believe we have rights, we want to develop these rights in different areas and assume the responsibilities which come along with them. For example, administration of our schools. Why can't we administer our own schools ourselves? I mean: What's so miraculous about administering a school or a school system? Mr. d'Anjou, I think, could tell us that you don't need the mind of a Louis-Joseph Papineau. He wasn't the only one capable of administering a school board. We can administer school boards even in our smallest villages. We're doing it right now with Anglophones, for groups of 35 students. So why is it that, for Francophones outside Québec, it takes over 2000 before people even begin to consider handing administration of their own school board over to them? These are examples of administration, of responsibilities that we are prepared to assume with regard to our school, social and community institutions.

Mr. Maciocia: Fine. On page 15, you suggest that Québec develop a new political philosophy. For example, you suggest that the aid program to Francophone communities be modified. How should it be modified and which measures should be added?

Mr. Matte: What's important, I think, in this section, is to develop a new political philosophy. Therefore, it is important that on a political level... I repeat, it is important that, on a political level, there be... We even claim that it should be... We recommend that there be a clearly established political commitment on the part of the National Assembly, that the ties between Francophones outside Québec and Quebecers be strengthened. Then this suggestion will go on to affect a political sphere. We spoke of a commission, and later, there will be administrative procedures. What we recommend in our brief is that these administrative procedures have really been the only method the Québec government has had to maintain relations to date with the Francophone communities outside of Québec; perhaps this is not sufficient. I think that my colleague, the director general, would like to add something to this.

Mr. Thériault: On the issue of a new political philosophy, I think it's important that Québec not perceive the progress of Francophones outside Québec as running counter to its own interests. We have often seen, in the past, Québec's hesitation to take a stand on situations that were downright unfavourable to Francophone communities outside Québec. If, indeed, we are all Francophones and we wish to protect our language and culture and enable it to thrive, it seems to me that Québec, which is the hub – and by this I mean that the majority of the Francophones on the North American continent live here – must assume its responsibility in the area of French culture, must take a stand that is very, at the least, pro-Francophone, even outside Québec. And I feel that this hasn't always been the case, with any political party. And I think there is still a lot of progress to be made in this area.

As concerns mechanisms, it seems to me that Québec must open up its programs, create infrastructures allowing a partnership that is much more concrete in many areas. Take the example of culture. There are many Francophones outside Québec who come here to pursue their career, who contribute to Québec culture, but who are never eligible for programs such as, for example, aid to young Québec artists. Now, is it too much to ask that we study these programs together, all these questions, to make the ones truly aimed at Francophones accessible to everyone? We think this is the type of example that could trigger new discussions, a new philosophy and new mechanisms to ensure better relations between Francophones outside Québec and Québec.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I believe it's Mr. Benoit, my colleague...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes,

you have a few minutes left.

Mr. Benoit: All right. Mr. Matte, welcome among us. Mr. Matte, in your brief, on page 10, you mention that the Fédération would formally support the agreement; you mention the Meech Lake Accord, in February 1990. If I'm not mistaken, we were four months from the end, at that time, and the Meech Lake Accord, it was increasingly obvious that it wasn't going to succeed, something I've always wanted to know, because I was, among others, sitting on a parliamentary commission in New Brunswick: Why didn't you make a statement before? You gave this moral warning to Frank McKenna to declare himself against Meech Lake, and we all know what occurred as a result. Why were Francophones outside Québec so afraid of the distinct society we were demanding, afraid of the spending powers we were demanding, afraid of the five conditions we were demanding? Why did it take you so long to come out with a statement? When you do so, it'll be too late.

Mr. Matte: We weren't afraid, and we're still not afraid, of what Québec can do. But we've often been told that, when Québec makes decisions, it makes them in its own best interests. And when we make decisions, we make them in the best interests of Francophones outside Québec. And perhaps we should look at the entire history of this debate. May I remind you that, when the Meech Lake Accord was signed, discussions had been held prior to it, debates, speeches even, by the Québec Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, for example, who had revealed Québec's five conditions at Mont-Gabriel. He had indicated that Québec was prepared to, under this agreement, improve the sections affecting Francophones outside Québec. When the agreement was signed, there was nothing that improved the sections affecting Francophones outside Québec. Naturally, there was a certain amount of bitterness, a certain resentment of the fact that promises had been made, if not promises, then at least certain statements made without people asking for them. So this was disseminated in the first phase.

In the second phase, when we saw the government representative practically warn the Getty government and the Saskatchewan government when they eliminated the rights for Francophones that had been recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada, it wasn't easy after that, for Saskatchewan and Albertan Francophones to stand up and say: Well, we're going to support Meech Lake. Therefore, we had to let time heal the wounds that had been caused to finally, at our meeting in February, come around to supporting the Meech Lake Accord. But I must say that from the start, Québec's five conditions were never questioned by Francophones outside Québec. We supported

them even before they were presented. We supported them after the Meech Lake Accord was signed. And we continued to support them up until late June 1990. Aurèle...

Mr. Thériault: Yes, it's obvious that we were the first organization – and this is something that needs to be pointed out because Quebecers often forget it – outside of Québec, on April 30, after the first round of Meech talks, to openly support Québec's five conditions. Our concern, the concerns we had were about language rights outside Québec. And this is what made us hesitate, without unconditionally supporting the entire Meech Lake Accord. Because you must remember that the Meech Lake Accord affected our linguistic dual nature, Canada's dual nature. Our concern was this and not Québec's five conditions. On the contrary, I think it is very important that we recall that, throughout the entire negotiation, we were very faithful to ourselves, that we supported Québec's five conditions from beginning to end. And when we decided to support the Meech Lake Accord, it wasn't easy because we had concerns, within the Meech Lake Accord, on the issue of linguistic duality but, on the other hand, we did it because we felt it was absolutely important for Québec. And we felt that we were prepared to live with it, even if we had concerns.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This interesting discussion brings to a close the time slated for this presentation. I would like to thank the representatives of the Fédération des francophones hors Québec and the Fédération nationale des femmes canadiennes-françaises, Mrs. Lanteigne, Mrs. Bourgeois, Mrs. Bergeron, Mr. Dumaine, Mr. Thériault and you, Mr. Matte for this significant contribution to our proceedings. We now welcome the Collectif Espace-Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:41 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:43 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would ask the Commission members to take their seats. We will now hear the Collectif Espace-Québec. Mr. Charbonneau, I believe you will be introducing the group to us. Please go ahead. You have the floor, Mr. Charbonneau.

Collectif Espace-Québec

Mr. Charbonneau (Yvon): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for receiving us even if, after reading our brief, it was evident to you that it was not our group's intention to take a clear stand on the constitutional question as such. I would like to take a moment to explain our initiative. It would

have been easy enough to gather together 20 or so people concerned about the environment and convinced that the only way to take charge of the environmental problem is through a sovereign Québec. It would have been equally easy to assemble 20 people, concerned about the environment, who believe the environmental problem must be dealt with in terms of Canadian territory. Our group represents many political leanings and we aren't favouring one particular constitutional formula, rather we are calling on everyone to realize that environmental management should be assigned to the level of power closest to the source of the problem and to the resources necessary to control it, for one, and two, that it should be carried out openly and in a spirit of cooperation with other levels of government as well as other political entities. That is the essence of our message.

Our delegation is composed of René Miglierina who is the executive vice-president of the Association Pétrolière du Québec, Robert Dubé, director of the Fondation Québécoise en Environnement, Solange Vincent, an ecology researcher, Bernard Cleary, journalist, and Pierre Dansereau, ecology professor and our group spokesperson. Mr. Dansereau.

Mr. Dansereau (Pierre): Mr. Chairman, it seems to us that, from now on, global political questions will be dominated by ecological issues for the simple reason that the planet has never before faced such danger. Our history can no longer be written about, and our political problems can no longer be solved, by means of what used to be the dominant sectors: the military sector, and more recently - and this appears to be almost your sole concern - the economic sector. We think an ecological viewpoint is necessary, that it deals with these concerns and gives us a better opportunity, a better means, a better framework for integrating all the factors responsible for the world crisis we're experiencing. The Québec-Canada drama we're playing out, some happily, others less so, is only one episode in the worldwide game of conflict over autonomy, interdependence, and the need for solidarity. That is how we feel issues discussed in this forum should be viewed. Ecology is a positive force. Ecologists are not spoilsports who want to slow or stop economic development. Unfortunately, more often than not, within the governmental structures we've created, such as ministries or environmental departments, the fight against pollution is considered the be-all and end-all of ecology. The need to address the wasteful use of resources and a deteriorating environment is enormous. However, more often than not, efforts to address this need come up empty. The solutions we find often create new problems because our outlook is far too sector-based. This is the tendency, this bad habit we've developed, that we're fighting

against.

We have to encourage more complex relations. We can't be afraid of complexity, and ecologists sometimes find it difficult to express themselves in everyday terms. They are not always as well served by the media as they'd like. And I have to admit that this is a problem to the extent that when we speak of sustainable development and eco-development, we're sometimes misunderstood, and the new outlook we want to open up on the world, on the way society is organized, is viewed in a negative light, as going against society's inclinations. And in fact, ecology does go against a certain number of very prevalent inclinations that we call... that Denys Arcand called, "Comfort and indifference, enemy number one of the institution of a new order." (translation) Comfort, indifference, waste, lack of environmental awareness, the NIMBY syndrome, which consists of accepting solutions as long as we don't have to get personally involved.

An ecological outlook allows us to traverse the whole spectrum of problems, to see how the management of air, soil and water is directly related to the potential for plant growth. That the development of our heritage is closely related to this. That the problems of the humanization of industry, of the industrial workplace, of the urban workplace, etc. that in the end, world poverty and pollution are one and the same. We must consider these interrelations so that we can create a program, develop structures. But first, before deciding on a formula, on any particular political and administrative structure, we have to construct a coherent ecological program that integrates all these factors.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dansereau, I hesitate to interrupt you, given your interesting remarks, but the presentation time is five minutes in total. We have already gone over that limit. Perhaps you could conclude.

Mr. Dansereau: ...hmmm

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Put "wrap it up quickly", but I have to ask you all the same.

Mr. Dansereau: So that we can draw slightly more immediate conclusions, one of the things we would most like to see is the institution of forums, the creation of organizations which will allow consultation. Consultation with the population, with all sectors of the population, is an extremely important part of this formula, recommended to us by the Brundtland Report, exhorting us to think globally and act locally. One is not possible without the other. If we don't find out what people want and need in their community, in the ecological

environment where resources are processed, where property is set aside, where our heritage is preserved, if we don't establish this type of contact, then we're not living in a true democracy. This is one of the formulas which seems to us to be most important. If you would like to read our brief, which you have undoubtedly already done, there are other things, corollaries to our main recommendation, that require you to think a little more broadly, to go beyond the economic frontiers by which some of you, perhaps, may be bound.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Dansereau. We will now move on to questions from the members. Mr. Desjardins, followed by Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Gentlemen, Ladies, for presenting the document we have here and which is a fervent plea for the environment, not only on a national scale, but on a world scale. It is a question, as you said, of survival. And when we look at the names appearing at the end of the brief, it's obviously not the quality of the people that's lacking, far from it. I have to tell you that when I read it, I was a bit... It left me feeling a bit unsatisfied, your document, simply because I said to myself, perhaps a little naively, but are they going to tell us which jurisdictions should be provincial and which could be shared with the federal government in terms of distribution of powers dealing with the environment? I understand that that's probably THE question. But I would have liked to see experts such as yourselves, no matter the option chosen, to clarify to the Commission this extremely important aspect of shared federal and provincial jurisdiction in the area of the environment. I see, I noticed that you mention air as one of the elements which obviously, and this is true for water as well, speaks for itself. But are you able, and this is my only question, to go a little further by telling us what are, in terms of environmental jurisdiction, the areas that can be shared and those that should remain exclusive to the federal government?

Mr. Dansereau: With the federal government, with the United States and eventually with other powers, we can't solve the whale problem. We can't solve the problem of acid rain. These constraints are the backdrop of what we have to work on. The problem of...

Mr. Desjardins: If eminent experts such as yourself can't do it, who will?

Mr. Dansereau: Who's going to do it? There are things that we can't accomplish without agreements with the other provinces of Canada, with the United States, and eventually, as I just

said, with other countries. Who is going to do it? Those people representing us, our politicians are the ones who are going to do it. But they must be aware of the problem, they can't detach themselves from it, like Mr. Reagan did just a little while ago. Mr. Reagan denied the acid rain problem. That was obviously an insurmountable obstacle for us, which, nevertheless, did not prevent us, here in Canada, and even in Québec, or Montréal, or Valleyfield, or Chicoutimi, from assuming full responsibility for our part in the problem. We can do something to prevent acid rain in Noranda, we did so elsewhere, to a certain extent, at Chicoutimi, Montréal and elsewhere. My dream, personally, what I would like to recommend is that Québec consider itself a true microcosm, that it seize this historic occasion to create an exemplary society by agreeing to the implied risks and using imagination, creative imagination. We have such creative imagination, just look at the Musée de la civilisation, you will see what we are capable of doing, what we can accomplish with this highly creative and imaginative spirit. We have this resource. Let's dare to use it, to shame our neighbours, to adopt a point of view that surpasses our petty behaviour? If you take the bus heading north, in the Laurentians, the roads department has put up a sign on the left reading, "passing lane, this is the one to take". (translation)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bouchard, followed by... Excuse me? Did someone want to add something?

Mr. Desjardins: I just wanted to say that I was very pleased at the reference...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I don't have time for another question, Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Desjardins: No, no. The reference to integrating the environment into the Constitution. I'm now a supporter of that.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ah! Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mrs. Côté.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. Basically, Mr. Dansereau, what you're telling us is that the environment is one of the issues that goes beyond the Constitution. The constitutional aspect of the problem can be settled, there is one to be settled, but even after doing so, one way or another, there will always be a need for all countries to work together, even beyond the airtight compartments that constitutions might establish. But to get back to the constitutional level, you complain that the current overlapping creates uncertainty and confusion, and God knows they exist, and also creates inefficiency in terms of intervention by the respective

governments, can I conclude that one of the solutions that must be examined would be to give Québec full jurisdiction over the environment, as long as, of course, Québec, like the rest of the world, establishes cooperative agreements with other countries, Canada included, in the area of environmental protection.

Mr. Dansereau: Certainly such a precaution would be necessary, only, we have to begin here, we are capable, we are far short of having taken all the steps possible without the permission of international cartels or other powers which go beyond us and which we do not have. We are far short of this because of the poor education, poor preparation, apathy, comfort and indifference, which prevail throughout our society, we are far short of it. We are making progress in recycling paper. On various fronts we have advanced, but not enough. What mechanisms, what administrative structures must we create to do so? I agree completely that we need to decentralize them as much as possible. That's one of the things that made paper recycling a success. That's one of the environmental undertakings, a remedy to environmental disorder that shows we are making some progress and even succeeding, precisely because we decentralized.

(9:00 p.m.)

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, a short question. You cut short Mr. Desjardins' last remark, I don't think he had time to continue, but he reminded us that your brief proposes including, entrenching, in the Constitution, environmental guarantees. People are talking about this issue, everyone's very interested in it. I remember that at the department in Ottawa, I had tried, along with public servants, to determine what tack to take. And we had a hard time defining that concept. It's really difficult to translate the kind of concern you have into a legal concept in a constitution. How, for example, do you give courts responsibility for imposing environmental policies on governments which will require spending hundreds of millions of dollars, billions, without having the judicial branch infringe upon the area of setting policy which is, in fact, a governmental prerogative?

Mr. Dansereau: I think there are two sides to that. The Constitution and the Charter of Rights should include certain provisions dealing directly and specifically with the environment. On the other hand, giving the Department of the Environment powers and a greatly increased budget is, I believe, debatable. It's like when people ask me: should ecology be taught in schools and universities? Yes, it should be taught specifically, as such. But if the history teacher, the economics teacher and the other teachers are not concerned about the environment, the ecology as such, it won't work. It's like trying

to teach a foreign language to someone who's not interested in languages, teaching, perhaps having someone who wants to learn Spanish study entomology in Spanish. Don't make him learn Spanish. But the environment is a little like that. It's a language, it's a dimension, it's a super-dimension, a system of integrated knowledge, motivation and action. It doesn't belong to any one person. This doesn't prevent an environment minister from being in a good position to accomplish certain things, but he has to relay his findings to the education minister, agriculture minister, fisheries minister and other authorities.

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

Mrs. Côté: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your brief. I find it clear and concise. The arguments are well thought out and the picture you draw of the environment in Québec is both to the point and effective. I think that that's what probably led you to say, on page 8, that Québec's successful transition to a new political status would require, in our opinion, sticking to social values based on equity, democracy, quality of life and conservation of the environment, all capped by the definition of sustainable development you give on page 5.

I have one question on page 6. You say that it will be necessary to have greater decentralization of power to the regional level. Therefore, my first question is: What would this mean, shared powers between the regions and the government of Québec, in a situation in which, ultimately, the national framework/parameters would have to be somewhat rigid and the regions would have to have some room to manoeuvre? First question.

And what do you mean when you talk about better environmental management in the next paragraph? Given the various interrelated factors, wouldn't it be more reasonable to favour institutions that form a sort of interactive network? I'd like your response since I'm having a little trouble understanding your argument, because further on, it's not developed in depth. It's concise. It's good. If you please.

Mr. Charbonneau: Yes. That question brings to light one of the main concerns or recommendations of our brief, to find a way, using the institutions that people will want, to encourage as much public participation as possible in environmental issues, information, consultation and decisionmaking and, sometimes, even in the implementation of certain initiatives, the most public participation possible.

Traditional government structures, and this applies to both levels, are very sector-based, very compartmentalized: forestry, agriculture,

mines, environment, we could list them all, they are all compartmentalized.

On the other hand, the public is far removed from the decisions made with regard to the management of their land, their environment. It's very far removed; there are many steps, there's a huge pyramid. What we say here: Would there be a way for people of all political leanings to come up with mechanisms which would make it possible to establish common ground among environmental decisionmakers? That's what we mean by an interactive network of institutions where information is accessed quickly, where the public can bring their information on the issue to the decisionmakers, and where environmental management is turned over to the population at large. This is also called assuming responsibility. That's what we're suggesting here.

As for the mechanics of the whole thing, in terms of formulas, what should be on a par-Canadian level? What should be on a Québec level? What should be on a regional level within Québec? We are asking for a forum to debate these issues, to study them in greater depth. The environment is a relatively new issue. There are few briefs dealing with this issue before you. That's one more reason to study it further. It's a complex issue, as Mr. Dansereau said, but it is an issue which can be assessed, which can be discussed and people, those concerned with renewing federalism and those who would like to see Québec move toward full autonomy, sovereignty, must concern themselves with coming up with institutions which will encourage responsibility for problems closest to their source and where the resources to solve them are most readily available. On the other hand, people should also concern themselves with opening lines of cooperation with broader areas.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): One question from the government representative. Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your brief and welcome, on behalf of the Government, to this commission, today. I congratulate you on your very interesting brief but, before moving on to questions, I would like to provide some information. Concerning the remarks that you make on how slowly the Québec program for cleaning up municipal wastewater is being implemented, according to the information and figures that I have here, since the beginning of the Québec municipal wastewater cleanup program, agreements have been signed with more than 665 municipalities in Québec for a total of \$6.8 billion. Of this, \$3.8 billion has already been invested, which means that there are 415 municipalities already serviced or in the process of being serviced under this program.

You also speak of federal involvement in the St. Lawrence plan. It is of course beneficial, but it was the object, as you said, of repeated demands on the part of the Québec government for several years before the federal government agreed to provide \$100 million over 5 years under a federal-provincial agreement. This sum is quite vast, but I believe it is still relatively slight if you compare it to the Québec government's involvement in the sector. That's what I wanted to say in response to that portion of your brief.

You mentioned, and speak often in your brief, Mr. Charbonneau mentioned this earlier, about the idea of public participation in the decisionmaking process. You talk about decentralization. On page 2, you say: "It is necessary to get the public involved in drawing up policies that deal with natural resources and the environment" (translation). On page 4, you refer back to this, saying: "One of the keys to protecting the environment is public participation" (translation). On page 7, once again, you talk about how redefining Québec would "better guarantee the recognition of individual and collective rights to participate actively and directly, within the democratic process, in choosing and in making decisions that affect the quality of their life and environment" (translation). Personally, when I read that, I wondered what you meant. You don't simply mean the appearances of organizations before the BAPE. What mechanisms have you come up with, in particular, beyond decentralization? Have you considered referendary consultations? If so, should these consultations be initiated by the government or by the public? Did you go as far as that in your...

Mrs. Vincent (Solange): In our brief, we are talking about the consultation that would be possible on issues as important as energy: a public debate. People in Québec have been asking for a public debate on energy issues for several years now and they have always been turned down. This event could play a major role in linking people with the development of their country and their resources, to create resources which would, in turn, insure the continuity of these resources. Up until now, development has been carried out by means of mega-projects because decisions have all been made by political and economic powers. If there were a public debate on energy in Québec, it would be a way to get the public involved in making decisions to determine the future of their energy resources, their environmental future, because the causes of the greatest problems can often be found in Québec's energy policies themselves. Now, there are other formulas as well which could be found, dealing with other questions. But as Mr. Charbonneau said, they must be formulas which open up the various sectors, like forestry,

agriculture and energy. We would have to find ways to look at things not only by sector, but in an interdisciplinary manner and also ensuring that these developments... One aspect of the environment that is often overlooked is that of equity, I mean, development that favours all.

I want to give you two examples of non-viable development, anti-development. These are two recent examples. One is cuts to public transportation subsidies; it's bad for the environment and inequitable. The federal government's decision to cut Via Rail is bad for the environment and inequitable. Therefore, when we want to get the public involved, it's so that decisions are made with the whole of the population in mind, and not just to favour a few. But to everyone's advantage and, especially to the advantage of the most underprivileged.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Questions now from the representatives of the Official Opposition party.

Mrs. Hovington: I think that Mr. Dansereau would like to add something.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Sorry. Go ahead, Mr. Dansereau.

Mrs. Hovington: No? I'm sorry, I thought he wanted...

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

Mr. Cleary (Bernard): If you will allow me, there were two elements...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Briefly, if possible.

Mr. Cleary: Yes, two things to add to that answer. The first is that consultations are usually conducted after a project is announced and they are what I would call based on information and in reaction to. I think one way would be to have consultations before a project is established.

The other thing is, and here I'm going to make my own pitch, is that locals should be involved in development projects, especially Native peoples. Since, and the brief stresses it, I think that people would be interested in using Native people in resource development and it would be a way of involving the public.

Mrs. Hovington: But if we decentralize...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Question now... I'm sorry, Mrs. Hovington. Bah! It's late, a short final one.

Mrs. Hovington: But if we decentralize the powers as you say, how would we be able to plan over the long term? And how could we make sure that environmental restrictions were being followed if things are truly decentralized to the regions?

Mr. Cleary: Don't you think the easiest way to oversee the application is by the people who are the most affected? You will see much greater environmental scrutiny by those who will have to put up with the problems, than by...

Mrs. Hovington: And for planning?

Mr. Cleary: Even at the planning level. We are always better off using local people so that planning is more in line with reality. And personally, I think that you can, in a new way and what you are working on now, include all these elements which would become much more... a great participation for all the populations and that would be the new formulas.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Question now, from the representatives of the party forming the Official Opposition. Mrs. Marois or Mr. Lazure. Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Yes, I'll begin and then my colleague, Mr. Lazure, will intervene. Good evening. Fine, you're not taking a stand on the object of our debates. You stated that clearly. Your brief, however, refers several times, throughout, particularly on page 6, to the concept of eco-development, of the human being as a part of the environment and especially to culture. On page 6, it is clearly set out. My question is a bit brutal, and my colleague, Mrs. Blackburn already asked another environmental group the same thing. Don't we have reason to worry that the possible extinction of a single people is an underlying threat to the human race? And if so, shouldn't we, for that very reason, attempt to take actions which, in consequence would allow us to protect ourselves, develop and progress?
(9:15 p.m.)

Mr. Dansereau: That's the beginning and the end. When I said, at the beginning, that our problem is more or less the planet's problem, what is the planet threatened by? By the folly of the human race, the only biological species in evolutionary history that has been able, up until now, to lead itself, to create, for itself, suicidal conditions. That's the point we've reached. That's what has to dominate political debate. If we want to avoid disaster, we have to strike a balance between self-determination and international cooperation. We cannot take any other route: accept the limitations. And the most serious limitation is the one we imposed on ourselves without wanting to.

Mrs. Marois: I don't know if you understand exactly what I meant, we are enormously concerned with the balance between systems, the fact that all animal species are entitled to their own space, nature, etc. But there are also different cultures, peoples on this earth. Shouldn't we accord the same importance to them and give them the tools they need to survive and participate in the global balance and in the differences which, ultimately, make life on planet Earth so rich?

Mr. Dansereau: Québec's problem is the Third World's problem. Québec, and all those who have, who are rich, and who waste as we do, are the number one problem. Meech Lake and everything we want is minor, it's a drop in the bucket beside the huge problem of the lack of aid being provided to Sahel, to Ethiopia, to Nicaragua, to Calcutta and elsewhere. All these people need our solidarity. If we want to halt the Amazon disaster, we have to wipe out Brazil's debt, like we wiped out Zimbabwe's debt. That's the problem. The economic problem is small beside the ecological disaster we're facing.

Mrs. Vincent: May I continue?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There's very little time for further questions. I don't have any objection to your continuing, but it's your time that's passing, M...

Mrs. Vincent: I'll stop then.

Mrs. Marois: Just one more minute.

Mrs. Vincent: What we're proposing is viable development. The country that will or will not be created here, I don't know, will have to have something concrete. We talked about this. What it is, is viable development which will better help a vulnerable nation to survive than another form.

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

Mr. Lazure: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to congratulate Professor Dansereau and his group for a highly educational brief. The claim you make is worrisome and especially the lag you described between public awareness of the problem which is already fairly advanced in terms of the environment, and the small number of changes. And there's also a certain commission report that was made public a few months ago on which we are still waiting for action, since there was grist for reform in that report, especially with regard to hazardous substances. I liked page 8, the short paragraph: "Québec's successful transition to a new political

status would require, in our opinion, sticking to social values based on equity, democracy, quality of life and conservation of the environment." (translation) A single question because there's not much time left. Certain groups say that to ensure this right to a healthy environment, that a charter of the environment is needed. Others, some of them in your group, alluded to this earlier: It would perhaps be necessary to include in the Charter of Rights, a clause guaranteeing man's right to a healthy environment. There are some who would hesitate to include that in the big charter, because we know what happens to the big charter, ultimately the interpretation is made by the justices of the Supreme Court. And we have to wonder if it wouldn't be advantageous to have an environmental charter which would be administered by an environmental tribunal on its own. What do you think of this idea?

A voice: Mr. Dubé.

Mr. Dubé: I will answer the question. No matter what decision is made with regard to a charter, a constitution, what remains important is the status given to the environment. And for that, what we recommend and what we say in our brief is that we have to create a forum which will allow us to truly discuss this point which seems fundamental.

Mr. Lazure: Fine. Mr. Chairman, if ever there is a second forum, I would request that it deal with the environment. I think that is concern number 1, almost on a par with health. When you ask the public what their concerns are, they answer: health and the environment. One month it's one, the next month, the other.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That's a very laudable concern...

Mr. Lazure: But you have another.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...but the concern of this commission is to produce a report before March 28 on the constitutional and political future, which of course does not exclude all the rest. I'm sorry that we don't have more time, I would have liked to discuss the Brazilian debt further with Professor Dansereau. I agree about Zimbabwe's and even Nicaragua's, but in any case, it's not the time to discuss that. I get the feeling that the Brazilians are a little richer than the others. But let's not go into that. I would like to thank you sincerely for this very interesting presentation. Time was short but you filled it well. Thank you to everyone and I would now ask you to please make way for the Groupe franco-militaire.

Is Mr. Castonguay to be the spokesperson or Mr. Chouinard? Mr. Castonguay, if you could

present your two colleagues and then quickly sum up your basic statement in the usual five minutes. You have the floor, Mr. Castonguay.

Groupes franco-militaire

Mr. Castonguay (Jacques): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me begin by mentioning the presence with me of retired lieutenant-general Jacques Chouinard and also Yvon Lafrance, member for Iberville county, who also served with the Armed Forces for 24 years and retired with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

I would like to thank you for hearing us this evening. As you will have noticed, the group we represent is composed of university men and women and retired senior officers. The ideas contained in our brief are those of these individuals and not of any national organization. What's more, since the skills of the persons we are representing lie in defence and security, our group does not intend to take a stand on the fundamental political options currently being studied.

Having said this, what we do wish to do is to make those concerned about Québec's future aware that defence and security are very important elements in the current debate. They are key pieces on the chessboard currently before the Commission for the reasons we would like to cite very briefly. Perhaps more than ever, mankind wants peace and hopes to obtain and preserve it through diplomacy and negotiation. The same goes for Quebecers and all members of our group. However, in the name of basic caution, it would be unwise to believe that our civilization has reached a point of maturity and wisdom that would override the need for traditional means to attain these objectives.

To protect their sovereignty, maintain their territorial integrity, and ensure their citizens' safety, States must, unfortunately, continue to employ economic sanctions on occasion, and sometimes even resort to arms.

A quick look at the world situation encourages us to be cautious. The events in the Middle East clearly require us to act wisely. But they are not alone. In 1989, no fewer than 142 countries invested an average of more than 5% of their gross national product in the Armed Forces, and continue to put their trust in traditional means for obtaining peace throughout their territories and ensuring their defence. Only certain tiny States are exceptions to the rule, and you probably wouldn't find them on ordinary maps.

In this country, maintaining public order is, above all, the realm of police forces. However, from 1867 to 1990, at least 150 cases of Armed Forces assistance to civilian powers have been reported, 46 in Québec alone. It is important to point out that in all provinces the mere presence of the army was, in 92% of cases,

sufficient to restore order.

Economic and geographic factors, questions of alliances and the entire range of obligations of sovereign UN member nations are subjects that deserve more than cursory study. On this note, I turn the mike over to Mr. Lafrance.

Mr. Lafrance (Yvon): Thank you, Mr. Castonguay. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I would like to begin by adding my personal thanks to those of my colleague Jacques Castonguay. I am also very pleased that you selected our brief and thank you for having allowed me to take part in presenting it. Let me start by pointing out that I agreed to be associated with this document on a personal basis. My participation does not in any way reflect the opinions of my political group, or the Canadian Armed Forces, where I had the honour of serving as an officer for 24 years.

The army does not advocate war any more than police officers seek violence. Police forces are designed, among other things, to promote civil peace, just as the army, through its participation in international alliances, seeks to maintain peace. The two take orders from the government to safeguard their society's fundamental and territorial values.

Since we seek peace in societies and worldwide, we nevertheless feel it is somewhat utopic to speak of sovereignty without giving thought to adequate security and defence structures. Regardless of the constitutional direction chosen by Québec, be it the status quo, a new association or independence, certain defence factors must be analyzed. Personnel-wise, at least 27 800 direct employees work in Québec for the Department of National Defence. They work in a climate created by a policy of bilingualism and it is appropriate to wonder how Francophones would be affected by new arrangements, which could give rise to new language policies.

Moreover, economically speaking for Québec, permanent military staff and civilian employees alone draw more than \$600 million in wages. This major sum and the \$2 billion that the Department of National Defence spends in Québec constitute significant economic factors. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are therefore presenting this brief in the knowledge that the current debate cannot ignore these issues and that the Québec of tomorrow, like the Québec of today, will have to choose its positions and adopt the necessary measures to ensure its defence, maintain order throughout its territory and ensure the safety of its citizens. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. We'll now move on to the questions, starting with a representative of the Government party, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to all the members, persons, Québec men and women who have played a role in the history of Québec as members of the Canadian Armed Forces. I would like to congratulate you for pointing out the importance of security, defence and peace because I think that these are very important topics. I have two questions. (9:30 p.m.)

Québec has often been compared to certain Scandinavian countries, namely Norway and Sweden, and some European countries, like Switzerland, in linguistic and economic terms. From a defence viewpoint, can such comparisons be made? In other words, can you envisage a Québec army by comparing it with certain countries whose populations might be the same?

Mr. Castonguay: Clearly we possess data concerning the Scandinavian countries, which we often compare to Canada when thinking of armed forces for various reasons. We also have data on Switzerland, about which we also often wonder, since Switzerland has a military system differing from the others. What is quite interesting about these countries is that they invest a very considerable amount of their gross national product, in percentage terms, a very considerable percentage, in defence. In the case of Sweden, we noticed that although Sweden does not belong to NATO — it doesn't belong to NATO but it nevertheless has an armed force of 700 000 men with a population of close to 10 million — if you compare that to Canada, which currently has an army of 88 000, you will see that the investment is very high. The defence budget, in fact, represents 8% of the government's overall budget.

As for Switzerland... Switzerland is often touted as a model in that it doesn't oblige its citizens to serve full time in the armed forces throughout their career but uses restricted compulsory service. I think there are disadvantages, but also some advantages. In terms of disadvantages, you'll see that all people in the country must serve from age 20 to 55 if they are officers, from age 20 to 50 if they are subordinate officers or soldiers, for a minimum of 11 months, minimum that is. I think that for many of us it might seem advantageous to see traditional armed forces assume this responsibility, that is, leave it to professionals and not have each and every one of us obliged to serve for such a long time.

I also have a few figures for Norway. It's rather interesting to see that for a country with a population of just over 4 million, they have active armed forces of 37 000. Canada right now has an armed force of only 88 000, I repeat, and you know the population figures.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Castonguay, can I

interrupt you to ask another question...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Please, Sir.

Mr. Williams: Because there are only five minutes left, not five minutes, but in all. What is Québec's role in drawing up Canadian strategies and, if we want to renew the Canadian federal system, what improvements would be made to this system? Would it be Québec's role to draw up the strategies of our Canadian force?

Mr. Lafrance: Yes, you mean strictly the armed forces?

Mr. Williams: Yes.

Mr. Lafrance: OK, in Canada, the armed forces are completely integrated. As I mentioned, we work in a bilingual environment...

Mr. Williams: Does Québec play a role in drawing up strategies?

Mr. Lafrance: No. Clearly, there are Canadian Armed Forces troops stationed in Québec, but they are part of the Canadian whole and work in the context of the large general headquarters for land forces which is in Saint-Hubert, close to Montréal, or in Ottawa. So, forces located in Québec work within this overall picture.

Mr. Williams: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now move to the questions from a representative of the Official Opposition, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, you say: Regardless of the option chosen — I'm reading from your brief — a potential threat will continue to exist, etc. I don't think... "Regardless of the option chosen" is a formula because, should Québec decide to remain within the federal system, clearly in terms of the military, things will remain unchanged for the most part. There will be no substantial change. Major changes could occur if Québec becomes a country, a sovereign State. And there, clearly the question is relevant: Does Québec make provision for an army or not? I would like to hear your views on that subject. Without forcing you to choose in any way, shape or form, let's assume that Québec is a sovereign State. How would you see that, given your expertise? Mr. Castonguay, you were the rector of the Royal military academy. You have a general at your side, a senior officer, also my current colleague. What would the Québec army look like in a sovereign Québec in terms of

personnel? A professional army, OK?

Mr. Chouinard (Jacques): I'd like to answer your question quite generally in the sense that we have the feeling that a country that becomes independent needs security and, to have security, from our point of view, you need not only a police force but also an armed force.

If we use this principle as a basis, without necessarily saying that it will take so many thousand or so many hundred, I think it's necessary, if Québec becomes independent, to have a force that would be able to take the necessary responsibilities when the time comes. And the time comes, in my opinion, when the country's police forces are, for some reason or another, mainly as regards internal security, overextended and, secondly, if ever there were a danger from abroad.

Now, what might Québec forces look like, if this were the case? This is a very hypothetical question you'll agree, at least it is as far as I'm concerned, knowing what we're talking about. Well, we're talking about a force to be determined, at that time, by Québec's political authorities who, being aware of their national and international responsibilities based also, I think, on Québec's economic capacity, and combining these two, will decide as wisely as possible to have an armed force able to fulfil the roles that those responsible for the province, for the country... It's because you're talking about an independent country that that country should fulfil... nationally and internationally... without giving any figures.

But I think that one of the points we made in the brief, is that, in my view, regardless, we must give serious thought to this because it isn't something that will happen on its own. We'll have to think about it because when we think of an armed force, whether professional, semi-professional, or semi-professional and professional like today's Armed Forces, with regular and reserve forces, we think not only of land forces, we think of air forces, and in Québec, with our shores, we also think of the navy. So, all that to say that this isn't a subject to be taken lightly, but rather very seriously because the costs become significant to consider at this point.

Mr. Brassard: I agree entirely, General.

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

Mr. Brassard: Yes, but in the event... You don't want to give any figures, but a sovereign Québec has to set up an army for the reasons you give. I think that's perfectly logical and normal. So what would be the nucleus that we have right now? Currently, in the Canadian Armed Forces, there are units composed

essentially of Quebecers stationed in Québec, in Valcartier, in Bagotville, here, there is an F-18 air base. What if we grouped all that together in terms of personnel? Because it could, after all, be the nucleus of a future Québec army. It would be entirely possible.

Mr. Lafrance: If you are talking figures, right now, in Québec, there are somewhere in the neighbourhood of 11 000 permanent regular military men and women. There are 7500 reservists and about 2000 military students. As you mentioned, they are stationed mainly in Bagotville, for aviation. There are also some in Valcartier for helicopter squadrons and there are some in Saint-Hubert. There are two reserve helicopter squadrons in Saint-Hubert. Where the navy is concerned, clearly, we have no ships permanently in Québec, but we do have militia and reserve training units for a maximum of 1000 marine reservists. And where land troops come in, as you mentioned, there is clearly the Valcartier base, which includes 4500 soldiers. There is the Montréal base too, with its logistics support and an equipment maintenance depot. There is also the general headquarters of the mobile forces, which are actually the land troops of Saint-Hubert. And there are militia units of the land army scattered throughout Québec. So, we are talking about 11 000 regular permanent military staff, 7500 reservists and 2000 military students, more or less, who are stationed in Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's now go to the members' questions. Mr. Ouellet, followed by Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I heard Mr. Brassard saying: Yes, I agree, we need an army, we need a navy we need an air force, in a sovereign Québec. The ecologists came just before you and I think they were hoping to have these large amounts of money for ecological projects rather than seeing them slated for military operations. Do you think that, in the case of a sovereign Québec, this government could decide not to have an army and not to belong to NATO or NORAD, organizations which have relations with Canada, relations which allowed these major institutions to adopt agreements under which the Canadian government feels obliged, since it is a partner, to participate in efforts aimed at cooperation, unity and a presence? But you believe, according to your brief, that this will necessarily have to continue in the case of a sovereign Québec.

Mr. Castonguay: Yes, for the reasons we mentioned right at the outset. There is the argument of reason. Ideally, this should not be necessary, but we know that we are not living in an ideal situation. We are living in a situation

where our civilization has not attained a point of maturity allowing us to absolutely foresee its behaviour. Human beings are often far more emotional than rational and we can definitely expect completely unpredictable movements and reactions which would require a stronger reaction than allowed through words. It is an argument that appeals to reason.
(9:45 p.m.)

We can also allude to the fact, and I think we mentioned it in the document, that currently, we can identify 142 countries that believe they will continue to resort to the traditional system to ensure their security and their defence. The survey I was able to consult on armed forces the world round showed that there is only one country, at present, that feels it can afford the luxury of not having an army and that is Costa Rica, a country of 2.9 million. In this country, this work is done by a police force. There is a large police force. Moreover, we can also note that U.S. armed forces are permanently present in Costa Rica. So, in a way, they assume this responsibility for Costa Rica.

But the greatest danger that we see in this idea of being able to assume these responsibilities — because they will exist; these responsibilities for defence, public safety, public order, will continue to exist — if we don't entrust them to the army, who do we entrust them to? I think the greatest danger in such a context is that the State will become the police. That's the greatest danger. The police force takes on everything, it's everywhere, and that's the danger of such a system.

Yet if you have a reserve armed force in case of difficulties, you know that the army isn't everywhere, the army doesn't monitor citizens' lives. It only intervenes when required and under very precise circumstances. Then...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, to begin with, thank you for your contribution to the Canadian Forces and what you have done for the country. As has been pointed out, your brief is very simple. It could have been summarized in a page. Whether it is the status quo, renewed federalism or Québec's independence, you want an army. What I didn't like about your brief was that it didn't get me excited. I don't believe in the army option. I feel: The fewer armies there are in the world... it's a bit idealistic... the better. So, I don't agree, but I would have liked you to get me excited, for you to say: OK, given an independent Québec, what would be the size of its army, its navy, its air force? You could have gotten me excited, you could have swept me off my feet, you might have sold me your product. I don't see that in your document. And we've

alluded to it somewhat.

If the status quo is there and renewed federalism ultimately, finally, the army... perhaps we'll stay in the same context we're in right now. Technically, the eventually sovereign Québec...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...conclude with a question, Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Desjardins: Yes, technically, since you are the experts not I, to belong to NATO or NORAD, if we want to belong, we need to have something to offer. That means that, first off, Québec would have to have an army to come under NATO or NORAD.

Mr. Castonguay: There's more than that. It's true, I think that a sovereign Québec would definitely want to belong to the UN. If we look at the largest organization that... if you consult the United Nations Charter, in section 43, paragraph 1, you'll see that the States that belong to the United Nations must also fulfil the condition set forth by the Security Council, namely, to provide forces if needed and even to give them rights of passage among others. So there is a formal obligation for a State that wants to belong to the United Nations. As for NATO or NORAD, clearly, we know that these are negotiated alliances that can be renegotiated and are renegotiable, especially in the present case of NATO, given the rapid evolution of the European situation. What will NATO be in few years? Good question. What type of alliance will exist in that structure? Another good question. But there is no formal obligation to belong to these organizations. France has special status within NATO. We also know that Sweden does not belong to NATO. And it's a system that certainly allowed Canada to make a contribution, I think a valid one, to the situation in which we currently find ourselves.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Castonguay. Thank you to your group for having presented this interesting brief which, in any case, bears the distinction in our discussions of being original. At least it's the first time we've heard anyone on this subject. Thank you also to General Chouinard and Mr. Lafrance. We will now welcome the Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval.

(Proceedings adjourned at 9:51 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 9:53 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, the Université Laval law students. Mr. Gobeil is the spokesperson. I'll remind you that you have five minutes for your presentation. Mr. Gobeil,

the floor is yours. If you would be so good as to introduce your colleagues first and then to present a general overview of your brief.

**Association des étudiants en
droit de l'Université Laval**

Mr. Gobeil (André): OK, well, we are the Association des étudiants en droit. We're the action committee. For this evening's presentation, I'll be accompanied by Pierre-Luc Desgagné, here on my right. To my immediate left, Christian Roy and at the end of the table, Éric Thibeault. Before we begin the presentation, I want to say that it will be in two parts. I'll handle the first and my colleague, Pierre-Luc Desgagné, the second.

Before we begin to present our brief, we'd like to thank the people of the Commission for their welcome and for making this tribune available to us to make known the wishes of the Association des étudiants en droit. Also, we want to congratulate you for your initiative in creating the youth forum on the constitutional and political future of Québec. Thank you for that.

As you can see from the appendix, our brief is the product of an extremely democratic process. We began with a brief, on November 2, that was an outline of students' concerns. Then, when classes resumed, we did a survey, asking students to give their position. After the survey, we compiled, we extracted the main guidelines which were then submitted to the general assembly. With this mandate, the intervention committee before you this evening wrote the final brief. This brief was passed at a general assembly at which students participated and had an opportunity to make changes and amendments. It would be a bit repetitious to repeat the various reasons for students' choices. You already know the various political, economic, cultural and legal reasons. You've heard them while travelling through Québec, as we already know. That's what brings us to the point of sovereignty. How sovereignty is to be achieved is very simple for us. We think there should be two referenda. The first would put the sovereignty option to the population. Then, if the answer is as clear as we think and hope it will be, the process of adopting a constitution will begin. The government will have to strike a committee to write the next constitution of Québec. In that constitution, we believe there should be a declaration of sovereignty, the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms, the Charter of the French language, the creation of a supreme court and its powers.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Once again, good evening. I'm Pierre-Luc Desgagné, not to repeat myself. Some of you may have reacted when the title and the third part of our brief

was read. Don't worry. It wasn't our intention to steal this historic adverb which now belongs to Paul Sauvé, but rather to give it a nineties turn. Many people have maintained, rightly we think, that this simple word embodied the drive that enabled Québec to carry out its Quiet Revolution. And that's why we've used it this evening, because we feel Québec society needs new drive.

And this drive, like in the sixties, has to bring change with it, not just in one area, but in many. That's the objective we propose in part three. Along with becoming sovereign, we must integrate reforms to this major political change, reforms that respect existing institutions. We feel these reforms are important and essential. We'll have to begin a review, a major redefinition of our education system. We'll have to make our legal system more accessible. There'll no longer be a CBGAT, Québec's regions will play an integral part in their development. From now on, as Jean Lesage said, we'll be condemned to excellence. And you'll agree with me that is a pleasant life sentence to serve.

Allow me to conclude by saying that the people we represent this evening, for them, well, the time for wishy-washy compromise and back-room deals is over. Québec's decision-makers indicated last spring that Meech was the last chance. Then some of them seemed to want to backtrack. As far as we know, there's a next-to-last chance, a last chance, but there's no after-last chance. So let's get on with it. Let's get on the sovereignty train. They're waiting for us at the central station of nations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): A question by a representative of the party forming the Government, Mrs. Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you. Alright, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): No, there's a mistake in my records. As Mr. Brassard has indicated to me, it's the Parti québécois, Mrs. Marois. Excuse me, Mrs. Pelchat, you have the conclusion. In a few minutes. Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Fine, that's OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's late for everyone. To begin, a question on your consultation. So, you say 25% of the people responded to your questionnaire. You also say you submitted your brief to a general assembly, is that right? I understood correctly.

Mr. Desgagné: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: Good. Do you have the impression that overall, the students in your faculty have been informed of the process you

undertook to submit a brief here, or to consult them if you prefer?

Mr. Roy (Christian): I can answer that, definitely. First, what we did, as we briefly explained in our introduction, there was a first brief submitted to meet the November 2nd deadline. Then, a survey was submitted and presented to all students. There were a little more than 1000 students, they all had access to the survey, they could have responded. We received 250, almost 250 replies. What was then done, before the first assembly, there was a lot of publicity for the first general assembly, where this idea of sovereignty was adopted. What finally emerged from the survey were the guiding ideas. After that was passed, we wrote a final brief and from there, during the drafting, there was again a lot of publicity to announce the general assembly where final approval would be given. And everyone had an opportunity to attend that assembly and vote.

Mrs. Marois: So, nobody there will be surprised tomorrow morning...

Mr. Roy: No, no, no.
(10:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Marois: ...by your... Good. I think that's important, because this issue is often raised and it adds to the credibility, I'd say, of your brief.

Now let's come to the process of becoming sovereign, but specifically the institutions. On page 6 of your brief, you speak of the constitution, the Québec constitution clearly, good, will include the declaration of sovereignty, the type of state organization, the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms, good, etc. So, on the kind of state organization, have you considered what model you would prefer? Do you think we should maintain a British-style parliamentary system, or should we consider another type of parliamentary system?

And then, obviously, when we read everything you introduce into the constitution, you include a number of rather... In other words, you get pretty detailed. Don't you have the impression that it could become a bit awkward as a tool? And I'll return to the amending formula later.

Mr. Desgagné: Let me answer by first specifying that we've simply included in our brief the answers suggested to us in our survey. However, concerning the development, as far as I'm concerned, I'm speaking for myself, as a law student, and there I should temporarily withdraw from the intervention committee. But, speaking personally, I think, from having discussed with a lot of people around me, we prefer a parliamentary system, of course, but also within a republic. Because, whether we want it or not,

a head of state will be necessary and...

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, that's fine.

Mr. Desgagné: ...so we'd replace the position of Lieutenant-Governor. Of course, there would be a transition period. But the position of Lieutenant-Governor would be replaced by an elected president, whose term of office would be five or six years and, of course, the president would be responsible for providing continuity between the various elected governments. And, in our view, that could bring an end to a number of sterile conflicts in our country since, in fact 1867, and perhaps even before. That could bring an end to those conflicts. As for the content of the constitution as such, you say it might be a bit awkward...

Mrs. Marois: Well, you list a lot of things. And if we understand a little, if we listen to other groups that have appeared, well, and want us to be concerned with the environment, and with a number of other items...

Mr. Desgagné: Yes, but, listen. In our view, a constitution has to represent what a population, what a people, what a nation wants. And if Québec has many reference points, if Québec needs many signposts, and sees itself in a constitution that's a bit, not heavy, but which represents us, I say, with a good number of items, well then, let's do it. After all, a constitution is a tool. It's not something... Moreover, we'll make sure there's no amending formula, like a certain country we know. But we'll make sure that the constitution, well, that we'll be able to amend it democratically, but we'll make sure it's not a straitjacket.

Mrs. Marois: Fine.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That's all the time you have, Mrs. Marois. We now move on to members' questions. Mr. Libman, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to our Commission.

Mr. Desgagné: Thank you.

Mr. Libman: I'll begin by referring to page 4 of your brief. You say that the declaration of sovereignty, once proclaimed, will enable the Québec government to negotiate with the Canadian government the gradual repatriation of all powers the two levels of government currently share. So, changes in the distribution of powers in the Canadian Constitution will have to be made with part 5, the amending procedure of the Constitution of Canada and probably the 7-50 formula. So here's my question. As law

students, what leads you to believe, legally, that a declaration of sovereignty is enough to authorize the negotiation of a massive repatriation of powers to Québec or in these negotiations, in effect, between Canada and the government of a sovereign Québec? What does Canada stand to gain in these negotiations, in return for this transfer of powers to Québec?

Mr. Desgagné: Fine. So, to reply to your question. First, thank you for your welcome. Number one, I'd like, first of all, to note that, I'm not sure if there's been some mistake, but I think you've got the November 2nd brief, and we were very careful to send you, by November 30, an amended brief. On the other hand, that doesn't affect the basis of your question and I'll reply to that, but I'd like all the Commissioners to have the amended brief of November 30. Having said that, Mr. Libman, I think there are two parts to your question. First, on the vote, the declaration of sovereignty, that's the first part? And second, what does Canada stand to gain? So, those are the two parts to your question.

First, as for the process leading to sovereignty, we don't feel it will be a unilateral declaration of sovereignty by the National Assembly or the Québec government. It will be a democratic vote. The population must make a clear decision. And we feel that adds a lot more legitimacy to such a decision than if it were a declaration by one government. I think Canada would find it difficult to refuse to negotiate after a people had voted by a majority in favour of a position.

Mr. Libman: I didn't necessarily say refuse to negotiate, but what would Canada stand to gain in return from such negotiations?

Mr. Desgagné: That's it, I'm coming to it. And, to deal with the second part of your question, what does Canada stand to gain? First, I think the question that has to be asked is first of all: What does Québec stand to gain from a declaration of sovereignty? I think that's been, often enough... There've been a good number of answers to that.

What does Canada stand to gain, well, it's what Québec stands to gain. People have argued for a number of weeks that we're in an era of economic integration and God knows, sometimes politicians make mistakes, they confuse economic and political integration.

Having said that, there's a lot of talk about economic integration. I think Canada would find it difficult to refuse an economic partnership with Québec because the global trend today is toward economic integration. So that's what I suggest to you as an answer.

Mr. Libman: Do you know of similar

situations where the constitution of a country, like ours, does not recognize secession? Do you know of examples of international jurisprudence, for instance, where there's a distribution of powers between a government that separates... If there've been negotiations between a government that separates with the larger country and how those distributions were made?

Mr. Desgagné: I'll reply by saying that, OK, the examples that come to mind, we could mention Tigray perhaps, in Africa. There, the problem is settled, the army is sent in and supplies are cut off. I don't think that's the case in Canada. We've often been able to negotiate in good faith.

I may be repeating myself, Mr. Libman, but I think it would be difficult for "big Canadians" to reject a democratic verdict when they themselves talk about democracy so often. I think it would be difficult for them to say: No, no. We don't recognize that vote because that democracy is no good, it doesn't suit us. But if it does suit us, then, we'll recognize it. So, in 1980, we recognized the vote, a lovely vote, 60-40. But there, if it's a majority, we won't recognize it. I think it would be difficult for the federal government and the provinces of Canada to reject such a popular verdict.

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

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the job suits you.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: In your brief, you propose that a referendum be held, and that a declaration of sovereignty be issued after that, etc. And then you say that negotiations with Ottawa would follow on gradual repatriation. I have two questions. The first comes up when you mention negotiations with Ottawa. This afternoon, a professor of constitutional law at the Université Laval whom you may know, Mr. Otis, appeared before this Commission, and Mr. Jacques Proulx put the question to him and I followed along the same line of thought, namely, why Ottawa and does Ottawa have the power to negotiate with Québec? And there seems to be a problem at some point because the answer was not at all clear whether Ottawa, assuming the provinces would object to Ottawa negotiating with Québec, whether we might not be at a dead end in terms of negotiation.

In your approach, you assume there will be negotiations with Ottawa to gradually repatriate powers. But in a context where Ottawa does not have the authority, because Canada no longer exists as such in terms of the Constitution currently in effect, don't you think, in that

context, there might be some rather serious economic consequences for Canada?

Mr. Gobeil: If I'm not mistaken, I think Mr. Mulroney has set up a committee for the reform of constitutional amendments, and to reform the amending process. So, I...

Mr. Beaudry: Which involves Québec, naturally.

Mr. Gobeil: Yes, I imagine so.

Mr. Beaudry: Because Québec is still part of Canada.

Mr. Gobeil: So, we'll give it visionary quality by assuming it sees what's happening here today and suspects something might happen like the scenario we proposed in our brief. In such a situation, I imagine the committee that's been struck will see the various scenarios.

As for the economic repercussions of the dead end, as you called it, I think the Association des économistes du Québec, which appeared before you recently, and I think also Mr. Fortin, said that the main value was confidence. I think if it's done democratically and in a way in which the people of Québec and the rest of the world community can have confidence, I don't think there's a danger of winding up at an economic dead end and worsening the current recession.

Mr. Beaudry: I have the impression that you haven't grasped the meaning of my question because even if Mr. Mulroney has set up a committee to study the possibilities for constitutional amendments, there's nothing concrete at the moment, there's nothing that says there'll be something concrete in the context where Québec has decided to declare its sovereignty. Assuming Canada doesn't negotiate because it doesn't have the power, in that context, don't you consider that the economic situation could possibly become very serious, once it's declared its sovereignty? Don't you think, rather than proceeding like that, that it might be preferable to negotiate with Canada before, to see what the reactions would be, and declare sovereignty afterwards?

Mr. Desgagné: With your permission, I'll answer, I'll complete the answer. In my view, and to continue the litany of quotations, Duplessis said: "You negotiate when you're afraid you'll lose." And I see Québec as a winner, first. And second, to repatriate powers, I fail to see the difficulty in saying, listen, we're going to legislate in this, that and the other domain. The best example I can give you is that recently, the gouvernement du Québec decided to repatriate powers in the field of manpower. The people

from the government will correct me, but as far as I know, there were no public negotiations, etc. They said, listen, we'll take care of manpower, it's as clear and simple as that. And, in our view, if Québec is a winner and if, on the other hand, we feel we don't have to negotiate for ever and ever, well then! listen, we decide to exercise those powers and that's it. Excuse the anglicism.

Mr. Beaudry: But it's not exactly the same thing, because when you declare...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Excuse me, Mr. Beaudry, but I think that your time has unfortunately run out. Your conversation with your future colleague must be brought to an end. We now move on to questions from a representative of the party forming the government. Mrs. Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to welcome you to this Commission. I'm very happy that you've pointed out and congratulated us on the fact that a forum for young people will be held on January 22 and 23. We'll have an opportunity to see each other again at that time.

I would like to deal with a question that hasn't been raised by my colleagues on the Commission. On page 5 of your brief, you say that one result of the federal charter has been a transfer to the courts of a certain amount of political power. On the other hand, you suggest that the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms be entrenched in the new constitution of Québec. Would we not, then, be making the same mistake as the Canadian charter?

Mr. Roy: Not at all. You have to understand that the Canadian charter is made precisely at the level of Canada to deal with a different set of provinces that don't have the same realities in terms of culture as Québec. There are a lot of differences, at the cultural, social level, no matter. What the Charter does, all you have to do is think of language, for instance. I think that's the best example that can be seen in the Browns shoes decision, among others. A decision that was handed down. The Charter goes a little way towards placing all provincial legislation on the same footing.

Mrs. Pelchat: Yes. I agree with you there, that was the second part of my question, but that's not the question I want answered. The fact that political power has been transferred to the Supreme Court of Canada, by doing so, we'll be doing the same thing with a future supreme court of Québec because the Charter, once it's entrenched, is supra-legislative and therefore the effect is the same. I mean, legislators' power to legislate is removed in the same way.

Mr. Roy: That's it. The effect may be the same but the result is completely different.

Mrs. Pelchat: In terms of interpretation, it's something else.

Mr. Roy: OK, but the result is completely different because the Québec Charter will be made in relation to the realities of Québec and not those of Canada as a whole.

Mrs. Pelchat: OK. Assuming we entrench the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms in a Québec constitution, would the rights of minorities in Québec, for instance, the Anglophone minority, be guaranteed in that charter? Mr. Gobeil?

Mr. Gobeil: Yes.

Mr. Desgagné: I could say something, if you want.

Mrs. Pelchat: Go ahead, Mr. Desgagné.

Mr. Gobeil: Me too.

Mrs. Pelchat: Go ahead.

Mr. Gobeil: OK. I don't think... I think there's truly a place, in the Charter of rights, for everyone and it's clearly indicated in the various sections of the Québec Charter, regardless of language, regardless of race, regardless of people's colour. So, I say obviously...

Mrs. Pelchat: So then, the Commission des droits de la personne du Québec said that section 3 of the Québec Charter of rights guaranteed the Anglophone minority's right to post signs in its own language. And it even said, in 1981, when Bill 101 was amended, that the "notwithstanding" clause should not be used to remove that possibility from the Anglophone minority. What do you think, eventually, in a sovereign Québec, not in today's context? Quickly, because I've got another one.

Mr. Gobeil: OK. That's fine. So, we say that the Charter of the French language will also be entrenched in the constitution. So, I think that may be a sizeable problem as such. There will also be a "notwithstanding" clause attributed to the government that may also be used in such a case.

Mrs. Pelchat: OK. Professor Dion told us that in a radically renewed federalism, Québec should be exempt from the application of sections 2 and 7 to 15 of the Canadian Charter. What do you think would be the ultimate effect of that since, ultimately, the sections of the

Québec Charter would be interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada?

Mr. Desgagné: Mrs. Pelchat, I think our position is clear. And I think rather than asking ourselves about what Léon Dion may have been thinking and what he might propose, we've taken a clear position. And we don't have to ask ourselves whether... perhaps Canada would become more decentralized. We've taken a pro-sovereignty position...

Mrs. Pelchat: Listen. No. I'll stop you there, Mr. Desgagné because you begin your brief by saying: As future lawyers. Now we want to take advantage of all the expertise that comes before us. That's a possibility, a hypothesis that's on the table and I would like to hear what you have to say on Mr. Dion's hypothesis since he is a professor in your faculty.

Mr. Desgagné: Listen, if, at the very limit, and I'm speaking for myself, I want that to be understood, we have to remain in Canada and the Dion formula is accepted by the provinces and they think it's fantastic, fine... If Québec could be exempted from sections 2, 7 to 15... If Québec, in fact, could be exempted from the application of the Charter in those areas that too often thwarted its expression of its difference, yes, we would agree with a possible exemption of Québec. And if you'll allow me, I'll just add a little parenthetical remark to the preceding question. There has never, is never, nor will it ever be a question of denying any right whatsoever of Québec's Anglophone minority.

Mrs. Pelchat: Even the right to post signs in its language?

Mr. Desgagné: And, on the other hand, there will be a "notwithstanding" clause in a charter. And the decision must be a political one. And the benefit of a political decision is that it's submitted to the will of the people every four years. And, as you know, a "notwithstanding" clause has a limited term. So, if the majority of the population does not agree with the political choice, then, it has an opportunity to say so, and very clearly.

Mrs. Pelchat: I agree with you. A very, very short question, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...question, Madam?

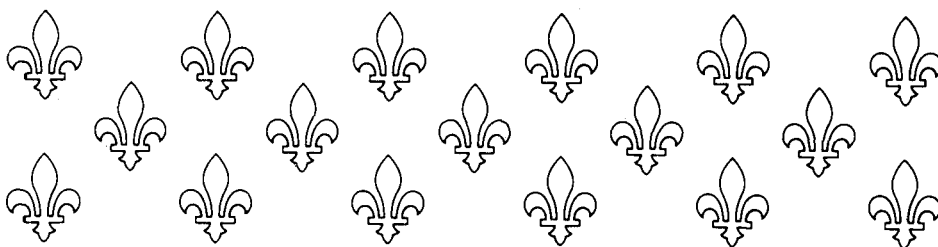
Mrs. Pelchat: You mention two referenda. What do you think would be the ideal proportion to gain recognition in international law for... Would it be 50% plus 1? Would...?

Mr. Gobeil: We gave that some thought, even before coming here, and we think it's a majority, 50% plus 1. It's the absolute majority.

Mrs. Pelchat: A simple majority. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I thank the representatives of the law students of the Université Laval, future colleagues of some of our members, for their presentation which helps advance our discussions. This session is now over. We resume tomorrow at 9:30 a.m.

(End of sitting, 10:20 p.m.)



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

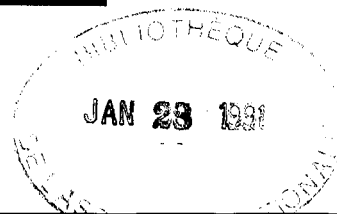
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

Québec City, Tuesday, December 18, 1990

No 22

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

QUÉBEC



Note de l'éditeur:

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

Editor's note:

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

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

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

Courrier de deuxième classe - Enregistrement no 1762

Table of Contents

Confédération des syndicats nationaux	1449
Société Makivik et Comité constitutionnel du Nunavik	1465
Fédération des femmes du Québec	1474
Mr. Guy Tremblay	1479
Mr. Jean-Luc Migué	1482
Alliance Québec	1492
Action-chômage Québec	1505
Group of professors and students from the Faculty of Philosophy, Université Laval	1512
Mr. Daniel Turp	1518
Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec	1529
Mr. Louis Bernard	1533

Speakers

Mr. Michel Bélanger, Chairman

Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant
 Mr. Claude Béland
 Mr. Richard B. Holden
 Mr. Louis Laberge
 Mr. Ghislain Dufour
 Mr. Serge Turgeon
 Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer
 Mr. Jacques Proulx
 Mr. Robert Benoit
 Mr. Christos Sirros
 Mr. Gil Rémillard
 Mr. Guy Chevette
 Mr. Jacques Brassard
 Mr. Michel Bourdon
 Mr. Denis Perron
 Mr. Marcel Beaudry
 Mr. Robert Libman
 Mrs. Jeanne L. Blackburn
 Mr. Guy d'Anjou
 Mrs. Christiane Pelchat
 Mr. Gabriel Desjardins
 Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington
 Mr. Jacques Léonard
 Mr. Claude Dauphin
 Mrs. Pauline Marois
 Mr. Gérald Larose
 Mrs. Rosette Côté
 Mr. Lucien Bouchard
 Mr. Jean Campeau
 Mr. André Ouellet
 Mr. Russell Williams
 Mr. Guy Bélanger
 Mrs. Louise Harel
 Mrs. Louise Bégin
 Mr. Roger Nicolet
 Mr. Cosmo Maciocia
 Mrs. Carmen Juneau

Table of Contents (cont.)

- * Mr. Pierre Paquette, Confédération des syndicats nationaux
- * Mrs. Monique Simard, idem
- * Mrs. Céline Lamontagne, idem
- * Mr. Léopold Beaulieu, idem

- * Mr. Charlie Watt, Société Makivik et Comité constitutionnel du Nunavik
- * Mr. Simeonie Nalukturuk, idem
- * Mr. Zebedee Nungak, idem

- * Mrs. Claire Bonenfant, Fédération des femmes du Québec
- * Mrs. Ginette Legault, idem
- * Mrs. Martine Bégin, idem
- * Mrs. Micheline de Sève, idem
- * Mrs. Ann Robinson, idem

- * Mr. Robert Keaton, Alliance Québec
- * Mr. Glenn Morton, idem

- * Mrs. Jeanne Lalanne, Action-chômage Québec

- * Mr. Raymond Brouillet, Group of professors and students from the Faculty of Philosophy, Université Laval

- * Mr. Philippe Lapointe, Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec
- * Mrs. Nicole T. Moier, idem

- * Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Québec City, Tuesday, December 18, 1990

Hearing of Organizations, Experts and One Individual

(9:34 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. The mandate of the Commission is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make the appropriate recommendations.

Today, the Commission will hear the following groups and persons who have submitted briefs: the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, for one hour and thirty minutes; the Société Makivik and Comité constitutionnel du Nunavik, for one hour; the Fédération des femmes du Québec, for 30 minutes; Mr. Guy Tremblay, for 30 minutes; Mr. Jean-Luc Migué, invited expert, for one hour; Alliance Québec, for one hour; Action-chômage Québec, for 30 minutes; a group of professors and students from the Faculty of Philosophy, Université Laval, for 30 minutes; Mr. Daniel Turp, invited expert, for one hour; the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, for 30 minutes; and Mr. Louis Bernard, invited expert, for one hour.

We will begin with the Confédération des syndicats nationaux. Mr. Paquette will introduce the group.

Confédération des syndicats nationaux

Mr. Paquette (Pierre): Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have the floor.

Mr. Paquette: First of all, I'd like to thank the Commission for inviting us to this hearing. Allow me to introduce the people with me today: Monique Simard, first vice-president of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux; Roger Valois, second vice-president; Léopold Beaulieu, Treasurer of the CSN; Céline Lamontagne, third vice-president; and myself, Pierre Paquette, secretary general of the CSN.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux has made a clear choice; that choice is the independence of Québec. That is the choice made by the 2 000 delegates to our convention held last May. To choose independence is to opt for a State that has complete sovereignty over its territory, which means that Québec would exercise all the powers of a modern State, in the current international context; this entails the repatriation of all powers currently in the hands of the federal government. One does not remain in a country because one derives greater financial or economic benefits than one contributes, just as it is not because of

opposition or rejection of the other party that one accedes to sovereignty. A nation decides to form a country to ensure the greatest possible control over its decisions, which means taking control of its collective destiny and taking its place alongside other nations. This is why the CSN stresses that it is up to the entire Québec population, and up to Quebecers alone to decide on their political and constitutional future.

An independent Québec will be a democratic, pluralistic society open to the world, with French as its language. This deep conviction is at the root of the CSN's decision to opt for independence. For us, sovereignty is part of a blueprint for a society whose goals are justice, social equity and solidarity, for the Québec of the present and the future.

The second part of our brief presents the major characteristics of this blueprint for society and touches on all aspects of social, economic and political life in Québec. Among other things, the CSN is in favour of a Québec constitution and a charter of rights and freedoms that would elevate certain collective rights to the same rank as individual rights.

The CSN also proposes that, in this independent Québec, powers be redistributed with a view to decentralization, modernization and democratization, both by ensuring that women benefit from equal representation in collective decisions and by introducing a method of proportional voting. Furthermore, the CSN considers that complete recovery of all economic powers by Québec is essential to setting up a strategy of sustainable development that would emphasize economic growth without endangering the environment. Complete repatriation of powers in matters of employment and labour relations would also enable Québec to work more effectively towards full employment, for a consistent legislation on labour relations and against the current state of poverty in which about a quarter million unemployed people find themselves.

As well, Québec must be solely responsible for its cultural and communications policies so that, among other things, the French language and Québec culture can develop fully. An independent Québec must respect the rights and aspirations of the aboriginal nations, by granting them constitutional guarantees, and it must recognize the institutional rights and contributions of the Anglo-Québécois minority. We aspire to a Québec which is diametrically opposed to intolerance and racism, a Québec which welcomes and respects the social and cultural contribution of ethnic communities. Moreover, it will be imperative to establish a consistent defence policy, in line with the reality of Québec, to ensure the security of the

territory through a policy based on disarmament and peace.

Thus, the growth of our society depends on its recovering all the powers of a modern sovereign State. This is the only path to a harmonious future. But we are not naive; Canada and its supporters here will do everything in their power to prevent Quebecers from taking control of their destiny. Once again, federalists will place obstacles in the path of our emancipation under the pretext of helping Québec. Nonetheless, it is with calm and determination that we, as a union, are involving ourselves in this crucial phase of Québec's history. This time we must not fall for the kind of promises and threats heard at the time of the 1980 referendum. Québec has the collective ability to build a strong economy in the current context of market globalization. The viability of independence is no longer in doubt, it is a recognized fact. With a complete repatriation of all taxation powers, Québec will be capable of assuming its responsibilities and taking charge of the social programs currently under federal jurisdiction, such as old age pensions and family allowances. Of course, certain areas of authority and responsibility can be shared between Québec and Canada, among them are communication networks, a part of defence, currency, etc. In this respect, the CSN is in favour of monetary union with Canada, but, in the absence of an agreement, a Québec currency, as some have pointed out, would be perfectly viable.

However, Québec's accession to sovereignty is not contingent on Canada's consent to share powers and responsibilities. The future of Québec and its development belong exclusively to its people, who must be prepared to assume all the responsibilities of a sovereign country.

As Mr. Bourassa pointed out after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and as reiterated by Mr. Rémillard last December 3: "Never again will Québec negotiate on a one-against-ten basis". Canada rejected Meech, and will not agree to negotiate until Québec has chosen sovereignty. Québec will then be in a position to levy all taxes, draft and interpret all its laws, and enter into such treaties as it deems useful.

Then, and only then, will Canada respect Québec and agree to negotiate. Not before. That much we've learned from history. This is why we consider it essential to initiate clear, democratic proceedings that will lead to independence as soon as possible. Accordingly, the CSN proposals are as follows.

First, that the National Assembly hold a referendum in June 1991, asking the question: "Are you in favour of the National Assembly's proclaiming its full sovereignty over the entire territory of Québec by June 1992 at the latest?"

Second, that the National Assembly form a constituent assembly, representative of the

various segments of Québec society, to draft a constitution within the 12 months following the referendum.

Third, that during the same period of 12 months, the National Assembly, along with Ottawa, hold negotiations on the transfer of power, which would include sharing of debts, common assets, repatriation of the federal civil service, etc., as well as on agreements to share economic and political areas. At the same time, proceedings will be undertaken with a view to having Québec recognized by international organizations and foreign governments.

Fourth, that the National Assembly hold a referendum on a proposed Québec constitution no later than June 1992.

These two referendums would be governed by the Québec Referendum Act, so that any expenses incurred would be under the Québec Election Act. The constitutional future of Quebecers has been the subject of debate for over 30 years. The Meech Lake failure is a turning point in this debate. The positions are now known. Paradoxically, it is the same people who claim to be tired of the delays involved in amending the Canadian constitution who today seek to stall the emergence of a democratic choice by Quebecers. Now is the time for a decision. It is now up to the people of Québec to make a democratic decision on its future. Thank you for your attention.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. Let's go on to the question period. This is a presentation of one hour and 30 minutes, which means the members have up to 10 minutes. If they can keep the preambles short, ask succinct questions and obtain answers that are no less succinct, we could go through all 12 people who wish to ask questions. If not, some people will be disappointed as usual.

Let's start with Mr. Poissant, followed by Mr. Béland.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have about 50 questions I'd like to ask. But I'll keep it down to five or six. At the end of your brief, you make an observation that I like very much. On page 107, you say that the members of the Commission will also have to come to some consensus within the Commission itself - this is in the fourth paragraph, but you don't have to read it since you know what you said - and you go on to say that this consensus will have to rise above the group interests of the various representatives. This, I think, is exceedingly important. It means that you, we and everyone here should try to reach a consensus that will be easy for Québec. I had comments to make on this point. I went to the dictionary, like others have done before me, to look up the definition of the words "clear", "precise" and "concise". If you read it, you'll notice that... I stress three

words: "clear", meaning easy to understand; "precise", meaning that there is no room for ambiguity. If you look at the word "sovereign", which we thought we understood, well... only last week the members of the Commission were told what it means. Now then, when I ask the citizens of Québec, are you in favour of sovereignty?, if I don't explain the concept to them properly, I may not get the answer I'm looking for. As for the third word, "concise", meaning able to be expressed in a few words, I think your question fits that description.

The other philosophy you speak of in your brief - which I like very much - on page 31, which begins with "the CSN..."; this passage, in fact, applies to all unions. You're concerned with improvements, with better economic conditions for workers in the province of Québec. I can tell you that business people like ourselves are for the most part in agreement with that. We're seeking to improve the economic situation for people. In fact, I recently met with one of your groups, the CSN in Clermont, and I was told... one of the comments they made was that they wanted income protection. What could be clearer? And they sent a copy to me, since I am the president. That said, we too want to protect income but we do have economic problems in Québec, and throughout Canada. For example, it takes 4.9 man-hours to produce a ton of paper. In the western United States it takes 2.2 hours; in the southern United States it takes 3.1 hours to produce a ton of paper, and son on. This doesn't mean that our employees are slower. That's not what I'm saying at all. What I mean is that perhaps our technology is not advanced enough. We're trying to improve it. But another equally important detail is that you have to add \$22 in social services expenses for each ton per employee, the western United States \$12, the southern States \$13, etc. All this to say that it's not just our job, as managers, but yours as well to think about not only producing at normal cost, but also being able to sell our products.

I mentioned earlier that the pulp and paper industry in Québec was the largest export industry in this province. It exports more than all other industries put together. Do we have to... this has to be part of the process leading to a consensus; basically you and I both defend employees' salary, you on your side, and me on mine. But we must remember one thing: it is the customer who pays the employee's salary. What happens is that when I go to the United States to sell our paper, 80% of which we export, I run into complications. A further problem is that, of all industries this is the one that requires the most financing. In other words, we have to say: All right, at this point I have to go borrow from the United States to upgrade the equipment. What I want to ask you, in fact, since we're working towards the same goal, at least I think we are, is: Wouldn't it be more normal, more

natural for the lender to operate in an economic climate of confidence. Can you give me your views on this point? The process towards this goal may be different - as Ford used to say, it's the customer who pays the employee's salary. I realize this is a long question, but I wanted to lead up to it this way.

Mr. Paquette: First let me get to the question itself. To me it seems very clear. If you look up "sovereign" in the dictionary, you'll see that it means supreme. What this means is that the National Assembly must be the supreme authority on Québec territory. I don't see how the question could be put more clearly.

In the overall approach we have taken in our brief, we wanted to go beyond the interests of groups and place the emphasis on the long term for Québec, because we think that Québec's long-term interest will obviously affect all groups. This is precisely what your question is all about; it seems to me that independence for Québec would make it possible to work together towards certain objectives that would be shared since, as you said, the growth of a company contributes not only to the profit of the employer but also to the salary of employees; but often, as is the case right now, we're lost in what I would call the pan-Canadian mass and these interests are not really being brought out. But we also realize, I think, that in a Québec economy, an enormous amount of work will have to be done in terms of research and development. Among other things, when you speak of pulp and paper, I think that one problem that has been brought up repeatedly is inadequate spending for research and development in this sector, as well as in other sectors.

We also have a problem in regard to natural resources. As you know, the forest is a problem at the moment. Recently, the president of the Conseil central du Nord-Ouest was telling me that there would be no point in a revival of the construction sector in this recession since he could no longer make two-by-fours with the trees that are left in Abitibi. This means there is a need for a reforestation and conservation policy.

Personally, I would say that the independence of Québec, sovereignty, will give us more tools in terms of society so that all groups can get involved but, of course, we must keep in mind that diverse interests have to be served. For instance, we can't ask private enterprise to do more than play its social role, which is to meet the needs of customers on the various markets and to make a profit. In all this, I think that the unions must maintain their fundamental role, which is, basically, to defend the interests of workers.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Béland, followed by Mr. Holden.

Mr. Poissant: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry, the time is up.

Mr. Poissant: There's another important one.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, but you won't have time for an answer.

Mr. Poissant: Oh! I'm pretty sure I will. On page 101, you say that sovereignty will create a more favourable climate for the claims and demands of unions. If the reverse were true, would you still support sovereignty?

Mr. Paquette: We support sovereignty because we're convinced that it is in the interest of workers.

Mr. Poissant: But it may not be.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Béland, followed by Mr. Holden.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger. Mr. Paquette, in your brief, I noticed you say that the CSN has always been very concerned with improving the economic situation of its members. In fact, I think this is in the preamble to your brief.

I have two questions. Here's the first: With this concern in mind, has the CSN drawn up scenarios for the economic situation in which a sovereign Québec could find itself during the period of transition, the period of negotiations of various union associations that you propose? Among other things, and this is my second question, you propose a monetary union. But, in the event that Canada refuses to go along with this union, have you constructed scenarios that deal with the value of a Québec currency, if it comes to that? These are two separate questions.

Mr. Paquette: Yes. First, I think that all the groups of economists who appeared before the Commission have brought the point up. We can't foresee the future, whether we'll remain in the Canadian confederation or get out of it. We're not in a position, based on, let's say a scientific method, to determine this.

However, one thing everybody agreed on is that the future of Québec depends to a great extent on the ability of Quebecers to develop their economy. In that sense, since we think that the independence of Québec, sovereignty, would give us better control over our collective abilities, we can expect that, in the medium and in the long term, the independence of Québec would be beneficial for its economic development.

Now, as regards scenarios, we looked at scenarios that were built by, among others,

economists who are members of the Association des économistes du Québec. As far as we're concerned, we have various hypotheses, but we think that the collective will is a more important factor than speculations on the future.

With regard to the period of transition or the viability of the Québec economy, I think that if we look at any country in the world, the standard of living or economic development is independent of demographics. There are small countries that are very wealthy, just as there are large countries that are poor. That's why we have to look at the assets that Québec has. Québec's economy has developed tremendously over the past 20 years. We know that more and more enterprises are owned by Quebecers. We also know that the markets and economic areas no longer correspond to political boundaries, which is an added advantage, I think, in the independence cause, and in having the financial capability, as a society, to give ourselves the tools and social programs we'd like to have.

What is even more important, I would say, is that we'd be in a position to put forward a much more consistent economic strategy than the one we have now, in which, in the paper industry, for example, there are problems with research and development. But the strong dollar that we have now is just as detrimental in the short term, I think, as productivity problems. I think we would have much better coordination and consistency.

When it comes to money per se, as we mention in our brief, we would prefer a monetary union with Canada. Since this is already in place and since it is in line with the major international trends, we would not oppose it, on the contrary, but we think that a Québec currency would be viable. In fact, there have been several studies on this subject. Our suggestion is to...

Mr. Béland: What studies are you referring to?

Mr. Paquette: There have been many studies conducted towards the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. In his brief, Mr. Fortin touches on this whole problem. The most important thing is to ensure that this currency is stable. What we propose, and what others have proposed as well, is to maintain the following for a period of at least five years: a fixed exchange rate with either the American dollar or a basket of monies which would include the Canadian dollar, and make sure that the stability is there. This would eliminate one of the current weaknesses of Canadian federalism, since we all know that for the past ten years at least, the Bank of Canada has completely ignored the effects of interest rates on the value of the dollar, not giving a damn about Québec industry.

One of the things we've seen is the dollar

go up from \$0.69 at the beginning of the 1980s to the present-day \$0.86. Monetary instability is a fact of life in Canada, under federalism; I think that we ought to be able to reassure our economic partners and perhaps make Canadians aware that it is important to have monetary stability in relation to other currencies when it comes to developing business relations.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Holden, followed by Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Holden: Mr. Chairman, I'll follow your instructions as if you were a judge of the Superior Court. My questions will...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm intrigued.

Mr. Holden: I must congratulate you on your brief. It is very moderate in tone. There are a few things I'd like to go over with you. You talk about a convergence between men and women, to build a new society based on true equality between the sexes, between the Francophone majority and the aboriginal nations, between the Francophone majority, the Anglo-Québécois minority and ethnocultural communities. OK. But can you give me more details on what you mean by equality between the Anglo-Québécois minority, ethnocultural communities and the Francophone majority?

Mr. Paquette: Yes. I'd like to point out that, rather than moderate, our brief is calm and determined. Having said that, I'd like to ask Mrs. Monique Simard to answer your question.

Mr. Holden: I beg your pardon, it was Mr. Bourdon who suggested that it was moderate.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Simard (Monique): It's good to hear you say that you listen to Mr. Bourdon nowadays. About your question, yes, we want to stress that, for us, Québec society is made up of different groups and that these groups must be able to live in a state of equality. We want to acknowledge that each of these groups may live in specific circumstances that deserve to be recognized. It is in that sense that we spoke about a Francophone majority in Québec, as well as of aboriginal nations whose circumstances are specific and who have specific rights. Another group is the Anglophone minority, which has acquired rights that must be taken into consideration. And of course there are cultural and ethnocultural communities which have their own circumstances to be considered. But our aim is to come up with a blueprint in which each of

these groups and each individual within these groups can live in an egalitarian society. This is why, in our brief, we insist that, as far as the Anglophone minority is concerned, there are a number of acquired rights that we must continue to respect and that institutions, for example, which belong to the Anglophone community - I'm thinking of hospitals, social services, colleges, universities - would also be here to stay. This is the thrust of our brief. Allow me to remind you that the CSN is an organization made up of different people who belong to these different groups. These people enrich Québec society, as they enrich our own organization.

Mr. Holden: Would the equality you advocate extend to signs given equal prominence in both languages?

Mrs. Simard: Well, I'm sure you have read every section of our brief; for us, the legislation on the language of commercial signs is not part of fundamental rights, which means we would not envisage any change in the positions taken in the past. However, when it comes to education we are very clear: we intend to maintain the rights that are currently recognized.

Mr. Holden: I have read your brief and I have also read the judgments of the Superior Court, as well as those of the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada, all of which say exactly the opposite of what you're saying. But let me go on to another question.

You say that achieving independence will be difficult, just as it will not be easy to implement a blueprint for society that would in every respect conform to the interests of workers. I agree with you that independence will be difficult, if it comes about, but does society revolve exclusively around the workers? Doesn't a blueprint for society encompass a little more than that?

(10:00 a.m.)

Mrs. Simard: Look, we belong to a union and it is obvious that in the blueprint for society we advocate, we defend the interests of the people we represent. That said, we believe in a democratic political process from which will emerge a political dynamic in which each group will defend its own social interests. To be sure, we are aiming for a society that offers greater economic justice and greater social justice because we believe that this will be beneficial for the greatest number of people, including the workers, incidentally, and, or so we hope, a society that will enable a greater number of people to become and remain workers. Let's not forget that at the moment, in Québec, there are far too many people who can't get a job. What we're clearly saying is that we know that over the next few months and years, a political dynamic will emerge, which will bring into play

the interests of each and everyone, and it is to be hoped that we will see a consensus on a blueprint for society that will serve the greatest number of people in our society.

Mr. Holden: All things considered, Mr. Chairman, this blueprint for society is the one I find closest, so far, to a real blueprint for society, and I congratulate you for your section on peace and nuclear disarmament; I agree wholeheartedly, the world is changing and people must change with it; I find your brief makes that point very strongly and very clearly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Since Mr. Holden's congratulations don't call for a reply on your part, we'll go on to the questions of Mr. Laberge, followed by Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Laberge: They may not call for a reply, but they deserve to be noted. I too would like to congratulate you on this particular issue. We have seen group after group, especially groups of Anglophones telling us that they were worried about the growing possibility of a sovereign Québec and were wondering what our position would be. I think your brief is very clear on that. Acquired rights will be recognized, not only acquired rights, but also the rights of minorities and aboriginal peoples. I think this is very clear; here's an opportunity to tell us more about that. Everybody should be aware that this is really the position of the CSN, and one that is shared by the entire union movement, I think.

Mrs. Simard: I don't want to take up too much time. But I think that, for us at the CSN, it was indeed important from the start to state this kind of position clearly. Because, as you know, we are a large organization, with 250 000 people, some of whom belong to minority groups, and this was discussed democratically, with all our constituents, during the months that preceded our convention, in a pre-consultation setting and at the convention itself. This is an ongoing dialogue with our basic unions. Just recently, I was in an Anglophone college union on the Island of Montréal where a debate on the position of the CSN was taking place, on maintaining these rights; this debate took place in a very peaceful atmosphere and enabled people, including members of the Anglophone community, to understand the deeply democratic position of the CSN; they realize that a sovereign or independent Québec can indeed be a society that respects all groups. That's what we're working toward.

Mr. Laberge: One more question, very rapidly. You have described your blueprint for society and there's quite a bit of material there for discussion. But I'd like to be very clear on

what you advocate. And that you speak on behalf of the workers; so many people these days discover new vocations, like speaking on behalf of workers - I'm glad you keep repeating this, it's more or less your job, isn't it? Thank you. I wanted to be clear that what you advocate is a fairly rapid process, you talk about June 1991, for a referendum on sovereignty. But of course, one does not initiate such a process for the sake of the process itself; the idea is to adopt a blueprint for society that one believes can be more easily attained through sovereignty. Am I correct?

Mr. Paquette: Yes. I may be able to address that. I think it's very clearly expressed. We believe that independence for Québec will make it easier to set this blueprint for society in motion, but under no circumstances whatsoever do we make it conditional on our choosing independence for Québec. So if there is a referendum in June, and we hope there will be because we think that immediately after the Commission, people should be invited to make their choice known; of course, it will be part of the process but it won't be a condition. Then, once Québec has achieved independence, the discussion can continue on how to organize such a society, but we are convinced that independence is a necessary means of moving forward, in that respect. On that point, you mentioned earlier that some people claim to be spokespersons for the workers. I'd like to point out that these people grossly underestimate the size of the Québec bourgeoisie. In my view, it is important for us to continue pushing for equity and social justice because there are disparities in our society at the moment, which don't necessarily have to do with the type of constitution we have at present but which we must continue to fight once independence is acquired. We're not saying that independence is paradise, it is simply a means whereby a people can move towards greater collective well-being.

Mr. Laberge: Thank you, and bravo!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, who will be followed by Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to greet Mr. Paquette and his colleagues, whom we have had the opportunity to encounter on the occasion of many other discussions. Three short questions: I am concerned about your views on ownership of businesses in your sovereign Québec; the only reference to this issue is a single paragraph, on page 37, where you say that the government of an independent Québec must aim to promote Québec ownership of large businesses established here. So far, so good, but things deteriorate when you say that the strong presence of

foreign ownership in the Québec economy is a problem. Perhaps you could tell me more about that, Mr. Paquette. Can you tell me exactly: What happens with Bell Canada? What happens with the banks? What happens with a number of businesses which you know perfectly well I'm referring to?

Mr. Paquette: First, I think we must acknowledge that for the past 20 years, in terms of Québec entrepreneurship, there have been important breakthroughs. Currently, it is estimated that just under 40% of Québec businesses are owned by Francophones. If we look at the overall picture, the proportion is over 60% or 70%. But the assets, the main assets, are still under foreign control. Just think of the automotive industry, or Bell, and a number of... I think it will be just like in any other country, which means that, and everybody agrees on this, there is a globalization of markets and this mix of business ownership is not necessarily a bad thing.

What is important, however, is to finally have control over the development of these businesses and of our economy. The main advantage in having Québec businesses owned by Quebecers is that they are attached, at least to some extent, to the development of the economy, their business and their society.

When an American company has to downsize, as I myself have experienced in east-end Montreal, they start by closing down the company which is furthest away from head office, to avoid political pressures. As a result, some very profitable companies in the Montreal area, and throughout Québec, are closed because of decisions made in Washington or in London. This is why we must start thinking, as a society, about developing some control. But for us, it is clear that this control depends primarily on Québec ownership.

Mr. Dufour: I understand that you do not exclude them. My second question has to do with collective powers as opposed to individual powers. You tell us you would put them on an equal footing. If I understand correctly, in our Québec constitution, we would protect individual rights and collective rights; thus, by definition, to protect your collective rights in a future Canadian constitution...

Mr. Paquette: ...Québec constitution

Mr. Dufour: ...Québec constitution. The right to strike would be protected. Is that correct?

Mr. Paquette: Yes, the right to strike would be recognized in the constitution; this is a collective right that we want. But, as we explained, we propose a system of checks and

balances between collective rights and individual rights because... the question of the language of signs is a typical example. Some people consider that the obligation to post signs in French which, in our view, is a collective right, but which spills over to the individual level, goes counter to individual rights.

Mr. Dufour: Let's stick to the right to strike.

Mr. Paquette: All right. With regard to the right to strike. This system of checks and balances also applies. I think we have that in our society. I mean the right to strike is recognized, and the right to health care, but there may be some incompatibilities at times...

Mr. Dufour: It is recognized, but not by the Constitution at present.

Mr. Paquette: No, but that's why we want to have it recognized, because as you know very well...

Mr. Dufour: I know, I know.

Mr. Paquette: ...the Supreme Court has ruled that the right to form an association involved neither the right to negotiate nor the right to strike. We don't want to form an association just for the fun of it. We want to form an association to be able to deal from a position of strength, to eventually help us sign collective agreements that are worth something.

Mr. Dufour: One last question, quickly, Mr. Paquette, there are many people waiting. The CSN is a very democratic organization. I think you have proven that over the years. What worries me, if we look at the end of page 100, when it comes to the political debate we're currently engaged in, you seem to say, maybe this is my interpretation, that the arguments advanced by those who said NO will, if they haven't already, reappear in one form or another.

We often get the impression that, in this debate, the moment one departs from the idea of sovereignty or independence, one is in the wrong. That's what your text seems to say, but with all the open-mindedness I know you possess, and the democratic views of your organization, surely that can't be what you mean. In other words, the federalists have the same possibility of expressing their views as others.

Mr. Paquette: Absolutely. In fact, the electoral legislation, in terms of public consultation, allows it, and we insist on it.

Mr. Dufour: I'd like...

Mr. Paquette: Basically what we wanted to refer to was, perhaps, primarily, is the impression of unanimity that some people have and to make discussions easier... One has to expect - I think we had a fine example of that yesterday - a certain demagoguery among federalists, just as we can expect the same thing...

Mr. Dufour: This is very subjective, isn't it, to say that someone is a demagogue.

Mr. Paquette: Monique would like to take it from here.

Mrs. Simard: Look. So far, the difference between 1980 and 1990 is that we now have a debate, on both sides, which may be calmer, less impassioned than the one we had in 1980. All we're saying is: Let's be careful because in the months or weeks to come, discussions are going to become heated, and sometimes it is easy to lapse into manipulative arguments which, it is true, can scare people. This is because information is not adequately provided, because the facts are glossed over. What we're saying is: Careful, this must be avoided on both sides. Let's bear in mind - as Mr. Poissant has often said - that people have to be kept informed. I can tell you that we are in total agreement with this view. When people are well informed, discussions take place calmly and people can make informed decisions, without wasting time or distorting the issues.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Turgeon, followed by Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know the combative spirit, one could even say the warrior spirit, of the CSN. This may be why your organization is one of the few to bring up the relevance of an army for Québec. By that I understand that it will be up to Québec to define its own defence policy. Myself, what I'd like to ask you first is how do you see Québec assuming its collective security? In your opinion, should Québec be a neutral country or should it enter into military alliances?

Mr. Paquette: I'd like to ask Mrs. Lamontagne to answer that question.

Mrs. Lamontagne (Céline): Yes, OK. First of all, good morning. What we must bear in mind is the reason for proposing an army. The army itself is not the essence of our proposal. Basically, we're saying that it is important, in a sovereign Québec, for us to have a specific, dynamic role on the international scene because we consider that a defence policy is tied in with a policy of international relations. So the specific issue of an army basically has to do

with protection of the territory, especially the land portion of the territory, inasmuch as, even if our objective is a medium and long-term one, there will be highly defined relations between all countries of the world. To the extent that we envisage certain roles for Québec, one of them is to play a role on the international scene in defining and developing other ways to resolve conflicts; world peace will not happen overnight, we won't see it in 1991, so we must protect our territory. This is one aspect of the issue.
(10:15 a.m.)

As for the other aspect, yes, there will be a need for alliances with our neighbours with regard to the protection of the territory. But we would hope for alliances that are as broad as possible and not limited to an east-west axis. In any case, the balance of power on the international level has shifted considerably over the past year. So, yes, in terms of protection of the Arctic, there has to be alliances with the United States and with Canada, and we have to develop mechanisms with the Scandinavian countries and with the USSR. In that sense, we envisage international relations which are not based on two hostile camps poised for a clash because each supposes that the other will necessarily attack some day, hence making it necessary to have heavy armament for defence. It goes without saying that we also think the United Nations should play a major role in world safety, that it must fulfill its original mission, which is to ensure world safety, and all of us hope that there will be as little war as possible in the world.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you. I'll ask you to be somewhat more specific on an issue raised earlier. In this quest for sovereignty, a sort of unattainable star to some but quite attainable to you, you say that the road will be a tough one. Do you have any fears, are you scared? Do you fear being intimidated by the slump, the disaster that those who oppose sovereignty predict? In other words, do you fear that English Canada would go quite far, much further than we may think, to scare Quebecers?

Mr. Paquette: I think we must expect a range of reactions. In fact, we have already seen in the newspapers the reactions of leaders of various components of English Canadian society; their reactions vary greatly. We believe that, verbally, the reaction may be quite violent, but in actual fact, English Canada has as much interest as Québec in ensuring that the process takes place as harmoniously as possible. We must remember that Ontario is Québec's main customer. In that sense, it is in our interest to see to it that everything takes place harmoniously. But of course, as in any democratic process, the discussions can sometimes be heated. But we do not fear a

slump, or a civil war or anything like that, but I think that we can expect that the democratic process may be a tough one. To get back to the question that was asked, unlike what happened in 1980, we would like the federal government to keep out of the debate and allow Quebecers to decide for themselves. That it have the decency, at least, not to pour millions of dollars into the effort as they did in 1980, but rather leave both camps alone and let Québec come up with its own intellectual and financial resources, let us debate the issue and bring it to a conclusion and, if I may say so, respect the decision of Quebecers. We, at any rate, will respect the decision of Quebecers at the end of this process. We do not want to force independence on anyone for the sake of independence. We are proposing this process along with others and we would like to see it carried through as rapidly as possible.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Campbell Steer, followed by Mr. Proulx.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Mr. Paquette, we all hope for a strong and prosperous Québec and I share your desire to improve the lot of Quebecers. To do so, you put forward some premises that deal with the economy and the world of business, two things which I would like to discuss a little further with you. On page 35, you say that private enterprise cannot all by itself assume collective objectives such as those involved in sustainable development. You also say, and here I think you give the State an important role to play when, on page 37, you say that the national government must manage the strategy to develop large businesses in such sectors as pulp and paper, aluminum, iron and steel, petrochemical, automobile, and aerospace. The Québec government must also establish the main parameters of regional action. My question is as follows: In this policy you propose, have you analysed how much it would cost us and how much all these sectors could bring in to the State?

Mr. Paquette: Let's say that on the whole... I think we have to look at the overall picture; we can't take one section of our approach all by itself. With regard to businesses, for example, we consider that they play an important role in Québec, but we feel that there are large strategic sectors which should be under more control. This does not mean that the State owns it all, but the State should exercise some control, particularly on...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But you envisage quite an extensive field of action and I imagine that this involves a certain investment, and a certain level of investment on the part of the State.

Mr. Paquette: But I don't think this would necessarily cost more. I'm thinking of money that isn't spent on professional training, for example, because there's no supervision there, it's more a question of a different sort of action that we would like to see on the part of the State. We are not defending the classical thesis of the State as provider. We talk about decentralization, for example, of a certain number of responsibilities at the regional level. What we want is for the State to play a role of leadership, if you will, of overseer of economic development. We're not among those who think that the market can undergo harmonious development all by itself. We think that it takes what I would call an arbitrator, capable of showing the way and sometimes giving a kick in the behind. This is important, for example, in environmental issues. I beg your pardon?

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I imagine you have also considered a certain economic contribution, because, on page 36, you say that the national government must invest in new projects by providing risk capital. Basically, my question is: Do you think that, with the share of the national deficit and debt that a sovereign Québec would assume, there would still be enough money left to continue investing in these areas?

Mr. Paquette: As far as I'm concerned, we'll have enough if, in the first place, we repatriate taxation powers. With regard to the question of the deficit and debt, there's something that hasn't been pointed out: there is a deficit and there is a debt that will have to be shared, but there are assets as well. The debt we're talking about corresponds to assets.

Take the elimination of duplication. It has been estimated that 60% of federal and provincial programs overlap directly or indirectly. There's a tremendous amount of money being wasted in that area. We think it could be used in a much more advantageous way. In terms of defence policy, what we propose is that the defence budget be limited to 3%. All this will enable us to come up with resources for economic development.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: If we look at the next page, page 37, third paragraph, you mention sectors in which there are interesting international opportunities for growth. What are they? I think we should all emphasize these sectors.

Mr. Paquette: Well, in high-technology growth sectors, for example, like hydroelectric power, there are things that should be done. We all know that the international division of Hydro-Québec is not fulfilling its mandate as it should. We also know that when it comes to

communications, or aeronautics, for example, we have a certain concentration of industries right here. It seems to me that we should be able to invest more effort in these areas, particularly by developing business opportunities in civilian industries. I can remember when Vickers closed. Vickers was capable of producing many things, but the company decided that it should produce armaments only. The thing is, for better or for worse, the demand for armaments fluctuates according to political conflicts.

There was a project to build wind-driven generators to produce energy for Third World countries. It is a perfectly viable project using a new technology, but the company showed absolutely no interest in it. It seems to me that we had an opportunity for development there.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: There are sectors that must be promoted. However, Québec would gain nothing by protecting traditional sectors that have been outdistanced by international competition. In your estimation, what sectors should be dropped?

Mr. Paquette: Well, the iron and steel industry, where we're experiencing problems at the moment, is one of them for sure, but we wouldn't just drop it in the actual sense, but there is no point in defending industries that we know are going to close sooner or later. Instead, we'd like to see the State, along with business and with the collaboration of workers, move towards converting these industries and lead them into sectors that are more promising. That's what we meant in our brief; there might come a time when you want to add other things.

Mrs. Simard: But I think this is something we must be very clear about. It's not a question of suddenly dropping the people who work in these industries. What we seek is an overall planning with the possibility of choosing sectors to be developed and deciding which sectors are at risk of declining or disappearing. So there would be a plan to phase out operations and manpower. Of course, this manpower would have to be reclassified and recycled to enter sectors which are going to grow. That's how we see it. To do this, there has to be involvement on the part of the State, which would participate along with other economic partners in overall planning. Too often this is done without a long-term vision, sector by sector, or even company by company. We have sectors that are experiencing a lot of problems, with people losing their jobs.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Which means that this would be yet another responsibility of the State or be instituted in industries which, perhaps, observe the 6 + 7 formula.

Mrs. Simard: Look, I think it's hard to

devise an overall plan without the participation of the State.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes. That's right. Thank you. That's all for now.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Proulx will be the last person in this question period.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is quite clear that you want an independent Québec. You want to see Québec become a country with full powers and the opportunity for international development. What I find interesting in this is that at the same time you are realistic and establish priorities. Your process includes a number of agreements with Canada, whether it be in terms of monetary union, contractual economic relations with Canada, elimination of all tariff or other barriers between the provinces, between Québec and the rest of Canada. Based on this, I have two questions, because there are things that bother me a little. In one place you say... to justify monetary union with Canada you invoke economic stability. I think it's realistic. It's important. To achieve this, elsewhere you propose abolishing the Free Trade Agreement. Don't you feel that doing this, if it happens, will create instability for a lot of people?

Mr. Paquette: First of all, we propose to abolish the Free Trade Agreement, but not to go back on the tariff reductions that have already been granted. This, I think, could reopen the whole debate on free trade. It isn't that the CSN is against trade liberalization. We're against this agreement because it didn't give us what it was supposed to, which is safe access to the American market. And we, in return, in fact, let down the barriers to our own markets.

What we know, what we see and what we fear is that, in the end, it will be the Canadian and Québec social policies that will be diminished. What we're after is a series of guarantees in the process of trade liberalization, guarantees that we don't have at present with the Free Trade Agreement. This is not to say that an independent Québec would not negotiate another type of Free Trade agreement with the United States, but it would do so on a completely different basis, just as, in fact, we could negotiate an agreement of this type with the European Economic Community or other countries. In that context, it's the Agreement as signed by Mr. Mulroney last January.

Mr. Proulx: Second question. You also propose that Québec resolutely open itself to the world and be able to sign treaties, apply for membership in the United Nations, sign the GATT agreements and, in fact, all the major

international agreements.

Mr. Paquette: Yes.

Mr. Proulx: But, at the same time, if someone were to ask you how you would explain that, on the one hand, you want to become sovereign, with full powers, while on the other hand, you know that signing all these agreements would diminish our powers because we've agreed to comply with demands coming from all sides? Isn't there a contradiction between, on the one hand, repatriation, getting rid, to a point, of the ties that unite us with the rest of Canada, or so it seems, and on the other, turning around and signing a series of agreements that, to a certain extent, will make us lose the sovereignty just acquired?

Mr. Paquette: I don't see any contradiction; Léopold Beaulieu will answer that question.

Mr. Beaulieu (Léopold): In a world context where all countries are complementary, there is an interdependence among peoples, nations and countries. By joining the United Nations, a sovereign Québec would take its place alongside other nations on the basis of its interests, taking into account its geographic position, culture, trade relations, and the defence of individual rights, of human rights... There is a place for Québec in such a context and it is only normal that Québec should join the 150 countries that make up the United Nations; that Québec should participate in the various specialized agencies of the United Nations on such issues as disarmament, the environment, industrial development, human rights; that Québec should be present at the International Labour Organization (ILO) to be able to sign the international conventions for which Canada votes, but rarely signs because, it would seem, this is the concern of all the provinces; that we be where the action is, for instance at the OECD or the OAS, the Organization of American States. Through its characteristics as a North American country, Québec could have economic, cultural, technical, scientific, and trade relations or ties, as well as serve as a base of operations and form alliances with the countries of Latin America and with Canada.

It would also have relations and treaties with our American neighbour, that goes without saying, as well as with all Francophone countries, which have begun to act in concert. Within the Canadian delegation, Québec has the possibility of taking an active role, but it would be natural and more normal for Québec to assume its international vocation, which is an extension and a reflection of its specific character, its population, and its interests.

(10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Paquette: Perhaps we should just add a

little something here. It seems to me that this would also prove to our economic and political partners that our intentions are serious. They should be aware that sovereignty does not mean building a wall around Québec as some have claimed. Instead it is an opening onto the world, based on Québec's specific character and, as such, a chance to interact with others. In that context, there is no contradiction whatsoever.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's go on to the 15-minute question period of the Government representatives. Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Paquette, Mrs. Simard, members of the CSN, thank you for being with us this morning. Yours was the last brief I read last night before going to bed, and I slept soundly. All is well in Québec and that's a good thing. I appreciated the seriousness, the level-headedness and democratic approach of your brief; indeed, it is among the excellent briefs that we have received in the seven weeks that we have been travelling across Québec. To be honest with you, I'm not sure I agree with everything you say but it is definitely one of the excellent briefs we have received in the past seven weeks.

I have a small question, after which I'll let my colleagues ask theirs. As you know, starting in 1992, there will be free movement of individuals from one country to the other among the 12 countries of the European Community. Travel will be easy. I paid for my studies by working in Northern Ontario for ten years or so. There was no problem. Once my studies were completed, I would go to Ontario, to work over there and come back to my family in September to continue my studies. What will happen immediately after independence, during the period of transition? I can accept that, in two or three years, all these treaties will have been signed, but what happens the day after the referendum if the independence you seek is achieved? What happens to this freedom of movement of individuals going back and forth between Québec and Ontario, or New Brunswick... We know that it's impossible to go and work in the United States. Wouldn't something be lost in all this, in the short term? And in the longer term? I'd like to hear your answer to that.

Mrs. Simard: For one thing, when we use the analogy of the EEC, we must keep in mind that the EEC is made up of 12 sovereign countries that decided, each on its own, to agree on a number of regulations among them, one of these being freedom of movement of individuals. This project will of course grow to greater proportions in 1992. As far as Québec and Canada are concerned, all we want is our

sovereignty and, afterwards, to be able to negotiate a number of agreements that will be suitable to both sides. I think that, as others have said before, we will not close the door to the world or to our immediate partners. Not only is this true of our geographical partners, like Ontario, the rest of Canada and the United States, but we will not close the door to any opportunities that we might have anywhere. These are things that will have to be discussed and negotiated. As you say, freedom of movement of individuals, labour and other things... on no account must we say - that's what we fear sometimes when we say that we must not lapse into arguments or examples that might frighten people - that on the day after the proclamation of sovereignty, there would be walls all around Québec and that no one would be able to get out or in. That's not it at all. In fact, our blueprint specifically provides for well-defined stages of negotiation, so that discussions of various matters can be carried out concurrently.

Mr. Benoit: I wouldn't want you to get the impression that I'm frightened or that I'm trying to frighten people...

Mrs. Simard: I didn't say you were.

Mr. Benoit: ...You can rest assured that I'm not trying to frighten anybody. Quite the contrary. I'm just trying to be realistic and understand what's going to happen. You haven't answered my question. It's the day after the referendum, we're on our way to independence... During this period of transition, what happens to my student job in Ontario? That's what I was getting at. I'm not trying to... you have to be realistic. There is a distinction between scaring people and being realistic. I'm not impressed by your telling me that I'm scaring people or that we're trying to scare people. We're trying to be realistic and the people of Québec will thank us, not only us but the Official Opposition as well, for having asked the right questions and obtained the right answers. This is not what I call scaring the people of Québec.

Mrs. Simard: All right. What we propose is, first of all, an initial referendum with a very clear question. Afterwards, during the year - and this is what is said in our brief, at the very end, very clearly, while a constituent assembly is being formed, which is what we hope for - while a Québec constitution is being drafted, discussion will have to be initiated. In fact, nothing will have changed the morning after, because there is a political process which must be set in motion starting that day, but the status quo would remain on these issues. I thought I was being clear, sorry, and I didn't accuse you of trying to scare anybody.

Mr. Benoit: I don't feel accused, either. Thank you.

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

Mr. Sirros: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to discuss government autonomy in relation to the aboriginal peoples. In your brief, on page 59, you state that you are in favour of government autonomy for the aboriginal peoples, the principle being that, in some cases, these governments would function within the framework of Québec's laws, and in others, the process would be a joint one. I'd like you to explain in more detail how you see these autonomous governments. Do they correspond to municipalities, regional county municipalities, another level of government in an independent Québec? Would this be a second government level? Do the powers of these governments stem from the National Assembly, or are there some powers that are specific to these governments, that don't depend on the National Assembly? How do you see this?

Mr. Paquette: Mrs. Simard will answer that question.

Mrs. Simard: First of all, with regard to our position on the issue of aboriginal peoples, there has to be a recognition of rights in the future constitution. This is extremely important in our eyes. Of course, what we would like to see - our brief addresses this issue in the form of questions - because depending on the native group in question, this could take various forms, and we don't want to say: It should be this way, or it should be that way. What has to be recognized, and I think this is very similar to certain positions expressed here by various native groups, is that there has to be a process of negotiation and a framework agreement that will ensure ongoing negotiations, to establish a number of things, particularly the issue of autonomous governments, but even there, these governments could take different forms. This is why we haven't been more specific in our brief; we're merely saying that this reality has to be recognized constitutionally.

Mr. Sirros: Would this constitutional recognition go beyond the one that already exists in the current constitution, which recognizes the existence of ancestral rights? In the constitution of an independent Québec, would you advocate the recognition of ancestral rights as they exist in the current constitution, plus something else or would it be the same thing that we have now?

Mrs. Simard: It should be more than that. We have to realize that what has been

recognized until now has had little impact, as the recent events made quite clear. Right now we're going through a period in which the nature of the claims made by the aboriginal peoples in Québec and elsewhere in Canada is becoming better and better defined and understood by more and more people. And during this defining — we are living a pivotal moment in the history of Québec — we should take advantage of this opportunity not only to recognize what has already been recognized, but to ensure that mechanisms can be set up to guarantee that the hoped-for negotiation can take place on an equal footing and produce truly beneficial results for the founding nations.

Mr. Sirros: If I understand correctly, then, I wouldn't be far from the truth if I said that you're ready to participate in a public consultation centred on the issue of the extent of aboriginal rights within the... that whether the current situation prevails or whether there is another constitutional arrangement, the CSN, as shown in recent declarations, would still be ready and willing to participate in...

Mrs. Simard: Not only are we ready to do so, but we have been among those who demand it, hoping that it would be heard by the government.

Mr. Sirros: Thank you.

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

Mr. Rémillard: Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to this Commission and thank you for being here. Your brief is quite substantial and well organized. You propose a constitutional option, as well as a blueprint for society based on the respect of certain values in which you believe, particularly fundamental rights and freedoms, which you advocate.

I'd like to ask you a question on the process you propose to reach sovereignty, the process which you describe on page 104 of your brief. First of all, you ask that a referendum be held in June 1991, based on a clear question, and the question you suggest is: Do you want the National Assembly to proclaim its full sovereignty over the entire territory of Québec no later than June 1992? So if I understand correctly, Québec would proclaim its sovereignty by June 1992 at the latest. This has given me pause, since, if I look at the rest of the brief, I see that you create a constituent assembly, as a second step, to draft the constitution of a sovereign Québec; in the third step you negotiate with Ottawa on the succession of State; then, as a fourth step, you call for another referendum to have the Québec constitution ratified. But

nowhere in these four steps do I see the proclamation of sovereignty as such by the National Assembly. Is this a negotiating tactic, in other words, if I refer to your question in relation to the proclamation of sovereignty — you do say "no later than" — is this a negotiating tactic, which means that the actual declaration of sovereignty would be a fifth step, after all the negotiations that might have taken place? Is this a bit of the Léon Dion philosophy of caution and wisdom?

Mr. Paquette: More like fatigue.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Paquette: No, that's not quite it. Basically, we're asking people to give the National Assembly a mandate to proclaim sovereignty, within a maximum of one year after the referendum. That way, the National Assembly will be able to judge when it will make this proclamation. This could of course depend on negotiations with the federal government, but it would not necessarily be tied in with that. What is more important for us is to have enough time to see, as was mentioned earlier, how to work things out immediately after the referendum. So, the day after the referendum, nothing will be changed for us, except that the National Assembly will have a clear mandate from the people to proclaim sovereignty, independence. What is more important for us is to set up a constituent assembly, which means adopting regulations and principles on which the new society will function. We think that the National Assembly must ensure that this process is completed within one year and what we would prefer to see is the constitution adopted by referendum before the proclamation of independence or sovereignty. But we wanted to keep these aspects separate. What is important to us is that immediately after the referendum, after the results of the first referendum, the National Assembly set up a constituent assembly to draft a Québec constitution and legislation that will govern this new society that has proclaimed its sovereignty.

Mr. Rémillard: Mr. Paquette, if I understand correctly...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): One final question, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Very well, Mr. Chairman. If I understand correctly, it would be at the fifth step, at the very last step, that your declaration of sovereignty by the National Assembly would come? After the entire process of negotiation. Which means that...

Mr. Paquette: No, it's...

Mr. Rémillard: ...if negotiations prove inconclusive in terms of the succession of State, when it comes to the issue of a Québec constitution, does this mean that there might be no declaration of sovereignty?

Mr. Paquette: No, not at all. In fact, you can see that in the first question, the date... this is why we stated... this period of one year to proclaim sovereignty stems from the need to set up rules, as an independent society, which means a constitution. That's why we're giving the National Assembly a maximum of one year to find the mechanisms needed to have this constitution ratified by the people. If, for one reason or another, the people reject this constitution by referendum, the National Assembly will still have the mandate to proclaim independence, except that the rules will be far less clear. But this has absolutely nothing to do with negotiations with the federal government. It has to do with our collective will, as Quebecers, to adopt rules within the framework of this independent Québec. That's what we mean, it should come at the right moment, but no later than one year, because we wouldn't want the government in place at the provincial level, or the federal government, to blackmail us and say: This is May 1992, give us another two or three months, I think that we'll have something to offer by then. That's why, in the question, we want the deadlines to be clearly indicated and that all governments, not only the federal, with which we'll have to negotiate the succession of State, but also the government in place in Québec City, know the time limits within which they have to work with the Québec population.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The next 15 minutes belong to the Official Opposition group. Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to congratulate you on your brief. One can sense your confidence in the ability of Quebecers to get things done. I think that's a very positive way of approaching the problem. And I would tell anybody who accuses you of exaggerating to take the time to read it. (10:45 a.m.)

I also congratulate you on your efforts to inform the public. I think it's terrific to see your documentation in so many languages: Creole, Greek, Italian, Spanish, English and French. It's great to see that you care about the various communities, which proves that, for you, sovereignty means the creation of an open, pluralistic, and tolerant society. Congratulations!

I have two small questions. First, as an economist, Mr. Paquette, I'd like you to explain to me or explain to certain people, because I'm tired of hearing the same tune: In economic terms, if we stay within Canada, would we be

better able to pay the debt, than if we opt for a sovereign Québec? I'd like you to explain that. This is something that bothers me. There are people who claim that if we get out of Canada, we'll have no money to pay the debt. It seems to me that the escalating Canadian debt is out of control, and yet everything is supposed to look beautiful and rosy if we stay with it. Can you explain that to me, as an economist?

Mr. Paquette: I'll try to explain rapidly. We had a beautiful presentation on that issue yesterday. In the brief submitted by the Liberal Party of Canada, for example, there is supposed to be no relation whatsoever — as I said earlier — between the debt and the assets, which makes no sense, because the debt was used to buy or set up these assets. For example, the Complexe Guy-Favreau in Montreal was paid in part by taxes, and bonds, and it probably accounts for a portion, albeit a very small portion, of the debt. Therefore, both the assets and the liabilities must be considered in any negotiation.

Secondly, what the Liberal Party did in its brief was simply to add 25% of the debt, which represents more or less the proportion of the Québec population in Canada, to the Québec debt. What I mean is, there is nothing to say that, after making the calculations — and I think we'll have to come to an agreement with the federal government on the parameters used to calculate the portion of the debt which we must assume — that it is in fact 25%. These are simply ledger entries that have to be made, in other words, to reduce this debt.

Incidentally, I participated in a meeting of the Economic Council of Canada about a week ago. There was a financier from the West who raised the same point, saying that a divorce between Québec and Canada would be impossible because the debt was too big. As if a couple, even with a load of debts, could not divorce for reasons other than financial. In any case, I don't think this is the main reason for staying together.

Secondly, in reply to that statement, one of the members of the Economic Council said that there were five or six different formulas. In any event, I'm convinced that the federal government is currently working on various hypotheses.

There is no technical problem involved in assuming a portion of the federal debt if there also is repatriation of taxation powers, assets, etc. I think there's a lot of shameless exaggeration in all this.

We're going to inherit quite a large share of the debt, that's a fact. I think we have to be in a position to deal with this. But I'm convinced that, with the savings we'll accumulate by eliminating duplications, better coordinated government action and decentralization, which is

one of the major issues being discussed here, we'll be able to fulfill all our commitments without being one cent poorer.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, I was under the impression that if we stayed within Canada *ad vitam eternam*, we wouldn't pay the debt, even though we have next to no control over it. I'm glad you were able to clarify this point. I hope that other people will also benefit from this clarification.

I also have a question regarding institutions. You speak of shared institutions that could be set up as part of a possible association agreement. What I would like to know, between a sovereign Québec and Canada, is what their powers would be, or what type of association you have in mind.

Mr. Paquette: Well, on that point, we'd like to leave... the only issue that we have really dealt with in detail is that of the currency, because it often comes up in discussion, but we think that in terms of communications networks, for example, we could share satellites with the rest of Canada. In defence, for example, a portion of defence could be shared since the boundaries are quite close and since we have aptitudes in common in that area. But I think that what is most important in our brief is that we don't want to make Québec's independence contingent on this kind of negotiation. I also think that it is important for English Canada to understand that it's in their interest to become associated with a sovereign Québec, and that it would be completely detrimental for them to try to threaten us. This is why we didn't delve into the issue at length. But perhaps on the issue of communications we could elaborate on Radio-Canada.

Mrs. Simard: Very well. Yes, there is the issue of satellite communications. On that subject, in our brief - there is some reference, in fact, to what has happened in Europe - there could be some sharing of equipment. This is only logical. There are other types of institutions, Radio-Canada, for example. What would we do with Radio-Canada? What we're saying is: Radio-Canada, anyway, Québec, well...

A voice: What's left of it.

Mrs. Simard: ...what's left of it. It is Quebecers and taxes from Quebecers that helped to build this government-run corporation, just like the National Film Board, and other similar institutions. But we have to look at how much of it we should absorb, basically, in the Québec network of communications or culture. This too should be part of future negotiations. Would we keep a Québec division of Société Radio-Canada? Would it continue to be an entity distinct from

Radio-Québec? All this would have to be discussed, it's part of the legacy that we in Québec have helped to build. Also, in terms of defence, there are a number of things that we should be willing to share. Mrs. Lamontagne would be able to explain this in terms of air, land or maritime space, and so on, where we think there could be a number of shared areas. We tried to include a number of areas where institutions could be shared. We don't have the answer to all the questions but we clearly state that these are areas that should be negotiated.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Brassard?

Mr. Brassard: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday we learned, much to our surprise, that we are living in a state of collective blindness. It would seem that the bourgeoisie, which is against sovereignty, would benefit from it and the workers, who are in favour, would be the losers. This is probably what Marx would have called the alienation of the proletariat. Mr. Chrétien and others could describe in great detail the negative consequences of what is yet unborn, namely a sovereign Québec, but they can't see the negative impact of what we already have, which is the current system. Which makes me think of a Lafontaine fable where an astrologer falls into a well. He was too busy looking at the stars to see the hole in front of his feet. How did you come to the conclusion - I'm sure you have thought about this - that the interests of workers would be better defended, better guaranteed in a sovereign Québec? Or you can look at it another way: What are the real risks, economic or social, that workers run by perpetuating the current system? Isn't it possible that, like the astrologer in the fable, we have already fallen into the hole?

Mr. Paquette: I do think that it has taken the CSN quite a long time to reach this point, since it was only in 1966 that the CSN came out in favour of self-government for the people of Québec. In 1979, we hadn't even taken a position for independence; at the time we were advocating repatriation of whatever powers were necessary for the economic and social development of Québec. It was in 1990 that... and I don't think that this is just due to chance; the CSN is an institution which is part of Québec society and evolves at the same pace as this society... We came to the conclusion that there was no chance of furthering our social, economic and political rights within Canada. All you have to do is look at the current policy of high interest rates, which is the doing of Southern Ontario for the most part, and which is hitting Québec very hard, to understand this. The same goes for the agricultural policy, which more often than not is tailored to meet the needs of

the Prairies rather than those of Québec. There is a whole series of areas like that, which is why we have concluded that the current system was a bad one.

But what does the future have in store for us? As I was saying by way of an introduction, the future depends on us, on our collective confidence and will to build a new country. For my part, I have much more confidence in this than in any strategy or hypothesis that might be advanced, because, unfortunately, no one can see into the future. All we have to build a future on is our knowledge of the current conditions. In that context, repatriation of all powers to Québec appears essential. Of course, decentralization of a number of powers to the regions is also important, but what we can be sure of is that, at present, the federal system is hurting the 10% or 12% of people who are chronically jobless. It also hurts in terms of duplication of programs in many regions, where the federal government is pulling in one direction and the provincial in another. It hurts in terms of vocational training. It hurts in terms of research and development, and in the long run... in fact, we all know that Canada is losing ground in terms of international competitiveness. We are going to be swept away in this Canadian mass. This is why I think it's important for us, at this turning point in our history, to make a decision on the future of Québec.

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

Mr. Bourdon: First of all, thank you for your brief and the superb Christmas card you sent, and for the great quality of your documentation; to keep it short, I would just like to say that listening to you and reading your material has made me immensely proud of having come out of your ranks. Whatever I know as an adult, I learned in and through the CSN. I'd also like to tell you that I like your blueprint for society because it is not against anybody; on the contrary, it is designed for and in cooperation with all kinds of people. I share your views totally. Your plan is so interesting that even Jean Chrétien might think about starting to pay taxes to Québec again, should sovereignty come about.

Mine is a rather pointed question: Do you, as I do, believe that the most important human right of a worker is to have access to a job?

Mrs. Simard: It goes without saying, I think, that the foremost right of an individual in our society is to fulfill himself, to be able to participate in creating the wealth of our society, to be able to put his creativity to full use and to be free and autonomous. All this is possible in our society, provided people can have a job and an income independent from that job.

Mr. Bourdon: On that subject, I'd like to add that vocational training, in east-end Montreal for example is so bad that, at one point, I met someone who used to work in a now-closed Texaco refinery, who told me: Look, Mr. Bourdon, I have some savings, I have a house, and I work at a dépanneur where I earn \$6 an hour. He added: I have no particular financial problems, except that I have tried to enroll in seven different programs and they keep giving me the runaround from one civil servant to another. It made me think when he said: Look, I have my dignity. Do you think that sovereignty would enable us to deal with the problem of poverty, by attacking the root cause of poverty, which is unemployment?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This will be the last answer in this question period.

Mrs. Simard: I can tell you that at the CSN, unlike some people, we're not saying YES to sovereignty, on condition that we get this or that guarantee. But what remains clear to us is that a blueprint for society that aims for full employment, and a number of other rights, is easier to achieve; in other words, with sovereignty we can assure ourselves of conditions that are far more conducive to making this plan a reality. You can be sure that we at the CSN will be there to defend this vision of society, this blueprint for society, and it is with that in mind that we found it easy to arrive at this conclusion, which is shared by the great, great majority of our members.

Mr. Paquette: Just to conclude.

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

Mr. Paquette: To conclude, in keeping with what Monique was saying, I'd like to invite you to make very specific recommendations to the government, so that, in the shortest time possible, the people of Québec can have their say on the fundamentals of this issue. Our proposal for a referendum in June 1991 is a very serious one and, if the work of the Commission is carried through seriously, as we think it is, and is taken seriously by the government, this can be achieved very rapidly. That way we could avoid the whole problem of insecurity in the face of uncertainty about the future of Québec. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Paquette. You have already been congratulated for the calm and level-headed tone of your brief. You have even contributed to a remarkable discipline among our members; this is the first time for many moons that we will be

adjourning right on time, and we went through twice as many people as the regulations provide for. Again, my congratulations. And now, if you would kindly make room for the next group.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:01 a.m.)

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

Mr. Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If the members of the Commission will kindly take their seats, we will resume the proceedings with a presentation from Société Makivik and the Comité constitutionnel du Nunavik. M. Charlie Watt va présenter ses collègues et faire sa présentation. Vous avez la parole.

**Société Makivik et Comité
constitutionnel du Nunavik**

Mr. Watt (Charlie): Merci, monsieur le Président et membres du Comité. Avant de commencer ma présentation, j'aimerais tout d'abord vous présenter les collègues qui m'ont accompagné ici. À ma droite, vous avez Simeonie Nalukturuk, président du Comité constitutionnel qui a reçu un mandat du peuple du Nord québécois. À l'extrémité, vous avez Tommy Cain, également membre du groupe constitutionnel. Zebedee Nungak, à ma gauche, est vice-président de la Société Makivik et Kakimik Naluyuk est aussi membre du groupe constitutionnel. Peter Audlaluk, d'Ivujivik, l'une des communautés du Grand-Nord, est également un membre du groupe constitutionnel.

Je demanderais maintenant à notre président du Comité de commencer son introduction. Simeonie, vous avez la parole.

Mr. Nalukturuk (Simeonie): Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, au nom du peuple du Nord québécois, que nous appelons maintenant le Nunavik, je vous remercie de l'occasion qui m'est offerte de témoigner devant vous. Le Comité constitutionnel du Nunavik, dont je suis le président, a été créé en 1989 par tous les résidents du Nunavik afin de, ce qui ne va pas à l'encontre des intentions du Québec, rédiger la constitution et négocier une structure d'autonomie politique pour le peuple du territoire. En d'autres termes, nous recherchons pour notre patrie, encore une fois, à peu près ce que le Québec recherche pour lui-même.

En 1985, les Inuit ont décidé qu'ils devaient avoir leur autonomie politique, soit un gouvernement représentant la totalité du peuple du territoire. Par conséquent, un gouvernement non ethnique. Ce gouvernement doit avoir un domaine de juridiction. Ce gouvernement doit avoir une base économique. Nous avons préparé une proposition pour un tel gouvernement dans lequel le peuple du Nunavik pourra participer à l'essor du Québec tout en assumant une plus

grande responsabilité vis-à-vis son avenir et contribuer à la vie politique et économique du Québec en planifiant ou en jouant un plus grand rôle dans leurs affaires. Tout nouvel arrangement au Québec doit comprendre de nouvelles ententes entre le Nunavik et le Québec. Merci.

Mr. Watt: Monsieur le Président, je présenterai un bref mémoire au nom du peuple que Simeonie Nalukturuk représente. Au nom de la Société Makivik, je suis heureux de témoigner devant cette commission pour parler de l'avenir du Québec, de l'avenir des Inuit du Nunavik au Québec. Voilà des questions dont je m'occupe, sous une forme ou sous une autre, depuis plus de 20 ans. Nous avons soumis un mémoire et j'espère que nous en discuterions en détail au cours des périodes de questions et réponses.

Mais tout d'abord, j'aimerais vous donner une description des perspectives Inuit dans un effort pour définir une relation entre le Québec et le reste du Canada. L'Inuit se voit lui-même comme un pionnier ayant le mandat d'établir une nouvelle relation ou de définir une nouvelle solution au statu quo. Nous avons été parmi les premiers peuples originaux à signer l'accord moderne sur la récupération des terres. Nous avons été les premiers, en fait, à choisir que notre terre et nos institutions soient sous compétence provinciale. Également, nous avons été parmi les premiers à faire administrer notre territoire par un organisme non ethnique.

Ces dernières années, nous avons combattu farouchement, sans y réussir très bien, pour faire enchâsser nos droits dans la Constitution canadienne. Aujourd'hui, nous tentons de stimuler une nouvelle relation économique avec les nôtres au Québec, dans l'espoir que cette mesure nous aidera à réaliser une base économique forte et durable dont nous avons tant besoin au Nunavik.

Durant toute cette période, nous avons été témoins des nombreuses démarches du Québec dans un effort pour définir ses relations avec le reste du Canada. Nous constatons aujourd'hui que le Québec est rendu au bout de sa corde, qu'il n'est plus disposé à tolérer le statu quo. Et, bien entendu, nous constatons également que le reste du Canada est lent à reconnaître le besoin d'un changement et lent à réagir au défi du Québec de redéfinir le pays.

D'après notre propre expérience en ces matières, nous ne devrions pas être alarmés plus que de raison par ces développements. Effectivement, grâce à un peu de perspicacité, nous considérons ces développements comme normaux, sinon prévisibles. Et ultimement, nous éprouvons une grande satisfaction à savoir qu'un système qui ne fonctionne pas sera inévitablement ainsi remplacé.

Cela dit, nous croyons qu'il s'écoulera un peu de temps avant que le reste du Canada soit prêt à accepter la décision du Québec sur son avenir. Il faut comprendre que, contrairement au

Québec, ou que les Inuit en fait, le reste du Canada a peu d'expérience dans la recherche d'un changement au statu quo ou dans la recherche d'une nouvelle autodéfinition. Par conséquent, le Québec devrait s'armer de patience et accorder au reste du Canada une certaine marge pour qu'il rattrape le temps perdu dans sa demande de réalignement d'un statu quo.

Quant à nous, Inuit du Nunavik, nous sommes encore disposés à conclure un nouvel arrangement avec le Québec, lequel pourrait se révéler nécessaire à cause des changements qui seront apportés. Nous estimons avoir beaucoup à offrir en matière de modèles convenables de gouvernement autonome et d'expansion économique dans nos régions. En outre, notre savoir-faire ne sera pas disponible au moment où le Québec commencera à établir une nouvelle et, souhaitons-le, solide relation avec ses voisins de l'Arctique.

En terminant, j'aimerais vous illustrer de façon concrète comment les Inuit tentent d'assurer leur avenir en travaillant avec des institutions dans le cadre de la structure québécoise. Je crois que les membres de la Commission pourront ainsi avoir un aperçu de la pensée qui a présidé à la rédaction de notre mémoire et à sa présentation. Comme les membres de la Commission le savent, le Nunavik fait partie du Québec, au nord du 55e parallèle. C'est une région où les Inuit forment une majorité écrasante et où le peuple espère gérer ses affaires grâce à un gouvernement autonome efficace. C'est également une région qui a un besoin urgent d'activités économiques viables et durables.

L'état de sous-développement de notre économie inquiète gravement les Inuit. L'incapacité du Nunavik d'être économiquement auto-suffisant pourrait éventuellement affaiblir notre espoir de bâtir un avenir solide et sûr au Québec. En outre, les Inuit sont des contribuables. J'aimerais souligner ce point une autre fois. Les Inuit sont des contribuables, tout comme les Indiens. Nous savons que le Nunavik rapporte très peu de revenus en taxes. En même temps, nous reconnaissons que le Québec dépense des millions pour assurer des services gouvernementaux et maintenir les besoins en infrastructures du Nunavik.

C'est justement ce déséquilibre qui menace notre avenir. Nous savons que, tôt ou tard, le Nunavik aura trouvé les moyens de prendre sa place parmi les régions du Québec. Nous estimons que les solutions à nos problèmes demeurent avec Hydro-Québec qui projette de mettre sur pied une multitude de projets hydro-électriques dans notre région. Cela semblait être une solution parfaite dans la mesure où la mise en valeur hydro-électrique peut répondre aux besoins énergétiques du Québec, tout comme à une base économique pour le Nunavik.

(11:15 a.m.)

Il reste beaucoup à faire pour éliminer ou réduire la négligence dont on fait preuve vis-à-vis l'impact environnemental et social des grands projets d'expansion. Néanmoins, les Inuit poursuivent déjà des discussions dans l'espoir qu'une loi soit adoptée sur les projets hydro-électriques du Nord tout comme les Indiens en ont une pour l'expansion économique au Nunavik.

Pour cette approche, il faudra repenser la réglementation de l'Hydro. Plus précisément, on ne peut plus considérer Hydro-Québec comme un moyen d'extraire des ressources et des richesses du Nord, uniquement au profit de l'économie du Sud. Nous croyons que Hydro-Québec a l'obligation de répondre aux besoins énergétiques et économiques de toutes les régions du Québec, y compris le Nunavik.

Dans ce sens, nous aimerions voir Hydro-Québec mettre en marche ce projet dans le Nord, en recourant aux Inuit à titre de co-promoteurs.

Les décisions sur ces questions dépassent, bien entendu, le cadre de cette commission. Cependant, j'estime que mon exemple de Hydro-Québec démontre à quel point les Inuit tentent d'assurer leur avenir en travaillant avec les institutions québécoises.

Au cours des années 70, les Inuit ont franchi la première étape en liant leur avenir à celui du Québec, en plaçant leurs terres et leurs institutions sous la compétence du Québec. Dans les années 90, nous espérons poursuivre dans cette voie, en collaborant avec le Québec pour assurer au Nunavik un gouvernement autonome efficace et une base économique viable.

Monsieur le Président, membres de la Commission, je vous remercie.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Welcome, Mr. Watt. Nous commencerons maintenant à écouter les questions de la part des représentants du parti gouvernemental, M. Sirros.

Mr. Sirros: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to our people from Nunavik. Tout d'abord, je tiens à remercier Makavik et les membres du Nunavik de se présenter devant la Commission sur l'avenir constitutionnel et politique du Québec. Je crois que vous avez fait remarquer de façon très éloquente que votre choix fondamental a été fait il y a quelques années, et qu'il s'agit d'un choix plutôt original. C'était la première fois que le choix se faisait de façon consciente, de la part des Inuit, de se joindre et de participer au développement du Québec en tant que société, en devenant membres à part entière de la société. Vous nous fournissez également l'occasion de tenir compte, de nous rendre compte plutôt de la grande étendue du territoire. Et peut-être, seulement pour donner un exemple, ce serait comme si quelques personnes de Québec ou de Montréal prenaient l'avion pour la Floride pour y présenter un mémoire. En fait, c'est ce que

certaines d'entre vous ont fait, car la distance est à peu près la même. Dans ce sens, il est évident que vous avez devant vous une situation spécifique et particulière. En tant qu'Inuit, vous êtes distincts — et vous le faites remarquer également — et différents des Indiens, que ce soit sur le plan géographique ou du fait que les Inuit n'ont jamais été inclus dans la définition des autochtones donnée dans la Loi sur les Indiens ou tout autre document. Tout ce que vous êtes est reconnu comme caractéristiques d'un peuple aborigène et autochtone. Dans ce sens, je trouve que ce que vous nous présentez ici est un énoncé qui dit, au fond: nous sommes d'abord des contribuables et des participants à part entière au développement du Québec, nous avons des besoins spécifiques, nous avons un processus qui nous permet d'envisager la mise sur pied d'un gouvernement autonome, notre propre gestion du territoire dans lequel nous vivons, selon des structures non ethniques.

Pourriez-vous élaborer un peu? C'est un point que nous avons développé quelque peu avec certains des autres groupes qui se sont présentés ici. Pourriez-vous développer un peu la notion de gouvernement à caractère non ethnique? J'aimerais que vous nous expliquiez comment ce concept est perçu et compris par votre peuple.

Mr. Watt: Monsieur le Président, honorable M. Sirros, au début des années 80, même avant les années 80, au cours de... Suivant la loi adoptée au début des années 70, les Inuit, à cette époque, étaient carrément sous la juridiction du ministère des Affaires indiennes, en vertu de l'Article 91.24 de l'Acte de l'Amérique du Nord Britannique. Nous avons été placés sous le régime de cette loi, soit par accident, soit du fait du refus du gouvernement du Québec, dès 1936, de payer pour le bien-être de notre peuple, un montant qui s'établissait à environ \$3 000. Il y a eu un litige entre le gouvernement du Québec et celui du Canada en 1936, comme je l'ai mentionné, et la décision a finalement été rendue en 1939. À cette époque, nous étions plutôt décrits comme un peuple inconnu, contrairement aux Indiens, mais comme des sauvages, c'est la description qui a été faite, dans les délibérations qui ont été tenues à cette époque.

Et fondamentalement, nous avons été administrés en vertu du même régime, jusqu'en 1975. Mais aujourd'hui, nous sommes encore politiquement placés sous la tutelle du gouvernement central, soit une division du ministère des Affaires indiennes, mais non sur le plan administratif. Sur ce plan, nous avons choisi de travailler dans le cadre du Québec. Nous avons constaté à ce moment-là que nous entrions dans un territoire tout à fait nouveau, mais néanmoins nous estimions que le temps était venu pour nous de progresser et d'explorer un nouveau domaine, même si cette attitude devait

entraîner des risques. Mais nous n'avons jamais réellement interprété cette position comme une chance énorme que nous prenions. Étant conscients du fait que votre peuple avait mené un long combat, peut-être de la même façon que nous, et ce, depuis plusieurs années, nous estimions que nous avions quelque chose en commun.

Nous estimions aussi que les Québécois seraient plus réceptifs que nos autres voisins en ce qui concerne la satisfaction de nos besoins. C'est ce qui nous amène à prendre cette décision. Quant à la question de garantir et de rechercher une place dans la société, je crois que nous avons pris notre décision, il y a quelque temps, mais je veux souligner aux membres du Comité ici présents, que cela nécessiterait une discussion approfondie et des négociations... à ce moment-ci que nous nous dirigeons dans cette direction. Comme nous avons une négociation tripartite avec le gouvernement du Québec, et je ne devrais pas dire qu'il s'agit d'une négociation, parce qu'il ne s'agit actuellement que d'une discussion qui débouchera sur des négociations: l'une portant sur le gouvernement autonome, que Simeonie Nalukturuk représente; l'une portant sur Hydro-Québec qui serait également rassurant, nous l'espérons, voilà les sujets de négociation à l'heure actuelle. Et selon l'arrangement que nous pourrions trouver de l'autre côté de la table, nous sommes portés à estimer que nous pouvons trouver un modèle, que nous pouvons construire un modèle ensemble. Il s'agirait probablement du premier du genre, c'est-à-dire une institution gouvernementale qui serait rattachée à l'Assemblée nationale du Québec et selon laquelle notre Assemblée du Québec déléguerait ses pouvoirs aux régions. Pour ma part, je ne suis pas tout à fait d'accord avec le concept d'aller très loin dans l'établissement d'une complète juridiction sans que le Québec ait un rôle à jouer maintenant parce qu'il s'agit de domaines qui doivent être mis au point durant les années qui se trouvent devant nous. Je ne sais pas si j'ai répondu à certaines de vos questions, monsieur.

Mr. Sirros: Vous avez répondu à certaines d'entre elles. Vous en avez aussi soulevé d'autres. Dites-vous précisément que, à votre point de vue, non seulement vous voulez, mais vous considérez normal et opportun que, dans la perspective d'un gouvernement autonome, ce soit l'Assemblée nationale qui délègue les pouvoirs dont le gouvernement disposerait à la suite d'une entente qui pourrait intervenir après discussion avec le Nunavik?

Mr. Watt: C'est exact.

Mr. Sirros: Alors, la délégation de pouvoirs à un gouvernement autonome ne vous pose aucun

problème idéologique ou philosophique.

Mr. Watt: Non, pas du tout, simplement parce que je crois qu'il doit y avoir deux étapes de prises. L'une, qui concerne les autorités déléguées et, plus tard, vous pourriez vous joindre à moi pour définir les domaines dans lesquels vous pourriez vouloir complète juridiction. Je ne peux m'empêcher de mentionner que, presque de la même façon, c'est ce que le gouvernement du Québec a traversé pendant des années avec le gouvernement central. Et je crois que mes propos ne sont pas réellement différents de ce que vous avez décidé de faire dans le passé et de tenter votre chance d'entrer dans la Confédération. Peut-être, dans un sens, disons-nous que nous sommes disposés à entrer dans la Confédération si nous sommes acceptés. Mais, si nous ne sommes pas acceptés par la nation du Québec, nous avons alors un problème. Qu'est-ce qui nous reste à faire? Voilà un problème qui nous confrontera tôt ou tard, que nous devrons régler une fois pour toutes et, autant que possible, nous essayons d'être optimistes dans la recherche d'une solution, peu importe les intérêts importants en jeu. Mais en ce qui me concerne à ce moment-ci, parce que nous sommes tout nouveaux pour vous, pour le Québec dans son ensemble, nous n'avons actuellement aucune plainte à formuler contre vous. Il se peut que, sur une période de plusieurs années, des griefs puissent prendre naissance. Cette situation tient à la nature humaine, et nous acceptons ce fait.

Mr. Sirros: J'estime aussi qu'il est probablement à propos de dire que, pour deux groupes qui sont si nouveaux l'un à l'autre — parce que, en fait, les relations entre les Inuit et le gouvernement du Québec sont plutôt récentes dans l'échelle de l'évolution humaine, c'est-à-dire 20 à 30 ans — nous avons probablement tous les deux fait de grands efforts pour en arriver à des arrangements et à des accords qui nous ont permis d'atteindre le point où nous pouvons tenir les discussions actuelles. Je me demande si je pourrais vous demander de développer quelque peu la notion d'expansion économique.

Telle qu'elle existe actuellement, la situation en ce qui a trait aux terres du Nord est la suivante: ce qui appartient aux Inuit leur appartient collectivement. Vous vous intéressez, dans plusieurs cas, à l'entreprise privée. Il semble, a priori, qu'il y ait une sorte de contradiction à propos de la propriété collective des terres qui ne permette pas nécessairement de capitaliser certaines entreprises; chose certaine, les entreprises touchant les ressources naturelles exigent d'énormes capitaux. Comment conciliez-vous cette position avec les besoins de la libre entreprise et, autre aspect de cette question, quel rôle le mouvement coopératif joue-t-il dans

votre société? Je serais tenté de croire que, dans le passé, on aurait beaucoup insisté sur la vie coopérative, si vous aimez, et que dans la société moderne d'aujourd'hui, cette situation pourrait trouver des échos dans le mouvement coopératif, soit par l'entremise des caisses populaires ou d'autres genres de mouvements. Je vois que j'ai attiré l'attention de M. Béland, là-bas. Alors, je me demande si vous pourriez développer un peu l'idée de propriété collective comparativement aux besoins de développer des capitaux et le rôle du mouvement coopératif dans votre société. (11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Watt: Monsieur le ministre, les questions que vous soulevez en ce qui a trait à la propriété collective de la terre qui, à certains égards, contredit la libre entreprise... oui, c'est vrai dans une certaine mesure, et nous nous débattons avec ce problème depuis quelque temps maintenant, depuis que nous avons signé la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois. Par exemple, une libre entreprise que quelqu'un aimerait utiliser est, disons... si un individu se trouve à posséder la maison qu'il occupe, et que la terre elle-même est possédée collectivement, cette dernière ne peut être ni vendue ni utilisée subsidiairement; oui, voilà un problème. Et, dans une certaine mesure, c'est une contradiction à l'approche de libre entreprise. C'est une situation avec laquelle nous nous débattons, et nous avons essayé d'en arriver à un accord provisoire avec les établissements bancaires en négociant une forme quelconque de bail emphytéotique, afin d'encourager un peu les libres entreprises à utiliser leur propriété comme accessoire. Mais cela demeure à élaborer.

Quant aux besoins économiques du Nunavik dans leur sens global, nous sommes portés à croire qu'il y a Hydro-Québec comme exemple parfait, qui pourrait être utilisé comme base économique pour nos gouvernements futurs; à ce moment-ci, nous avons une institution gouvernante principalement sur le plan administratif. Mais elle n'a pas réellement les pouvoirs suffisants pour mettre en place les changements sociaux ni les changements économiques, ni même pour stimuler les besoins économiques aptes à satisfaire les besoins sociaux. Et nous ne voulons plus être identifiés par nos voisins, par vous entre autres, comme vivant aux crochets des contribuables. Par conséquent, nous aimerions participer — et c'est à cela que nous travaillons actuellement — nous espérons pouvoir participer non seulement aux discussions officielles, mais aussi aux négociations officielles... Hydro-Québec extrait des ressources du territoire dans lequel nous vivons. Et nous appelons ce territoire notre patrie. Nous devrions avoir droit aux richesses provenant de cette exploitation de notre territoire. Voilà un élément qui pourrait servir de base économique pour notre institution gouvernante.

Mais permettez-moi d'aller un peu plus loin en ce qui a trait à l'exercice de nos droits obtenus en vertu de la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois. D'une part, nous avons un type d'institution gouvernementale qui est davantage un organisme administratif, une division du gouvernement du Québec, qui exerce son activité fondamentalement dans le domaine des programmes sociaux, des besoins d'habitation et des domaines d'infrastructures, et ainsi de suite, mais qui n'a pas les clés pour l'adoption d'une loi qui favorisera ou créera les possibilités d'emploi, ni les occasions économiques. Alors, en d'autres termes, les droits que j'obtiens en vertu de la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois sont des droits, mais ils ne me sont d'aucune valeur si je ne peux les exercer. C'est ce que j'entends par un urgent besoin d'avoir des institutions gouvernantes qui nous permettront de prendre les droits que nous avons et de les utiliser pour le bénéfice de notre peuple et des régions, non pas à long terme, espérons-le, — mais il y a de fortes chances que cela soit — de sorte que nous puissions être considérés davantage comme un véritable peuple ayant le droit de contribuer à la société du Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Nous passons maintenant aux questions du parti de l'Opposition. M. Perron.

Mr. Perron: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Si vous me le permettez, j'aimerais tout d'abord souhaiter la bienvenue aux membres de la nation Inuit, qui ont présenté ce mémoire ce matin. Je trouve le mémoire très intéressant, étant donné particulièrement que nous devons considérer que vous formez une nation sur le territoire québécois, et ce qui est le plus important, c'est que vous avez déjà pris la position réelle que vous vouliez occuper comme nation à l'intérieur d'une société québécoise.

Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais particulièrement saluer la présence d'un membre de la nation Inuit, Monsieur Zebedee Nungak, que j'ai eu la chance de rencontrer en 1976 au cours de la campagne électorale, parce qu'il s'est présenté à cette élection de 1976 et lorsque j'ai eu cette chance de le rencontrer à Sept-Îles, il m'a impressionné et je constate qu'il est encore présent ici aujourd'hui.

J'ai quelques questions à vous poser au sujet de votre mémoire et j'aimerais... Vu que vous vous êtes placés vous-mêmes, dans votre mémoire et avant la présentation de votre mémoire, sous la juridiction du Québec et que, à l'heure actuelle, vous négociez avec le gouvernement du Québec une constitution pour le Nunavik, devons-nous comprendre que vous êtes en faveur de la souveraineté du Québec plutôt que d'un fédéralisme renouvelé? Voilà la première question.

Mr. Watt: Avant de tenter de répondre à vos questions, je voudrais tout d'abord corriger un point: vous avez mentionné que nous sommes la nation Inuit. Nous formons la partie de la nation Inuit qui habite le Nord québécois, qui fait partie du Québec depuis 1912, c'est-à-dire depuis la Loi de l'extension. Nous formons une nation, globalement, devant les communautés internationales. Permettez-moi de clarifier ma pensée. Nous avons des Inuit dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest qui forment le même peuple. Nous parlons la même langue. Nous avons aussi des Inuit au Labrador, qui ont la même langue et les mêmes antécédents culturels. Nous avons également des Inuit en Alaska qui parlent la même langue. Nous avons des Inuit au Groenland, en Alaska, qui parlent aussi les mêmes langues. Récemment, nous avons découvert, chose très intéressante, que nous avons la même langue que les Inuit de Sibérie, mais avec de légères variations en ce qui a trait aux dialectes, mais, au fond, c'est la même langue.

C'est pour vous dire que nous nous considérons comme une nation au niveau international, mais que nous ne formons qu'une partie de la nation qui vit au Québec.

Pour revenir à vos questions, en ce qui concerne notre option... Si je vous comprends bien, vous disiez que vous étiez davantage en faveur de la souveraineté que d'un fédéralisme renouvelé.

Mr. Perron: Oui.

Mr. Watt: Permettez-moi de considérer la chose ainsi. Pour ma part, tout comme mes collègues ici, je n'ai pas vu le Québec satisfaire vraiment... J'espère avoir raison de parler ainsi. Mais, si vous aviez choisi d'y aller pour l'indépendance claire et nette, je dirais alors que c'est prématuré à ce moment-ci, parce que vous n'avez pas encore terminé votre étude de faisabilité. C'est là le pouvoir numéro un que j'estime en tant que comité. Si j'étais membre de cette Commission, j'insisterais plutôt énergiquement sur le besoin d'une étude de faisabilité pour déterminer si la base économique du Québec est suffisante si la province est complètement détachée du reste du Canada.

Et je crois que le Québec, probablement plus que les autres provinces, est tout à fait capable d'y arriver, mais le fait est qu'il devrait y avoir des conséquences directes et indirectes. Si cette situation se réalise sans un examen très attentif de ce qui arrivera au Québec, y compris de ce qui arrivera au reste du Canada... parce que, connaissant le Québec et en en faisant partie, j'ai tendance à croire que vous pourriez prendre une direction. Quand vous commencez à voir que le reste du Canada — admettons — se fait avaler par un plus gros animal — disons les

États-Unis, par exemple – vous pourriez être le premier à courir et à essayer de sauver le pays. Alors, c'est tout à fait possible.

Et nous comprenons que lorsque vous parlez de souveraineté, vous aimeriez devenir souverain et conserver certains liens, peu importe leur nature, avec un gouvernement central, – peut-être que le "gouvernement central" n'est pas le mot juste ici – avec le reste du Canada.

Mr. Perron: Association?

Mr. Watt: Une forme quelconque d'association. Et cette option doit être articulée de façon que chacun de nous puisse en comprendre clairement le sens. Nous ne nous déclarons pas contre ce concept, nous ne nous déclarons pas non plus en faveur, parce qu'il reste à négocier les modalités. Plus que tout, lorsque je dis "reste à négocier", je ne parle pas des négociations entre les gouvernements fédéral et provincial dans ce cas, mais je parle de nous... comme faisant partie de cette formation, comme vous la désignez, à titre de nation.

Mr. Perron: Et d'égal à égal?

Mr. Watt: Oui. De quoi?

Mr. Perron: D'égal à égal.

Mr. Watt: Parfois on veut négocier d'égal à égal, mais la réalité, parfois, dicte une autre conduite. Mais cela reste à voir.

Mr. Nungak (Zebedee): Pour répondre à une partie de votre question, j'aimerais élaborer sur la raison pour laquelle il ne nous est pas possible de répondre par un oui ou par un non clair et net à la question: Êtes-vous en faveur de la souveraineté? Nous dirions oui, mais en disant oui, nous nous limitons au territoire du Québec tel qu'il est aujourd'hui, tandis que dans le cadre de négociations, nous voulons mener et, dans le territoire, nous voulons la juridiction. Nous avons des revendications non réglées dans les étendues au large de la Baie d'Hudson, du Détroit d'Hudson, de la Baie d'Ungava. Il s'agit de territoires fédéraux qui ne font pas partie du Québec à l'heure actuelle, mais que nous utilisons tous les jours.

Il s'agissait de territoires dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest – avant que nos grand-pères deviennent des citoyens, en 1912 – que nous avons toujours utilisés. Nous avons effectivement des revendications qui ne sont pas encore réglées. Nous aspirons avoir juridiction sur cette région parce que, dans la vie de tous les jours, nous allons chercher notre nourriture à cet endroit. Ce n'est pas parce que nous avons des ambitions territoriales artificielles, mais plutôt que ces étendues au large sont comme notre corbeille à pain. Nous récoltons une grande

partie de notre nourriture à cet endroit. Nous avons une revendication en suspens. Alors, dans l'équation de qui est souverain de quoi, nous avons une question qui n'est pas réglée et qui ne serait pas réglée sans notre participation. Et s'il fallait reculer les frontières du Québec, nous aurions beaucoup à voir dans cette décision.

Mr. Perron: Si la population du Québec, si le peuple du Québec prenait la décision, en tant que majorité, de devenir indépendant ou une nation souveraine avec le territoire de 1912 dont vous avez parlé, alors, nous devrions rédiger le texte d'une constitution. Pourriez-vous me dire quels droits pourraient être garantis dans cette nouvelle constitution du Québec?
(11:45 a.m.)

Mr. Watt: D'accord. Je crois qu'on peut envisager la situation sous deux angles. Premièrement, je crois que vous avez votre propre constitution sur laquelle vous continuez de bâtir. Et cette constitution du Québec reflétera probablement la réalité future. Nous avons aussi mis au point notre propre constitution à laquelle les membres du Comité ont travaillé depuis qu'ils ont été élus pour le faire. Je crois, d'une part, que nous pourrions vous dire: "Oui, nous avons notre constitution". Et notre constitution, en ce qui me concerne, ce que nous sommes, ce qui est notre base, c'est un fondement qui n'est pas négociable. Il est de même du Québec qui dit: notre constitution, notre fondement, n'est pas négociable. Ce qui est négociable, c'est ce qui découle du partage de la base économique, en ce qui a trait au partage de certains pouvoirs qui doivent être stipulés à la suite d'une discussion qui mènera à des négociations. Je ne sais pas si j'ai répondu à votre question.

Mr. Perron: Oui, vous y avez répondu.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Time is almost up, Mr. Perron, please keep it short.

Mr. Perron: Yes. D'accord. Une dernière question que j'aimerais vous poser. Dans votre mémoire en page 10, vous notez: "Tout projet d'avenir politique et constitutionnel du Québec devra traiter de la relation Nord-Nord entre le Nunavik et les Territoires du Nord-Ouest ainsi que le Labrador, ce qui, de toute évidence, exigera la participation directe des Inuit du Nunavik." Quand vous parlez du Nunavik, parlez-vous de tout le reste de votre nation qui se trouve dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest, au Groenland, au Labrador, ou seulement la partie qui se trouve au Québec?

Mr. Watt: Quand nous parlons du Nunavik, nous parlons du territoire au-dessus du 55^e parallèle, y compris les étendues au large. À la

page 14 de ce mémoire, et comme vous l'avez mentionné, il faudra qu'il y ait un dialogue Nord-Nord sur le plan des accords qui doivent être conclus. Ce ne sera pas uniquement bénéfique aux Inuits, mais je crois que ce le sera également au Québec dans son ensemble. Je crois que vous avez un argument beaucoup plus fort... le fait que nous revendiquons les étendues au large, le Québec y trouvant un certain intérêt, sous la forme d'une juridiction sur les territoires au large. Voilà une région. À part cela, nous avons aussi une partie de la nation que j'ai décrite un peu plus tôt, dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest, et la mobilité de ses gens devra être prise en considération, également l'afflux entre les deux collectivités du Nord québécois et des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, ainsi que du Labrador. En plus d'avoir des droits sur le territoire au large... nous avons aussi des revendications non réglées au Labrador même, sur la terre ferme, et connaissant ce qu'est l'histoire du Québec par rapport au Labrador, ces revendications pourraient être de quelque intérêt pour vous.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now...

Mr. Watt: De plus, nous avons des revendications non réglées sur les territoires au large sur l'emplacement du Labrador, où il y aura une très intense activité... Encore ici, le Québec a une certaine connaissance de cette région, qui pourrait vous être bénéfique.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now proceed with questions from the members of the Commission. There are three of them waiting for their turn, Messrs. Beaudry, Libman and Laberge. If you could keep to the point, we'll be able to fit in all three. Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. D'après ce que je peux comprendre de votre position sur cette question, c'est-à-dire sur la discussion qui se tient en faveur de la souveraineté, je comprends que votre position est claire: que le Québec ne devrait pas se déclarer souverain à moins que des discussions n'aient lieu, ou n'aient déjà eu lieu avec vous, en premier lieu. Est-ce que je vous comprends bien?

Mr. Watt: C'est tout à fait exact. En d'autres termes, ce que nous vous disons, membres de la Commission, c'est que, quoi que vous fassiez, peu importent les recommandations que vous formulerez au cabinet ou au gouvernement, nous devons faire partie des principaux joueurs en présence.

Mr. Beaudry: Est-ce que je vous comprends bien aussi lorsque vous dites que c'est votre position officielle si jamais le Québec déclarait

sa souveraineté sans vous inviter à participer aux discussions? Dois-je aussi comprendre que votre position en ce qui a trait à votre propre constitution - parce que vous parlez de votre propre constitution parallèlement à celle du Québec - et peut-être les territoires, à l'intérieur de la province de Québec, à ce moment-ci, pourraient aussi être abordés et rediscutés, même si des accords étaient survenus avec vous auparavant avec le Québec au sujet de ces territoires? Dois-je comprendre que vous mettriez tout cela dans la balance pour en discuter de nouveau dans cette situation?

Mr. Watt: En ce qui a trait à la relation réelle de nation à nation, si c'est ce que vous impliquez, rien jusqu'ici n'a été réglé dans le passé entre nous-mêmes et le gouvernement du Québec, sur le concept de la relation de nation à nation, mais il y a eu entente entre le gouvernement du Québec et nous-mêmes, au niveau administratif, sur le plan des responsabilités physiques qui l'accompagnent normalement, pour gérer le peuple et la région qui a besoin d'administration.

Mr. Beaudry: Dans votre mémoire, vous dites que les accords ont été conclus avec le Québec et vous ont satisfaits, dans une certaine mesure, et que des discussions doivent se tenir de nouveau. Et vous parlez de votre propre constitution, de gouvernement autonome. Dites-vous, en fait, que, si éventuellement vous désirez être souverain, même si à ce moment-là vous faisiez partie du Québec, vous revendiqueriez un certain territoire dans le cadre de la juridiction du Québec? Est-ce votre position ou envisageriez-vous votre souveraineté uniquement dans les territoires à l'extérieur du Québec?

Mr. Watt: Je dois dire que nous préférons en arriver à une forme d'association plus officielle, plutôt que de voir chacun aller dans sa propre direction. La raison pour laquelle nous préférons nous concentrer sur une forme d'association, c'est parce que c'est plus sain et plus productif de pouvoir vivre en harmonie ensemble. Pourquoi faut-il que nous nous fassions la vie misérable, lorsqu'il y a moyen de régler les griefs, s'il y en a?

Mr. Beaudry: Ce moyen devrait être pris avant que le Québec ne se déclare souverain?

Mr. Watt: Certainement, oui.

Mr. Beaudry: Vous vous rendez compte qu'une longue période de temps pourrait s'écouler avant que nous puissions nous présenter devant le peuple du Québec pour demander ce statut?

Mr. Watt: C'est exact. Oui. Nous savons aussi...

Mr. Beaudry: Alors votre position, en ce qui a trait à cet aspect de la question, est à peu près la même que celle des autres Premières Nations de la province?

Mr. Watt: Ce n'est pas tout à fait ce que j'ai dit.

Mr. Beaudry: Sur ce point particulier.

Mr. Watt: Sur ce point particulier, je ne connais pas exactement les positions des groupes autochtones en ce qui a trait à ce qui arrive... quelle serait leur position si le Québec devenait souverain ou indépendant. Je n'en ai pas d'idée bien claire parce que je ne peux parler que pour les Inuit.

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

Mr. Laberge: Mr. Chairman, whenever I meet taxpayers, in Québec, I always sympathize with them. Chaque fois que je rencontre des contribuables au Québec, je sympathise déjà beaucoup avec eux, étant contribuable moi-même. Nous savons tous les deux ce que cela veut dire. Je tiens à vous féliciter. Je trouve que c'est une très bonne attitude que vous avez prise; ce ne doit pas avoir été facile. Vous aviez le choix, et vous avez décidé d'aller dans ce sens, et ce n'est pas assez bien connu des Québécois et il est bon que vous veniez ici pour le répéter. Il y en a beaucoup qui n'en savent rien. Une chose, en fait: je reconnais que vous êtes quelque peu impatients de conclure vos négociations avec le Québec. C'est un bon début, mais nous devons aller plus loin. Je ne sais pas si nous pouvons aller aussi rapidement que vous le souhaitez, mais j'espère simplement que cela ne retardera pas ce que nous estimons devoir aussi faire. Nous reconnaissons... Vous avez entendu le mémoire présenté par la CSN ce matin et par la Fédération des travailleurs du Québec il y a un mois. Nous reconnaissons ces droits et sommes disposés à nous asseoir et à négocier. Nous croyons que le gouvernement doit agir ainsi. Cependant, j'espère que cela n'empêchera pas les autres.

Mr. Nungak: Eh bien, le Québec de l'époque de mon grand-père... auquel nous nous sommes annexés, formait une partie importante du Canada, en 1912. Le Québec avec lequel nous avons consciencieusement signé un accord en 1975 était un État non souverain, selon la langue d'aujourd'hui. C'était à part entière une partie du Canada. Le Québec dont nous aspirons faire partie, à l'avenir, est un Québec qui, nous l'espérons, aura assez de bon sens pour conclure un accord avec nous. Nous avons plusieurs questions qui ne sont pas encore réglées. Nous ne prétendons pas avoir les moyens de vous

empêcher de faire ce que vous êtes déterminés à faire, ou ce que plusieurs personnes dans la province sont disposées à faire, mais nous ne pouvons pas dire: "Nous sommes dans votre train, en quelque sorte", parce que d'être dans votre train peut limiter nos relations en ce qui a trait aux questions que nous venons de décrire: nos cousins, tantes et oncles dans les autres juridictions, notre revendication des territoires au large, et le reste. Nous espérons au fond que la société québécoise reconnaîtra que nous voulons faire partie du Québec si le nouveau Québec, ou le Québec de l'avenir, doit être en quelque sorte très différent de celui auquel nous nous sommes joints en 1912 et en 1975. Nous espérons simplement que nous aurons un rôle important à jouer dans la façon de définir le nouveau Québec.

Mr. Laberge: Nous sommes d'accord avec cette position.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now come to Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. J'aimerais accueillir le sénateur Watt et la société Makivik. Je crois que le sénateur Watt est le premier et le seul sénateur que nous entendrons à ces audiences. J'aimerais élaborer quelque peu sur certaines questions qui ont été posées précédemment, et apporter des précisions sur certaines d'entre elles. Tout d'abord, à la section 3 de votre mémoire, vous dites que votre comité constitutionnel, comme le ministre l'a mentionné, propose la création d'un gouvernement unique, non ethnique, "qui relèverait de la compétence du Québec et fonctionnerait en vertu de pouvoirs délégués par l'Assemblée nationale du Québec". Vous mentionnez que les pouvoirs seraient délégués par l'Assemblée nationale. Considérez-vous ces pouvoirs comme enchâssés dans la constitution, ou seraient-ils délégués par une loi de l'Assemblée nationale, où un simple vote de la majorité pourrait renverser certains de ces pouvoirs qui sont délégués par l'Assemblée nationale? Demanderiez-vous ou exigeriez-vous que ces pouvoirs soient implantés dans la constitution?

Mr. Watt: Nous aurions préféré que soit enchâssée dans la constitution, probablement au début, la notion ou la capacité du gouvernement du Québec de se faire représenter par un organisme régional, comme le gouvernement du Nunavut, par exemple.

Si nous sommes capables dans certaines régions, si nous pouvons clairement définir les valeurs auxquelles nous tenons, nous voudrions certainement les enchâsser dans la constitution plutôt que de les voir décrétées par une loi, parce qu'une loi, comme nous le savons tous, peut se modifier n'importe quand. Voilà l'une des

raisons pour lesquelles j'aimerais vous ramener au fait que notre constitution, qui est un fondement même de notre identité, n'est pas négociable. Mais qu'est-ce qui découle de cela comme mécanique, sous quelle forme et comment le pouvoir sera-t-il rattaché aux institutions gouvernantes, en parallèle avec le gouvernement du Québec, qu'est-ce qui doit être négocié?

Mr. Libman: D'accord, toute la question des négociations territoriales, la souveraineté territoriale ont fait l'objet de beaucoup de discussions. Les événements semblent indiquer que le gouvernement ira de l'avant avec son projet de mise en valeur de la Baie James II et s'occupera très peu de l'impact environnemental, de l'impact sur les Cris et les Inuit, dans les régions du Nord québécois. J'ai eu l'occasion, l'été dernier, de me trouver dans la région de la Baie James et de m'entretenir avec plusieurs représentants des Cris; ils sont fort inquiets de l'impact qu'aura ce projet. Plusieurs estiment que le gouvernement n'a pas nécessairement respecté l'accord visant la Baie James et le Nord québécois. Et, comme je l'ai mentionné, ils sont inquiets de l'engagement du gouvernement envers leurs préoccupations particulières. Et vous avez mentionné plus tôt la nécessité d'être consultés et de prendre part à ces négociations en ce qui a trait à tout réarrangement constitutionnel futur, et les Cris ont présenté eux aussi ce point très clairement. Ils estiment que si l'on ne s'occupe pas de leurs sujets de préoccupations, s'ils ne sont pas consultés, ils devront tout simplement déterminer s'ils feront valoir leurs propres revendications territoriales d'un Québec indépendant, si le Québec décide de devenir souverain. Ils estiment que toute démarche visant la souveraineté du Québec doit obtenir leur consentement. Donc, étant donné que le gouvernement semble – bien que le ministre puisse avoir de bonnes intentions – quelquefois négliger les préoccupations des autochtones, envisagez-vous comme un conflit possible, si le Québec veut accéder à sa souveraineté, le fait que les autochtones essaleront de façon illégitime de revendiquer tout le territoire de 1912, l'île de Rupert, etc.? Ou croyez-vous que le territoire sera partagé entre les communautés autochtones, les Cris pouvant réagir d'une façon, votre communauté pouvant réagir autrement? Envisagez-vous cela comme une source de conflit légitime entre les autochtones du Nord et le gouvernement du Québec, si le Québec décide de devenir souverain, sans dûment consulter les autochtones?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ce sera la dernière question et la dernière réponse.

Mr. Watt: Voilà plusieurs questions que vous

me posez là. Je crois qu'il conviendrait de dire que personne ne pense réellement de la même façon, ou personne n'a jamais réellement la même position. Il est possible que les Cris aient une opinion différente – et même s'ils pouvaient avoir le même intérêt fondamental en ce qui concerne les questions socio-économiques, en plus de l'impact socio-environnemental – sur ce projet particulier devant se réaliser bientôt. Nous avons décidé que nous traiterions de cette question par le biais de négociations, plutôt que par une confrontation. C'est le moyen que les Cris ont décidé de prendre.

Mais, ce qui arrive à la fin, s'il arrive que le Québec devienne souverain, ou indépendant du reste du pays, sans consultations adéquates, ou sans avoir obtenu de données appropriées de la part des Cris et des Inuit, il se peut effectivement que nous soyons en mesure d'élaborer un scénario différent et une approche différente. Mais ce que nous vous disons ici, c'est que vous avez besoin de nos ressources afin de continuer à développer votre économie, et continuer à développer vos besoins énergétiques. Par conséquent, nous devons non seulement être consultés, mais nous devons participer aux négociations. Je crois même qu'il conviendrait de dire qu'il faudrait probablement un représentant de notre peuple pour faire partie de cette Commission.

Mr. Libman: Vous parlez!

Mr. Watt: Pourquoi cette question n'a pas été traitée, je crois qu'elle dépasse votre mandat, alors...

Mr. Libman: En tant que sénateur canadien, vous êtes préoccupé par...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Votre temps est écoulé, M. Libman.

Mr. Watt: Je ne suis pas...

Mr. Libman: préoccupé par...

Mr. Watt: Monsieur le Président, si vous n'avez pas d'objection, j'aimerais mentionner le fait qu'ils ont fait allusion à mon statut de sénateur. Oui, je suis sénateur, mais je ne suis pas ici à titre de sénateur; je suis ici à titre d'Inuk représentant les Inuit, mais non comme représentant du gouvernement du Canada. Je vous remercie.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Alors, c'est maintenant à mon tour de vous remercier de votre présentation, M. Watt, mais vous avez aussi droit au titre honorifique de Sénateur dans cette salle. Également, mes remerciements à M. Nungak, à M. Nalukturuk et à tous vos collègues pour votre mémoire et votre

présentation, et pour avoir répondu aux questions. Merci.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:06 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:09 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now resume the sitting. Let's welcome the Fédération des femmes du Québec. Ms. Bonenfant, if you would introduce the members of your group, after which, since this is a half-hour hearing, you will have five minutes to present your brief. Go ahead, Madam.

Fédération des femmes du Québec

Mrs. Bonenfant (Claire): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I am pleased to introduce the individuals here with me: on my right, Martine Bégin, chairwoman of the Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail, commonly known as the CIAFT; then Ann Robinson, jurist and professor at Université Laval; on my extreme left, Raymonde Chartrand, chairwoman of the Fédération des agricultrices du Québec; then Micheline de Sève, professor of political science at UQAM; and Ginette Legault, political analyst and research administrator at UQAM, all members of the Fédération des femmes du Québec, of course.

I will attempt to summarize our brief and especially our orientation in the next five minutes, but first I'd like to quickly present the Fédération des femmes du Québec. The Fédération was created in 1966, and brings together four regional councils made up of individual members and 115 associations that represent some 100 000 women. In addition, these associations are themselves federative, which enables us to reach some 300 000 women in Québec almost directly. The Fédération des femmes has been involved in all the major developments in the history of women for the past 25 years and constitutes the most important grouping of women's associations in Québec in terms of numbers. For the past few years, we have been particularly interested in constitutional questions, as indicated by our involvement in the Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on the constitutional accord of 1987. The participation of the FFQ in this Commission is thus very consistent with the action we have taken in the past. Moreover, because women, as a social group, are not represented on this Commission, we feel obliged to remind our political elites, which are made up primarily of men, that the future of Québec is not determined only or mainly in economic terms.

So why get involved? Because the future of Québec is at stake and the political form

ultimately chosen for Québec as well as its constitutional status will directly affect the social and political organization of Québec. What kind of country do we want to live in? What blueprint for society do we want to stand up for in this country? And what powers do we need to do so? These are the questions that we asked ourselves and attempted to answer in our brief. Women are the bearers of a blueprint for society and we want this blueprint to be embodied in Québec. We want a society that is non-discriminatory and democratic, that is conducive to the exercise of civil and civic rights. The Fédération des femmes believes that, above and beyond the political allegiance of its members, it must choose a political blueprint, irrespective of a party, irrespective of partisanship. Our voice is that of women and feminists. We have come here to state which blueprint we want for Québec and which powers Québec needs to achieve it. Thus, above and beyond the constitutional status of Québec, we're interested in the blueprint for society and for politics.

We believe that the freedom to make important changes in the social and political fabric of Québec will be proportional to the degree of autonomy that Québec chooses to attain. And while we are very aware of the fact that political autonomy is not the only condition for such changes, we believe that women, as a social group, have an interest in choosing the greatest possible political autonomy for Québec.

Québec's belonging to the Canadian federal system prevents us from developing a blueprint for society that corresponds to our particular needs. This is the conclusion that the Fédération des femmes has come to over the years, through studying different issues from the point of view of women's interests. An analysis of our past positions shows that the limitations we've encountered are on two levels. First, the division of power between the two levels of government and second, the distinct character of Québec society.

In the current federal system, the division of power between Ottawa and Québec has created inconsistencies in policies, and Québec women have all too often had to pay the price. Whether it's jurisdiction over marriage and divorce, pension plan reform, professional training, or maternity leave which is dependent on unemployment insurance, our analyses have revealed that it is not only the division of power between the two levels of government, but the competition between them that creates the inconsistencies. We're constantly facing absurd situations; in Québec you marry under provincial law, divorce under federal law, then divide up your property under another provincial law. (12:15 p.m.)

This leads us to conclude that, as long as the two levels of government are in competition, it will be very difficult to define a consistent

orientation and build a society based on a collective blueprint.

There's also the question of the distinct character of Québec. The experience of the Fédération des femmes with groups of Canadian and Québec women over the past ten years has shown that Québec women, unlike the other women in Canada, have more confidence in their provincial government than in the federal. What's more, by concentrating our efforts on the provincial level, we've made real progress in terms of the condition of women, progress which is not unrelated to the distinct character of Québec. From a feminist point of view, we're aware of the importance of autonomy and identity. These are the stakes that have been and will be central to the struggle of women. We are aware of the price of autonomy, but also of its value.

In light of the considerations we've just mentioned with regard to a new blueprint for society, and as a result of the FFQ's involvement in the demands of women in Québec, the provincial board of directors of the Fédération des femmes du Québec believes that the interests of women would be better served by an independent and sovereign Québec.

In planning for sovereignty, we must collectively redefine not only our ties with Canada, but what the new country of Québec will be. All social relationships must thus be rethought.

The constitutional project should include, in addition to the declaration of independence and sovereignty, the inclusion in the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms of certain provisions devoted to the specific rights of women as well as recognition of the ancestral rights of the first nations, as defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The development of the constitutional project must be carried out by a constituent assembly, elected by universal suffrage and made up of an equal number of men and women. The representation we see here, on this Commission, should not be repeated in the constituent assembly. Our brief contains recommendations on the organization of the new State of Québec on a political, legal, judicial and economic level, and on the relationships to be established with other countries and the international community. We're ready to answer your questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): First, a representative from the Official Opposition party. Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mrs. Bonenfant, Ladies. I would like to welcome you to this Commission and thank for the particularly valuable contribution you've made to this Commission. You're taking a stand for sovereignty and I'd say that it's

somewhat new, compared with 1980, for women to appear as witnesses before a commission and stand up for sovereignty, like the young people, although it was slightly truer in 1980. We've heard the unions, and some businessmen's groups and that gives us the impression that we've covered all social strata.

You've accurately determined the relationship between the importance, as women... You're aware of the importance of autonomy and identity. You're aware of their price and their value. You've said that it's the same thing for a people, and that the people of Québec have no interest in losing their identity in the Canadian identity.

You've provided a particularly enlightening example, and certainly one that I find most interesting in this regard, and maintain that the problems in the relationship between Québec and Canada are not exclusively due to the Canadian federation but also to the distinct character of the people of Québec who are always making demands that do not correspond to the expectations of the other provinces.

I don't want to dwell on this point because there isn't enough time, but you pinpoint several problem areas. A propos of the matrimonial regime and pension plan reform, you say that you were willing to recognize pension plans for women who stay home to look after children, the elderly or the handicapped, but you couldn't because the federal government hadn't advanced that far. Then, there's vocational training, maternity leave, and social programs where again, in health and social services, demands are made for it to be Québec that has full power in these areas, since the federal system has not reached that point. In other words, you say that when Québec women want something, and history bears this out, when Québec women have gotten something, it's been from the Québec government, whereas Canadian women, as you indicate on page 9 of your brief, turn to the federal government. And you say that this is standing in the way of our developing a blueprint for society.

I have two questions which concern primarily the process of achieving sovereignty. You propose the main elements of a potential blueprint for society and suggest, on page 13, that the elaboration of Québec's constitutional project must be carried out by a constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage and made up of an equal number of men and women. I'd like to know how you can elect members by universal suffrage and ensure that there is equal representation. I must say that this has created some difficulty for me, but I'd also like to know how and when you think this should be accomplished. Would there be an initial referendum on sovereignty, then the Québec constitutional project developed, and finally a second referendum held? And in what timeframe?

Mrs. Bonenfant: We have reflected a great deal on the need for a referendum and, I must say that, as the work of this Commission proceeds, we can see that there is a consensus on a referendum which would be held soon after the Commission issues its report. We are prepared to rally round this consensus, if it really is the consensus of the witnesses appearing before the Commission. But we thought that quickly setting up a constituent assembly would save energy, because, if an initial referendum is held and then a constituent assembly is set up, another referendum would have to be held on the constitution and this would take too much time and create unnecessary delays.

As for your other question, I think we need to look into the method of electing a constituent assembly. Other countries elect constituent assemblies. I think it's easier to achieve equal representation of men and women on a constituent assembly than on an elective or national assembly that's subject to all sorts of imperatives. But if we opt for a constituent assembly whose composition is representative of society, we simply ask that there be a man and a woman representing the constituted body. So I don't think it's impossible to set up an assembly with equal representation of men and women.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time has run out, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: I have a very small question, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm leery of your very small questions, but go ahead, this is the last.

Mrs. Blackburn: Well, I'll be brief. On page 16, you propose a new electoral system. Others who have appeared before the Commission have said that perhaps we shouldn't change the electoral system immediately because there's already enough uncertainty... to avoid undertaking a reform of the electoral system too quickly.

Mrs. Bonenfant: I'd like to ask Ginette Legault to respond to this.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I suggest that you be brief.

Mrs. Legault (Ginette): In our brief we did in fact allude to the possibility of changing the electoral system. This is something that women's group have been working on for a long time. But I think that the message being conveyed is that it's important to look into the necessary structural changes in the political system. What I mean is that there is a more

fundamental question behind the question of electoral system: Is the place granted to women in the current political structures and in particular in political parties one of equitable representation? We were really broaching the electoral issue from this point of view.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now go on to questions from the members. Mr. d'Anjou, then Mr. Proulx.

Mr. d'Anjou: Good afternoon, Ladies, and welcome. I'm pleased to hear your presentation. I've spent some time on economic issues, on the problem of poverty. Coming from a region, I think you're perfectly right to raise this issue. However, the solutions are not always that easy. On the question of unemployment, you recommend the development of equal opportunity, vocational training programs and the adoption of a full employment policy. But what would a full employment policy include? A lot of people are talking about it, but I haven't had the chance to find out what would be included in such a policy in a social democracy.

Mrs. Bonenfant: I'd like to ask Mrs. Bégin to answer.

Mrs. Bégin (Martine): OK. I think it's important to specify that a policy of full employment is a policy based on... All decisions must be made on the basis of jobs, on the basis of the rate of unemployment and not, as is currently the case, on the basis of the dollar. The value of the dollar goes up and down... There are lots of decisions that are made for economic reasons that affect the rate of unemployment. And the rate of unemployment is currently a stabilizing force in the economy. So a policy of full employment would be a policy in which decisions would be made to preserve the greatest number of good jobs to ensure that various individuals, men and women, who want to work, will be able to work under interesting conditions and provide for their needs, and thus stave off poverty.

There are other factors that must be taken into account in a full employment policy, such as injustices to women in the workplace or in respect to employment. I think that the different social and economic partners - not just economic, but social and economic - must sit down together and come to a conclusion on ways and means of operating that would make it possible to manage employment, not manage unemployment as is currently the case. Of course, there is also a vocational training policy that meets the needs of individuals, labour, companies and the regions.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you. I must say, however, that when I look at the population of

the regions, which is becoming sparse, I have to recognize that the number of jobs has greatly decreased in the regions and the basic reason is that we have modernized. We have regrouped. Some companies have even left the region to face the challenge of competition. The employer who has to make a decision either to modernize to meet the challenge of international competition or to keep the greatest number of jobs, because often modernization means a reduction in the number of jobs, is facing a difficult decision. If you don't modernize operations, you keep more jobs, but you may be less competitive. If you do modernize operations, you inevitably reduce the number of jobs. It's not easy.

Mrs. Bégin: I don't think we can see it simply in these terms; there's no hiding the fact that we do not currently have a policy of full employment. Obviously an employer faced with a decision like that is on his own. There's no general policy that he can count on, yet he's faced with the decision. When I said that the social and economic partners need to sit down together to find ways and means of operating that would make it possible to preserve jobs, it's so that people won't be left out on a limb when they've got decisions to make, in companies, the government or different institutions. I think that all partners must sit down together to determine how they're going to operate, to preserve good jobs for everyone. But, currently, I think that companies facing decisions like that are really on their own, and must ensure their productivity in light of the globalization of markets, etc. But as I said I think the companies facing these sorts of decisions are very much on their own.

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

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Bégin, on page 5 of your brief you say that you feel it is impossible to develop a political blueprint without a social blueprint and that such a social blueprint must include a feminist blueprint. I fully agree with that...

Mrs. Bégin: I would hope so.

Mr. Proulx: It's not difficult to convince me on that particular point. But a little further on, you say: "Provided women are closely associated with all phases of the development of this blueprint." To my knowledge, women make up 52% of Québec society and, although I know why, I'd say that if they really wanted to and could — and I must add "could" — they'd have the power to ensure that such a project lives or dies. I'd like to expand on two points: how are we to get rid of the minority complex that we, as Francophones, have and stop asking

permission to participate fully? Perhaps you could briefly explain to us why women in particular, as a majority, have difficulty getting over this. I'd also like you to elaborate on the question you broached: how a sovereign Québec would have a greater chance of eliminating this complex and enabling all its citizens, men and women, to participate fully in the development of a blueprint for society.

(12:30 p.m.)

Mrs. Bonenfant: I'd like to respond to that, then give the floor to one of my associates. Nothing could be more like the situation of Quebecers than the situation of women. You ask when Quebecers are going to take this power? I think that the progress women have made over the past 50 years, since we've had the right to vote, is quite extraordinary; but in spite of it, in spite of the desire of women to fit into social structures, we've always come up against virtually insurmountable obstacles. This is systemic discrimination. In our system, women are discriminated against, and I think it's the same thing in the federal system. Québec is fundamentally discriminated against; we're constantly running up against obstacles. Our path is strewn with obstacles. I think women have become aware of the importance of achieving the greatest possible autonomy and they've incorporated the means of achieving autonomy in their struggle.

Now, as far as concrete solutions are concerned, I think there are countries that have developed interesting blueprints for society, and I'd now like to give the floor to Micheline de Sève, who will describe things that have been tried in other countries, such as Norway for example.

Mrs. de Sève (Micheline): In response to your question, Mr. Proulx, I'd like to say that there are some very valuable women sitting around this table, but there are a lot more that could be and are not. I think that when we propose setting up a constituent assembly with an equal number of men and women, what we mean is that one list could be reserved for women candidates and one for men candidates in each riding and all voters would vote for both of these lists. This would be one way of ensuring our representation, perhaps not equal because it would be 52-48, rather than 50-50, but that would be fine. I think that several countries have proposed structured measures to narrow the gap between the demographic weight of women in the population and their low representation in political institutions, which reaches about 20% at best. Take, for example, countries like Norway and Sweden where political parties have introduced equal quotas in the number of representatives or candidates running for election. Another problem is costs which can be extremely high, but can be adjusted, such as the cost of a

party convention; election funding programs could be suggested which would presuppose that the candidates could show adequate support through an equal or higher number of signatures than that currently accepted. There are a number of measures like these. The opportunity to define a new blueprint for society as part of the pursuit of a sovereign Québec is a prime opportunity to ensure that channels are in place to facilitate the entry of women into politics, and offer them access to all decision-making bodies in the Québec community. I think that the desire for autonomy has led us, within the context of our brief, to propose new things in regional and local decentralization. In Norway, to go back to an example of a Nordic country, there are areas of authority, of taxation for local and regional municipalities, where local municipalities are not subordinate to regional municipalities but rather autonomous with respect to the provision of services for their citizens. This brings the administration closer to the people being administrated and expedites a process of fair representation for minorities and all groups of society.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now go on to questions from a Government party representative, Mrs. Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Bonenfant, Ladies, Gentlemen, welcome to this Commission. I, too, would like to thank you for your contribution. You clearly opt for sovereignty. I don't think there is any question about that. But you do so by affirming that this political status is essential to recognition of the place of women in our society and equality between men and women.

I must say that this concerns me somewhat because I think that recognition of the place of women and equality at all levels does not necessarily depend on a constitutional status, but on a political and social desire. Mrs. Bonenfant, I'd like you to explain why you make a correlation between the two and your conclusion.

Mrs. Bonenfant: The conclusion we have reached is that in all the cases we've looked into and I've mentioned them rapidly.

Mrs. Pelchat: Yes.

Mrs. Bonenfant: If we go back to them, we can see for example... if I can find where these cases are listed. Take, for example, pension reform: why did it fail? Because we never managed to reach an agreement with the federal government on the recovery of amounts that were ultimately meant for the province. We've never managed to obtain repatriation of divorce in Québec legislation because the federal government has opposed it and women in other

provinces have opposed it because of Québec's distinct character. The women in other provinces don't have an interest in it; we understand this and support them; they don't have an interest in entrusting divorce cases to small courts because they have less confidence in their judicial system. Some women, in Prince Edward Island for example, have openly said to me that they have no interest in repatriating these laws. But we have a different civil code, different laws and an important judicial system; we have every reason to repatriate divorce. These are a few examples.

On the question of public office, I'd like to give the floor to Mrs. Robinson, who has worked with us and has something to propose with respect to equal access of public officials.

Mrs. Pelchat: I've another question for you. But go ahead Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson (Ann): First of all, you said that the question of equality is not necessarily solved by legislation. I completely agree with you. I would however like to tone down this question because issues of equal rights for women have started to take on importance in Canada and Québec as a result of the Canadian and Québec charters. As soon as the legislator agrees to include an equal right in federal and Québec legislation, as soon as the principle of equality is formally recognized in the charters, we can have access to these principles, to procedures of equal access, and this is what has led us to propose equal access on the Québec electoral level as well.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you. I have another question. Mrs. Blackburn broached the question of the electoral system. We often get the impression that women believe that the electoral system hinders their entry into politics and that with a proportional system, it would be easier for women. I'm wondering whether the root of the problem is not the desire of women as individuals to go into politics, and I don't know whether the problem is really with the electoral system as such, or with other tools that must be given to help... I can tell you, from my own personal experience, that I was elected at age 26 and had two handicaps: I was a woman and I was young. And I can tell you that it wasn't easy.

But the desire to go into politics... Is that something that all women have? Because we had many discussions during the last election campaign with women. We met with many women to encourage them to enter the system and regardless of the electoral system, the answer was always the same.

Mrs. Legault: I agree with you on this; when we talk about modifying the electoral

system, we're not saying that it's a sufficient condition, but rather a necessary condition. This does not exclude the fact that a series of measures should be implemented to facilitate the entry of women into politics.

Mrs. Pelchat: Can you give us an example?

Mrs. Legault: I think that the questions we raised earlier are not negligible; the question of *financing* is a major obstacle as you undoubtedly know, for a woman entering politics. It's often one of the main reasons why women decline the invitation of political parties. There's also the difficulty which I mentioned earlier of our integration in political structures and that's where the concept of institutionalized discrimination comes into play. It's not intentional, it's not obvious, it's subtle, but it's enough to make a woman decide not to enter the system.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. Thank you Ladies for your presentation. I was going to say that you've contributed something new, but that's not true; we've already heard several women's groups and the points you've raised are no different. Even if each group has its own way of discussing the issues, all the women's groups that have made presentations have raised the same issues; all the better, because I think it's a sign there is consistency in their ideas. Thank you for your presentation.

Mrs. Bonenfant: Didn't you think there was? Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you for the presentation, we'll now hear professor Guy Tremblay.

Please take your places around the table. I'll ask the members to take their seats, as we're going to resume this morning's sitting, even though we are now into the afternoon.

Mr. Tremblay, the presentation will last a half hour, and you'll have five minutes to present the main points of your brief to the Commission members, who have already read it.

Mr. Tremblay, you now have the floor.

Mr. Guy Tremblay

Mr. Tremblay (Guy): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To avoid repetition, I've prepared a short brief. I wanted to present you with a blueprint, a blueprint for the division of legislative powers that to me seemed to be a blueprint that others wouldn't draw up the same way, and that's why I've prepared this type of brief.

Instead of reading it to you, I'd simply like

to discuss two more general points. First, it's always seemed to me that, in the first 100 years of Confederation, there was perhaps a certain equilibrium in the sense that you had two ways of looking at the division of legislative powers, which were complementary and which ensured that both Québec and English Canada were satisfied. There was the first way, which was the official way, that of the Privy Council, an approach that involved total compartmentalization, and this cartesianism, if I may call it that, satisfied Québec, which was protected by a firm interpretation. But at the same time, concomitantly, there was an approach that could be referred to as financial federalism, in other words a federal practice whereby Ottawa could interfere even in provincial areas through its spending power, which ultimately is not contained by the Constitution, so that English Canada, which was somewhat disappointed by the complete compartmentalization of the Privy Council, consoled itself when it saw that, in federal practice, there was a way of having a Canada that was strong and ultimately could do things even in provincial areas.

If, as I now believe, official federalism is also becoming centralized, well, then we have two visions that are no longer balanced. We have two sides, if you will, in terms of federal practice and official federalism, a central government that ultimately can do anything it wants. And, therefore, in my opinion we no longer have a true federal system.

Which brings me to my second point. When we talk about decentralizing powers, if we want to maintain a federal system, of decentralizing powers in favour of the provinces, I think that to achieve a true federal system, in addition to decentralizing certain powers we may have to include in the Constitution standards that clearly say Ottawa doesn't have the right to do certain things.

(12:45 p.m.)

Today we no longer have this type of standard primarily because of Ottawa's spending power, with the result that this bad apple in the Constitution has, I think, contaminated all the rest, so we no longer have the original equilibrium that ensured that both English Canada and Québec were satisfied with the division of legislative powers. So I think, as I said in my conclusion, that we have to get out of this situation and, for my part, I feel that a confederal system, a true confederation, could be a good solution. But obviously I don't have any magic solution. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Tremblay. The first question from one of the members, Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the Commission, Mr. Tremblay. It's

through your testimony, the essence of what you, the experts, present to us, that our committee obtains the food for thought that is important to the decisions that the Commission will ultimately make. I think you recognize that the members of the Commission wish to engage you in a dialogue on alternatives that you allude to, but are not the ones you've retained with respect to modern federalism or decentralized federalism.

What to me is nevertheless interesting to note is that you say that for you the Lake Meech Accord had given rise to — you say so in your brief — something so that with Meech perhaps we could have got our foot in the door in order to initiate a process of decentralized federalism. That's how I interpret your vision of Meech, when you say that, at least, it was something that was a foot in the door toward a new type of federalism. I think everyone here accepts the fact that Meech failed legally because of two provinces, legally. There are two provinces that refused to finalize, to ratify Meech, two provinces representing 5%.

So, for those who advocate modern federalism, Ottawa has just created a constitutional committee that will study ways of making the amending formula more flexible. The committee will report on July 1st. Couldn't we take a little more time to see whether there's a way of making the Constitution more flexible, making it more modern and ensuring that we fill in the holes in sections 91 and 92 in the Constitution? What you're against is the holes that aren't covered by 91 and 92. So, in any case, do you think the scenario I'm proposing to you is realistic?

Mr. Tremblay: It's hard for me to predict the future but I would say that if the federal government, if English Canada, to speak generally, or the rest of Canada, said to us clearly, right now: We're prepared to contain somewhat the almost inevitable centralization now prevailing. We're prepared to do it right now if there were... But we don't see that, we've never seen it, because to me it seems contrary to English Canada's perception of the two governments in Canada, it seems to me that... In the rest of Canada it seems people believe that the main government of the two is the federal government. To them it has greater legitimacy. So, as soon as we started to say: Contain that power a little; introduce some constitutional standards to which they'll be subject, well, that goes directly against their first perception of what the Canadian government is. It's their first government, whereas in Québec the one with greater legitimacy, I would think, for most Quebecers is the gouvernement du Québec, and the second has always been the central government.

So the essence of what I'm saying is that

we don't have the will, we've never perceived any will to contain the expansion of the central government in Canada. I can't make out any signs of a will of that kind. So I can't predict the future. If we did it, well, I think maybe there would be people who would want to listen to it with...

Mr. Desjardins: So, for you the implementation of attempts that are now being made in good faith by the central government, with the Spicer Commission, but among others by the constitutional Commission, which nevertheless has a report to make over the short term... You're saying to us: There's no point in contemplating it or it's unrealistic.

Mr. Tremblay: In other words, I don't see playing around with the amending formula. You talked about the amending formula. I don't see it in the mandate given to the Spicer Commission, or in the idea that Mr. Mulroney recently expressed or in the reaction of the federal government to Mr. Rémillard's request to withdraw from the health and job-training sectors, I don't see it in these various things the central idea that I'm defending, that of containing the central power. We can change the amending formula but that won't change the fact that right now we have a division of legislative powers whereby the federal government can invade any area whenever it wants. I would cite the example of literacy that the Minister was talking about in the newspapers this morning. He said: The federal government's present role in literacy complies with the parameters set by the Province of Québec.

But what I'm saying is that if Ottawa wanted to get involved in literacy, completely outside the parameters determined by Québec, it could. It's just because it has willingly agreed to sort of complement Québec's approach. It's not the Constitution or the law that prevents it. What I'm saying is that there should be standards, or that a long time ago we should have included in the Constitution some constitutional standards to which Ottawa was obliged to conform, but we didn't. Again I can't see even the beginning of a suggestion in this regard in the various projects you listed for me, but if there were, well maybe I'd see things differently.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to a representative of the Government party, Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Tremblay, on behalf of my political party, I'd like to welcome you to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. Thank you for your brief. It's

concise, in fact it's not quite three pages, but it says a lot. You touch on all points, in fact on all the problems we're now having with the existing type of federalism. You say that, because of the breakdown of Canadian federalism we're now experiencing, Québec is in an intolerable constitutional situation that calls for a radical corrective measure. What kind of radical corrective measure are you thinking of, Mr. Tremblay?

Mr. Tremblay: I'm thinking of a radical corrective measure that would change the root of the evil, in other words the evil is that the country is inevitably, little by little, moving toward a single State and centralization, and a constitution is made for a long time. Ours has been around for about 125 years, and when you let a little train go chugging off inexorably in one direction, well, you can be sure that over the long term it will get there and even over the medium term with the way things are going now with the Supreme Court's jurisprudence. So the radical corrective measure, I think that at the very least we have to change the current division of legislative powers, in other words either radically reform federalism so that the central government is a government contained by standards or create a confederation, which is the solution I prefer, a true confederation whereby the members of the federation can themselves decide which powers they give to the federal government. And these powers can be changed according to the political needs of the moment.

Mrs. Hovington: In short, what you're telling me, Mr. Tremblay, is that the radical corrective measure you're suggesting is to free Québec from the pseudo-federalism we're now caught up in. If we went back to true federalism or confederalism, then do you think Québec would have enough leeway?

Mr. Tremblay: I think so. I think the Fathers of Confederation intended to... It says in sections 91 and 92 that there were exclusive provincial powers, and today none of those powers are exclusively provincial because of a loophole - at least one, there are several - in the Constitution. They're in the interpretation. I think that if someone had said to the Fathers of Confederation, if someone had said to Georges-Etienne Cartier: You're saying that education is exclusively provincial, but I'm telling you this: When Ottawa, because it has absolute power of taxation, any tax, decides that it's going to occupy a taxation field and spend its money for educational programs, there's nothing in the Constitution that can prevent it from doing so, well, he would've been surprised. He would've said: Maybe I'll add a section to the Constitution to ensure that that doesn't happen.

Mrs. Hovington: Mr. Tremblay, yesterday we heard from Ghislain Otis, who's one of your colleagues, a professor of constitutional law at the Université Laval, who said there's a constitutional convention that will enable Québec to negotiate directly with Ottawa without taking into account the Constitution Act of 1982, even before it declares itself sovereign. Do you agree with your colleague...

Mr. Tremblay: I spoke...

Mrs. Hovington: ...that there could be a constitutional convention that would enable us to set the rules of law aside?

Mr. Tremblay: I think, and I've spoken with Mr. Otis, I think the constitutional convention he was talking about isn't exactly the one you're referring to. I think he's talking about a constitutional convention, if I'm not mistaken - I wasn't here for his presentation - whereby Québec is entitled to self-determination and thus can choose its representative. I think that's what he meant.

Mrs. Hovington: And do you agree with this...

Mr. Tremblay: I think so. Yes, I think it stands up. I think the conditions of the constitutional conventions set forth by the Supreme Court in 1981 and 1982 have been satisfied. But the matter can't be definitively resolved. We're not in the area of strict law. We're in the area of conventions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to questions from the representatives of the Official Opposition. Mr. Léonard.

Mr. Léonard: Yes, Mr. Tremblay. I'd also like to welcome you and commend you on your brief. It's concise but I think it sums up a great deal of experience and academic work.

I'd like to ask you a question about something you say on the first page: "We must realize that the Supreme Court of Canada no longer hesitates to transfer provincial powers to Ottawa, by simple interpretation of the division of legislative powers effected in 1867 and on the pretext of government efficiency", and you cite the case involving Crown Zellerbach Canada Ltd. Since you're a constitutionalist and a professor, could you explain to us in layman's terms the impact of the Supreme Court decision in the Zellerbach case?

Mr. Tremblay: Yes. I think that in that case, generally speaking, it was a federal Act on the pollution of salt water in the Pacific Ocean that was involved, and I think a ship simply

polluted the water and was prosecuted under the federal Act. Except that the water polluted was provincial water in the Province of British Columbia. I may be slightly mistaken but I'm generally relating the facts. And the water was provincial water. It's clear, from jurisprudence and from the Constitution, that the water was inside the province. But, on the pretext that provincial water can be polluted and will eventually flow into federal water outside the province, they took the whole shebang and gave it to Ottawa exclusively, instead of saying what I think they normally would have. Moreover, it was a 4-3 decision of the Supreme Court.

If the nine judges had been sitting, well, maybe the verdict would have been 5-4 for the other side. But, still, losses like that, one after another, make for jurisprudence over the long term that, I think, is very detrimental to the provinces. Instead of saying, which would have seemed to me, if you will, the normal way of reasoning on the basis of previous jurisprudence, instead of saying that pollution of extra-provincial water comes exclusively under federal jurisdiction and that in conjunction with that power it can also govern the pollution of border waters, which enables the province to do the same thing, the Supreme Court didn't say that. It took the whole shebang, as I said just now, it linked it to the beginning of section 91, and this is a link that is very delicate in constitutional law and which ultimately, to my way of thinking, runs counter to previous jurisprudence.

Mr. Léonard: Fine. I suppose there are other elements that tend to create greater centralization. If we simply look at the weight of the national debt, right now, just to pay it, we're going to need additional revenue going into the federal coffers, so there's what I would call a financial trend toward centralization. It's very strong because it's going to take quite a while to pay it. When you say that you are or you would be for a true confederation, history teaches us that ultimately evolution is such that we revert to a federation, which goes back to a strong central government. So even if you say that we have to put checks and balances in the constitution of a true confederation, what are the real guarantees, at a time when Québec's weight is gradually diminishing within Canada's population as a whole?

Mr. Tremblay: In my opinion and, I think, in the opinion of most people writing on this subject, the difference between a federation and a confederation is that, in a confederation, the parties, the member States of the confederation are sovereign States and are normally represented at the United Nations, for example. So they themselves, the States, have the option of withdrawing from the federation or giving

more powers to the central level of government according to their needs. They're the ones who decide because they're sovereign States. So it's a difference that in my opinion is fundamental, but, mind you, there's nothing to prevent a confederation from being highly centralized. If we have a guarantee that we're a sovereign State and that we want to share many powers, well, it's less worrisome because we know that when we go off the rails the way we are right now, we can always get on track by taking back some of our legislative powers. That doesn't exist within federalism, which ultimately... of which we've lost control, in my opinion, right now.

Mr. Léonard: Do you see a big difference between...

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

Mr. Léonard: Yes. Do you see a big difference between sovereignty-association and a confederation in terms of the meaning you give these expressions?

Mr. Tremblay: Often the differences, especially when you don't have time to discuss them, the differences are how you perceive the words. I don't want to be perceived as saying things I don't have time to explain properly, so I've selected the word that corresponds to what I mean.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Tremblay, thank you for your presentation. Your brief was short and your presentation was clear. It has enabled us to finish at a reasonable time for those who have an appetite for things other than intellectual. Thank you again, Mr. Tremblay. The sitting is now adjourned. We'll resume this afternoon at 3:30 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 1:02 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:32 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll resume our work this afternoon with a presentation by Jean-Luc Migué, an economist who has been asked to present an expert's brief. Naturally the members of the Commission have read Mr. Migué's brief.

His presentation, like those of the other invited experts, will last one hour. Mr. Migué has 10 minutes to present the gist of his brief, and then we'll go to the questions. Mr. Migué, the floor is yours.

Mr. Jean-Luc Migué

Mr. Migué (Jean-Luc): Thank you, Mr.

Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I would like to devote the few minutes you've given me to reiterating that economic analysis proves the superiority of true federalism over other constitutional arrangements.

It might bear repeating at the outset, that, for an economist, federalism is synonymous with decentralization, with the maximum distribution of powers across a variety of jurisdictions. And this means, therefore, that federalism, as the economists understand it, is the opposite of a unitary State. If I might personalize the concept, I would say that federalism here should be the opposite of Trudeauism and, therefore, of arrangements. And so it's the opposite of the constitutional arrangements that Canada has known for a number of years.

What is it that makes federalism a better system? In a word, federalism enables the policies of decentralized governments to best meet the wishes - the real wishes - of the people. Federalism's ability to adapt does not come primarily from the fact that provincial politicians represent popular wishes better than politicians at the centre, or that... believing in, choosing decentralization is not coming down on the side of, let's say, the Québec government or that of Toronto; it's not mistrusting the government in Ottawa. No. What makes federalism a more representative voice of the people, and thus provides a more complete expression of the public will, is that it sets in motion a whole series of competing forces, competing forces tied to the greater mobility of resources across the nation, forces which grow... this mobility grows right along with federalism. And I will try to show that this kind of mobility allows the people to remove their assets and capital, and even themselves, from the weight of policies that appear to them to be too heavy.

So, beyond the political processes inherent in open societies and democratic regimes, beyond these political processes, federalism provides the people with an additional tool to discipline their governments after a fashion and to lead them to better reflect the real wishes of the citizens.

I'll illustrate my thesis. First, by showing that the mobility of resources - in short, of goods and services - can act to control governments better. And if you will allow me, I'll take an example from agricultural policy. Imagine for a moment that agricultural policy is a matter of strictly provincial jurisdiction in Canada and that one province decides to have a regulatory system similar to the one set up in Canada for about 20 years.

Basically, the direction we've been going here has been to establish cartels for agricultural production so that prices increase for the benefit of the producers of, say, milk and poultry. These price increases clearly mean losses for a part of the population, for you and

me as consumers of agricultural products, and for the food processors who also must buy from local producers. But since prices are only controlled and increased in one particular province, nothing says that the consumer can't buy from a neighbouring province and avoid the effects of a policy that he doesn't like because it's too much of a burden.

So you see, this mobility of agricultural assets gives people in the regions a particular economy and the power to remove themselves. On the other hand, under the current system, competition is suppressed, neutralized in a way, because agriculture regulated on a national basis, and the same in the neighbouring provinces as in say, a particular one, what's the point in a consumer buying outside the province?

Well, the process is no different if we consider the mobility of capital or people. Imagine, for example, that a province like Ontario decides to adopt a particularly restrictive manpower policy, let's say, for example, as Ontario did recently with its affirmative action policy. The impact of such a policy is to raise manpower costs, to increase wages for part of the population. Now suppose, by way of a further example, that Québec decides to implement a language protection policy. In fact, the effect of our language regulations is to increase, complicate, to make recruiting of certain parts of the workforce more difficult, mainly at the managerial and professional levels. And thereby increasing the salaries of a part of the population, etc.

It can be argued that the province, Québec, has been associated for a number of years with a rather heavy tax system. We see that a very special choice made by one province whose impact, like the impact of all the specific measures I'm enumerating, is to raise production costs in the province in question. Consequently, return on capital, return on investments in that province is reduced. So, resources, savings... people stop investing as much in that province. The weight of government policy can even lead people to move to a neighbouring territory, because federalism enables members of the workforce, people, to move from one province to another. There you have it. Moreover, we witnessed this here in Québec for quite some time: the population decreased, or at least, didn't increase, even in absolute terms; this was the main result of the heavy tax burden and, in all likelihood, for some, of the language policies.

I insist - it's important at this stage - on emphasizing that I'm not judging the reasons, the appropriateness of these policies, language policy or Ontario's affirmative action policy or the tax policy of any one province. That's not my field. What I want to show is that adoption of these or similar policies results in higher production costs in the province in question. And

increased production costs, well, that gives rise to the outward movement of investments and to the process that ends up with people voting with their feet and leaving the province.

Under the current centralized system, this competitive aspect is paralyzed. It is neutralized. By what? It is neutralized because all the policies, in short, a long succession of federal redistribution policies with strong regional consequences have had the effect of removing from the playing field, as it were, those provinces which adopt policies similar in weight to the federal ones. I would include sources of transfers to the provinces coming from the federal government such as equalization payments, grants associated with established programs, regional policies, in short, all the social policies of the central government as having the effect of excluding the provinces or, at least, excluding the inhabitants of provinces from the weight of policies that individual provinces had previously adopted. The centralization we know in Canada is a mechanism by which one province can shift the burden of its policies onto its neighbours.

I would like to generalize a little from these illustrations. I'm stating the principle that the economy of one province within a federation is, of necessity, a small-scale economy. The analytic meaning of small scale is that a province can never pass on to another province the costs or the benefits of its policies. It is, therefore, the members of a regional economy that carry, not only the cost of local taxation and the cost of local regulations, but also reap the benefits of effective policies, which is to say, of policies that suit the people.

Why is it so? Why does a local policy, which is of necessity narrower than the national economy, why can they never shift the load on others? The reason is that imposing an excessively high cost on the local population, through taxes, regulations or other means, rapidly leads to large-scale replacement by imports from outside the province. Theoretically, it leads to a rapid flight of capital and, in the extreme, even to population shifts.

This inherent mobility, which is a virtue of a centralized system, can even give rise to a kind of distribution of the people across the territory, one which, indeed, creates voluntary communities of people. Provinces can be defined, municipalities too, as communities of individuals living in more homogeneous groups, who have come together for the very reason that they have found a whole collection of policies that serve them better. Well, that's the ultimate federal mechanism: competitive forces that are set in motion. Conversely, in a centralized system, as is the case in Canada right now, these mechanisms are paralysed. Why are they paralysed? Because the tax burden, the burden of regulations is, in a way, shifted outside the

province. Why buy outside the province if taxes and regulations are the same everywhere across the country? There's no interest in doing so, and, as a result, I would emphasize...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We have reached the end of the presentation if we haven't already gone beyond it.

Mr. Migué: OK. So, in conventional political terms, the idea of competitiveness is tied to political responsibility. That's what we mean by responsibility. To repeat, this responsibility comes from the fact that federalism, with its decentralization, provides individuals with an additional tool to express their wishes and to transmit them to their legislators.

I had planned to bring out the constitutional corollaries that are in the brief.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think you'll probably have the opportunity to do so during the question period. We will begin with questions from a representative from the Government party for the next 10 minutes. Mr. Dauphin.
(3:45 p.m.)

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, Mr. Migué, on behalf of the Government party which I represent, I'd like to thank you for helping us with our work. I have several questions. I will be happy to ask my questions and to have the benefit of your expertise. Number one. You put forward the idea that the maintenance and development of people's mobility in the country will provide a competitiveness between those provincial governments that are able to most adequately identify and meet the people's wishes. As you mentioned, mobile people can leave their own province for another one whenever it suits them. So, considering the cultural dimension in Québec, couldn't we say that our mobility is limited, that is, the rest of the country would be able to choose from nine provinces, while we would give up our cultural identity if we were to have the same right to vote with our feet, as you would put it?

Mr. Migué: I would like to point out that the mobility that the economist brings into the discussion doesn't only apply to people. The strength of federalism doesn't only come from the fact that people can move about and gather in regions that best meet their wishes; mobility also results from the potential for movement of other resources, that is, of goods and services. I gave the example of agricultural products earlier. The Québec consumer who could go out of the province for his milk and poultry at prices visibly lower than current Canadian ones would benefit in no small measure. And that's part of the culture of eating well at reasonable

prices. There's more to it than the mobility of people.

I would add that the principle of mobility doesn't require that everyone be mobile. Over a century ago, economics introduced the concept of marginalism, which led to the discovery that at bottom, it takes the actions of only a very small fraction of the population to determine the final result. So, when it comes to choice, provincial choices, I'm convinced that the most mobile are those who have the greatest influence on provincial choices. Thus, it's necessary for only a small fraction of the people to move, and I think it's the same for French-speaking Canadians, even though it's true that our mobility is less. But it does exist and, as far as I know, there is a segment of the Francophone population which is highly mobile and whose impact is felt on the entire population, whose movements can reflect back on the whole population and for the benefit of the entire population.

Mr. Dauphin: With beneficial results. Thank you. Second question. Whereas everyone talks more and more about world markets and free trade, thanks in part to Québec, with Canada and the United States, Europe of 1992, and GATT, you're speaking about regionalization. Whereas movements towards unification have resulted in a certain uniformity, you're proposing institutionalized competition. So I have a twofold question. How does your theory hold up in the rest of the world? And if you have examples, I'd like to hear them. And second, on such questions as the environment, should we not work towards a uniform approach in which everyone does his part, rather than towards a competition in which a region could become a "paradise" for the disposal of toxic wastes?

Mr. Migué: Why would that be the case here? Why would people in one particular province, through their local administration, choose to live in pollution? The main advantage of the federal process is that it better reflects the wishes of the people. So, who better than the local administration to reflect them? I'm working to bring out the virtues of federalism, that is, of decentralization. That doesn't mean that in a federal system we have to deny the interdependencies of economies, and, in particular, we certainly can't escape the fact that there are external economies, that is, that there are spillover effects. Some sectors of activity require the intervention of a higher or larger government than the local one. Fine. That's the beauty of federalism. It conciliates both... Here in Canada, we have a legacy of institutions that are federal institutions through which we can go to perhaps, in some cases... I don't think, at all, that the environment requires federal intervention in any large way. Anyway,

that could be done on an ad hoc basis through interprovincial or federal treaties. It's true that there are interdependencies. I didn't have the time to talk about them here, but those who have read the text... It will be seen that in an ideal federalism, I'm retaining a very limited number of functions for a federal administration.

In this regard, since you referred to external models, I think that the Europe now being built is going to be able to achieve the best of both worlds, in that the system is highly decentralized, since each national region still retains its essential functions. In fact, they're in the process of discussing the transfer, however marginal, of national functions such as currency and national defence. These are institutions that we already have. So, I think that the European system can serve as a kind of model. They're starting from a different point. They're starting from total decentralization and, thus, have no federal ties. Here, the institution already exists.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Fine, Sir...

Mr. Dauphin: One last question?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, one short, last one.

Mr. Dauphin: All right. On page 17, you place effectiveness, balkanization and redistribution of wealth on the same footing. Don't you think that your option runs the risk of removing regional disparity by downward levelling?

Mr. Migué: I believe that in Canada we've already proved that regional policies, and not only regional policies but all the central policies affecting the regions, have increased regional inequalities. That's the paradox. The paradox is due to the fact that by standardizing services, by standardizing taxes, by standardizing regulations, we find ourselves excluding the very agents, the local production factors, from the effects of local policies. In this way, we find ourselves reinforcing the immobility, deterring it and, in short... The first effect of the policy of regional grants is to immobilize production factors in the least productive regions, instead of having an assistance policy that is neutral vis-à-vis the regions, because there is no more virtue living in one region than another. Instead of having an assistance policy for the less-favoured that would be neutral for the regions, our federal system, with all the resulting central policies, has, in fact, contributed to the immobilization of production factors; in the end, this means that the disparities increase. Anyhow, the facts are there, the income spread between the residents of various provinces is not diminishing... In the last few years we have even

been able to see an increase. So, we needn't invoke the need for centralization based on regional disparity. On the contrary, I think we have to give the job of redistributing wealth to those who are best able to evaluate the popular will on the subject, and that's the provinces.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now continue with questions from representatives of the Official Opposition party. Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon and welcome. I have to tell you right off, that I have difficulty in subscribing to your vision of the State's role in the economy, because I believe, and I remain convinced, that the State is a tool that must be used to find a better balance and a better sharing of wealth. I don't have the feeling that you promote this vision very much; on the contrary, it's a very liberal model, if you will, that you are applying, of a very liberal economy. We'll surely touch on this again in the questions we'll deal with together. Your thesis, as mentioned by my colleague, Mr. Dauphin, is, in fact, the reverse of what's generally said; you take the view that balkanization would be the result of centralization, while up to now, what we've understood is that the will to decentralize power was what could lead to balkanization. I'd like to hear what you have to say about this and about something else you say in your brief. On pages 38 and 39, you say that all the powers... The return to federalism, as you define and understand it, prescribes precisely the reverse, that is, that all the powers should belong to the provinces, except for those few that would be specifically assigned to the central administration. Farther on, you say that these would be the spheres assigned to the central State, spheres whose local spillover effects would turn out to be so obvious that today they already force the Canadian government into agreements and treaties abroad, for example. I would like you to tell me how you are going to know, what criteria you're going to use to properly identify the effects of a local spillover.

Mr. Migué: I had anticipated several minutes to establish empirically the scope of Canadian centralization, because I believe that the meaning of balkanization has to be linked to central policies that affect regional groupings such as the provinces, which no longer bear, no longer have to support the cost of their policies.

If we examine the provincial budgets, we see a whole series of items, in particular, equalization payments and payments for existing programs. These represent between one-quarter and one-third of provincial budgets and one-quarter to one-third of the federal budget. So, in budget policies, even in the provincial and

federal budgets, we see a high degree of centralization. But what is the meaning of these payments or regional policies, from the standpoint of federalism? It's the negation of federalism. It's the negation of federalism because it paralyzes the competitive mechanisms which are the heart of federalism. And of course, if the taxation which finances the transfers between regions is the same across the territory, of course there will be no more outlet, there will be no further mechanism through which citizens dissatisfied with these redistribution policies or of any other regulatory policies, if they are not satisfied...

So you see, in this sense, then, grants from the centre and regional policies balkanize, that is, they dissociate the cost of policies from the benefits to the citizens at the local level. I would add then, that beyond these policies of interregional grants, budgets are not a good measurement of the effects of policies. Because, for at least 20 years, and even 30, the bulk of provincial budget increases have been imposed by the federal government. This is true of hospital insurance, of post-secondary education, and we could go through the whole list of policies.

What does this mean from the standpoint of federalism? It's the opposite, in that it removes from the provinces the need to measure the benefits and the costs of their actions; it dissociates the price and the benefits, and thus, the cost of local production. In that sense, it balkanizes Canada, sets up barriers and acts as a brake.

(4:00 p.m.)

This is not to say that the provinces don't practice certain forms of protectionism. Take the brewing industry, for example, which is completely closed to movement between provinces. I'll admit it. But my assertion is that when we look at all the budgets and all the constraints that the central authority imposes on provincial administrations, like the one last week that prevents Québec from changing its policy on financing health services... Well, when we look at all the measures for redistribution, we can see that the balkanizing effect, as you put it, of the federal government is far greater than that of the provinces.

The second question: At what point do we start measuring the spillover effects? They're very hard to measure. That's why, in the position we've taken, I postulated that it was necessary to lean towards decentralization and to always lean away from conceding power to the federal government, because history shows us that centralizing forces are almost impossible to overcome.

For decades we sought the goodwill of true federalists and even made alliances with the sovereignists, who are nearly impossible to win over to decentralization, and, as a result, we

should move towards... That said, I would limit the spillover effects to the army or national defence, currency, external affairs and, without question, to some aspects of justice and the environment, but basically, there aren't very many and when in doubt, they have to be kept to a minimum, that is, the vote should be in favour of decentralization.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Léonard?

Mr. Léonard: Mr. Migué, I've been listening to you, I read your text and I have the feeling that you're describing a federal system that is incompatible with the one that exists or the one advocated to us yesterday by Jean Chrétien. These are truly two different visions. If I understand you, what he's proposing is clearly likely going to lead us to greater centralization - that's what Mr. Guy Tremblay said this morning - that inevitably, and you just said it yourself, these are two completely different forms of federalism. You said there are forms, costs, and large-scale waste in the current federal system. I would like to hear more on this. I'd also like you to tell us how we can concede or why we would attribute many powers to other provinces when they haven't asked for them, while our situation is the complete opposite.

Mr. Migué: A true federal constitution would not impose any constraints on provincial authorities because the mechanism which limits provincial discretionary power, that is, the means whereby citizens can impose their will on provincial governments is not a judicial and constitutional constraint, it's the economic process, the process of competition between resources that I described earlier. That doesn't mean that all the provinces... Giving these powers to provinces or to one particular province doesn't prevent it from entering into agreements, to have arrangements with the central government or another province and to even give up, to transfer such powers as are constitutionally allocated, but which for economic or other reasons the province chooses to transfer. So...

Mr. Léonard: We're going...

Mr. Migué: ...there's nothing irreconcilable between the two.

Mr. Léonard: Are we going to end up with perfectly asymmetrical federalism?

Mr. Migué: Perhaps. But we can't look at the real world in a Cartesian perspective, can we? The real world is always a bit messy, always a little complex, and that's fine, because

that makes for diversity. There's no question but that the ideal technocratic world is the world of the unitary State in which everyone does the same thing, and everything is standardized throughout the land. In fact, that's the basis of the Soviet empire if you want to put it that way, while what we want is to give the people the means, via their local authorities, to express themselves and thus to have diversity.

Mr. Léonard: I, for one, would really like to come back to the concrete, the practical, but what are the odds...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The time is almost up.

Mr. Léonard: ...that your idea can be applied?

Mr. Migué: What are the odds?

Mr. Léonard: Yes.

Mr. Migué: First of all, I have to say that my first concern is not with establishing strategies. It seemed to me that it would be useful to define a destination instead of trying to rush things along. This isn't my field of expertise. Since you've honoured me by inviting me here as an expert witness, I chose to concentrate on the sectors in which I'm most competent. Having said this, any kind of modification, any form of... any constitutional option that entails the slightest decentralization is going to impose a specific plan of action. It's true that we'll have to resist the centralist forces. What is the plan of action? Looking around the table, I would say that the expertise will not be found here. It seems to me that it's not really... But I dare say this isn't true only for my option.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We continue now with...

Mr. Migué: I would, however, refuse to be forced into the status quo or independence alternative. I read the newspapers like everybody else and I see scenarios that are... in short, one's as realistic as the other - or perhaps as unrealistic - but anyhow, they appear defensible. And last week I saw some that, in theory, aim at circumventing the constitutional brakes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We turn now to questions from the members. Mr. Proulx, followed by Mr. Larose and Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's at least one thing on which I agree with you, Mr. Migué: the federal government has

centralized too much, and quite probably, if it had acted differently, we wouldn't be in the situation we currently find ourselves. And a number of us agree about decentralization. That's one of our main objectives. Even if not for the same reasons as you, I think that we agree at least on that. But I've always had a lot of trouble with the theory you're defending because, for me, putting it into my own words, it's the theory of "let the best man win", "survival of the fittest". We tend to forget that somewhere there's always someone stronger than ourselves and that when there's only one left, the strongest, what will happen to our planet?

This theory also too easily forgets that there's more than just economics on the planet; there are human beings. In my view, your theory puts humans on a siding; to continue to defend that is quite dangerous. So you can understand that there's no way I can endorse this theory because, in my view, it's a dead end. All the big problems being experienced in several countries around the world are precisely because of the application of this theory.

Just the same, I would like to make some qualifications to your brief. And I'll assume that your sources were probably bad. On page 34, you say that with free trade, even though nothing forbids regulation of agriculture, we have already seen the value of milk quotas in Québec and Ontario plunge by almost 50%. I really don't know where you could have gotten that. I'm a milk producer, I know all about that. Moreover, my organization is the one that controls quotas, that sells quotas through electronic auction. And speaking as an agricultural producer and as a purchaser of quotas, I can tell you that I haven't seen where there's been a drop. I didn't see any drop when I wrote my cheque to buy quota.

Mr. Migué: Well, this is...

Mr. Proulx: If you don't mind, I'll finish, and then, because it's still my time, you can have the rest of my time to reply. You're right, when it comes to the Toronto area. In Ontario, but only in the Toronto area, and for one reason only: because of the excessive speculation in agricultural land in recent years.

Then on page 34 you say that once it loses its power to control imports of processed agricultural products, the government will discover that it has trouble maintaining the agricultural marketing boards that are so expensive to consumers and processors. Here, I would say that the retail prices of milk products in Montréal and Ottawa are comparable with those in the United States. They're almost the same, within a few pennies. I won't deny that some products, maybe a quart of milk is cheaper, but on the whole, you don't just buy milk, you have a grocery order; you buy a variety of milk

products. According to statistics, the cost of milk products found in a typical grocery order in Montréal, Ottawa and Toronto is similar to that in any large American city. The difference is that, in the United States, the producers are paid 15%, 20% or 30% less than Canadian producers. So the American processor makes much more money than the Canadian processor.

Related costs - which I was speaking about a moment ago - in the thousands, we forget about all the costs associated with the misery this creates. There is a terrible social cost for this, when we look at the thousands and thousands of American farm bankruptcies. We always forget to calculate this cost when we talk about the economy in the abstract.

I can tell you that Québec is the country with the least expensive grocery order: 11.5% compared with 11.7% in the United States, 16.8% in France, 13.7% in England and 15.5% in Australia. So for the people, the consumers who are subjected to regulations that affect them negatively, you'll have to admit it's not so bad. If regulations were so costly to the consumers - I'll end on this note - how is it that 90% of Québec consumers regularly support the management systems, and their organization is always at our side when we go to justify price increases?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You don't have any time left to answer, but answer anyway; it makes no sense otherwise. So take as much time as you need.

Mr. Migué: I'm a bit surprised... your rebuttal has little to do with what I said. I have a feeling you're building a straw man just to knock it down. Nowhere did I act as a critic of the choice of any one policy. I'm not appraising any particular policies. I don't feel that the constitutional debate must define policies for agriculture, education or whatever. Consequently, I wanted to show that it's not an exercise in liberalism and an absence of public intervention. I wanted to show that, through federalism, we could make it possible for people to exert greater influence on their legislators and, therefore, to be able to adopt policies that better suit popular tastes and wishes.

All policies are neutral to me. The important thing is defining an institutional arrangement that enables the people to have the power to exert greater influence on their government. And if a decentralized system that gives individuals this authority and sovereignty leads to agricultural policies that increase agricultural prices, well then, so be it; that's the will of the people. Unfortunately, under the current conditions, the people are being taken advantage of because they have no instrument, no competition between provinces, to rid themselves of the weight of unpalatable policies.

Because say what you will, consumers are suffering a lot from agricultural policies.

But if this is their will, I have no objection. As for the value of quotas - it's true this isn't an official statistic; it was taken from a story in the *Globe & Mail* - but it matters little whether the quotas went down 50% or 10%. The reality is that since the introduction of free trade, which in a way resembles federalism, there's a form of Canada-US federalism. I should mention the screams we're hearing from the processors of agricultural products. Companies like McCain's and Campbell's are vowing to close shop and take their money to the United States if they have to continue paying 25% to 40% more for their raw materials. I don't think I made that up, and the association of food processors is very clear on the subject.

So, there are already concrete demonstrations of the process. But that's what the process is all about.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now continue with questions from Mr. Larose, to be followed by Mr. Desjardins and Mrs. Côté.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first question I would ask you, it seems to me that the whole text lies or rests on two premises, two beliefs: well-being and social harmony resulting from competition. The second premise: out of competition, there is a kind of invisible hand that organizes social relationships so that wealth is distributed, and the laws governing the marketplace are filled with altruistic objectives that some would like to see achieved through regulations or State intervention. Am I wrong?

Mr. Migué: Yes. The premises of my brief are: first, that beyond the political process which is a real mechanism for popular expression, it's inherent in democracy, it's certainly built into open societies, free societies, just societies, but beyond this process, there can be other processes which round it out, making it easier for people to control their own destinies. One of these premises says that it's better if we don't have to have 100% of the public involved in expressing its wishes in all sorts of areas, in agriculture or in education. So much the better. It's simply a process. On the other hand, I'd like to see as much as possible of the population in the decentralized regions involved, precisely because they are in a better position to shape legislative choices. So the invisible hand is, in fact, real.

(4:15 p.m.)

Your second question was about the reality of an invisible hand wasn't it?

Mr. Larose: No. I wanted to verify the basic premises because, in your text, you gainsay

everything about regulations, everything about...

Mr. Migué: No.

Mr. Larose: Well, look, let's take page 35...

Mr. Migué: I give the decentralized administrations...

Mr. Larose: ...or I could take page 27, page 31. This is all part of what you're telling us, most specifically about air transport.

Mr. Migué: What I'm saying is...

Mr. Larose: What was that example again, on page 35? You say that in air transport, it will find that excessive fuel taxes and union protectionism are in conflict with an "open skies" policy, etc. I want to tell you that you appear to defer only to market forces, and therefore to competition, because when you discuss the merits of the unitary State and federalism - you say this in the first few pages - the virtue is in competition. I can tell you that by the end of your text you end up with...

Mr. Migué: Competition between governments.

Mr. Larose: ...such a distribution of jurisdictions that there is no more competition. So that's what I'm trying to clarify. On what do you base your arguments? Because despite your premise, there will be no competition at the end of the line. So the virtues have vanished somewhere along the line.

Mr. Migué: My premise is that we'll have to place the power with decentralized administrations made up of more homogeneous populations because these decentralized powers have less authority over minorities, I meant to say specific populations, to impose things that the people don't want. I don't see why we would want to deny the people an additional mechanism like inter... competition. But I have to point out that it's a competition between administrations. When, for example, I say that a provincial administration would probably impose fewer regulations on agriculture than the federal administration, what would be the reason? Because that provincial administration is in competition with the administration of another province which itself would choose a different type of agriculture regulation. So in this situation the resources, you and I and the people with capital, with savings, would opt to direct their resources wherever it would be most profitable. That's competition in public services. But that's in the public administration. I believe in public administration. Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We continue now with Mr. Desjardins, followed by Mrs. Côté and Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Personally, Mr. Migué, I'd like to thank you for the thoroughness of the document you submitted to us. I think you've made a very important contribution because I think the members of the Commission now have definitions for the terms. When we began this Commission, we talked about sovereignty and the meaning of the word "sovereignty" wasn't clear for many people. Now, after all the experts we've had here, we know what sovereignty means and we know what autonomy means; we thought we knew what federalism meant, but you tell us that according to your definition, the very essence of federalism goes against what we've been practicing for decades. You're showing us a new direction. It leads me to ask myself whether in granting something close to sovereignty to the provinces, we don't end up with a confederation. But that's not the thrust of my question; it is this: As things now stand, how do you think your ideal can be realized? And my second question: Would you, Mr. Migué, personally like to see Quebecers, knowing what they were deciding about, sounded out on your option, by way of a referendum?

Mr. Migué: Well, that question was put to me already when I was asked whether it is possible to finalize a strategy for moving toward my ideal regime. I have no answer and no one it seems has any answer for getting from point A to point B, wherever that is. I can only recognize, along with the rest, that it means political confrontation and that faced with the Ottawa steamroller, any hope for a renewed federalism can only be realized through the forces of decentralization — and thus of a will. In short then, I can see — but very generally — a kind of implicit alliance that may exist already between the true federalists and those in favour of Québec's independence, and "indépendantistes" in the rest of Canada. But I repeat that I do not have the expertise in strategic matters and I must decline, as for the... and even on the referendum question. Should we have one referendum, two, three? I must admit I haven't really thought about this aspect.

Mr. Desjardins: In your document, you refer to free trade, saying that you think it's one of the avenues to explore. Could you be a little more explicit?

Mr. Migué: No, I referred to... that is, I asserted that Canada-United States free trade puts the Canadian government roughly in the position of a province. And that's its virtue, in

that from now on, it submits the central government to the kind of competition that the ideal federal system imposes on the provinces. And again I used agricultural policy as an example, even though I will no doubt be criticized, but even if the Canada-United States free trade treaty didn't prohibit the Canadian government from practicing supply management of agricultural products, we would find that just as processed products themselves are in competition with those from the United States, the food processors here can no longer support the cost of Canadian regulations. So something will have to give somewhere. And it's probably the regulation on agriculture that will have to give, unless... Fine. So you see, the competition that the marketplace gives public administrations will be imposed on the federal government by free trade. Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, Mrs. Côté and Mr. Bouchard.

Mrs. Côté: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Migué, you just said that power had to be given to administrations close to the local or regional communities. So be it. I think that your criticism of today's federalism has been made by a good number of people, notably by Mr. Tremblay, this morning and by Mr. Léonard who mentioned it earlier. I don't know whether I understood your text properly, however, because your answer to Mr. Larose was the opposite of what I was expecting. In the final analysis, by assuming that local or regional administrations will be small States, in quotation marks, you're preaching a reduced role for the State. You're preaching a State role reduced to a bare minimum, with no regulating role, no distributing role, no presence or involvement in cultural, economic, social and cultural affairs. And since you advocate competition... Elsewhere, I read your texts on education, and competition is the recurring theme of all your theory. Consequently, if I apply this theory to any constitutional option I choose, it doesn't matter which one, nothing changes for Québec. Whether it's in a renewed federalism, as you see it, or in sovereignty, since competition is the dominant force. In the blueprint we have to redefine in Québec, whatever the status we're going to decide, I personally would like to know how you see the whole set of social policies or those having a vocation to redistribute wealth, and which are founded on all the charters of rights and freedoms. As you know, many have come to this Commission to say that we must always strive for economic development that won't create poverty, in which wealth is shared equitably... some measures that ought to combat inequality and disparity. So, I have some difficulty. I would like you to tell me where to find this in your theory.

Mr. Migué: There's nothing in the logic of economics that prohibits recourse to public authority to achieve the objectives you've defined. In other words, I should dissociate myself from this arrangement I'm advocating, of a reduced role for the State. This isn't at all the meaning of my approach. I wanted to show that in a decentralized system, the State would better reflect the population's wishes because of competition, which would provide the people with another tool. If, in return, this population uses the conventional democratic mechanisms and chooses to practice full redistribution, to regulate things, agriculture and the manufacturers of various things, in my ideal scenario, the only actions I would deny the provincial administration would be those that were protectionist vis-à-vis other provinces and the rest of the world, because that's the way people can control the local administration. But I strongly deny the suggestion that... Because, at the constitutional level, which is what we're discussing, as I understand it, in the end it seems irrelevant to evaluate any specific policies, for either redistribution or agriculture. That's not the point... These aspects come after a constitutional agreement has been reached. This isn't the time... What we're doing today, in short, what I'm working at... It's not up to me to define your mandate; what I'm doing is defining a constitutional arrangement that enables the people to adopt social policies, educational policies and regulatory policies that are closest to what they really want.

Mrs. Côté: With respect to that, on page 39, please explain to me what you mean when you say that apart from this limitation of size, institutionalizing competition between governments dictates that decentralized administrations retain almost all the attributes of sovereignty. Where do you place the attributes of sovereignty? Where are they? And the power of the State?

Mr. Migué: The attributes of sovereignty means that in the division of power, I'm saying that it's useless, even counterproductive to constitutionally or legally limit or constrain provincial powers. Because the mechanisms for controlling the provinces' discretionary powers, those that make them reflect the popular will, are not constitutional or legal mechanisms. It's the competition that will result, that will appear between the various provincial administrations. This means that in my system, the provinces have every power except that of restricting the flow of goods, people and capital. These are the attributes... What are the attributes of sovereignty if not that? Every power. There is no constitutional constraint. In my ideal world, the only place I would put constitutional constraints is on the central authority because

that's where the danger lies. The danger of centralization is too great and the only available means for limiting its dangers, for limiting the growth of power at the centre, is the Constitution.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bouchard, with the last question of this period.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. Mr. Migué, first I would like to tell you that I harbour the greatest respect for the logic of economics. In the exercise of this logic today, you bring us back to essentials, to the essence, even to the quintessence of what federalism is, of what it should be. And you tell us that the federal model has been betrayed in Canada, altered through certain developments, a subject we'll come back to. In your proposals, I wonder if we haven't reached the limits of this economic analysis? An analysis that claims, like all analyses of its kind, to encompass the whole of reality with one template, when in fact, there may be bits that extend beyond this template, especially when we try to apply economic theory to a political reality. You say, for example, that the essence of federalism lies in limiting the State's power, in establishing competition between the federation's components and that, in this way, services are competitive and the central State is a house divided, since the people can play one State against another and so on.
(4:30 p.m.)

I must admit that there's a certain intrinsic logic in this, and I too acknowledge the thoroughness mentioned earlier by my colleague, Mr. Desjardins. It's true you've made your case rigorously, but the rigour applies only to the template, and suffers from the limitations inherent in it. If, for example, you're right, and federalism is of necessity decentralized, why do we now have highly centralized federalism in Canada? If we look at the act of confederation, on paper, it is, in fact, as you say, a decentralized model. Then on page 29 you try to explain why we've come to be centralized; but you say that it's the evolution of feelings. What's this about, this evolution of feelings? This doesn't sound much like economics! There's also a recognition of unlimited spending power, but that wasn't written in the Constitution. There were no centralizing mechanisms in the Canadian Constitution. Nor was Québec inclined to centralize, on the contrary.

The whole of Québec, Québec's very existence, the way Québec is constituted, its identity, the survival needs, are such that Québec would need the federalist model that you are proposing. Moreover, maybe that's why our Fathers went into Confederation, because, like you, they thought it was a flawless model, one that, if respected and applied would enable us to have an almost sovereign Québec, as you said.

However, that's not what happened. There must be something in your model, an unknown virus that your economic analysis can't help you to track down, there's something missing in your analysis that would account for the fact that federalism has become centralized, and maybe it's mainly in English Canada, because Québec didn't want it. There must be something in the reality under study that ruins the conclusions, which distorts the conclusions of your premises, since politically, we find that our Federation, from its beginning, and as it evolved over the years has become more and more centralized like a dead star that collapses in on itself, becoming extremely dense at the end of its life. There's something that doesn't work in your system, since inevitably, the facts prove you wrong and there's nothing more stubborn than the facts.

Mr. Migué: First, I must say that you're concerned about methodology and I hadn't planned to go into that today. The limits of economics, I'll only say that economics, like any other discipline, only studies a part of the real world. Economics, like any other discipline, is a way of seeing the world, and of seeing the whole world, as a psychologist is able to view all the world, not as a specific part of reality, or the sociologist, etc. In this regard, I think that economics — it wasn't my purpose to interpret centralization — but I think that the systems of economic analysis offer the best answer to the question that you're asking, and what allows for centralization when we're not covered on all sides by an extremely decentralizing constitution is the fact that federal power, as a national monopoly, is stronger than provincial power. And since all the policies hold on to more benefits than they distribute — the tax burden — therefore in any central policy there are more beneficiaries than there are... The beneficiaries are more concentrated, so they're more aware. Centralizing forces are inherent in any system. And every federal system is centralized because it's politically profitable for the central administrations to grant favours to people in the regions. Obviously, no one is going to refuse. In this sense, we've introduced profitable federalism.

Mr. Bouchard: We have to get rid of federalism...

Mr. Migué: I beg your pardon?

Mr. Bouchard: ...since it's ailing... So we have to get rid of federalism because it's ailing, with its propensity to centralize that we can never change.

Mr. Migué: We have to set up mechanisms that will protect us from excessive central-

ization. There's only one such mechanism and that's the Constitution.

Mr. Bouchard: You mean that's sovereignty.

Mr. Migué: No, no. The Constitution can protect... can limit power at the centre.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, that puts an end to the difficulty of converting economic theory into everyday language, if not an end to the doubt, because I think that the federalism you're defining has the unfortunate fault of not corresponding to the federalism most of the people on this Commission have in mind. But it's interesting anyway, because it forces us to go back to the sources of the theory, and, for once, they weren't grounded in law.

So, thank you, Professor — and friend, in spite of it all. Now I would ask you to please make way for the next group, Alliance Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:35 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:39 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...to return to their seats. We are now going to receive the brief and the presentation of the Alliance Québec group. Mr. Robert Keaton is going to introduce the group and present the highlights of the brief. Mr. Keaton.

Alliance Québec

Mr. Keaton (Robert): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Messieurs les membres de la Commission, nous sommes très fiers de pouvoir vous faire cette présentation au nom d'Alliance Québec et de la communauté que nous servons. Permettez-moi de vous présenter les collègues qui m'accompagnent cet après-midi. À ma gauche, M. Trent Mell, président du Comité des jeunes d'Alliance Québec, Mme Margaret Lefebvre, de notre Comité exécutif, M. Glenn Morton, de notre conseil d'administration, de Val-d'Or, le Dr John O'Brien, président du conseil d'administration, ainsi que M. Maurice Podbrey, directeur du théâtre Centaur et membre du conseil d'Alliance Québec.

Notre présentation d'aujourd'hui est le résultat de la plus grande consultation populaire jamais entreprise par Alliance Québec. Plus de 2500 particuliers ont participé à une série de tables rondes communautaires tenues à l'automne. Elles visaient à sonder l'opinion de notre collectivité sur les questions essentielles auxquelles sont confrontés maintenant cette commission ainsi que tous les Québécois. Plus de 240 groupes se sont rendus à Montréal, Sept-Îles, Saint-Augustin, Laval, dans des églises, des salons, des bureaux, des foyers pour personnes âgées. Ces groupes constituent un profil de la

véritable communauté anglophone, c'est-à-dire une communauté multiculturelle, multiraciale et de plus en plus bilingue, qui a un engagement envers le Québec et le Canada.

Nous sommes ici pour vous parler des racines profondes que nous avons au Québec et de l'attachement que nous entretenons pour la province, de l'insistance dont nous faisons preuve pour que nos amis, voisins et compatriotes québécois francophones soient rassurés dans chacun des aspects de leur identité, afin que notre société puisse aller de l'avant sans aucun sentiment d'insécurité ou de crainte pour sa structure spéciale. Nous sommes ici pour vous parler des racines profondes que nous avons au Canada et de l'attachement que nous entretenons pour le pays et de notre profonde conviction que le Canada peut et doit apporter la meilleure réponse aux aspirations futures de tous les Québécois.

We believe that these aspirations, held by all Quebecers, may be fulfilled, not by just basing ourselves on the lessons of the past, nor by simply correcting previous injustices and present mistakes, but by redefining our relations so as to flexibly meet present requirements, make profitable use of present advantages and face future challenges. We believe that this redefinition must be guided by the following principles:

First of all, Canada must ensure the economic well-being of all its citizens, through a strong macroeconomy that can stand up to the potentially disruptive impact of a highly competitive world. Canada must also fulfil its role in promoting Québec's identity.

Second, all levels of government in Canada have a responsibility to protect and promote minority rights within their respective fields of jurisdiction.

Third, the Québec government, while rightfully promoting the French language and culture, must recognize and respect the dynamics of a pluralist society.

To put these principles into concrete form, we must reach a clear commitment to meaningful change in Canada, change that will respond to the legitimate objective of consolidating a strong, stable, predominantly French Québec. Change that will allow all Quebecers to recognize themselves in a fundamentally democratic society and, in practice, change that will ensure that Québec is able to express both its unique character and its growing pluralism. These goals can be reached within a changing Canada. They can be shared by all Quebecers. They can be shared by all Canadians.

Les Québécois anglophones contribueront à ce processus de modification du Québec et du Canada. Nous y contribuerons, sachant que, comme la loi créant la Commission l'énonce clairement, nos besoins seront étudiés à fond et sérieusement par tous les Québécois. On ne peut

sous-estimer le sens de cet engagement. Dans nos consultations à l'intérieur de notre communauté, le niveau d'inquiétude exprimé par les Québécois anglophones à propos de leur place au Québec était frappant. Qui suis-je, disait-on? Qui suis-je, si ce que j'ai apporté ne compte pas et si je ne suis pas considéré comme un Québécois? Ils sont inquiets au sujet des écoles, des hôpitaux et des institutions culturelles qui définissent notre communauté et demeurent la meilleure garantie de son avenir. Et ils continuent de rejeter toute hypothèse selon laquelle la langue anglaise doit être limitée afin de garantir la prédominance du français. Comme le Québec s'oriente vers des changements nécessaires, il faut s'occuper de ces préoccupations. Ce ne sont pas nos préoccupations personnelles, elles doivent être celles de la Commission et de tous les Québécois.

(4:45 p.m.)

The constructive creation of change is a joint undertaking within Québec society and between Québec and the rest of Canada. We should not underestimate the goodwill of other regions in the country in the matter of working towards this goal. Canadians have come to understand that the constitutional context has changed, and citizens in other regions are expressing their dissatisfaction with respect to the present form of federalism. The challenge facing the rest of Canada, and Québec too, entails taking advantage of the opportunity presented. If we do so, we will be able to achieve new, beneficial types of agreement that were impossible for us to achieve up to now. We can build from our joint accomplishments. English-speaking Quebecers have been, and will continue to be, key partners in creating a proud, modern Québec. We cannot talk about Québec's cultural contributions to international artistic life without bringing up such Quebecers as Oscar Peterson, Donald Sutherland and Margie Gillis. We cannot talk about our business successes without mentioning Sam Steinberg, the Reisman brothers, the Parés, the Cleghorns, the Bronfmans, the Molsons. We cannot talk about Québec political life without recognizing the contribution of Eric Kierans, George Marler or Michael Fainstat. We cannot talk about Québec's vital contributions to medicine without remembering Wilder Penfield, Phil Gold and Ronald Melzack, and we cannot think of our heroes if we overlook Doug Harvey, Toe Blake and Victor Davis.

Yes, our community shares the great pride of all Quebecers when we consider the tremendous social, economic and cultural progress we have made together, particularly in the past 30 years, from the Quiet Revolution to the spectacular growth of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, not to mention our unrivalled network of small and medium businesses. This proud, constant evolution came

about while Québec was part of Canada. We ask the Commission to remember this, because the Commission will determine the course of Québec's future.

Québec and Canada have never resorted to extra-constitutional measures, and our commitment to constitutional legality has served us well thus far. It is what shows the whole world that we are dependable, open to thoughtful, well-considered change. It is what demonstrates our economic and political stability and reliability.

Alliance Québec est ici aujourd'hui parce que nous sommes profondément attachés au Québec et au Canada. C'est notre patrie. Nous faisons partie du Québec comme il est une partie de nous. Non pas simplement par naissance ou par résidence, mais comme sujet de fierté et d'affection. Nos divergences ne doivent pas nous diviser. Elles peuvent continuer à nous définir à mesure que nous édifions sur cette société ouverte, vibrante et généreuse que nous avons créée ensemble.

Oui, le Québec et le Canada doivent changer. Alliance Québec estime que les Québécois de tous les niveaux culturels et de toutes les communautés linguistiques sont prêts à s'associer pour réaliser ce changement. Il y aura d'autres débats, d'autres discussions. Ils seront marqués par la passion que les gens portent aux valeurs qui leur tiennent à cœur. Notre relation avec les concitoyens francophones est l'une de ces valeurs. Notre attachement envers le Québec et envers les uns les autres continuera de nous guider. Nous avons édifié notre destinée ensemble dans le passé; nous le ferons encore à l'avenir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will begin with questions from representatives of the Official Opposition party. Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Keaton, Madam, and Gentlemen, I would first like to welcome you here. Please allow me, Mr. Chairman, to extend a special greeting to the president, Mr. Keaton, who made such a valuable contribution as a member of the Commission de l'enseignement professionnel du Conseil des collèges, when I was its Chairwoman.

Mr. Keaton: Thank you, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: I have read your brief very carefully. You express your determination to play an active, in-depth role in the debate on the future of Québec. And, speaking of the consultation you carried out, you say you are resolute partners of a French-speaking Québec. You have certain grievances, however, well-founded or otherwise, but they are nevertheless there: A feeling of being left out and that, even though you sincerely wish to participate, you get

the impression that the commitment, the contribution and the potential you have demonstrated are not appreciated.

You know, Québec... I think this can be explained in part. French-speaking Québec has not often been aware of you in its struggles. It has not often found support among you, and I am thinking particularly of the debate surrounding Meech Lake, to which you brought three proposals that were conditions for your support of Meech, and that neutralized, so to speak, Meech. But I would not like the question to be taken up from that angle, because between the French-speaking and English-speaking communities in Québec, there are no doubt many missed opportunities for coming together.

Mr. Keaton, in your brief, and moreover, like most groups from your community that have appeared here, you demand the inclusion of a certain number of rights in the Constitution. You yourselves list health, education and justice. And you demand firm assurances that the fundamental infrastructure of institutions will be maintained and supported. And you ask for guarantees of a measurable level.

In your conclusion, you say, on page 19 that the inclusion of minority institutions in, I presume, a constitution. Could you tell us where you see the inclusion of rights or the enshrining of minority rights?

Mr. Keaton: First off, the Québec constitution must be within Canada. This is possible; you know that every province has the right to a constitution, or, in a case of Québec independence, that rights should begin with the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. In our view, this is a form of protection and guarantee for individual rights, for them to apply to everyone, not just to minorities but to everyone. We say that the Charter must exclude a "notwithstanding" clause; we discussed that, because the "notwithstanding" clause is a threat to individual rights. It's on that basis that, in a Constitution, there should be guarantees above all, to begin with, of the right to education in the minority English language, and not merely the right to education but also the right to run school boards, which is provided for by Bill 107, for example. The problem with Bill 107 is that it doesn't give constitutional guarantees. So that's a priority. We start with health services in the minority language, then we continue to the institutions that will be protected by law. Does that answer your question, Mrs. Blackburn?

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes, that answers it. The impression we are left with by the briefs presented by representatives of your community is that, in the end, you are all demanding the inclusion, the enshrining of your rights in the Québec constitution, in the Québec charter, and then in the laws, as you clearly explain, and I

think that this meets with general agreement here, if not unanimity, because I wouldn't like to speak for everyone. But the impression we are left with by your briefs is that Québec's English-speaking community has, for reasons of its own, decided or understood that Québec was moving, definitively and irreversibly, towards sovereignty. And I appreciate your contribution in this regard because, already, you are indicating the main areas of activity, that is, the main rights that should be protected by the constitution.

I was also told by a well-informed source that there are people in your community who were drafting what should be a text to be included to protect Anglophone rights in the constitution. Am I correct in my impression that Québec's English-speaking community has understood that Québec is heading for sovereignty?

Mr. Keaton: Well, we look at the opinion polls published in the newspapers, too. Obviously, the majority is in favour of sovereignty, however it's defined. We don't know exactly what sovereignty is. For most people, it may also be more of an indication of a sense of change. So, the word "sovereignty" captures this feeling of change, if we may interpret public opinion. That's quite clear. But certainly the Québec English-speaking community does not wish for Québec sovereignty; it deeply believes that it is still very possible for Québec to remain in Canada, provided Canada changes to meet Québec's needs. It's too soon to get rid of Canada. That's like throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

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

Mr. Chevette: Yes, Mr. Chairman. On page 17 of your brief, you say that the vast majority of people consulted wanted changes within federalism. But you don't say what changes. On page 21, you say that you have simple, dynamic formulas for making Canada work better. But you don't provide the simple, dynamic formulas. You say that we must enter negotiations in an open, in-depth way, with a reasonable timetable. That's not defined, either. Don't you think people are tired of these endless negotiations? Thirty years to produce Meech, with the results you know. I would like you to give me an answer on those three points, and on a fourth as well. Because I have almost no time. I'll give them all to you.

Tomorrow morning, Québec decides, by referendum, to be sovereign. Do you accept the verdict or not?

Mr. Keaton: I think our community is democratic enough in Québec, generally, to accept a democratically decided verdict. But,

certainly, we are not in favour of a referendum too soon. Because, first of all, this Commission has until March 28 to reach its objective of conclusions and recommendations. And it will certainly take some time for the people to be able to digest the ideas contained in the report, and for the government to formulate its approach. So we should not go too fast and break the speed limits.

Mr. Chevette: But you know that there is a strategy to gain time.

Mr. Keaton: It's not to gain time, Mr. Chevette. It's to have time to think it through. Because, today, it's easy to come out in favour of something without really knowing the consequences.

Mr. Chevette: But it's just as easy for a federalist to say he wants to remain federalist as for someone in favour of sovereignty to say he wants sovereignty. It's not a question of... What would your reasonable timetable be? And is it a matter of giving the federal government time, for instance, to publish all its little studies intended to scare people? Is it a matter of giving time to conduct personalized opinion polls to intimidate people? Or else... what is it?

Mr. Keaton: No, it's certainly a matter of giving the federal government time to really formulate its ideas, in order to reach suggestions, proposals for change. Because before Quebecers decide to leave Canada, every one of us has to think about what Canada is, what Canada can be. And I also think that there is a responsibility on the part of those offering Quebecers sovereignty to spell out the consequences of independence. It's like someone said to me the other day: Are you ready to make the journey with us? He was talking about the current majority of public opinion. I said: Well, wait! Before we make the journey, we want to know the destination, how much it will cost, how fast and by what means of transport, and all those questions. All the questions have to be resolved before Quebecers decide.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now move on to the members' questions.

Mr. Morton (Glenn): Mr. Chairman, may I elaborate a little?

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

Mr. Morton: Mr. Chevette, you indicated, and you are certainly not the only one, that many people are fed up with how long things are taking. You suggested that it's been 30 years now, and that this matter has to end up

somewhere. And, no doubt, since the failure of Meech Lake, this sense of frustration has developed more and more. We understand that. I think that, up to a certain point, the sense of frustration comes from the feeling of "rejection" of Québec – we have talked about it often enough – by what we call the rest of Canada, English Canada, if you like. I would like us to think a little about that. Because, we know that the idea of the rejection of Québec by the rest of Canada has become fairly popular, but I don't think it's precise or accurate. Who is this "they" who rejected Québec? Meech Lake? Is it all Canadians? I don't think so.

(5:00 p.m.)

In analyzing it, we mustn't make an overly complex analysis; there are four names that emerge. I ask you to go back a little, to the month of June, to the time of those tensions, those emotions. Four figures, four names that have been associated with the rejection of Meech Lake. We talk about Filmon and McKenna, we talk about Wells and we talk about Harper, but you knew... It comes down to four people. Mr. Filmon wanted to ratify the Meech Lake accord in his province. We know what prevented him from doing that. Mr. McKenna did ratify it in New Brunswick. It was another gentleman, Mr. Harper, who more or less threw a monkey wrench into the works, and for very particular reasons, reasons that we became familiar with this summer, in the expression of the problems we had near Montréal. There is one other gentleman, Mr. Wells, the fourth. We aren't talking about all of Canada that did reject and that should make you feel frustrated with those negotiations that didn't work. There were very few people. And I would like French-speaking Quebecers to be able to bear in mind this idea that it wasn't all of Canada. There were very few people behind it. There was actually a colossal effort. Over 90% of people in Canada, as represented by their politically elected members, supported the idea of Meech Lake. So...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go to members' questions. Mr. Desjardins, followed by Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Libman.

Mr. Desjardins: Good afternoon, Mr. Keaton and the people who... It is my turn, isn't it?

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

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Keaton and the people with you here today. We have the opportunity to speak together often on another commission we work on. You know, yesterday, Francophones outside Québec came to testify before our Commission, and we clearly understood that they were saying, in veiled terms, that Québec separation would not

necessarily be easy for them to live through in English Canada. I think we can imagine what they would have to go through. Conversely, what do you have to fear from eventual Québec independence – and I think that comes through a little in the brief – is it the fear of your gradual assimilation, you Québec Anglophones?

Mr. Keaton: There is more than one level of response to that. As Quebecers, in general, like everyone, we fear that a change as profound as separation may have considerable economic consequences. So, as ordinary citizens, there are questions to be asked. As minority English Quebecers, clearly, we have fears as far as protecting institutions in a situation of instability which Québec will certainly have for a while. There is no country in the world that has achieved independence without going through a period of instability.

A voice: Now...

Mr. Keaton: What I mean is that we would feel more vulnerable, and that's natural. That doesn't call into question the intentions of those who say: We will protect institutions. We don't question the sincerity of those intentions. But simply, in reading history, knowing a little of what economic instability can be like, it can lead to pressures to reduce guarantees to English-language institutions.

Mr. Desjardins: My second question... and I would like to say that I totally agree with the interpretation you give of the failure of Meech in English Canada. It was a few individuals, whom you named, who manipulated, in demagogic fashion, the majority of Anglophones in the conception or interpretation that was made of Meech. And I'm not prepared to say that all the English rejected Meech. Some people could find support in certain opinion polls, but I think that the reality is different. But as far as that goes, some day or other, people will have to sit down with Québec, and Meech will have very little in common with what Québec will present at the bargaining table. At that point, how can we tackle it, how do you see English Canada evolving in the short term, with respect to the representations which Québec will make in the very near future?

Mr. Keaton: Here's how we see it. Look across Canada – at the present time, because we are now concentrating on what is happening in Québec, and that's natural because we are in the process of defining ourselves – there are things going on that are very interesting, too: what's going on in Alberta, for example. There is the parliamentary commission in Alberta, and there, they are asking a lot of questions just as fundamental as the ones we are asking here.

That means that when they start to question the value of the monarchy in Alberta, now that's a fundamental question, and they are asking those questions: Is it worth keeping the monarchy, the parliamentary system, federalism? They are asking those questions in Alberta right now. Look at what's going on in New Brunswick; they're asking questions there about Canada too, about federalism. What I mean is that if we listen closely to the Prime Minister of Canada...

Mr. Desjardins: The Spicer Commission points in that direction too?

Mr. Keaton: Spicer, what I mean, if we look a little outside Québec, now, there are many indications of a change, a feeling of change. The leadership challenge is how to channel that feeling in a positive direction. The problem is, the only way of doing it, with the failure of Meech Lake, is to define the changes in such a way that Canadians can see that they will really meet the needs of all regions in Canada, and not be merely a response to one region.

Mr. Desjardins: So it is possible.

Mr. Keaton: Yes, of course, it's worth trying again and, listen, I am also a little frustrated after... I worked for the Referendum too, 10 years ago. It's been a long time, we want to be rid of these questions, but we aren't the only ones. Canadians in general want to be rid of them, to get beyond these questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mr. Libman and Mr. Larose.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. I have just heard you urge the Commission, anyway Quebecers in general, not to rush and not to make any immediate decision regarding sovereignty, for example, and to wait for Ottawa to make proposals. You more or less said that a moment ago. But mustn't we, once again, although it may be tiresome, mustn't we recall the facts? The facts of the situation we are in, those aren't only the facts that have come up in the past six months.

As you said a moment ago, it goes back 10 years. Let's recall, there is a triptych there, a trilogy. First, 1980, Québec voted no to a referendum question, after 10 years of political mobilization, after an intensity such as we have never seen in Québec, at the conclusion of that Quiet Revolution which culminated there. Some thought that it could be the crowning achievement of 20 years of collective evolution. Québec said no, because it was given a promise of a renewed Constitution, it trusted the authorities, the federal ones in particular. The answer was no, and two years later, Québec had

a Constitution imposed on it that it did not want, that it renounced. It's a very rare precedent in the democratic world for a founding people to have an amendment to an agreement bearing its signature imposed on it, for its signature to be repudiated, for the agreement to be torn up, and for another one to be imposed on it against its democratically expressed will. That's rare.

It's an event we lived through not long ago. A few years later, Québec itself, speaking through its Prime Minister, proposed minimum conditions which could, in his view, justify going and signing this document that was imposed on it. Québec showed, once again, a great deal of patience, a great deal of faith, almost naïveté, we could say. So, a process was begun, a document was signed that did not meet the minimum conditions which Québec had presented, and a few years later, the signatures of the first ministers that had been affixed to the document were called into question, and then finally, the answer was no, and the hand stretched out by Québec was rejected.

Don't tell us it was four people! Because the Chambre de commerce du Québec brief reminds us of all the polls that indicated that close to three out of four English Canadians disapproved of Meech, rejected Meech, and of course that authorized the politicians whom you have named to take the positions which you know. And then, you tell us today: Careful! Don't move any further, Québec! Twice already we've been told no, don't move any further, wait. Wait for your counterpart to tell you what he is now prepared to do. Well, listen, it's not exasperation, it's just a minimum of logic, a minimum of pride that means a people must, at such times, make decisions. And that's what we must do.

Mr. Keaton: We together.

Mr. Bouchard: Yes, a people, you're part of it.

Mr. Keaton: Yes, thank you, Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Bouchard: Unless you don't want to be part of it, but you are.

Mr. Keaton: But, listen, we can go over the history of recent years and of the Meech Lake Accord. And we saw that there was a large percentage of public opinion in Québec that wasn't in favour of the Meech Lake Accord either. Here in Québec!

Mr. Bouchard: There was still a majority.

Mr. Keaton: Precisely...

Mr. Bouchard: There was a majority...

Mr. Keaton: That's a little odd...

Mr. Bouchard: ...that was in favour.

Mr. Keaton: So we can say that a majority of Quebecers rejected the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Bouchard: No, no, no. There was a majority of Quebecers that supported the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Keaton: Yes, yes, pardon me. Yes, but there was a substantial number against it. Also, in the last two weeks just before it failed, on June 23, the percentage in favour, outside Québec, began to rise. It began to rise; why? We're not totally sure why. The problem is that the Meech Lake Accord was never properly explained to the Canadian people. It was decided with all respect for the gentlemen who were around the table then.

Mr. Bouchard: Yes, the argument of the bad negotiator. The argument put forward by Jean Chrétien, but listen now.

Mr. Keaton: No, come on. Simply, it was a fairly complex accord and I don't think those who supported the Accord took the necessary time to explain to Canadians...

Mr. Bouchard: Three years...

Mr. Keaton: It wasn't explained for three years. We explained to one another...

Mr. Bouchard: Listen, Sir. I'm not a very big speaker, but I made about 25 speeches on the Meech Lake Accord in English Canada. I made at least 25 speeches. And then, I was only a little minister, and anyway all the ministers tried to make some. And Mr. Mulroney - whatever people think of Mr. Mulroney right now; he's out of favour with people - did everything he could for three years to sell the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Keaton: Once again, Mr. Bouchard, I respect your opinion...

Mr. Bouchard: What more could we do?

Mr. Keaton: ...on that point. All I want... It gets us nowhere to try to explain or clarify all the details of what happened in the last few months. Honestly, I think that, from now on, we have to see the situation across Canada. And I swear that there is a profound change in the Canadian people, that didn't exist before.

Mr. Bouchard: Where do you detect that, Sir? A few months ago, I saw a poll in Ontario that said that a very significant majority of

Ontarians acknowledged that they liked the status quo, liked things just the way they were. I'd have to check that, but I saw it on television. I think the CBC had commissioned the poll. An overwhelming majority; I think 70% of Ontarians - I can't be sure - said: The status quo is fine. We like things as they are. Québec has been outside for 10 years, let it stay there.

Mr. Keaton: Even the polls - if I'm not mistaken - on different problems in Québec say that the problem of primary importance to Quebecers, just like Canadians, is the economy. It's not the Constitution, right now.

Mr. Bouchard: No, but here, we're talking constitution.

Mr. Keaton: Yes, yes.

Mr. Bouchard: Insofar as we are talking about that, what I'm saying is that the latest polls show that in English Canada, at least in Ontario, if I'm not mistaken...

Mr. Keaton: But the question is how to get Canada to move. Some parties...

Mr. Bouchard: People find that the status quo is just fine. It's perfect.

Mr. Morton: You're talking about polls, Mr. Bouchard. And certainly, when we start talking about polls, we're getting into something that is very difficult to categorize. Go ask the NDP, in past years, what the polls were saying. Every time a political party is halfway through its term of office in Canada, what party, according to the polls, has become the most popular party, if not the NDP? They've never formed the government. This is just to say that we can't consider polls the Gospel truth.

It reminds me of what Mr. Diefenbaker said about polls, some years ago. Mr. Diefenbaker's French wasn't outstanding; he spoke in English. I'm certain that if he were here today, he would make more effort to speak in French. What he said, Mr. Bouchard, is that polls - making a play on the words in English "polls" and "poles." What Mr. Diefenbaker said about polls was that "polls" ("poles") are for dogs. People found that pretty funny. And that reflected a certain lack of satisfaction with the whole process of polls.

The other matter of polls, I don't know whether it's a particularly Canadian or Québec characteristic, but we have a tendency to look at our leaders and say: We elected you for four years, but watch out. You're at the top of the pole, we want to correct you, we don't let you go too far. And when someone comes and asks: Do you support the government? People have a way of saying that they may have a vote just

once a year, but in the meantime, when it comes time to respond to a poll, they can criticize. And that's why the polls often reflect a frustration at the time.

And so, from there to using polls to justify whatever we are trying to say, I think there's quite a way to go. We can't use that.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Before moving on to Mr. Libman, Mr. Larose and Mr. Turgeon, a brief comment, Mr. Campeau.

Mr. Campeau: I just want to state the following fact. It is true that Mr. Mulroney worked for the Meech Lake Accord. It is true that Mr. Bouchard worked too, probably. Mr. Bourassa also worked very hard. And the day after the Meech Lake failure, I think he's the one who said: It's not two men, it's not Clyde Wells, it's not Mr. Harper who prevented it from passing. If there had really been a Canadian will for it to pass, it would have passed.

And Mr. Bourassa was nevertheless one of the individuals at the heart, at the centre of the discussions with all the first ministers. So, it's all of Canada that said no to Meech Lake. It's not just two, three or four individuals. It's all of Canada.

(5:15 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That was an observation; it doesn't necessarily call for a reply. Mr. Libman?

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Avant de passer à ma question, j'aurais une remarque à faire: je trouve que c'est un point qui est trop souvent négligé. C'est que la cause de l'échec de l'Accord du Lac Meech tient à l'inquiétude répandue selon laquelle la clause d'une société distincte aurait un impact négatif sur la Charte des droits et libertés; si quelqu'un devait subir les conséquences de cette inquiétude, c'est bien la communauté anglophone du Québec. C'est pourquoi la communauté anglophone du Québec, en grande majorité, y compris Alliance Québec, s'est opposée à l'Accord du Lac Meech en raison de l'inquiétude de l'impact que pourrait avoir la clause d'une société distincte sur la Charte des droits et libertés. Et cet élément doit faire partie de la discussion, ainsi que les critères qui sont partiellement responsables de l'échec de Meech et je crois que c'est un point à mentionner chaque fois qu'on analyse les raisons de l'échec de Meech.

Tout d'abord, je tiens à mentionner que des félicitations devraient être adressées à Alliance Québec. Une masse considérable de travail et plusieurs consultations ont présidé à ce rapport. Alliance Québec s'est exprimée de façon très ferme sur la question de ne pas tenir à l'écart la communauté anglophone du Québec; le mouvement a effectivement agi et j'estime qu'il devrait être félicité pour ses travaux sérieux et son rapport

magistral que je vois ici.

Mais actuellement, monsieur le Président, le sentiment répandu dans la communauté anglophone du Québec en est un de frustration, de désespoir, de colère. C'est le sentiment qui a cours dans la communauté aujourd'hui. Des milliers et des milliers de jeunes anglophones ont quitté le Québec. Nous nous inquiétons de l'avenir de nos commissions scolaires et de notre système d'enseignement. Nos garanties sur les soins médicaux n'ont rien de sûr. En fait, la loi 142, qui garantit l'accès aux soins médicaux en anglais, peut être révoquée par un simple vote à l'Assemblée nationale. Je crois que les préoccupations de la communauté anglophone au sujet de l'avenir constitutionnel du Québec sont expédiées rapidement et souvent laissées de côté. Il y a de la frustration, un manque très net de confiance dans cette communauté à l'heure actuelle. Et ce sont là les véritables sentiments. Ce sont les commentaires véritables que je reçois de mes électeurs.

En fait, ma circonscription est celle du Québec qui a le pourcentage le plus élevé d'anglophones dans cette province et je sens vraiment, et de façon régulière, de la frustration, de l'inquiétude et de la colère. Allez voir à Sherbrooke, à Gaspé, dans l'Outaouais; vous ressentez un peu cette même frustration. Et je pense que plusieurs de ces sentiments ont été exprimés dans les extraits tirés des rapports de tables rondes; c'est pourquoi je trouve que le ton répressif de votre mémoire ne correspond peut-être pas tout à fait à certains commentaires qui me sont faits couramment, mais votre rapport reflète quand même ce qui a été une stratégie de la part des porte-parole anglophones au cours des 15 dernières années. Que ce soit une question de média ou d'organisation, on a toujours baissé le ton et on a pu aborder ce débat d'une façon très calme.

Mais nous voici en 1990. Je crois que nous avons l'occasion unique, au moment où le Québec réfléchit sur son avenir, et comme vous l'avez démontré aujourd'hui, et comme vous l'avez dit aujourd'hui, les anglophones, au cours des 15 dernières années, ont démontré une volonté de communiquer, de dialoguer, de travailler pour la protection et pour la promotion de la langue et de la culture françaises au Québec. Mais je crois qu'en 1990, après 15 ans de ce genre de dialogue qui, en fait, a été un dialogue à sens unique, je crois qu'il est temps que la communauté anglophone réfléchisse à une stratégie. Alors, voici ma première question. Comment estimez-vous... Vous savez, et je crois même que nous avons vu dans les questions posées aujourd'hui que cette attitude existe encore. Il n'y a pas de volonté de tenir de dialogue bidirectionnel. Quelle doit être, d'après vous, la perception des anglophones pour que la majorité des Québécois les écoutent de façon légitime, qu'ils respectent de façon légitime

quelques-unes de leurs préoccupations et certaines de leurs frustrations qui ne sauraient être cachées à l'occasion d'entretiens avec eux, n'importe où au Québec?

Mr. Keaton: Mettons les choses telles qu'elles sont. Alliance Québec ne s'est jamais prononcée contre l'Accord du Lac Meech. À partir de juin 1986, date à laquelle onze premiers ministres ont donné leur approbation à l'Accord, nous nous sommes prononcés en faveur des cinq points touchant le Québec. Nous avons demandé, au cours des trois années qui ont suivi, qu'on clarifie la question de l'impact que la clause d'une société distincte sur l'article 16 inter-prétatif aurait sur la Charte des droits et libertés. Et toute minorité — en fait, n'importe qui — aurait dû poser cette question, et plusieurs l'ont fait. C'était une question honnête qui ne visait pas à tuer l'Accord du Lac Meech, mais destinée à essayer d'obtenir un éclaircissement: les Anglais du Québec faisaient-ils partie de la société distincte? Un jour, M. Bourassa disait une chose, le lendemain, on disait autre chose, et rien n'a été clair pendant un certain temps avant que l'Assemblée nationale ne clarifie les choses. Nous avions un appui conditionnel, et c'est normal. Ensuite, la Commission Charest a été créée. Et nous nous sommes prononcés en faveur de l'Accord du Lac Meech à la condition que... La principale recommandation que la Commission Charest clarifiait, comment l'appeliez-vous, la clause de société distincte pouvait être énoncée. Nous savons maintenant ce qui est arrivé de tout cela. D'accord, je ne veux pas entrer dans ce sujet. Mais jusqu'à la toute fin, ça été difficile. Je dirais que la communauté anglaise avait peur de se prononcer ouvertement et d'appuyer l'Accord du Lac Meech, parce que ce n'était pas clair.

Mr. Libman: Non, je suis d'accord avec vous, Bob, mais la raison...

Mr. Keaton: Mais laissez-moi revenir...

Mr. Libman: ...mais ce manque de clarté a justement provoqué de l'inquiétude chez les anglophones, ce manque de clarté entre...

Mr. Keaton: Non pas seulement chez les anglophones, mais chez beaucoup de gens.

Mr. Libman: Certainement, mais...

Mr. Keaton: Beaucoup de gens, vous savez. Et ce qui est arrivé, c'est que nous avons brisé la volonté que nous avions de garder le pays unifié, en voulant produire un document parfait. Mais de toute façon, pour revenir à votre question sur les tactiques de la communauté anglaise, quelle sera votre prochaine démarche, si vous êtes intéressé. Il y a beaucoup d'hyperboles

en politique aujourd'hui. Il semble que pour capter l'attention de quelqu'un, il faut parler plus fort, comme je le fais dans le moment. Et il faut utiliser plus d'adjectifs, et adopter des positions plus fermes, comme si nous devions frapper le Canada pour le réveiller. Tout tourne en rond. Nous sommes dans une spirale, et, vous savez, cela accommode des gens, mais pour la plupart, ce n'est pas le cas. Nous avons été pris au piège. La politique doit se fonder sur la raison. C'est pourquoi nous adopterons une position raisonnable, ce qui n'exclut pas la fermeté. Nous n'avons pas besoin de recourir à de la grande rhétorique, nous n'avons pas à crier ni à utiliser des énoncés exagérés pour dire tout haut ce que nous croyons être la vérité. Non, je dis simplement que...

Mr. Libman: Je ne mets pas cela en doute. Je me demande simplement si, au cours d'une discussion en table ronde, il a été question de changer de tactiques, histoire de mieux faire comprendre à la majorité qu'il y a de la frustration.

Mr. Keaton: Permettez-moi de vous parler de la frustration. La frustration est, en fait, ceci: que dois-je faire pour être accepté comme Québécois? Ce sentiment est exprimé dans l'article de journal avec Ed Bantey; tous ces gens, vous savez, des Québécois anglais qui sont ici depuis longtemps. Il semble tout simplement qu'il n'est pas important que nous soyons en quelque sorte considérés comme "les étrangers, les Anglais, les maudits Anglais". And it still goes on. Not among the elite. Now, among the elite there is a consensus of recognition of rights and all that. But it's in the general population, because after years and years of attacks on the English, the English are responsible for this, and for that, the Plains of Abraham and all that. With ordinary people, there is this expression of frustration.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now go to Mr. Larose, who will be followed by Mr. Turgeon, and then we will have the questions from the Government party.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to congratulate Alliance Québec for its considerable work, its brief and the democratic approach that can be sensed throughout this document. You really carried out very extensive consultation. I would first like to say that as far as recognition of Anglophones' rights for their institutions, etc. are concerned, if there is one thing that's clear to the Commission, it's that. You say, at some point, that this should be done with a little enthusiasm, that is, yes, maybe I'm putting it in my words there. But at least you can be sure that on that basis, the Commission, in my

opinion, has established a fairly strong consensus. I just want to make a brief comment on opinion polls, because I find that too often we base our discussions on perceptions that conceal objective reality. And that if we think that it's a mistake on the part of politicians, in my opinion, we're making a huge mistake. All the polls - I have them here - all the polls, the one by Angus Reid, in April, 74% against, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, 73% in British Columbia, in short, people were overwhelmingly against. If we take the CBC-Globe & Mail poll, 82% were against Québec society legislating on language. In short, in my opinion, Clyde Wells is not on the fringe of Canadian society. He has just been chosen Canadian of the year by all the opinion makers in Canada. It's not...

Mr. Keaton: Yes, yes.

Mr. Larose: Just a moment.

Mr. Keaton: But not for the right reasons.

Mr. Larose: Oh! Well, maybe. But let's say that the...

Mr. Keaton: For being a newsmaker.

Mr. Larose: Now I'm not someone who necessarily wants to speak ill of the mass media, but it's obvious that Clyde Wells represents something pretty important in Canada and, as far as that goes, it's not just the little 3% which he represents that allowed him to gain national stature. It's because he reflected an absolutely authentic base. And, in that sense, what's interesting is that the 1990 debate has made us look at Canada from the outside, to ask: What is this Canada of 1990? And something very interesting in the Commission's travels is that people have come to talk to us about Canada, and about the real Canada which is no longer a Canada of founding peoples. Meech signified the death of the theory or the basis of two founding peoples, except for Québec which is a homogeneous society, and the Maritimes which remain a homogeneous British society. The rest of Canada is Canadians, yes, but who no longer have any connection with the founding peoples.

If we continue along our old tracks, we could well fall back down into the ravine. And, in that sense, we have to rethink things.

My question is about page 23. You touched on it earlier. It's about the time we must take to think about these issues. Myself, I'm a guy who usually takes his time. In a union organization, let's say we repeat discussions more often than not. I'm for us allowing for that. But let's agree that we didn't start yesterday on the constitutional issue. There have been at least 30 years of facts, someone just said. On the amending formula, we've taken

18 years. We suffered a blow in 1982. Since then, we've been talking. Can I tell you that, in Québec, Meech Lake was done in exactly 14 days? The minister may correct me, but it seems to me that it was adopted on June 4. The 16th, I was sitting right where you are now. A little worried that the Québec people would become a distinct society. Anyway, we talked with some people and I think that by the 19th or 20th Québec had said yes.

Mr. Ouellet: You were against it.

Mr. Larose: I was against it, yes, but the Québec National Assembly had said yes. What do you want me to say? I'm not the one who decides. It's the National Assembly.

Then, there were three acts. People moved around. Bouchard made a lot of speeches, but there are lots of people who made speeches.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your question, Mr. Larose, don't forget your question.

Mr. Larose: No, but I consider this important. A lot of people are coming to us now to say that it is no longer necessary to hold a referendum very quickly...

Mr. Ouellet: And 75% of whom were against, with the...

Mr. Larose: No, no.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your first question, Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: In your opinion, and I'm asking very simply, is the breathing room you need to think just time to make another swamp, to recreate confusion in order to then rebuild, not Meech Lake, but "Each" Lake? In short, it seems to me that after 30 years, it's time for you people to be clear and for us people to be clear and to build something other than all this "crap" we've made for the past 30 years. Anyway, I don't see where we're headed.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...a little time for the answer, Mr. Larose.

A voice: What's the question?

Mr. Larose: It's why time...

Mr. Keaton: No, no. It's implicit. The question is implicit. We understand one another. If Canada were a country that wasn't worth the trouble, I would better understand letting go faster, you know, like Lithuania or Estonia or Latvia. I fully understand why they want to leave the Soviet Union: because of history.

We have our troubled history. In comparison

with other countries, our problems have been solved well enough to create other problems, as always. What I want to say, in spite of all our efforts, that started long ago, with Mr. Jean Lesage, till now to reform Canada. Nonetheless, we have created, we have built something of value in that time. We live in a country with quite a remarkable standard of living, in spite of the problems. I know very well that those who want sovereignty are dreaming of a better life. Whoa! It's a big risk. Before we let go of Canada, I think, as Professor Dion said the other day, it's worth giving ourselves another chance.

(5:30 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Turgeon, for one brief question, if possible.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Keaton, in your brief, you recognize the predominance of French. You say, at the same time, that you will oppose any initiative aimed at making Québec exclusively French.

Mr. Keaton: Exclusively French.

Mr. Turgeon: There are two words that stand out in that: predominance and exclusively. Now I don't know anyone here, except the Anglophones, who is talking about a Québec that is exclusively French. When we talk about a Québec "official language: French" official doesn't mean exclusive.

You also say that you get the feeling of being left out of the debate and that, in your opinion, your contribution to Québec society is not recognized. Those are perceptions; I allow you them. You don't extend your analysis to determine whether you are kept out by Francophones or whether you keep yourselves out, too.

My question... Actually, I have two of them. About two things. What I'd like to know is, if Quebecers were to opt for sovereignty, what position will you take? Are you ready? Is Alliance Québec ready to go tell the rest of English Canada that they will have to respect the democratic choice of Quebecers? First question.

Secondly, in that hypothesis, is Alliance Québec prepared to go tell English Canada how it should behave towards its French-speaking minority? You could cite yourselves as an example.

Mr. Keaton: I'll answer the second question, which is easier than the first.

Mr. Turgeon: OK.

Mr. Keaton: Listen, for 10 years - Alliance Québec has existed for 10 years - throughout that time, we have always aided the cause of

Francophones outside Québec, in court, before tribunals, in speeches, in pressure on different governments. We consider ourselves an ally of Francophones outside Québec because that represents the basis of Canada, French all across Canada. Despite the fact, perhaps, as you say, that has changed but, nevertheless, I don't fully agree with that, Mr. Larose. So we will still be prepared to do that because we don't just believe... It's not a tactic, how can I say it, an "expedient tactic"; it's a belief.

In answer to the first question, obviously, we are Quebecers. And if Québec decides democratically, I believe there is a certain percentage of the English-speaking population that will move away. That's not surprising. I even said so before the Conseil national of the Parti québécois, two months ago; something like that.

Mr. Turgeon: They'll move away, why?

Mr. Keaton: Because... I don't know. I'm not one who's going to move. I haven't asked. Because they believe they'll be more secure elsewhere, economically speaking, even if...

Mr. Turgeon: That's a perception, a perception.

Mr. Keaton: Look, you're an artist, so you clearly understand the perceptions politicians have.

Mr. Turgeon: Yes. I understand perceptions. Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now move on to the questions of the representatives of the party forming the Government. Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Yes. Mr. Keaton, Ladies and Gentlemen, tout d'abord, au nom du gouvernement du Québec, je tiens à vous souhaiter la bienvenue à cette commission. Je tiens à vous remercier d'avoir accepté d'être parmi nous cet après-midi pour discuter de votre rapport, un très bon rapport, très bien rédigé, je dois le dire.

Nous avons pris connaissance des commentaires intéressants de la part de vos membres sur l'avenir constitutionnel du Québec. Je me reporte à la page 94 de votre rapport, au témoignage d'un agent d'assurances, que je cite: "J'ai besoin de trouver une nouvelle fédération canadienne pour répondre au caractère unique du Québec au sein de la constitution. Choisissez un autre lac et recommencez le processus depuis le début, avec la représentation des autochtones, des femmes, etc."

I think we could have a lot of candidates for a new lake...

Mr. Keaton: Yes. If the lake is frozen now...

Mr. Rémillard: ...with all the fame we have attached to Meech Lake and the economic boom that it may have brought to the Outaouais region. Maybe we could find another lake. But you recommend that we start the whole process over. We had the opportunity, during the discussions about the Meech Lake Accord, to talk together very often. One of the reasons you had this hesitation about Meech was out of respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. Among other things, this "notwithstanding" clause that is of particular importance to you.

In fact, yesterday, we had the opportunity to welcome here, Mr. Jean Chrétien, the father of the "notwithstanding" clause. And Mr. Libman put a very good question to Mr. Chrétien, asking him: About the "notwithstanding" clause, what's your reaction? And Mr. Chrétien was very honest, as he was throughout his testimony yesterday, moreover. He told Mr. Libman: We must keep the "notwithstanding" clause. And I'll give you an example, he said. Referring to a recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada regarding hate literature, a section in our Criminal Code about which our Canadian Supreme Court recently handed down a judgment, as you know, and which was considered by the Supreme Court to be constitutional, in compliance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, because it is a limit on freedom of expression but an acceptable one in a free and democratic society such as ours. Mr. Chrétien, speaking to Mr. Libman in response to his question, said: Imagine if the Supreme Court had told you that this section of the Criminal Code was unconstitutional; so, that would have allowed hate literature, and, then, we would have had the "notwithstanding" clause, and we could have used the "notwithstanding" clause to see that the Canadian people is protected against hate literature. I know this is a subject of great interest to Mr. Libman. Does this answer by Mr. Chrétien satisfy you and convince you about the "notwithstanding" clause?

Mr. Keaton: I also followed Mr. Chrétien's appearance, yesterday. I listened closely to his answer to the question, because it is a really fundamental question. The "notwithstanding" power is an extremely great power. And you know that it's a power that was requested by the Western provinces to ensure the principle of parliamentary primacy, because that's the tradition of Canada, a British tradition, I suppose. And, I understand very well the democratic idea behind that, because it represents the majority of elected representatives in the elected assemblies. So we cannot transfer the law to nine individuals, or the system of non-elected representatives.

I will just tell you a short story. I was, for three years, a citizenship judge for Canada. I swore in quite a few new Canadians. At every interview, I said: Here, in Canada, we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms that is among the best in the world, along with that of Québec. And it was the best in the world. We have a right to that: the Charter... the right to equality... and all that. Once in a while, there were more educated people who read and said: Listen, Mr. Keaton, what is this Section 33? That's the "notwithstanding" clause. What? What's that, "notwithstanding"? It means that the Canadian people has these rights, but when legislators don't want it to exercise those rights, they may remove them. It's like playing cards with a "trump card." Frankly, as a judge, I had a lot of trouble explaining the Canadian way of responding to fundamental rights. With one hand, we give them to you; but with the other, we take them away. I understood it very well, but I didn't like it, because there are no guarantees in life. But after my experiences, especially in the United States with the freedom movement, frankly, I'd rather take my chances in a court of nine individuals. There, I'll lose some of the time, but I'll win some of the time. To be... and I respect democracy, to be at the mercy of the whims of majorities expressed by assemblies, motivated to a considerable extent by things that are pretty hot at the moment, by a trend, a temptation to remove rights to accommodate either the bureaucracy or the government. But, it comes from someone. And I say that someone who values freedom, not just minorities but individual rights, cannot easily accept this matter of "notwithstanding" legislative power. So, I was not convinced by Mr. Chrétien.

Mr. Rémillard: So, I am to understand, you're saying that Mr. Chrétien did not convince you.

Mr. Keaton: No. But I well appreciate that argument. It's not a crazy argument. It's a very, very strong argument. But when it comes to taking a stand, frankly, I take a stand in favour of the rights of individuals. Because that's not against the people, that's against governments, with all due respect for the government people here. And, furthermore, the first instance of government use of this clause was the government of Saskatchewan, against the strikers. And 111, now, is the trade-off.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Right. Now, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much, Mr. Keaton, for your brief. Perhaps a little more than the other members of this Commission, I know what effort you have put into this consultation, meeting with

more than 240 groups, that's extraordinary, and I would like to congratulate you. I would also like to congratulate you on the sensitivity of your brief, and especially the schedules you included. Thank you for having translated all that. Because I think that every effort we can put into understanding the other community better will help us build a stronger society. It's clear that the English-speaking community does not have just one voice.

Mr. Keaton: Je n'ai pas l'intention aujourd'hui de ressasser l'histoire et de tenter de découvrir les responsables de la mort de Meech. Et je ne prétends pas avoir le monopole de la vérité. Je constate plusieurs des points que vous mentionnez dans votre mémoire en ce qui a trait à l'appréhension, mais aussi en ce qui a trait à l'engagement envers le Québec. Et j'ai entendu parler des inquiétudes, du manque de confiance même, en raison de la loi 178, dans la communauté anglaise, mais également, et presque avec la même vigueur, j'ai entendu les mêmes sentiments de la part du Québec sur l'échec de Meech. Alors, ma question serait la suivante: Si c'est ce dont nous traitons, qu'est-ce qui manque? Qu'est-ce qu'il faudra? Quel type de leadership devons-nous adopter pour pouvoir reprendre la discussion de façon à répondre à la question de M. Chevette, et qu'il ne s'agisse pas simplement d'une stratégie pour gagner du temps? Que pouvons-nous faire pour traiter de ces appréhensions, mais aussi de ces engagements dont nous entendons parler de la part des anglophones et des francophones?

Vous savez, l'une des expériences les plus frustrantes que j'ai eues au cours des deux dernières années a été d'essayer de convaincre, d'expliquer à mes amis francophones l'impact profond sur le psychique, sur la psychologie de la communauté anglaise - je ne parle pas du reste du Canada - que la loi 178 a eu parce que mes amis francophones disent: Well, it's just commercial signs, Mr. Keaton, it's not a fundamental right. I don't see how it can be considered a fundamental right, like speech, and all that, it's just businesses. It's the Anglo-Saxon businesspeople, I don't know. Je ne sais pas. Je l'ai dit à M. Claude Ryan, je l'ai dit à d'autres de mes amis: Vous savez, lorsque je suis sorti de la maison, ce matin, j'ai ressenti... Moi, vous savez, je ne suis pas né d'hier, et j'avais pu m'acclimater à une foule de choses, mais je me suis personnellement senti, je ne sais pas - je n'utilise pas le mot humilié, tout le monde se sert du mot "humilié" aujourd'hui - mais je me suis personnellement senti comme un "invoulu", si je puis dire... une personne dont on ne veut pas, un "non-voulu" au Québec. Et je savais qu'au fond, ce n'était pas vrai, mais je le ressentais. Parce que la loi dit: Maintenant, votre langue, qui est un prolongement de nous, que ce soit une enseigne commerciale ou quoi que

ce soit, elle est illégale...

A voice: There's the same feeling...

Mr. Keaton: Dans un sens, peut-être que l'équation de l'échec du Lac Meech pour les francophones est le même type de chose, la dimension psychologique ici. Mais j'essaie de dire, en ce qui a trait à la communauté anglaise - je ne parle pas du reste du Canada maintenant - le point qui a soulevé l'appréhension dans notre communauté, plus que la loi 101, plus que la loi 22, a été la loi 178. Je vous le dis, je ne peux le croire. Je me suis présenté devant un groupe, une soixantaine de personnes, dans l'Ouest, et je leur ai demandé: Combien d'entre vous voudraient faire abolir - vous savez, une petite question - la loi 101? Trois personnes sur soixante ont levé la main. Et combien veulent faire abolir la loi 178? Tout le monde!

A voice: But...

Mr. Keaton: Vous comprendrez où je veux en venir. Tout ce qui a échoué... La principale appréhension a été la loi 178. Si cette loi pouvait être modifiée pour respecter, non seulement l'anglais, mais toute autre langue, avec prédominance et présence du français, et ce que je veux dire à ce sujet, ça m'ennuie réellement, que les Québécois francophones et que la majorité aient de façon constante appuyé par une attitude tolérante et généreuse le principe des enseignes bilingues, avec prédominance française. Et cela, chaque jour, en dépit de toute la rancœur, de l'amertume de la dernière année, je dirais qu'une majorité de Québécois francophones appuient encore - je vais utiliser des chiffres exacts - une majorité de Québécois francophones appuient encore ce que la Cour Suprême a accepté unanimement, que la Cour d'Appel du Québec accepte unanimement, que la Cour Supérieure du Québec accepte unanimement, et que la Charte des droits et libertés du Québec dit que c'est notre droit.

Mr. Williams: But, Mr. Keaton, is it possible to convey the same message to the rest of Canada, the same feeling that the English-speaking community had with Bill 178, with the failure of Meech?

Mr. Keaton: Oui, je l'espère. Et j'ai voyagé beaucoup à l'extérieur du Québec, à Toronto et ailleurs, et, vous savez... We're going to do everything we can, here, the English-speaking community, because we don't want to be considered "aliens" or foreigners. We're here in Québec, we want to stay in Québec, we want to contribute to Québec, we want to be considered Québécois. But we also believe it's possible to do all that and remain within Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Je crois que le temps est écoulé, et même dépasse de 15 minutes la période que nous avons, mais c'était intéressant, pourquoi pas? I thank you, on behalf of the Commission, for the brief you have presented, and for participating in our discussions, and I now invite the group Action-chômage Québec to take your place at the table.

Mr. Keaton: Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:47 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:50 p.m.)

Action-chômage Québec

Mrs. Lalanne (Jeanne): Oh, it's so far away. Can you hear me?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, yes, everything's fine.

Mrs. Lalanne: Good evening, Mr. Chairman, good evening everybody. Thank you for welcoming us with open arms. We're going to try and give you the basics and omit the details. Well, we sent you a letter. As you can see, it's not a proper brief because we've been very busy since October; we have 100 to 150 people coming into our office every day. So the letter, we wrote it quickly. It took us an hour. But anyway, I'd like to tell you that we're for Québec sovereignty and we don't see it as a goal, as an objective, but as a means. A means of freeing us and recovering our power, beginning with our purchasing power, Mr. Chairman.

Quebecers are poor. We're very poor. I'm going to give you the real figures. I hope you don't think there's only 7% unemployment, as Statistics Canada says. I'm not saying Statistics Canada is lying, but I am saying the best way to find out how many unemployed people there are in a region or a country is to count them, Mr. Chairman. All right, in October 1990, we had 541 500 in Québec. The rounded-off figure Statistics Canada gave us was 359 000. In our system, here in Québec, we have 75 768; they said 34 000. They don't count people on welfare. There's 800 000 people on welfare, and 200 000 of them are able to work. Well, anyway, I won't bore you with the figures; you can read them for yourselves so we'll leave them for you.

I want you to know that these people are struggling with problems created by the federal government. We've spent 17 years sitting in the same offices, and standing up, I might add, at the arbitration boards we regularly attend. We see 15 000 people a year. We have 8 000 members. Fine. And we can tell you that most of the people who come to our offices are people

with unstable jobs. The unemployment-insurance slogan used to be "With you between two jobs". Now it's more like "With you between two projects." See? People are shunted from one to the other and they live in very unstable situations. So that means they're on very, very thin ice. It makes them very uncomfortable and insecure. But we think there might be a way of doing things differently.

So, since 1941 when the Unemployment Insurance Act was passed — but I'm not going to go into all that — anyway, it's going from bad to worse, there's cutback after cutback. In short, the last ones we had, what happened was the federal government didn't want to put one more cent into the fund. They said people needed more weeks to qualify for benefits, which would be paid for a shorter length of time. That means a shortfall of \$350 million for the Province of Québec.

I hope I won't have to say "Province" of Québec much longer. I hope it won't be much longer. Anyway, from cutback to cutback, there's no real will to create jobs. Every time someone tries to get out of the mess and start up a business of his own, you have two sections in the Act, sections 19 and 21, which are now called section 10, that prohibit you from going into business for yourself.

Not only do they do nothing to create jobs but they prevent people from doing it. Does that surprise you? Do you believe everything I'm telling you?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): After two and a half months, nothing surprises me any more.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: We've been stuck with them for 17 years. We've almost come to blows, symbolically of course. We're a peaceful, non-violent group...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: ...and, in any case, the maple leaf and all that, well, I think we've done our bit. I myself knocked on 2 000 doors in Québec-Est for the NDP in the last election. I got 8 000 votes. It's because we thought renewed federalism could maybe help us somehow, maybe we could have some kind of dialogue, some kind of agreement. But we're realizing that it's a one-way love affair. It's clear. And there won't be any divorce. We've never been married, we've just had an engagement that's dragged on for years and years, since 1963.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Madam, if you don't mind, perhaps we could go to the questions, unless you have a concluding

sentence first.

Mrs. Lalanne: I've got eight pages here...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Oh! Well...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: ...I'll have to leave it with you. In any case I'd have liked to give you concrete examples...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: ...to convince you that we can't go on any more... And I'm doing it on behalf of, I was going to say... Before, when we were defending the unemployed, it was still just a minority of people; but now it's almost a majority. Ottawa gives the grants to great big multinational companies. At least if they gave them to small and medium-sized businesses... or at least if they gave employment tax credits... at least if there were a job stabilization fund, like the CSN asked for at Montebello. They made no effort to understand things. And it's not just a linguistic issue, it's an economic issue. People are hurting. There are people without heat who call our office so often that, once, the next time the phone rang Pierre picked it up and answered "Action-chauffage"...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: You know. People who have nothing to eat come and see us. There are people who are sick and tired of it. There are three people a day who commit suicide in the Province of Québec. There are 150 who try and commit suicide. That doesn't include the ones who give their families the lovely gift of disguising it as an accident. It's a total scandal. Our words have been falling on deaf ears for years. But I'm going to tell you one thing, Mr. Chairman: we're in the process of going from collective unawareness to collective awareness. People are getting poorer and poorer but less and less ignorant. They're making connections. Groups like us, sociology of freedom and unions that hold meetings regularly - finally we're starting to ask questions. Why is it the way it is? What's going on? On one hand, they want us; on the other hand they're making life miserable for us. What's this inconsistency? We want it to stop. And I want us to set a date for that, for the referendum. I think it should be right away, on June 23, 1991.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Maybe if we go to the questions you'll be able to...

Mrs. Lalanne: Maybe I'm pushing things a

bit but we've been waiting so long.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, you can explain more if we go to the questions. Mrs. Côté, followed by Mr. Dufour and Mr. Desjardins.

Mrs. Côté: This is a good way to end a sitting. First, I'd like you to tell me, based on your work with people looking for a job, based on your work with some of the 1.6 million poor people in Québec, I'd like you to tell me which aspects are under federal jurisdiction, in addition to unemployment insurance, which you see in your day-to-day work, which also detract from peoples' quality of life. You said you had eight pages. So I'd like you to give some others, if you have other examples than unemployment insurance, other areas where there's federal interference in provincial matters.

Mrs. Lalanne: Training, Mrs. Côté, training. They've cut \$1.3 million from the unemployment insurance plan, which has \$13 billion for all of Canada, using the excuse of providing training. For ages they've been cutting people off. There is fraud and there is abuse. But they're starting to realize that people don't believe it any more because every family has someone on unemployment, and they can see that they're not the ones abusing the system; they're poor people doing everything they can to try and find a job somewhere.

First, they're using training as an excuse. If they had some to provide, they would have provided it. What's this sudden interest? Over the past four years they've cut 32% from the training budget. It's Ottawa that did that. It's not us, it's not the provincial government, it's not Action-chômage. It's them. They've cut \$800 million from the budget, even though in 1988 there was a surplus of \$2.8 billion in the unemployment insurance fund. There's no planning. No planning anywhere.

Québec City has a complete welding diploma for young boys aged 20 to 30 or 35. Everybody's a welder. But what're they going to weld? That's one example. You train people but for who and for what? For big companies. They should have budgets for training. It's not by cutting off some little guy who lives in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, so he's got to move to Saint-Ferréol because the rate's lower. That's what it's come to, Mr. Chairman. People have to move to Saint-Ferréol because the unemployment rate is supposedly lower. It's that bad.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, followed by Mr. Desjardins.

Mrs. Lalanne: Did I answer your question?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Go

ahead.

Mrs. Lalanne: A bridge; we'll weld a bridge.

Mrs. Côté: With the welding courses they could weld Canada together.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That's a suggestion we'll have to keep in mind. Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must say I would've liked to correct a certain number of statements in the brief, but since she didn't have much time to prepare it, just an hour, well, I'm going to forget about the statements in the brief. I'm going to continue in the same vein as Mrs. Côté. I think you're trying to solve a certain number of problems. It's obvious that the unemployment rates, especially the regional rates, in Québec are too high. Certain economists have appeared before us and said that, in any case over the short and medium terms, sovereignty won't solve those problems. I'll restate the question more directly: if we forget about the unemployment insurance program, what are the programs that could be initiated by the Québec government, incidentally, to provide more assistance for the economic development you're referring to? Because I just want to quote an economist who was here this week, I think, and who said... and he was a sovereignist... It was Pierre Fortin: "Our standard of living will always depend first and foremost on our economic behaviour and not on our political status." I think that's true a priori. So let's try to think about what the programs would be. And I'm asking you to identify them for me because it won't be any easier to identify them in a sovereign Québec.
(6:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Lalanne: First of all, in a sovereign Québec, we'll be freer to take the action we want to take. We'll be passing laws of our own. We'll have members representing the people, members elected by us, who'll pass the laws, in the first place. I've seen in... I'm going to answer your question anyway. I don't have a solution for all the problems; obviously, that would be too much to hope for. But I'm saying that just by giving tax credits to small private businesses, it seems to me that's got to affect you personally, since you're from the employers' group, and you ought to at least like that.

Mr. Dufour: We've already got that. Do you want more?

Mrs. Lalanne: Yes, but not really. What we've already got is section 25, Mr. Dufour. The federal government gives us section 25. You should know about it; everyone's looking to use it. Employers all want to take advantage of it.

It's someone who's receiving unemployment benefits who works for an employer. OK, he's gaining confidence, he's productive, and it doesn't cost the employer very much. That's all well and good, all that, but at the end of the year, when it's over, the employer has no obligations. He's not obliged to keep him. And the weeks he put in, they're not even insurable weeks of work.

Mr. Dufour: But instead...

Mrs. Lalanne: That's one example.

Mr. Dufour: ...of government programs to assist businesses, I'd like you to identify concrete things. You were talking about welding just now... Obviously we can't train people just to be welders. But what is your concrete job-training proposal for small and medium-sized businesses?

Mrs. Lalanne: We're going to start cooperatives, Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: We already have them.

Mrs. Lalanne: We're going to be our own bosses and we're not going to lay people off.

Mr. Dufour: We already have that too.

Mrs. Lalanne: We're going to produce useful things that people need.

Mr. Dufour: OK.

Mrs. Lalanne: There's lots of stuff we could be doing but we're not. I say that a people that can't meet its own needs won't survive for long. First we're going to have to put on our thinking caps. And people who graduate from university, in business administration, with their brand-new diplomas, we're going to put them in contact with the other manual workers we have at our offices, and they're going to start cooperatives. We'll go the granola route; we'll grow linseed if we have to, Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Dufour: Good luck to you!

A voice: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: Good luck, for sure. But I'm telling you, we're going to do it because people are ready...

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

Mrs. Lalanne: ...to do it.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Lalanne: Anyway... If we get other ideas along the way, so much the better. But the first thing is the referendum...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Save some for Mr. Desjardins...

Mr. Desjardins: Yes...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...who has some questions for you.

Mr. Desjardins: Yes, because...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Desjardins: ...it's the best part, the best part saved for the end!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Desjardins: First I'd like to apologize for being here. I've probably got the plague, but you have before you a representative of the federal government. I see you wrote your document in a hurry but you see there are elements of your argument we could debate, such as free trade, which you refer to. You know very well that the current government - if there's anybody here who will probably be opposed to free trade in a future, independent Québec, it's Mr. Larose - that the duly elected government adopted free trade and that eventually, regardless of Québec's future - whether it's independent or not - free trade may be there just the same.

So when you say that free trade has caused us to match our social programs to the United States, I think you'll have to admit, Madam, that if you're sick in the United States and you have to spend a month in the hospital, or if you go... or if your children go to American universities, it'll cost you a lot more than it would in Québec and that, despite all your criticism, the social programs we have such as family allowances, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, we have one of the most generous systems in the world. I think you've gotta give me that much?

Mrs. Lalanne: I'll give you that much. But why compare ourselves to the worst, to people who don't have anything, like the United States? There's only 25% of the population that's covered by unemployment insurance. Everybody knows they have no health insurance. But why should I compare myself to the worst? In any case, we weren't so much against free trade as we were against the Mulroney agreement, do you see?

Mr. Desjardins: OK. It's the treaty itself and not the principle itself.

Mrs. Lalanne: Yes, that's it.

Mr. Desjardins: OK.

Mrs. Lalanne: Because, obviously I'm quite prepared to trade a basket of apples for a basket of oranges. I have no problem with that.

Mr. Desjardins: I'd like to ask you...

Mrs. Lalanne: Providing we're the ones who make it, the trade, and it meets our needs and theirs...

Mr. Desjardins: You refer in your document, there are two lines: "But the failure of Meech Lake was a blow nonetheless for people who still held out some hope." For you...

Mrs. Lalanne: Of course. Which included me, which included us. Aw c'mon, the maple leaf...

Mr. Desjardins: You had hopes pinned on Meech? You had hopes pinned on it? What would it have changed for you, the Meech Lake Accord?

Mrs. Lalanne: Well, at least, if they had - I don't want to get into a big emotional discussion of this either - recognized, at least, if they had recognized us as a distinct society, well we would have felt like they understood us. We wouldn't have run smack into a brick wall of misunderstanding. We would've been able to talk to each other. The minimum condition for someone to be able to talk to someone else is to feel understood. They wouldn't even recognize us as a distinct society when we really are...

Mr. Desjardins: Your reasoning...

Mrs. Lalanne: ...to the depths of our being.

Mr. Desjardins: Your reasoning leads you to conclude that sovereignty maybe wouldn't be a cure-all for all the problems according to you, but even if some economists have told us: It will be almost neutral in terms of prosperity; and others have told us: There may be difficult problems. You don't have any problem with that.

Mrs. Lalanne: I think that if I have to tighten my belt... For years governments have been telling us we have to tighten our belts. Well, all right! We'll tighten them for ourselves. If employees take wage cuts at companies, we'll tighten our belts. We'll take wage cuts. We'll do this, we'll do that. Who gets the benefit? I don't mind tightening my belt at all. Anyways, it'll take us maybe 20 years before we get out of the hole with our \$28-billion deficit, which will be divided up and we'll get our share. It'll take

years. That's not so serious. At least one day we'll get somewhere.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll have questions from the representative of the Government party, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Good evening. I've been listening to you just now. I'm rather fascinated but at the same time you scare me one heck of a lot. Because the solutions look so easy to you. There are no jobs. We'll create jobs for ourselves. We'll grow grain. We'll grow linseed. It worries me when people see things that way. Because I know it's not realistic. You said the suicide rate was dangerous. Did you know that in Sweden there's a full-employment policy and an unemployment rate of 3.5%, which is very high for them? And they have the highest suicide rate.

Mrs. Lalanne: I'm not going to commit suicide because there aren't any jobs here.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): And it's where the alcoholism rate is highest. So when you say that that's the solution, I think it's a shame you're trying to present that image, because I think it misleads people. It's not true that it'll be as easy as all that. It's not true and you yourself know it. Everybody knows it and nobody's fooled by it.

Mrs. Lalanne: I know it'll be difficult. I said so just now. But it might be less difficult. And in Sweden, if they commit suicide because they have jobs, well, that's pretty sad. At least we won't be committing suicide because we don't have them. That's already something. So, given the things that have to be done, I'm not prepared to say nothing can be done and we can't produce anything here. I say: Never say die.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): But you agree...

Mrs. Lalanne: I know it'll be hard.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): You agree by saying: Well, we're not about to commit suicide because we don't have jobs. That's not an answer, it's not the type of dialogue that will get us anywhere, that will enable us to understand essentially what we want. I too am for more autonomy for Québec and I believe in it. I believe in it like a lot of people do, I think. In any case, few people believe in it. I'm very motivated and my mind is made up. But I know we'll have to work hard. I know we'll have to make sacrifices. And my greatest fear isn't that we're going to scare people, because that's fashionable. Some people say: Oh! They're getting

out the scarecrows to scare people. No. It's to provide food for thought before we make a decision, because soon we'll have to make a decision that commits us and it'll be for a long time. So the consequences will be significant. So I say to myself: We have to do it. We the politicians have an extremely important educational role. Because we're not the ones who'll decide. You say, and I agree with you, that it's not up to us to decide. It's up to the people. Our role, you see, is to inform the people, really inform them, so they'll understand the issue fully when they make their decision. I think it's dangerous when we present things as being too easy. I think it's dangerous because it isn't true. There are people who will take it at face value, and that worries me.

Mrs. Lalanne: What I find more dangerous is that people say we're going to lose our pensions, we're going to lose everything. I find that really dangerous.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I don't agree with that either. I was one of the first to criticize that attitude.

Mrs. Lalanne: Well, yes. Thank you.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): There are extremes.

Mrs. Lalanne: Of course.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I agree with you. But you'll agree with me that we're going to have to roll up our sleeves; we're going to have to work hard.

Mrs. Lalanne: Oh, yes.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): That's the reality.

Mrs. Lalanne: Yes, and it won't be easy.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Right.

Mrs. Lalanne: But we're going to do it because we can; we've got the strength to do it.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): In that sense I agree with you. That's the kind of language I'm much more comfortable with, and I think most people are too. That's the language of reality. Through our efforts, and if all Quebecers are prepared to make all these efforts and sacrifices to achieve results, then I think there's a marvellous future ahead of us. But we're going to have to create it and it won't be a rose garden and there won't be any magic solution. Sovereignty won't be any magic solution for the situation women are in. There won't be

any magic solution for full employment. There won't be any magic solution for... There's no magic solution for anything. But it will be a means.

Mrs. Lalanne: It won't be a magic solution, but maybe it's the ideal situation just the same.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): In any case, I won't go so far as to say I share your point of view because I'm here to listen to you, form an opinion and express it at the end, but I think there's some truth in what you're saying.

Mrs. Lalanne: But it was my duty to come here...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Yes.

Mrs. Lalanne: ...and tell you what I'm telling you about the statistics. And when I tell you that I go to the unemployment insurance office and I see what there are as jobs, criteria: you have to be on welfare to be entitled to a PAIE program, or there's almost no jobs, unstable jobs, part-time, or they say "There's no life like it!" to get people into the armed forces, and then they order plastic bags for them, the people who've gone to the Gulf.

A voice: You know, Madam...

Mrs. Lalanne: I'm all for national security, but it's tough when you see young people reduced to that.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I spend a certain number of hours at my riding office, and there are people who come to me with their tales of woe. I've had mothers come to me with babies in their arms and say: Listen, I haven't eaten for a week and my baby... I don't have any diapers and I don't have any milk, what do I do? I've seen that. We find ways of helping them, we manage.

Mrs. Lalanne: The MPs send them to the Action-chômage office and we go and get their cheque, we make calls for them, we provide a very good service. I have to tell you that it isn't...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): On occasion you've been an excellent resource, I must admit.

Mrs. Lalanne: It's not the fault of the federal MPs... - sorry, what a slip! - federal civil servants, they're not the ones who passed the law. I'd like to ask something here. If we become sovereign, there are 176 unemployment insurance offices and 7090 federal civil servants who will have to be retrained, who will have to

be given jobs. One thing I want to keep is the unemployment insurance concept. It'll be called Québec unemployment insurance...

A voice: Work insurance...

Mrs. Lalanne: ...or Québec employment insurance. But we absolutely have to keep the concept of insurance, and the benefits paid out, and not a welfare plan. We don't want to be on welfare any more, in any way. We want to be active members of society, we want to take part too, especially the poor people, in social change.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So the floor...

Mrs. Lalanne: ...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): ...if you don't mind I'd like to draw a conclusion. You know, you present your argument with a great deal of passion and intensity, and I think we need people like you. It's very important. I just wanted to qualify some of the things you said because, as I said to you just now, I don't want us to present things as being easy when we know they won't be. But I respect your point of view and I appreciate people like you. And I think we need people like you. So keep on doing what you're doing. It's very important.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The floor is now Mrs. Harel's for the party forming the Opposition.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm familiar with your fine work here in the Québec City region and I understand you represent the Action-chômage movement for the Québec City region. That's right. And the work you've done with the Action-chômage movement for all of Québec on the recent unemployment-insurance reform. Just now our colleague, Mr. Desjardins, asked you to discuss some economic problems that might arise in a sovereign Québec. But I was thinking it might be more useful to hear about the current economic problems of the people who use your services, who are having difficulties. Maybe just a comment in passing, because we did a sort of survey of the health and education programs, simply to remind everyone that between now and 1996, it seems to me, the federal government will be withdrawing completely from the financing of health and post-secondary education programs. The government now estimates the 1990 shortfall at \$1.3 billion. But in 1996 we won't be getting one cent from Ottawa to finance health and post-secondary education programs. And even today - and you remind us in your brief and we can hassle about the form - but you remind us of an obvious fact: the federal government has

completely withdrawn from financing the unemployment insurance fund. That's enabled it to save \$2.9 billion, hasn't it? I've often thought that Duplessis must be turning over in his grave because he was the one who approved the transfer of unemployment insurance from provincial jurisdiction; he did it because Ottawa was paying for it. In other words Ottawa was paying for all the 4% surplus portion, which is called structural unemployment in technical terms, which is ultimately unemployment that is due to situations such as free trade or technological change. The 4% surplus, which was ultimately in excess, that's what was financed but won't be any more, and which is now completely, solely financed by workers and employers. And I understand from your brief - I hope I'm not misinterpreting you, tell me if I am - that you're not so much against free trade as you're against the complete absence of programs to enable workers to retrain and get ready and cope with free trade. Am I... (6:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Lalanne: You've got a very good understanding of the regulations, Mrs. Harel, a very good understanding.

Mrs. Harel: Ha, ha, ha! Do you want me to keep going? Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: You were off to a great start! It was most edifying...

Mrs. Harel: In your...

Mrs. Lalanne: ...and very real, most of all very real.

Mrs. Harel: Perhaps another element: I don't see it and that surprises me because it's fairly new. It's a concern that has been voiced by André Bourbeau, Minister of Manpower, Income Security and Occupational Training. Not only will there now be the total commitments of \$2.9 billion but in addition the unemployment insurance fund may finance the portion that was paid by the federal government for job training, in other words \$1.8 billion. And that's the 15% found in the Act. This will enable the federal government to get, in addition to what it no longer pays, about \$1.1 billion to finance its own job-training programs and ultimately to finance its intrusion into job training. But I'd like to go back to the people you see. Do you just see unemployed people who are under federal jurisdiction or do you also see unemployed people who are under provincial jurisdiction? Because there's both. We sometimes forget that there are unemployed people who have finished their unemployment stamps and who are on welfare, but who are unemployed...

Mrs. Lalanne: We see them too.

Mrs. Harel: ...and we forget that 65% of the people on welfare, who are looking for jobs, have lost their jobs. Do both types go to see you?

Mrs. Lalanne: We see not only people who are under federal jurisdiction or who are under provincial jurisdiction but also people who aren't under any jurisdiction, people who aren't entitled to anything because they've gone over the amount just a little, or they're working for minimum wage. Or they're earning the maximum but they're working restricted hours, insufficient hours. We really have seasonal unstable workers - that's one of the main characteristics of Québec City - but we serve a broader group than that.

Mrs. Harel: So people who aren't under provincial or federal jurisdiction, but they're unemployed because their wives or their husbands work...

Mrs. Lalanne: Yes, we provide services for everybody.

Mrs. Harel: ...and ultimately because they have a spouse who works, they're not eligible for anything, not for the training program...

Mrs. Lalanne: That's why, Mrs. Harel... I'm here on behalf of them. Besides, they asked me to; I didn't come here on my own initiative. Jeanne, go on. Listen, we're sick and tired. We're fed up, like it says in the letter. It's the ordinary people who're talking like that. A long time ago they noticed that Ottawa manages poverty instead of fighting it. We want it to be the opposite, even if we have to make more effort, a concerted effort. I think Ottawa could still be an ally... Louis-Joseph Papineau asked for it in 1794 when he presented his 92 resolutions for the people. He said: Oh, maybe Ottawa could remain an ally. But we want it to be an ally provided that it doesn't harm us, and we'll decide that after the referendum. Up to what point can they allow that? We can accept them and they can understand us too because, it seems, we've got a big understanding problem between them and us.

Mrs. Harel: There was quite a lot of discussion of manpower mobility yesterday, when Mr. Chrétien was sitting in the chair you're occupying now. And Mr. Chrétien argued in favour of manpower mobility. I said to myself that I would ask someone like you, someone who meets lots of unemployed people, if there are a lot of people you meet who want to go and work or who do go and work outside Québec and are enthusiastic about doing this.

Mrs. Lalanne: They do it unwillingly. They

go off and plant trees in British Columbia. Well, I'd rather see the trees planted in Québec. There are small forests that are being deforested. But they go; they go unwillingly. They're anxious to get back; this is where their home is and it's no fun exiling yourself that way. There was a time, in 1983-1984 - I've got the press file here - when it was "Go west, young man." People went there. Anyway the Westerners didn't think much of that, seeing people arriving... Sometimes they called us "frogs". In any case, that doesn't matter. I don't think it's reasonable to move people around like that. There are Anglophones who come and work here. We give them a nice welcome. We personally like them a lot. It's not the Anglophone people we personally resent; they shouldn't feel like the target or the object of our hatred. That's not it at all. It's just that we want to take our place proudly, standing on our own feet. We really want to take things in hand. But, yes, there's lots of people who leave and I'm telling you they come back quick, Mrs. Harel. And they're lucky when they have enough weeks to qualify for unemployment insurance.

Mrs. Harel: In addition, manpower mobility, someone from the Gaspé said to me yesterday that now it consisted of going to places where you need fewer weeks in certain regions of Québec to be eligible for unemployment. It consisted of going to regions such as the Gaspé or the Lower St. Lawrence where, ultimately, you can get unemployment when you wouldn't be able to elsewhere in Québec. Is...

Mrs. Lalanne: It's crazy to have to tell yourself that, as a people: I live in Québec City. I have my house or apartment, my cats, my friends, my neighbours but I'm moving to the Gaspé because I'll be entitled to unemployment there. Ultimately what would we be reduced to as a people? I don't accept that as a person and on behalf of the people I represent. We want to work at home, we want to live at home, even if we have to tighten our belts. We're going to roll up our sleeves, like Mr. Bélanger said just now, and I'm telling you we're going to create something good. I'm confident of it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The time has run out, so we'll have to adjourn the sitting very soon.

Mrs. Lalanne: May I ask you one last favour?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Of course.

Mrs. Lalanne: Hold it on June 23rd, the referendum, please...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Lalanne: ...so we can decide, so we can celebrate on the 24th. For once we'll have something to celebrate, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We granted you the favour of being able to ask the question, but we didn't say we'd give you an answer. So, thank you, Mrs. Lalanne, and the people who are with you.

Mrs. Lalanne: Thank you, too, most respectfully.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Lalanne, and your group. The sitting is now adjourned for a 38-minute break. We'll resume at 7:00 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:22 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:09 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...if the members would please take their seats, we'll begin in a few moments. We'll be resuming our work this evening with a presentation by Raymond Brouillet, who represents a group of professors and students from the Faculty of Philosophy, Université Laval. Mr. Brouillet, you have the floor.

Group of professors and students from the Faculty of Philosophy, Université Laval

Mr. Brouillet (Raymond): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, let me start by thanking you for inviting me to address you. It's an honour for me and for the professors and the representatives of the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students' associations of the Faculty of Philosophy of Université Laval, the people who have freely lent their support to this brief. Without further delay, I'll attempt the tour de force, even more of a tour de force, I dare say, for a philosopher, of presenting in five minutes the main lines of our brief, which is already meant to be a summary of the position I propose to defend before you.

Our brief attacks the question of the constitutional status of Québec from the angle of strategy rather than content. The question we ask ourselves, and which we put before you, is the following: what means does present-day Québec have at its disposal to bring about substantial changes to its political and constitutional status, in the direction of a considerable increase in its political powers, possibly going as far as sovereignty? The thesis that I'm attempting to establish, as follow-up to my brief, is addressed to everyone for whom the status quo is unacceptable and for whom any change to be hoped for must be in the direction

of a substantial increase in Québec's powers.

I state my thesis as follows. There can be no real start towards solving the issue of Québec's political and constitutional status in the direction hoped for by the majority without, first and foremost, a decision by the majority of the people of Québec asserting its sovereignty. To support my thesis, I first refer to the legal framework in which the question is being asked and to the Canadian sociopolitical context. The affirmation of Québec's sovereignty by the people of Québec is a necessity if Québec is to modify its constitutional status or be able to negotiate on a basis of equality. Otherwise, the ultimate fate of Québec will continue, from the legal standpoint, to depend on the wishes of English Canada, and we will remain in a constitutional impasse.

My analysis of the sociopolitical context leads me to refute three types of arguments put forth by certain well-known figures to attempt to justify yet again having recourse to negotiation in order to reach a new constitutional arrangement, even before the people of Québec have made a decision whether to assert their sovereignty.

The first category of arguments. There are those who believe that a clear mandate by the population of Québec to negotiate a new arrangement would suffice. I think I detect this argument just beneath the surface of certain statements by spokespersons of the Liberal Party. I'll be happy to be proved wrong. I would answer this argument as follows: during the Meech Lake Accord negotiations, the Liberal Party received a very clear mandate from the population and we can see what results it produced.

Another category of arguments. There are those who believe that in order to begin to solve the problem, it should be combined with the threat of independence. This is the position favoured by Mr. Robert Normand, editor of *Le Soleil*, in a speech that appeared in one of the October issues of *Le Soleil*, and recently by Professor Léon Dion, who spoke of the threat of a referendum on independence as a knife at the throat of English Canada. I think that this scenario, far from causing English Canada to accept such a formal demand, would be more likely to be seen as a provocation. I think it's time that we stopped asking English Canada to decide about our sovereignty for us. I hope to be able to come back to this strategy during the question period.
(7:15 p.m.)

Third category of arguments. For certain people, this threat of independence is not at all necessary to make English Canada take action, since, as they dare to assert, only a few individuals rejected the Meech Lake Accord. We've all heard that. You'll recognize a position analogous to the one supported by the president

of the Conseil du patronat du Québec during a broadcast of *Le Point* a couple of months ago in which Messrs. Lucien Bouchard and Gérard Larose took part. This position didn't enjoy much credibility, since everyone, or almost everyone, knows very well that a very large majority of English Canada were fiercely opposed to the Meech Lake Accord and that MP Elijah Harper could not have played the part he did without the strong opposition of English Canada as a whole.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Brouillet, we've already somewhat exceeded the time. I would just ask you to move a little faster, if possible.

Mr. Brouillet: A few notes and I'm finished. To wrap up my analysis of the Canadian and international legal framework and the Canadian sociopolitical context, I conclude that the means by which we can make it possible to achieve substantial changes to Québec's constitutional status in line with what the majority of Quebecers want is to assert Québec's sovereignty. I end my brief on this note. It would be unfortunate if the Commission did not face up to the question of strategy and concerned itself only with content. That would be building constitutional castles in the air, or rather building on the quicksand of the Canadian constitutional negotiating framework. The only constitutional "castles" that have a chance of becoming a reality will be built on the solid bedrock represented by the desire of the people of Québec to assume their sovereignty. Let us first decide on sovereignty, and negotiation as equals will thereby become possible. Mr. Chairman, the time available being what it is, I'll limit myself to this brief summary. Each part of it could stand much more elaborate development, but I'm counting on the question period to enable me to return to the subject. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will start with questions from a representative of the Government party, Mrs. Bégin.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Brouillet, I've familiarized myself with your brief, and what it mainly deals with, in the final analysis, is the means Québec has at its disposal to make substantial changes to its political and constitutional status. You conclude that the Canadian Constitution provides no mechanism for Québec to change its status unilaterally within Canada as a whole. You say that the Constitution instead provides for the agreement of this province and 50% of the population, or, in certain cases, unanimity. For this reason, you conclude that the only means Québec still has for providing itself with a new

constitutional framework is by way of sovereignty. And subsequently you'll go and negotiate as equals with any partner you choose. That's what it says on page 2 of your brief.

You'll recall, Mr. Brouillet, that we were on our tour of the province and we heard from one of your former colleagues, former MNA Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, who stated in his brief, and I quote, "In fact, we can very well transform the federal union into a confederal union without breaking up for a period of time something that almost all of us wish to maintain. It isn't necessary to break up the Common Market or withdraw from it just to make changes in it or then join it again. What must be done is to make our specific proposal for a new agreement and, in contrast to the procedure used in 1980, obtain a clear, unequivocal mandate for sovereignty through a referendum." So Mr. Charbonneau doesn't seem to share your point of view completely, and I'd like to hear what you have to say about that.

Mr. Brouillet: It's more that I don't usually share his.

Mrs. Bégin: All right.

Mr. Brouillet: Listen, it's a purely theoretical view. We can build castles in the air, constitutional castles in the air that seem to be the ideal solution from our point of view. But when we look at the means of implementing them, it's another matter. We can't decide unilaterally to change the way jurisdiction is shared between the federal government and the Québec government. We first have to acquire, as the great constitutional scholars tell us, jurisdiction over what jurisdictions we have, if you see what I mean, and do it through sovereignty. It's obvious that if English Canada accepts this, it's a different story. My assumption is that English Canada isn't ready to accept a radical, in-depth revision of the Canadian federal context, and starting from that assumption, if we accept certain premises, we must be logical in our conclusions. Mr. Charbonneau's conclusion presupposes a belief that English Canada will come and sit down with us and accept with good grace our negotiating a confederation by mutual agreement.

Second, a common market and the maintenance of those institutions can be achieved even if we assert our sovereignty. Listen, when we talk about the people of Québec asserting their sovereignty, it doesn't mean that in itself it will destroy the economic community, after all. Come on now. It's clear that at that point, the economic community will be negotiated in terms of how it is to be administered in the future. But that doesn't mean we're putting an end to the economic community

by the very fact of asserting our sovereignty. Goods will continue to flow, and capital too, at that point. But it's obvious that it will be necessary, once sovereignty has been decided on, to then sit down and negotiate the methods we wish to have for administering that economic community in the future. So I don't agree with Mr. Charbonneau at all.

Mrs. Bégin: No, but if I understand Mr. Brouillet correctly on this point, there is something you said that I would like you to explain further. You say that if we declare our sovereignty, the free movement of goods, capital, and persons is going to continue with Canada. That's what I thought I understood.

Mr. Brouillet: But do you think that the day after the National Assembly, after the people, decide on sovereignty, that barriers are going to go up, that they're going to say no more trade, there will be no more flow?

Mrs. Bégin: Yes, but there are going to be... As far as I can see, if...

Mr. Brouillet: Listen, there will simply be a declaration saying that in these matters, the status quo is to continue, and later on we're going to negotiate the methods for administering these things for the future. In the meantime, let's discuss the question and allow a certain period of time to discuss and negotiate methods for the future. But it doesn't mean that...

Mrs. Bégin: Excuse me, but...

Mr. Brouillet: ...abruptly, we're going to break off all relations...

Mrs. Bégin: Excuse me, but I don't understand you, Mr. Brouillet, and I would very much like to understand you...

Mr. Brouillet: Is your... Is my mike working? Yes?

Mrs. Bégin: What you're saying is that sovereignty is to be declared unilaterally, and despite that, Canada will continue to leave its borders open to all movement of goods and capital. It seems to me that when you are sovereign and there are two countries, there are borders, there are customs, there are...

Mr. Brouillet: No! No!

Mrs. Bégin: In the final analysis, there are two countries.

Mr. Brouillet: No! No! Listen, customs, customs... We'll have it if we want to have it. If

we want to have customs, we'll have it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That uses up the time that has been...

Mr. Brouillet: Listen, there are sovereign countries that don't have customs. The European Community, it's the...

Mrs. Bégin: Yes, there are agreements...

Mr. Brouillet: It's the example par excellence.

Mrs. Bégin: But there must be agreements, Mr. Brouillet! I recognize that at present there are no customs between the United States and Canada...

Mr. Brouillet: Or would you prefer that there be agreements with Canada to erect barriers where none exist?

Mrs. Bégin: I recognize that. But there is a treaty between the two of them. Are we going to have such a treaty by declaring...

Mr. Brouillet: There is the short term, and then there are the medium and long term. I say that at the moment the people decide on sovereignty as a principle, it doesn't mean there is a simultaneous decision to erect customs barriers. Come on!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That uses up the time allowed for this exchange. We will now go on to Mr. Léonard, representing the Official Opposition.

Mr. Léonard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Brouillet, at the same time, I'd like to greet you as a former colleague. I agree with you when you say on page 4, roughly, that MP Harper's obstruction appeared like a life buoy that enabled certain parties to escape from the political morass in which the Meech Lake Accord had placed them. It's stating it a bit baldly, I'd say, but I think that, at any rate, there was a consensus in English Canada to the effect that the Meech Lake Accord was in a way Québec's imposition of a blueprint for society to which English Canada had difficulty adhering. In any case, they weren't prepared to grant the concessions contained in the Accord. I think this explains to a great extent the hesitation we saw in that regard. But I followed and read your brief from the perspective of the current constitutional reality. I think it's a certainty that we can't, in my opinion, change federalism into... with the modifying clauses that exist, the amending formula that exists. So it comes back to the international level, to our placing ourselves under the control of international law,

in the process of acceding to sovereignty. What makes you say that once we are in... under the control of international law, we would have greater negotiating power? And is it to be hoped that these negotiations would go fast, or that we would commit ourselves in a hurry? And does this mean negotiations exclusively with Canada?

Mr. Brouillet: Well, listen, I think it's obvious that at first it's just Canada that we'll have to negotiate with, and as fast as possible. There are, however, certain international agreements that could require our adherence as quickly as possible. First, our joining those organizations and also entering into agreements such as the GATT accord. And then it will also be necessary to look at the question of free trade. It's clear that we'll have to deal with those questions as quickly as possible so as to be able to enter into such agreements.

But first and foremost, we'll have to come to some agreement with Canada about maintaining the customs union, for example, and maintaining the monetary union too. I think that will be pretty fast on both sides. My perception is first that it will have to be considered beforehand. The National Assembly is going to see the referendum coming, and is probably going to know too, as we will, through surveys, whether there is a chance it will pass or not. There are going to have to be contacts, meetings, so that the day the majority of the people of Québec make a decision, the National Assembly can decide in favour of the principle of sovereignty at the same time the people come to their decision. And at the same time, until further notice, we should maintain a customs union and a monetary union. That's one thing that's the status quo in those questions, and we'll postpone negotiations about administering it until later.

I'm convinced that English Canada and businesses are going to be very happy to say that the two Canadian governments should quickly, immediately come out in favour of the status quo on those questions. It's to the advantage of both sides, so what do you expect? As for my perception, to answer your question, it's obvious that our major concern, first, is going to be with English Canada, in the immediate future.

Mr. Léonard: I agree with you that there are at least two factors that will lead English Canada to negotiate quickly. First, there is the share of the debt and the stabilization of all the various economic activities; the other is the whole question of transport because you have to go through Québec to link the two parts of Canada. That really seems important to me. Well, I'd like to return to one point: I think what you say in your report is that, in the final analysis, we have to establish a balance of power that is

sizable, recognized, and unassailable. I suppose you are referring to the referendum. You didn't state that very clearly. For you, it would mean a referendum. When and how do you see it happening?

Mr. Brouillet: As far as the referendum goes, I think we have to start with it as soon as possible. But I say as soon as possible; there has to be an agreement. There has to be an attempt, among all the members of the Commission, to achieve the greatest possible consensus on it. The political parties that are to receive the Commission's report are going to have to study it and take a position. And it's at that point that we're going to see whether, among politicians, a large majority, a certain consensus emerges to go ahead with this question. And at that point, we mustn't hesitate. As soon as it's ready, we go ahead. But we have to be sure that all those things are thought out and that there is the greatest possible effort to achieve such a consensus for a large majority of the people.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to questions by the members. Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Brouillet, you sketched a portrait of sovereignty for us that is rather optimistic, to say the least, from your point of view, in any case. As for me, this isn't the first time people have come here with briefs and said to us that we're going to declare sovereignty and once we've declared sovereignty, we'll leave the door open; we won't be stuck inside Québec. We're going to keep free movement of goods and people. We won't burden ourselves with our share of the debt for the moment. We'll take over the powers we need, as if the rest of Canada were just sitting there, impassive, amorphous, waiting to say: Way to go, Québec! You've declared your sovereignty, we don't see that as a provocation, and whenever you feel like it, you can come and take control of education. And we'll just applaud, and whenever you feel like it again, you can come and take control of communications, and we'll applaud again, and then when you tell us, well, maybe we want the debt, we'll sit down with you guys and negotiate. I find that absolutely amazing.

Mr. Brouillet: Mr. Beaudry, to start off, that's a completely false perspective. Your question is in a false perspective. When a people has the right to self-determination, it decides on it by majority. It isn't going to ask for the transfer of education. It isn't going to ask for the transfer of this and that, piecemeal.

Mr. Beaudry: It's going to take them.

Mr. Brouillet: It has transferred everything at the level of powers and jurisdiction.

Mr. Beaudry: And after that, just who is it going to negotiate with, Mr. Brouillet?

Mr. Brouillet: Now... Please. One minute, please. In the medium term, the way to ensure transfer of the exercise of jurisdiction... That's what is negotiated. But we don't negotiate the transfer of jurisdiction, my dear Sir. We...

Mr. Beaudry: But who are you negotiating with at that point? And to negotiate how to do it, as you say, to negotiate, the other party must wait until you want to, because you've decided to negotiate only in December 1990 or 1991 because it isn't your affair until you have negotiated the power you want to exercise.

Mr. Brouillet: Where do you get that, that business about making you wait?

Mr. Beaudry: From you, Sir. That's the way you've established your sovereignty, because you don't want all of them, all the powers, the next morning. That's the answer you gave Louise Bégin.

Mr. Brouillet: It wasn't about that. You're mixing up two questions, Sir.

Mr. Beaudry: I'm not mixing up anything. I'm trying to look at the practical side of your brand of sovereignty.

Mr. Brouillet: No, no. But there are fundamental distinctions that the mind is capable of making between the decision...

Mr. Beaudry: Yes.

Mr. Brouillet: ...to transfer the entire range of powers and the moment you decide to exercise them fully.

Mr. Beaudry: Who is that "you" you're talking about?

Mr. Brouillet: Do you understand the difference?

Mr. Beaudry: Who do you mean when you say "you" decide to transfer?

Mr. Brouillet: The people of Québec decide.

Mr. Beaudry: And the others, the English, those people, while all this is going on, they're waiting for you?

Mr. Brouillet: They have nothing to say

about it.

Mr. Beaudry: Ah, so! Well, in that case, when you are finally ready to negotiate, are they going to be there with nothing to say about it?

(7:30 p.m.)

Mr. Brouillet: Mr. Beaudry...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Just a minute. You will try to speak in turn, if you please.

Mr. Brouillet: No, listen...

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Brouillet: No, Mr. Beaudry, these are simple issues. Just try to listen.

Mr. Beaudry: Listen, I don't want to be made to look like an idiot. I don't think this is altogether simple for Quebecers.

Mr. Brouillet: No, no, no. Just listen. The decision about sovereignty is...

Mr. Beaudry: The decision about sovereignty, I agree with you, if you are...

Mr. Brouillet: ...the people of Québec.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes. That, that's OK.

Mr. Brouillet: OK, fine. Don't mix up the two.

Mr. Beaudry: But it takes two to negotiate.

Mr. Brouillet: Negotiate about the details of the transfer of exercise of powers.

Mr. Beaudry: It takes two to do it.

Mr. Brouillet: Yes, it takes two.

Mr. Beaudry: So the other party, namely Canada, is going to have to sit down at the negotiating table with you. They're not obliged to sit around waiting to find out whether you feel like negotiating on Tuesday morning. Do you understand? That's your problem. And up to now, no one has answered it.

Mr. Brouillet: But it's your problem, my dear Sir. And who is telling you...

Mr. Beaudry: It's not my problem yet.

Mr. Brouillet: ...that there will be a delay...

Mr. Beaudry: It may become my problem, but up to this point it isn't yet.

Mr. Brouillet: But it is your problem, my dear Sir.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry has high hopes, but it hasn't gotten to be his problem yet.

Mr. Beaudry: No.

Mr. Brouillet: My dear Mr. Beaudry, when English Canada comes and tells us how to... That's what is being said, that Canada will come and ask us to negotiate. And you tell us that you're going to refuse to negotiate when they want to negotiate. Your position is illogical.

Mr. Beaudry: That's what you're saying, that Canada will come on its knees...

Mr. Brouillet: No, no, that's what you're telling me.

Mr. Beaudry: ...to negotiate with Québec.

Mr. Brouillet: You're the one who's saying that.

Mr. Beaudry: But if it were the contrary, Mr. Brouillet.

Mr. Brouillet: It's you who are telling me that. So you're going to refuse to negotiate when they want to negotiate? You're going to postpone it?

Mr. Beaudry: No. I know that you're going to want to negotiate, but Canada won't wait for you indefinitely. Do you understand?

Mr. Brouillet: Ah, another question!

Mr. Beaudry: I do have another question to ask you.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: Well, we argued a bit over that one... The second question is that your report is contradictory.

Mr. Brouillet: Ah! Go on.

Mr. Beaudry: On the last page, you say, "Let us first decide in favour of sovereignty, negotiate as equals, we will become... At that point everything will become possible." So you're assuming that you're going to be able to negotiate with Canada, the federal government. I understand what you're driving at. Wait... My question hasn't come up yet, at that point. One moment. I see what you're driving at. On page 2, in contrast, you say, "Moreover, even if they

wanted to, they couldn't." Speaking of Mr. Mulroney, Mr. Peterson... There, you tell us in principle that if the current federal government, with Mr. Mulroney, and perhaps even the other provinces, but Mr. Mulroney in particular, who is going to be the person you're talking to at some point... If the government wanted to negotiate with Québec, today, on certain powers, certain changes, it couldn't do so because the Constitution doesn't allow it.

Mr. Brouillet: The people of Québec have not yet come out in favour of sovereignty. Follow it through to its logical conclusion.

Mr. Beaudry: OK. It doesn't allow it. How can you ask Canada, once Québec has separated, to have the powers that would enable it to negotiate one on one at that point? Where will it get them, pull them out of thin air, or what?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry, this will be the last exchange. That's the question, now the answer and we're through.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, yes. It's my last question. Yesterday a professor of constitutional law was asked the same question and he wasn't able to answer it.

Mr. Brouillet: Ah!

Mr. Beaudry: But you're a professor of philosophy, so maybe we'll have better luck.

Mr. Brouillet: Mr. Beaudry, really, there is no contradiction, if you read the text. That's just what my demonstration is based on. The fact that currently Mr. Mulroney can't negotiate bilaterally with the government of Québec because of the amending formula, that's what makes sovereignty necessary. If we want...

Mr. Beaudry: That's still about Mr. Mulroney's status.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry, I apologize, but time is really up.

Mr. Brouillet: No, no. Listen. To wind up... Mr. Beaudry... Canada...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Brouillet, I must apologize to you too, but time is up for both of you. Anyway, it has been a very interesting presentation, which has certainly livened up our evening. And just as well. It will keep us alert until the end of our day. May I express my thanks to you, Mr. Brouillet, and to those who joined you in preparing this presentation by a group of students and professors of philosophy.

Mr. Brouillet: Is it over already, Mr. Chairman? Is it already over?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): All right, try to finish in one quick sentence. Go ahead and wind up.

Mr. Brouillet: My wind-up is going to be very simple. Mr. Mulroney, along with Canada, signed the United Nations Charter, in which the principle of self-determination of peoples is recognized. If the people exercise this right to self-determination in their desire to be sovereign, Mr. Mulroney is bound by Canada's signature and he will have to respect it. What will remain to be negotiated is not the decision to grant powers to Québec, but rather the details of transfer. So that this is done calmly, deadlines can be set, and if after a certain amount of time it seems to be dragging on too long without any result, Québec can say: starting next year, we're going to be the ones who administer family allowances; starting next year, taxes will be paid to Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That seems a perfect place to finish, Mr. Brouillet. Thank you, Mr. Brouillet.

Mr. Brouillet: Sirs. And we can continue the discussion in the hall. There are so many other interesting issues in this debate.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear Professor Daniel Turp, who is one of the experts who accepted our invitation and whose brief you have received. As in the case of other invited experts, this will be a one-hour presentation. The expert has 10 minutes to state the basic points that he will be talking about later as he answers questions. Mr. Turp, you have the floor.

Mr. Daniel Turp

Mr. Turp (Daniel): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, it was in order to serve the people of Québec and your Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, in which I believe much of the people's hope lies today, that I accepted your invitation. I'm proud to be able to make a modest contribution to your process, and grateful to you for having requested my participation.

As objective as expertise might be — you've asked me here as an expert, if I understand correctly — it must lead to observations. In answering the first question you addressed to experts, I arrived at an observation that colours the entire scientific approach you asked me to

take and that leads me this evening to present you with concrete proposals and legal drafts which I hope will support and influence your reflection and help prepare Québec's political and constitutional future.

It is an important observation. In the present context of Canadian federation and in light of Québec's historical relationship with the other members of Confederation and with Ottawa, I believe it is neither realistic nor desirable for you to propose a new type of federalism to the people of Québec or to recommend to the National Assembly that the terms of Québec's membership in Confederation be renewed.

It is not realistic to believe such an approach could be successful, given the outcome of past negotiations and the impossibility of persuading the other members of Confederation to confer special status on Québec, even though this status is so essential to the preservation and strengthening of Québec's identity. And I believe such an approach would be undesirable, because Québec once again would risk having its proposals rejected by the other provinces, and this would prolong the uncertainty on the economic, social and cultural levels. Moreover, if a majority of the Commission were to decide in favour of federalism, then I believe this option should be subject to approval by the people of Québec. The people must be consulted not only on sovereignty, but also on any important changes proposed to Québec's political and constitutional status.

Because the federalist option represents a dead end for Québec, in my opinion the best option from this point on is sovereignty — an option which it is realistic to believe can be implemented gradually and peacefully. Never before in the history of Canada and Québec has sovereignty seemed such a desirable option, being not only legal under both constitutional law and international law, but also — and especially — being legitimate. Its legitimacy is the result of Canada's refusal to follow through on the commitments made to the people of Québec since the Referendum of May 20, 1980, and also of the now indisputable support of the people of Québec for sovereignty.

This legitimacy, in my view, cannot but lead Canada to take account of Québec's wish for sovereignty and to undertake negotiations in a realistic manner. Such an acquiescence will not be easy, admittedly, but it will be seen as a long-overdue solution which Canada — and perhaps even more Québec — kept delaying until all internal recourses ran out on June 23, when the Meech Lake Accord died in the constitutional saga. And negotiation will be all the more necessary for Canada because of its interest in maintaining a Canadian economic union, and also because of the economic pressure that, as the economist Pierre Fortin reminded you, is sure to

be exerted by national and international financial circles, not to mention political pressure from members of the international community who will have recognized the legitimacy of Québec's attempts to achieve sovereignty.

Therefore, Messrs. Co-chairmen and members of the Commission, although sovereignty seems to me the option that you should recommend to the National Assembly, I also feel it is important that you present the Assembly with concrete proposals and even a timetable for implementation. One proposal I feel is essential is that the people of Québec be consulted by referendum on their political and constitutional future, and the Commission should even submit a draft referendum question to the Assembly for this purpose.

Appendix 1 of my paper contains such a draft, which has the advantage of being clear, as I think some people will agree, when they look at its wording: Are you in favour of Québec obtaining international sovereignty? I also thought it would be useful to set down a clear and brief draft declaration of sovereignty, which the National Assembly would be asked to adopt immediately after the referendum votes have been tallied, if it turned out that a simple majority of Quebecers were in favour of Québec obtaining international sovereignty.

This draft declaration, which would constitute the birth certificate of the sovereign State of Québec, is included in Appendix 2 of my brief. I've also prepared a draft treaty creating a Canada-Québec economic union, which the Québec government, in its characteristic generosity, could use to negotiate a treaty maintaining the Canada-Québec economic area. In this overly ambitious exercise in composition, I drew on the treaties of existing economic unions and communities. I carefully studied the treaties governing the Belgium-Luxembourg and Benelux economic unions, the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Community. To some extent, I was also able to consult the text governing the European economic and monetary union, which is now being created.

(7:45 p.m.)

This latter treaty, I admit, remains unfinished as yet, but I feel it could provide a useful starting point for setting down the basic rules governing economic relations between Canada and a sovereign Québec, as well as any common and coordinated policies they may create together. During the question period, I could tell you more about these rules, as well as the institutional mechanism and the balance I sought to achieve between the parliamentary conference, the commission of ministers, the secretariat, the bank, the union bank, and the court of arbitration.

Finally, for the implementation of these proposals and the adoption of these legal texts,

I've proposed a timetable that I humbly believe will meet the expectations of the people of Québec and enable Québec to undertake negotiations with representatives of Canada as soon as possible. Appendix 4 of my paper contains very specific proposals, which I would like to make public here. The filing of your report on March 28, 1991 should be followed, in my opinion, by these actions: From April 1 to 30, 1991, a debate in the National Assembly on your report and on the referendum question; May 1, 1991, approval of the referendum question by the National Assembly; May 20, 1991, issuing of referendum briefs; June 24, 1991, referendum and declaration of sovereignty in a special sitting of the National Assembly; June 25, 1991 to June 30, 1991, negotiation of succession agreements and a treaty creating a Canada-Québec economic union; and, on July 1, 1992, the coming into effect of this treaty. These dates will remind you of historical milestones which will not be forgotten once Québec becomes sovereign.

This is not a hurried schedule; on the contrary, I believe that the work of your Commission and the interest of the people of Québec in this work will have laid more than sufficient foundations for a referendum on a date which will make history once again: June 24, 1991...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So that we may go into it more deeply in the question period, perhaps you could wrap up.

Mr. Turp: Certainly, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that the people of Québec are urging you to put aside any naive ideas about renewing federalism and are asking you to take a firm stand in favour of sovereignty. A firm stand in favour of a generous sovereignty, a sovereignty which will lend vitality to a people and the government it chooses, and which will enable it to meet the economic, social and cultural needs of the entire Québec population, of the children, women and men who make up the population. A sovereignty that expresses itself through even stronger guarantees for the rights of Anglophones and the cultural communities that also enhance and build up Québec. A sovereignty that will allow the people of Québec to rewrite history with the aboriginal nations and acknowledge their collective rights, granting them special status if necessary in order to maintain their aboriginal identity. A sovereignty that will also manifest...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Turp, I must interrupt you. We won't have time to get through all the questions. We've already exceeded by more than half the time allotted for your presentation. Remember, the Commission members have read your brief. Let's start with

questions from a representative of the Official Opposition group, Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. But I'm surprised at the order. Is it new?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Oh. I'll check.

Mrs. Harel: If you say it is, then I'll be pleased to go ahead.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let us check. Confirmed by the secretary, Madam.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you. Mr. Turp, you tell us there must be a consultation either way, whether on the reform of federalism or on sovereignty. Have I understood your brief correctly?

Mr. Turp: You've understood my brief very well.

Mrs. Harel: And so you say the right to self-determination must not be exercised on sovereignty alone. It must constantly be used so that Quebecers can make choices. You propose the question stated in Appendix 1: "Are you in favour of Québec obtaining international sovereignty?"

I have two questions. Would it be a good idea to include both the renewed federalism option and the sovereignty option in the question? Do you think such a question could be formulated? Second, you say — and this is perhaps the crux of your brief — a clear consultation must be made before negotiating. In any case, you say we must declare sovereignty before starting negotiations, and you say it with much emphasis on the need to declare sovereignty before undertaking negotiations on association, because you say we must use the rules of international law and throw off the constitutional yoke of the amendment formula. I'd like to hear you talk about that. And, finally, if Canada refuses, if it sulks and doesn't want to negotiate, under the Vienna Convention, what happens with the assets and liabilities of Québec once it is sovereign?

Mr. Turp: Concerning the right to self-determination I would say, Madam, that one author spoke of it as a daily plebiscite. Exercising one's right to self-determination means to hold a plebiscite, as an individual and as a people, every day. It can be done in different ways, and I think it must be clearly established that the right to self-determination, recognized by the United Nations charter and by treaties, allows the people to decide on their political status whatever it might be, whether it's maintaining federal ties, becoming sovereign

or joining another State. And I think that has to be clear.

Sovereignists must not think that the only way to exercise self-determination is to become sovereign. With this in mind, it's conceivable for the referendum question to contain several parts, one with the federalist option and one with the sovereignty option. But a word of caution to those who would propose such a formula, because it would mean coming up with an exact definition not of the sovereignty option, but of the federalist option to be put before the people of Québec. If you just ask people to say yes to federalism, you're not telling them what kind of federalism Québec intends to negotiate with Canada. So I think it's a pitfall to be avoided, because the referendum, as many have told you, must consolidate Québec's position in relation to the rest of Canada.

In my opinion, Québec now has a stronger position than it ever had in relation to Canada. Referendum results in favour of an option – and I maintain it should be the sovereignty option that Quebecers are asked to support – will consolidate this position and enable Québec to negotiate an economic union that will maintain, essentially, what Mr. Chrétien proposed to you yesterday, namely a shared Canadian area.

As for succession of State, your third question, I would say this: The Vienna Convention on government succession with regard to property and government debts has one regime for property and one for debts. As far as property is concerned, all immovable property located within Québec when it becomes sovereign will belong to Québec. All movable property located within Québec will belong to Québec. Movable property in Canada will belong to Québec in an equitable proportion, since Québec invested in the construction of certain federal buildings outside Canada, and since we can't really appropriate them – we can't move the post offices from Alberta and so on – Québec has the right, according to international law, to an equitable proportion of the movable property located there. And what's interesting – Mr. Chrétien didn't tell you this yesterday – is that the succession is without compensation. It belongs to Québec.

As for debt, international law says that Québec must assume an equitable proportion of Canada's general debt. And certain criteria have been put forth by the doctrine. These could include population, territory, tax contributions, national revenue, gross national product, assets, real estate, and as the International Law Commission put it, the ability of the successor State (Québec) to assume a portion of its debts. And these criteria are not exhaustive. They'll have to be studied, analysed and applied, not by legal experts but by actuaries. I think Québec has a few good actuaries who could represent it

during negotiations.

Mrs. Harel: So we have to understand that without consultation, we couldn't even assume that Quebecers want to stay in the present federal system.

Mr. Turp: No. I believe – and I wanted to stress this during my presentation but it's even more explicit in the brief – it's important for Quebecers to have a chance to say yes or no to federalism. They were never consulted on whether they wanted to belong to Canada. There was a vote in the National Assembly, the Legislative Assembly, in 1867, but the people never stated their opinion. I think that history, especially the failed negotiations of recent years, would like the referendum to deal with federalism so Quebecers could say yes or no to federalism. But I don't think that would be the right way. Quebecers have to stop giving that never-ending last chance to federalism. I think Quebecers have to have the possibility of giving sovereignty its first real chance.

Mrs. Harel: But our efforts to obtain sovereignty, are they based on the right to self-determination or rather on the right of secession?

Mr. Turp: The right to self-determination is a generic term that includes the right to secede, to join and to federate.

Mrs. Harel: Not necessarily.

Mr. Turp: Not necessarily.

Mrs. Harel: I'm given to understand that the right to self-determination as cited by the aboriginal nations, for example, doesn't mean State independence. Is that it?

Mr. Turp: No. Not if the aboriginal nations express their right to self-determination by demanding autonomy within Québec. But they could also want to... Perhaps they'll find themselves in the same situation as Québec; they'll have no more internal recourse left with Québec. When that happens, they too will want independence and sovereignty in the exercising of their right to self-determination.
(8:00 p.m.)

Mrs. Harel: And if Canada refuses to negotiate the debt and, of course, the division of assets and liabilities... If Canada refuses to negotiate the debt, as some of the members of this Commission often ask, what do you think will happen under international law?

Mr. Turp: Its creditors will be very worried, because Canada's debt is Canada's debt. It's not Québec's.

A voice: Oh, that's it!

Mr. Turp: They'll be very worried. I can tell you, and that's why I suggest — these are hypotheses that are not well viewed by some members of this Commission. But we go on. And the discussion being held here between the members of the Commission and those who appear before you is a discourse of conjecture and hypotheses. But those who don't want change present the blackest possible hypotheses. Those who want change are optimists...

A voice: Present hypocrisies, Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Turp: ...believe in Canada's good faith. Because once Québec becomes sovereign, Canada is obliged — my predecessor told you this — under international law to negotiate with Québec on matters related to succession of State. It has to.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That ends this round of questions. Now for questions from the members. Mr. Ouellet, followed by Mr. Nicolet and Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I must remind the members, of course, that if you can keep it short and to the point, we'll all benefit.

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Turp, I'm glad to see you again.

Mr. Turp: Likewise.

Mr. Ouellet: I'm sorry this sitting is not being held in Montréal, perhaps you would have brought your students who...

Mr. Turp: They're watching me.

Mr. Ouellet: I hope so.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Turp: They're watching me. I appreciate this opportunity you've given me to come to Québec City.

Mr. Ouellet: Fine. I want to thank you for answering the questions submitted to you in your capacity as an expert. You completed this rigorous exercise and answered the questions very precisely. But I noticed that your answers were based on a hypothesis. That is, when we asked you in question two, "What are the areas in which Québec could and should have full jurisdiction? And what are the areas where it should exercise concurrent or shared jurisdiction?" This question was meant in the

context of a sovereign Québec as well as in the context of Québec within Canada. Now I think your answer was based solely on the assumption of a sovereign Québec.

Mr. Turp: That's correct.

Mr. Ouellet: Why?

Mr. Turp: Because I thought your first question was well formulated. Actually, it was quite an ingenious question, but even an expert had to make an observation after discussing the principal problems Québec is faced with in terms of its political and constitutional status. And you can see that I proposed in my brief... I nonetheless made an effort to discuss the federalist option, the sovereignty option, and the conditions and difficulties involved in their implementation. But this question, in my view, was supposed to result in an observation that would colour the expert's entire approach after that. And I think the expert has to take a stand sooner or later.

Mr. Ouellet: I understand that the expert may take a stand, but I presume that it's up to this Commission to draw the conclusions. I congratulate you for having discussed both options, federalism and sovereignty, in your answer to the first question. And I would have liked... Of course, I understand your desire to support your preferred theory, but I find the work a bit incomplete since you didn't answer a question which I find quite legitimate, namely, "What are the areas in which Québec should have greater jurisdiction, even within Canada?" It's an entirely plausible question. You didn't answer it. So we'll have to turn to other experts to discuss this question, because...

Mr. Turp: I suppose you chose them in an equitable proportion.

Mr. Ouellet: I hope so.

Mr. Turp: Look... Is it the option I prefer? As a young Quebecer, it's the option I prefer, but I'm answering in my capacity as an expert who's been asked a question which, in my opinion, called for an observation. And the solution I'm proposing isn't necessarily that of myself, the Quebecer who is in favour of independence. It's that of an expert who observes that federalism is a complete dead end, and who says: Well, the political and constitutional future of Québec lies in sovereignty. I was more or less confident, and I'm still confident, in the people of Québec, who in 1980 rejected sovereignty and who made a well-reasoned decision. Personally, I said: The people of Québec have made a decision. They're in favour of maintaining federal ties, so let's work

for better federal ties for Québec. And I became a federalist once again, to a certain extent, because the people of Québec had exercised self-determination and decided to give federalism another chance.

Mr. Ouellet: But now you're talking about your feelings.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry, but the time is up. Or, finish your answer, but we can't start another question.

Mr. Ouellet: All right, but Mr. Bélanger...

Mr. Turp: Now the people of Québec... in my opinion, Mr. Ouellet, the people of Québec...

Mr. Ouellet: This isn't the expert talking any more.

Mr. Turp: ...have found themselves in a situation where Canadian federalism hasn't kept the promises it made to Québec during the 1980 referendum...

Mr. Ouellet: That's a matter of opinion, everyone might not agree.

Mr. Turp: No, it's the observation of an expert.

Mr. Ouellet: You were asked...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm sorry, Gentlemen, it's an extremely interesting debate, but unfortunately there's no more time for this question. Next is Mr. Nicolet, followed by Mr. Poissant and Mr. Béland.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Mr. Turp. I'd like to ask you a few small questions of a rather technical nature, to help me clarify some issues that were raised recently. The first has to do with the whole problem of territorial integrity. We were told in Sherbrooke that Canada could insist on maintaining a corridor along the U.S. border. Moreover, just yesterday we were told that the Canadian North was vulnerable and could be excluded from the territory of Québec. Does international law have a response to these assertions?

Mr. Turp: Yes. Under international law, Québec would enter into sovereignty with all the territory it had before it became sovereign. That means the entire territory, without any corridors, including the territories granted to it in 1898 and in 1912. This is clear under international law. Under State succession, the State inherits the land that is within its borders at

the time of succession. I think Mr. Morin told you this last week. On top of that, there is the rule of the intangibility of borders, meaning that the borders of a newly sovereign State can't be contested by the predecessor State or any other State in the international community.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you. Someone also told us that confederations were essentially unstable and had a tendency, throughout the world, to become federations or disintegrate. I see that on page 14, in answer to question 8, you list a number of treaties linking States together for purposes of economic development. Are these confederations according to your definition? And can you assert that confederations are by nature fragile and unstable?

Mr. Turp: I would say that we know of some true confederations, namely the old Helvetic, Germanic and American confederations, which indeed became federations. But I suggest that no new confederations have been born since... But neither have any new federations been born. The federal phenomenon no longer seems to meet the aspirations of the people. And there is a renewal of the idea of confederation. The European Economic Community is, in fact, a confederation of States now. In international law, it's often described as a confederation of States, because the States have maintained their sovereignty while pooling some of their resources and skills. And the EEC does not seem particularly unstable. There is very creative tension within it, but the tension is such that there is no desire to switch to federalism. Even what's happening now - you're aware of last weekend's intergovernmental conferences, one on political union and one on economic and monetary union - it's clear that what they'll end up with is not a European federation but a community that will be a confederated union with certain jurisdictions delegated once again to European bodies.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This ends... If you make it brief.

Mr. Nicolet: Half a minute, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Take one minute, because half a minute always turns into three minutes.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, on page 7, you refer specifically to relations between a sovereign Québec and the aboriginal communities, and you seem to prefer a treaty rather than recognition within a Québec constitution. Could you explain why you chose this approach over the other?

Mr. Turp: I don't necessarily prefer the solution that's indicated in the brief. I think it will be important for a sovereign Québec to sign a number of treaties with the 11 aboriginal nations on its territory, but you know there are aboriginal nations which, according to them, have a territory which goes beyond the borders of Québec or even Canada. For those cases, we should consider having trilateral treaties, since those aboriginal nations have jurisdictions; they even have the right, under existing treaties, to move freely between Québec, Canada and the United States. It's in this case that we should consider signing treaties with Canada, when the land of an aboriginal nation overlaps the two territories.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Poissant, followed by Mr. Béland and Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Turp, there is a very interesting item in your brief, in the fourth paragraph on page 9. This is new for me and I think it would be worthwhile for the members of the Commission to read it and keep it. I think it's a kind of runway clause, if I may use the expression, where you say "To ensure a continuity that will make it possible to preserve Quebecers' standard of living - I like that phrase - the Québec government should maintain federal legislation on economic matters, etc., during the transition phase." I find this clause very interesting because it's new. It's the ambiguity we always have, that period of uncertainty between day 0 and day 1, 2, 3. (8:15 p.m.)

However, this runway clause could be permissible in both options. Either we decide today to go for sovereignty, or we wait. We wait for the transition phase, or we decide today that at the end of the runway there will be time to negotiate the recovery of more powers. So I think it's a very, very interesting clause, which we should keep. But let me get back - and I'm surprised at one of your comments - I don't know if it's true, but do you go so far as to recommend that we have three currencies?

Mr. Turp: No, not at all!

Mr. Poissant: When we already don't know which of the two will survive?

Mr. Turp: No, no...

Mr. Poissant: But you say: There will be a Québec currency, possibly...

Mr. Turp: No, no...

Mr. Poissant: ...Québec currency, and... Because listen: "The existence of such a bank,

however, would not exclude maintaining the Bank of Canada", therefore Canadian dollars, "and the creation of a Bank of Québec", when we've just created a union bank. It's a little like - what do you call that - the Common Market basket currency, the ECU. So there we have... But listen, on page 12, third paragraph.

Mr. Turp: No, no, you have to distinguish between the existence of banks and the power to issue currency! In my draft treaty it's quite clear, there's a union bank, which is a central bank. Like the one the EEC will create over the medium term, which will have the sole power to issue a currency: the common currency of Canada and Québec, a sole currency, to be exact. A single currency. But that doesn't preclude the existence of two national banks, just as all 12 banks of the EEC countries will be maintained even though there will be a union bank. No, I say...

Mr. Poissant: I don't want...

Mr. Turp: ...and I hope there will be only one currency. But currency is not an essential symbol of sovereignty. The proof is that the Europeans, who want to keep their sovereignty, are ready to adopt a single currency.

Mr. Poissant: In any case, I'm noting your comments. On page 10, third paragraph, third line, I was also surprised when you said, "Québec should also inherit the treaties dealing with coastal waters and become..." If I understand correctly, article 24 of the Vienna Convention says that treaties are not automatically transferred to the successor State.

Mr. Turp: Except territorial treaties.

Mr. Poissant: Yes.

Mr. Turp: Such as that one.

Mr. Poissant: Yes, that one is.

Mr. Turp: Automatically.

Mr. Poissant: But is this a territorial treaty?

Mr. Turp: Well yes, it demarcates the border...

Mr. Poissant: Then let me finish my question, I know you're the expert. The question is, when it comes to economic matters such as free trade, it's clear that these have to be renegotiated. You know as well as I do that Canada now has, in addition to those two treaties which I didn't know about - and no doubt there are more - 53 fiscal treaties with as

many different countries. It's easy, but they're all economic treaties. I've dealt with it closely in international tax law... It's fine negotiating a treaty, but when... I imagine the treaty with Bangladesh will go well, and with Côte d'Ivoire... But when we have to negotiate with France, England, the U.S., I think we'll have... Maybe the runway won't be long enough, or at least the time we decide on. But there are 53 treaties to renegotiate. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Turp: No. Fiscal treaties are treaties which Québec will inherit automatically. International practice contains numerous cases. I can give you the references, I've researched them.

Mr. Poissant: Can you name just one, please?

Mr. Turp: Mrs. Gruber's work on State succession and treaties, which is one of the major works on the question of State succession. Fiscal treaties are bilateral treaties...

Mr. Poissant: We know that...

Mr. Turp: ...which don't present any problems in terms of State succession.

Mr. Poissant: But why this distinction in article 24? They say all economic treaties with a third party - so the U.S. in the case of free trade - are not automatically transferred and have to be renegotiated... Look, I can read you the article. I imagine you have it in front of you.

Mr. Turp: All right, we'll read it together, if you wish.

Mr. Poissant: We won't have time, in any case, but I mean...

Mr. Turp: It's because the principle...

Mr. Poissant: What's important is that we'll have a lot of treaties to renegotiate, and it won't be done as quickly or as easily as we'd like to think.

Mr. Turp: Listen, if you'll allow me, Messrs. Co-chairmen, I'm ready to make a list of the treaties which Canada... Québec will automatically inherit. And you'll see that it's not so frightening.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If you're ready to make the list, the Commission should be receptive and tell you that it would be pleased to receive it.

We'll proceed now to questions from Mr.

Béland, followed by Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Turp, we asked you, as an expert, to explain the impact of your opinion on the preservation and enhancement of the standard of living of Quebecers, in your case, in the event of sovereignty. You answered, "We believe the standard of living of Quebecers will not be significantly affected by Québec's becoming sovereign, and still less..." and then you state two conditions. First, that Québec's sovereignty be perceived as legitimate by the international community, especially France and the U.S. You say this will place a lot of pressure on Canada, and then we will be able to negotiate an advantageous treaty because it will be signed within a reasonable length of time.

There are two conditions I find important, and I imagine you take for granted they will be met, since you opt for sovereignty. I'd like to know on what facts, realities or jurisprudence you base your assumption that the two conditions will be met.

Mr. Turp: I'd say on past history. The past history of State succession, which enables one to be optimistic. There are very few State successions that have not taken place peacefully and gradually. I can't think of any accession to independence that wasn't rapidly followed by succession agreements or, in some cases, by unilateral succession declarations that were accepted by the other party.

In fact, I think it's almost essential that the Commission analyse this practice to see that the scenarios of catastrophe will not come true, in light of past experience in accession to sovereignty, even under much more difficult, less democratic and less legitimate conditions than those of Québec. That's what led me to believe that Québec can achieve sovereignty under normal conditions, conditions that would not jeopardize the standard of living of Quebecers.

Moreover, I'm one of the 53% of Quebecers who believe there will be no significant change in the standard of living of Quebecers after sovereignty.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

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

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One remark to start off, Mr. Turp. I'm very impressed with your resumé. I can assure you that I won't attack you in the field of international law.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Turp: Thank you, that's very kind.

Mr. Beaudry: I must also tell you that just now I was tantalized. When you said that federalists presented the blackest scenarios, you held back from saying that sovereignists presented the rosier ones. It was apparent that you were holding back. So we're in the grey area.

Mr. Turp: No, I think sovereignists are becoming more and more realistic.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry has the floor.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, let's say we'll remain in the grey area.

Mr. Turp: Not too long.

Mr. Beaudry: Coming back to what Mr. Béland was saying about the standard of living, I understand you're not too worried. On page 9 of your brief, you say, "as long as it's done within a reasonable length of time". I refer the brief you presented in Montréal with a number of people, in which you referred particularly to the Vienna Conventions of 1978 and 1983. You used these as a basis to say that even if Canada is not a signatory to those conventions, you believe that Canada, because of the customary nature of those two conventions, would have to sign or negotiate with Québec a division of powers, assets and liabilities, a division that Québec would like to obtain following its accession to sovereignty. Because in your brief, you speak of concurrent jurisdictions, jurisdictions exclusive to Québec, and jurisdictions exclusive to, possibly, another level of government.

In a context where Canada... Now, my first question. Do you think that Canada, in that context, not having signed the two conventions in question, will no longer be the same Canada once it has lost Québec? Do you believe that the federal government as such has the power, without the support or consent of the other nine provinces, to negotiate directly with the province of Québec?

Mr. Turp: Yes, because the rest of Canada has become another sovereign State. The predecessor State, as opposed to the successor State of Québec, and the rest of the territory of the former Canadian State and it's...

Mr. Beaudry: When you say...

Mr. Turp: ...and there are now two States on the territory that was once the Canadian federated State.

Mr. Beaudry: When you say the rest of the State automatically becomes a sovereign State, do you agree that the rest of the State is not

essentially the same sovereign State once Québec has left, because it's been divided into two sections independent from each other...

Mr. Turp: No, because...

Mr. Beaudry: ...because you have all of the Maritimes separated from the rest of Canada by Québec.

Mr. Turp: Alaska is separated from the rest of the U.S...

Mr. Beaudry: Well, no, I understand but...

Mr. Turp: ...of Canada.

Mr. Beaudry: ...they came into the U.S. voluntarily. Here I'm talking about a situation where you want to make a State out of a constitutional consequence which would be Canada with nine provinces, and I'm asking you whether in that Canada with nine provinces, the federal government would automatically have the same powers it now has under the constitution that unites us, even without the consent of the nine provinces remaining after Québec's departure?

Mr. Turp: Listen, let me understand by distinguishing two things. After Québec becomes sovereign, there are two States, a State of Québec and a predecessor State of Canada. That's one important thing to understand. Who represents the other State, the new Canadian State? That's another question.

Mr. Beaudry: That's what I'm asking you.

Mr. Turp: Well, that question will be solved by those who make up the new Canadian State.

Mr. Beaudry: In other words, the nine provinces.

Mr. Turp: And the provinces and the federal government have to agree to respect the obligations of this new Canadian State in the negotiation...

Mr. Beaudry: That's what I'm getting at, Mr. Turp. If you tell me that the new Canadian State, in order to have the power to negotiate with Québec, has to obtain the consent of the nine other provinces, that means it could take a long time if one of the provinces didn't agree. Suppose we find Mr. Wells on the other end again, as we did on June 23, the negotiations could be quite lengthy. We're no longer talking about just the federal government, we're talking about a federal government that obtains its

powers from the nine other provinces.

Mr. Turp: Listen. I think that once again you should commission a study by a good constitutionalist because according to the principle of continuity of the State, the laws should continue to apply in the predecessor federal Canadian State...

Mr. Beaudry: The principle, yes, I agree.

Mr. Turp: ...the Canadian Constitution continues to apply and, according to the Canadian Constitution, the body that represents the State in its international relations is the federal government...

Mr. Beaudry: I agree.

Mr. Turp: ...And, in my opinion, just as in Québec we want a legislative mechanism to continue the laws of the State, and therefore which includes the federal laws adopted as Québec laws, the Canadian State will continue to be governed by the Canadian Constitution. The only difference will be that the provisions of the Constitutional Act of 1867 and the others up to 1982 will become null and void in terms of Canadian constitutional law.
(8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Beaudry: Plus the fact that the Maritime provinces, which today are linked to Canada by Québec, will be separated and therefore could suffer grave consequences because they'll no longer have the entire territorial link they have at present, and therefore they could object to the federal government negotiating directly with a sovereign Québec without their consent, because it could be harmful to them.

Mr. Turp: Mr. Beaudry, I think that if any harm is done, it certainly won't be Québec...

Mr. Beaudry: No, I know it won't be Québec.

Mr. Turp: ...Québec that will be proposing to cause it. Therefore there is no reason why the Maritime provinces shouldn't want Canada to negotiate with a Québec that doesn't want to cause them any harm. On the contrary, it wants to propose a treaty to them - I gave you a model - that would provide for the free circulation...

Mr. Beaudry: If you'll allow me, Mr. Turp...

Mr. Turp: ...of people, goods and so on.

Mr. Beaudry: ...you'll allow me to differ with you, because it's too easy to say there won't be any problems.

Mr. Turp: I never said that.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Faced with this difference of opinion between two lawyers, we'll proceed now with questions from the representative of the government party. Mr. Dauphin - another lawyer, I'm told.

Mr. Dauphin: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to welcome you and to thank you for accepting our invitation to come and speak as an expert. Several of the topics I wanted to discuss have, of course, been covered, but I'd like to come back to some of them, particularly to relations with the aboriginal people which Mr. Nicolet mentioned earlier. When you say on page 7 of your brief that certain powers could be delegated and we could have, through treaties, different relations with the aboriginal nations, I'd like to hear you talk about the status you foresee. Earlier you spoke of a special status. Do you foresee a form of self-determination, and based on this, would it be subject to international law?

Mr. Turp: I think we, as a people, have to accept it when other peoples, even if they're on the territory over which Québec and its government have jurisdiction, express their right to self-determination and determine what jurisdictions they wish to exercise over their territory, which was theirs long before it belonged to the Québec people, and when the Québec people and the aboriginal peoples start to negotiate in good faith. And I think this negotiation could give rise to treaties in the sense of Canadian law, as the Supreme Court applies the term to aboriginal treaties. These are not international treaties but rather what the Supreme Court has referred to in some of its decisions as *sui generis* treaties. And they don't necessarily have to be international treaties if it is not the will of the aboriginal peoples that their relations with the Québec people and the Québec government be governed by international law. If I've understood correctly what the aboriginal people want, it's not independence or sovereignty; they want autonomy within a Québec territorial framework, and I think we could reach an agreement with them on treaties guaranteeing this autonomy, which would be treaties as defined by Québec constitutional law.

Mr. Dauphin: But in your viewpoint, which one would you favour?

Mr. Turp: My own position is that, as soon as Québec becomes sovereign, it should call a constitutional conference with the aboriginal people, negotiate with them as equals, listen to their demands and be ready to grant them the special status Canada has always denied Québec, with the result that today, Quebecers

have no more internal recourse and want sovereignty.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you. My second question: with regard to nationality, another expert, Mr. Morin, included nationality in a list of things provided by a common institution. What would it be in your opinion? Who would grant citizenship?

Mr. Turp: I would suggest that Québec should be able to grant its own citizenship. I think that for several purposes, notably diplomatic protection, it's important for an individual to be able to identify with a State. This doesn't mean Quebecers couldn't have passports like the Europeans. You've seen European passports. You should circulate them among the Commission members. Those with double citizenship, you show your French passport where it says "European Community". Which is a passport indicating French citizenship, but allows identification with an economic entity such as the European Community. But I think there should be a Québec citizenship and a Canadian citizenship, and we should reach an agreement to have a common passport.

Mr. Dauphin: If I may, I'd like to come back to State succession, which has been addressed by several of my colleagues, with respect to free trade. If I understood correctly, you said there wouldn't be much difficulty. The same for the treaty on coastal waters and the treaty creating the St. Lawrence Seaway. I'd like you to elaborate on that. You seem to say it would be quite easy to inherit these treaties, almost automatically, on becoming sovereign.

Mr. Turp: I appreciate your question because just now I didn't really have a chance to elaborate and make the necessary distinctions. The object of State succession law is to prevent upheavals in legal systems and insurmountable difficulties for States that become sovereign.

One of the difficulties is territory. So the international law on State succession says that there is automatic inheritance of territorial treaties. The border treaties between Canada and the U.S. are treaties which Québec would automatically inherit. It has to recognize borders, and its borders will be those recognized in treaties signed with the U.S., first by the United Kingdom and then by Canada.

This rule also applies to treaties that have to do with territory, such as the St. Lawrence Seaway Treaty, which Québec would automatically inherit. And after this succession, circulation would be just as free as it is now on the St. Lawrence Seaway.

In addition, a general rule stipulates that when a State separates — the Commission makes

this provision in an article it calls "customary law" — the general rule is automatic succession. There are two exceptions, and I think they're stated in article 34. There is no automatic succession when the States agree otherwise. Therefore, Canada and Québec could agree otherwise regarding a treaty between Canada and a third party. Or in the case where succession would go against the object of the treaty or would create radically different conditions of execution. Fiscal treaties do not enter into these categories of exception, so there will be automatic succession.

The Free Trade Agreement. I've done a little research for you. I've consulted people, some of my colleagues helped me. The Free Trade Agreement is truly an important treaty. You've already asked many questions about it. I think we could even say that Québec would automatically inherit the Free Trade Agreement. By this I'm excluding what I said in my brief and what Jacques-Yvan Morin told you last week. I think the best solution, if the Free Trade Agreement is to continue to apply, would be for Canada and Québec to give the Canada-Québec economic union a mandate to represent the Canadian territory in the free trade bodies, and there you would have succession.

Furthermore, in my treaty, I believe it's in article 84, I've included a clause enabling the union to inherit the Free Trade Agreement and the associated rights and obligations. But this hypothesis is valid only if a Canada-Québec economic union is created.

According to the other hypothesis, we could assume that Québec's sovereignty would not radically affect the conditions of the Free Trade Agreement. Why? Because if a sovereign Québec has its laws and has integrated the federal laws regarding trade, customs and so forth, its legislation will comply with the Free Trade Agreement because Canadian legislation is now in compliance. The only adjustments to be made will be minor adjustments in chapters XVIII and XIX dealing with the institutional mechanism. The Commission would have to be "trilateralized" and would have to be able, under chapter XIX, to appoint Québec experts. But in the list in chapter XIX, there are already Québec experts.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think Mr. Dauphin has one last question.

Mr. Dauphin: If I may. On the same topic, Mr. Chairman. Do you think the Americans will automatically accept Québec as a signatory to the treaty, in the event it becomes sovereign?

Mr. Turp: What do you mean "as a signatory"?

Mr. Dauphin: As a party to the treaty.

Mr. Turp: Look, I can't speak for the U.S. president or for Congress, but I think the U.S. would want to maintain free trade, and they know Québec is one of the important parts of Canada that they trade with. You're aware of the extent of Canada-U.S. trade. I don't think they would have any objection; on the contrary, they would want Canada to reach an agreement with Québec on representation of both Canada and Québec in the free trade institutions. I think the U.S., very clearly, would let Canada know that minor adjustments should be made to the Free Trade Agreement to provide for Québec's participation.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): On this note, I thank you, Mr. Turp, for kindly accepting our invitation. Your contribution to the debate elicited much interest. Thank you also for the analysis of fiscal treaties which, I believe, you will be sending us. I would ask you now to give your place to the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:43 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:45 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...to please take their seats. We will now hear the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec. Mr. Lapointe, please introduce your colleagues and then take five minutes to summarize your brief.

Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec

Mr. Lapointe (Philippe): Thank you, Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. May I introduce the vice-president of the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, Mr. Gilles Richard, who comes from the Outaouais region; Mrs. Thérèse Nault, who is the secretary of the Fédération de l'âge d'or, who comes from central Québec; Mrs. Georgette Leblanc, who is an administrator and represents Québec City and its environs; and Mrs. Nicole Moier, who is temporary general director. As for me, I am Philippe Lapointe, and I come from the Laurentians, from a small town, Saint-Adolphe-d'Howard.

Mr. Chairman, the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec is happy to be able to take part in the debate on the future of Québec. Elderly people have contributed to building present-day Québec. These same elderly people continue to be full-fledged citizens, and their point of view in the current debate must be perceived as that of experienced citizens who wish to go on taking an active part in the development of the society they live in.

Aware of the importance of the subject

under study, the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec has taken pains to consult its members. A survey by questionnaire conducted in the various regions of Québec made it possible to reach 1 380 members who are representative of the elderly of Québec as a group. The answers obtained are clear. To assure the future of Québec, 93% of respondents deem that the protection of health services is essential. Quality of life must be an important factor in the choice of an option for the future of Québec. For the elderly, certain factors appear essential to ensure quality of life: health; access to healthful housing facilities; the possibility of remaining in their homes, coupled with home services; a decent minimum income; access to leisure activities adapted to their requirements; access to transportation that is safe and adapted to their needs; access to high-quality hospital care; access to necessary medicines. The option selected will thus have to make it possible not only to maintain what has already been achieved in the way of social programs, but to develop more of them.

88% of respondents deem protection of the French language an absolute necessity. The constitutional option that is decided on must provide Québécois with all the guarantees necessary to protect the French language. We have come a long way in this regard, but we have to remain vigilant, and complete control over the development of the French language appears essential.

86% of respondents feel that control over education is indispensable. The sphere of education plays a primary role in the transmission of Québec culture and represents an ideal centre for the development of that culture. Québec must have complete control over education at all levels.

82% of respondents believe that control of our own economy is essential. Control over the economy seems to be perceived more as a means of ensuring quality of life than as an end in itself. Québec must have control over its own economy if it is to be able itself to set policies, priorities and action plans corresponding to its citizens' needs.

77% of respondents think that the ability to choose our own immigrants is absolutely necessary. Full jurisdiction by Québec in regard to immigration is another factor that is essential for the protection of Québec's French culture. It is vital to set up the mechanisms required to integrate newcomers into the Francophone milieu.

As for the choice of a constitutional option, 25% of respondents favour keeping the current federal regime, 16% favour Québec independence, and 53% favour Québec sovereignty combined with association with Canada; 6% abstained. These results correspond more or less to the results of surveys of the population in general. By the position they take, the elderly

demonstrate that they are ready to participate as full-fledged citizens in building the Québec of the future; but in order to do so, the elderly must have a voice that is heard in the corridors of power, and must be involved in decision-making bodies in the areas that affect them most closely. Québec must provide the mechanisms required to achieve this end.

To conclude, the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, otherwise known as FADOC, ardently hopes that the Québec of the future will be able to fulfill the aspirations of all its citizens, with particular attention to certain classes of citizens too often neglected: the aboriginal peoples, the young, and the elderly. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Lapointe. We will now go on to the questions, starting with those of our members. Mr. Desjardins will go first.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lapointe and all those with you, welcome. As MP of a rural riding, I have 61 municipalities and as many Golden Age clubs. So, I can well appreciate the work that you do in your regions, because in many small towns, if there were no Golden Age club, not much would be going on.

Mr. Lapointe: Wonderful. It's good to hear that.

Mr. Desjardins: It's to your credit. To return to your document, you surveyed your members. I'm a curious fellow. Who suggested the questions to you? How did you go about it? Did the members form a committee? Who helped you formulate the questions on the future of Québec?

Mr. Lapointe: We set up a committee of members, who formulated the questions.

Mr. Desjardins: OK.

Mr. Lapointe: However, as to the form taken by the survey, it would perhaps be helpful for you to know about, for us to explain, the wording we use. They say that... In short, I think the details could be provided by Madam...

Mr. Desjardins: No, Mr. Lapointe, I just wanted to... In regard to the debate we're currently involved in, you know there are two schools of thought. There is sovereignty or independence, and there is renewed federalism, and the latter does not appear among the questions submitted to your members. And I just wanted to know whether you think that, if that option had been included in the questions, it could have changed the results you're presenting to us? I'm asking you the question.

Mr. Lapointe: Obviously we think we asked

what our members wanted.

Mr. Desjardins: All right.

Mr. Lapointe: So we asked those questions. And with the type of survey we did, it is understood that we have answers we feel are clear.

Mr. Desjardins: What is clear in what you have said is that whatever the future of Québec – and you say that sovereignty fulfills most of what your members are hoping for – but what is clear is that you want your quality of life to be taken into account. You have worked hard throughout your life to build yourselves a comfortable retirement, you want that to continue, and you want your lot in life to be improved. So, in regard to a declaration of Québec independence, with subsequent negotiation, would you prefer that as a solution, or negotiation with Canada prior to a declaration of independence? This takes on importance in the current debate, knowing whether... If there is a declaration of Québec sovereignty, should negotiations come before or after? Do you have an answer to that?

Mr. Lapointe: I, that is to say, we, not I but we in the Fédération, it's clear that we feel that our power will be much greater when sovereignty has been decreed. Power will be greater when it will be a matter of negotiating. I don't know whether that answers your question.

Mr. Desjardins: Yes. Will you let me ask one last one?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes.

Mr. Desjardins: We had an expert a while ago, whom you heard, Mr. Turp, who suggested a question for us in May 1991. And yes, you had that question: "Are you in favour of Québec's attaining international sovereignty?" You have just answered it, haven't you?

Mr. Lapointe: Well, as I noted, he was an expert. I'm not one.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to questions from a member of the Government party, Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lapointe, I will come back for a bit to the question of my colleague Mr. Desjardins, who was saying... Because I think it's very important. I don't know whether the respondents to your survey really grasped the scope of the second

question. When you say: "To assure a future in Québec that is in accord with its aspirations, which of the following political regimes do you favour?" You speak of keeping the current federal regime; you know very well that the debate is not about that at all. No one wants that. Québec's attaining independence: no one wants that. And Québec sovereignty combined with association with Canada. So you understand that there was only one question they could answer, those people, because no one wants the status quo, or "hard-line" independence either.

And my second question was also in order to discover whether there really is – and I'm asking you because you are probably aware of it if you analysed it to any extent earlier, or the person who suggested that you ask those questions in a second survey did – a difference between independence and sovereignty? In your opinion, is there a difference?

Mr. Lapointe: For us, I think that sovereignty and independence, if you leave aside association, are essentially the same thing.

Mr. Maciocia: They're essentially the same thing.

Mr. Lapointe: Essentially the same thing. If you are sovereign, you are masters in your own house.

Mr. Maciocia: So there you are.

Mr. Lapointe: So I'm persuaded that our members understood it in that way. Still, 16% of them said they wanted to attain independence, and 53% wanted sovereignty. So for them, it's independence, but they clearly want, let's say...

Mr. Maciocia: To maintain the link.

Mr. Lapointe: To maintain the link, some link, with Canada.

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, but that's just...

Mr. Lapointe: However, there is one thing that I'd like to mention, which is very clear: 69% of them say they don't want Canada as it has been.

Mr. Maciocia: As is.

Mr. Lapointe: So there are 69% who want independence, but 53% who want independence with association.
(9:00 p.m.)

Mr. Maciocia: There you are, because along the same lines, speaking of independence or sovereignty, there are only 16% of your people who responded in the affirmative to that question. And 78%, because if you turn the

question around somewhat, there are 78% who voted for keeping links with Canada. Is it really that? Because if you calculate...

Mr. Lapointe: That is... You're saying there are 53% who favour Québec sovereignty accompanied by association with Canada, and 25% who...

Mr. Maciocia: There you are, who favour keeping...

Mr. Lapointe: I don't see it like that, and I think that our people don't see it like that. What they see is that they want to be masters in their own house...

Mr. Maciocia: Yes.

Mr. Lapointe: ...and there are 53% of them who say: We want to be masters in our own house, but we must still have some kind of link.

Mr. Maciocia: There you are. If, for instance, on the subject of renewed federalism, we were to assume that the current government, or another government, it doesn't matter, would repatriate to Québec such matters as health, education, regional development, immigration, putting those powers exclusively under Québec jurisdiction, would you agree to still remain within the Canadian federation?

Mr. Lapointe: I think our members want to be sovereign...

Mr. Maciocia: I'm not convinced of that, Mr. Lapointe...

Mr. Lapointe: They want to be sure... That is, not all our members, clearly, 69% of our members...

Mr. Maciocia: No, no, that's just it...

Mr. Lapointe: ...I'll be completely honest.

Mr. Maciocia: It's on that point that I disagree with you, Mr. Lapointe, because you asked the question on independence. Only 16% are for it, not 69%. And 53% are in favour of a link with Canada. And in the approach you took too, when you talk about health, access to housing, all that...

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

Mr. Maciocia: It's along those lines that I said to you that if the Québec government repatriates health, social services, immigration, education, regional development, and other things

to Québec, without having to undergo a transition that may be costly, would you be in agreement with that formula?

Mr. Lapointe: I'm going to repeat that our members, 69% of them, came out in favour of sovereignty, and a good number of them said sovereignty with association. And they want, for instance, to repatriate health, they want to repatriate immigration. ~~When they are masters in~~ their own house, they are going to do what Quebecers want in regard to those areas.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on now to questions from a representative of the Official Opposition, Mrs. Juneau.

Mrs. Juneau: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. What surprises me this evening is that there has been an attempt to put the survey in question, in short, to discredit the survey you took, which curiously resembles everything we're seeing all across Québec. For my part, in any case, I think your survey truly corresponds to what people hope for and expect. I'd also like to know... In your survey, it said that people in the past had taken advantage of the feeling of insecurity of elderly people. So today you no longer believe what Mr. Mulroney, the Prime Minister of Canada, said, namely that Iron Ore workers could lose their pensions... That doesn't worry you any more, those old stories about losing your pensions? How would you people react today if they trotted out those same old fears?

Mr. Lapointe: I'm very glad to be getting that question. A fair number of elderly people were frightened in 1980. At present, we can observe that whatever position they take to scare us, the majority are not frightened any more. There are still some people who are afraid. There are still some, and I find, and many Golden Age club members, and the majority of them, believe that these major fears, which assail the poorest people - because there are poor people in our midst, you obviously know that 40% of us live below the poverty line, and there could be more if they get stingy with certain programs - if the same things are brandished in front of these people that have already been brandished, if promises are made that are not kept, if those scare tactics are tried, let's say, in my opinion, I say it's indecent, and this opinion is shared by the Golden Agers. It's indecent to evoke fears like that. So I'm convinced that it's proof that people get scared at some point and then eventually they wind up deciding that these fears lead nowhere.

Mrs. Juneau: Mr. Lapointe, I think that is a

form of contempt for you, and I find it unacceptable that you are treated that way, for one thing.

Mr. Lapointe: That's why I say it's indecent.

Mrs. Juneau: Second, I would like to ask you by what mechanism you think we can respond to the Fédération's hope that seniors would occupy decision-making positions in regard to Québec's attaining sovereignty?

Mrs. Moier (Nicole T.): I think that topic was dwelt on in a number of the briefs that have been presented. There have even been discussions within the Fédération to find out whether people would rather have a government department devoted to the elderly or would prefer another type of committee, or board, or link with decision-making bodies, in any case, and the experience we've had with the department in charge of senior citizens, I'm not saying that the federal department for seniors in Ottawa doesn't do anything at all, but it is after all a department without any budget, and we too run the risk, by having a government department in charge of senior citizens, of ghettoizing elderly people and having all the other government departments wash their hands of the problems of seniors to a certain extent by saying, well, you have your own department, go see your minister and go see your department. So, as we stated in our brief, we would much rather have either a council of seniors, a senior's secretariat, that would perhaps function like the youth secretariat, but in any case, a secretariat of the elderly, some kind of link, some sort of committee or board, that would really have a consultative role, of course, but that could have some influence, not just stuck away in a corner, but that could influence government decisions.

Mrs. Juneau: Would you...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This will be the last question, Mrs. Juneau.

Mrs. Juneau: It will be the last, Mr. Chairman, thank you. Would you, like the earlier speaker Mr. Turp, be in favour of a referendum between the time the Commission winds up and the month of June?

Mr. Lapointe: So you are asking whether...

Mrs. Juneau: You are in favour of a referendum between now and June.

Mr. Lapointe: Obviously it's very difficult to know exactly when, but I think there will have to be a referendum. The population will

have to be asked in detail what it wishes. But I think the Golden Agers have not really decided when that should be. But if it is to be done, they're in general in favour of it.

Mrs. Juneau: Thank you, Mr. Lapointe.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It remains for me to thank the representatives of the Fédération de l'âge d'or, Mrs. Nault, Mr. Richard, Mrs. Leblanc, Mrs. Moier, and Mr. Lapointe for this very interesting contribution to our work. We will now, immediately, as soon as the table is free, hear from Mr. Louis Bernard.

Mr. Lapointe: Thank you, Messrs. Chairmen.

(Proceedings adjourned at 9:10 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 9:12 p.m.)

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

I would ask the members of the Commission to please take their seats. We will now hear the presentation, which will be the last one today, of another invited expert, who is very well known, Mr. Louis Bernard. Mr. Bernard, you have 10 minutes to present the main points of your brief, which everyone has read, of course, since it had the advantage of being short.

Mr. Louis Bernard

Mr. Bernard (Louis): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the duties I have performed in the service of the government have led me to take part in a very great number of constitutional conferences, from 1967 to very recently. And I thought that, perhaps, the reflections I had on that occasion could be of help to your Commission.

I've organized my thoughts into five main ideas that I'd like to submit to you. The first of these ideas is that, come what may, Québec should maintain, at least in the beginning, its internal political structures and, in particular, should maintain its parliamentary system and its electoral system. These are, Mr. Chairman, political structures which we have truly mastered, which we are familiar with, and which, in my opinion, do not have to be reformed immediately.

We mustn't forget that our National Assembly is one of the oldest parliaments in the world. In the two centuries it has existed, we've learned to adapt this British invention to our own context. And, today, our Québec parliamentary system is very different from the British parliamentary system or the Canadian parliamentary system. It meets the needs of Québec very well. Furthermore, the very creation

of your Commission, which is an expanded parliamentary commission, a Québec invention, is solid proof that we're capable of using the institutions we have.

I know, Mr. Chairman, that this is a matter which could be debated and that others may have different ideas about it. But the point that I'd like to make, today, is that even if we think that the presidential system is preferable to the parliamentary system, or even if we think that proportional representation is preferable to voting for a single candidate in one round, we should agree, as a society, not to call into question our familiar institutions at the very same time we begin to review our relations with Canada and the rest of the world.

In other words, I submit that we must not try to do everything at the same time or settle, at the same time, matters concerning our internal structures and matters concerning our external structures. I hope that your Commission will be able to reach a consensus on this point.

The second idea that I'd like to submit is that the proximity of the United States means that it is in Québec's long-term interests that English Canada remain a distinct political entity. I don't think it's a good idea, Mr. Chairman, for us to be brash or reckless, for our neighbour to the south is a formidable giant with a population 40 times ours. If all of Canada fell apart, and the other provinces joined the United States, we would be completely isolated. And we'd find ourselves surrounded on all sides by an economic, cultural and social ocean which, with time, could easily overwhelm us. We have only to think of the pressure the American reality already exerts on us to have an idea of the pressure should we lose Canada as a buffer.

I'm not saying, Mr. Chairman, that this prospect should prevent us from taking our own road. I'm simply saying that, as far as possible, we must favour the continuation of English Canada as a distinct political entity so that our distinct character may be backed up by that of our Canadian neighbours. Against the power of the United States, two distinct and, if possible, allied societies are better than one. We mustn't forget that we'll have to live with the future for a long time so we have to do our best to evaluate the very long-term consequences of the actions we take today.

This brings me, Mr. Chairman, to the third idea I've submitted in my brief: both Québec and Canada have an interest in being associated in an economic alliance of sovereign countries. First of all, I personally believe that it is in Québec's interest to become a fully sovereign nation, in other words, with the power to make its laws, levy its taxes and conduct its international relations. The reason behind my conviction is very simple. I believe that this is in the nature of things and is in keeping with the very laws of life. Whether we like it or not, we have

become a nation and we must be aware enough to admit it and courageous enough to take all its consequences. If we want to make our contribution to the progress of humanity and guarantee the development of our remarkable and unique society, we have to assume responsibility for our own destiny. Being master of your fate is not only a right, it's a duty. Furthermore, it must be said that sovereignty will enable Québec to enjoy full authority over matters such as communications, labour, social security and the environment, which are vital to its development and which would be practically impossible to get control over under a federal system, even a renewed one. Sovereignty would also guarantee Québec everything it needs to permanently and definitively ensure the absolute security of its cultural identity. On the other hand, in today's world, sovereignty can exist only with interdependence. This universal trend prevails on every continent and we are no exception to the rule.

The fourth idea that I'd like to submit is that this new arrangement is best initiated quickly. I think that if decisive steps are not taken immediately, there's a good chance we'll go around in circles. We risk having the situation deteriorate to the point where solving the problem would eventually become very difficult. There are, I believe, certain moments in the lives of nations, when people must be able to seize the opportunity. There is currently a desire in Québec, which is felt everywhere, to look for an area of agreement among all the various leanings, which could serve as an anchor for our collective goals.

I fervently hope that your Commission will be able to define this common ground which is capable of uniting the great majority of Quebecers. By highlighting the elements of a national consensus, your Commission will enable Québec to take a decisive step towards solving the constitutional problem. Because with the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, I believe that we still haven't answered the infamous question, "What does Québec want?"

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, though I don't want to take a categorical stand on a reality I am less familiar with, it seems to me that Canada is currently undergoing a phase of erosion which could even endanger its future. Personally, I grow more and more convinced that the presence of Québec in the Canadian federation is keeping English Canada from defining itself and identifying the values proper to it which could be used to hold the nation together over the next few years. This is why, in my opinion, it is important that this matter be settled quickly.

And this leads me to my last idea, Mr. Chairman: what must be done to bring things to a successful conclusion, a problem which has haunted us for such a long time. To my mind, it

is up to Quebecers to resolve the impasse by making a decisive gesture. This gesture would be to make it clear that Québec is prepared to create a sovereign country, even without an economic alliance with Canada, if, within a given time period, it proves impossible to negotiate such an association agreement.

I therefore suggest that your Commission recommend that the government hold a referendum on the following question: "Do you agree that Québec should declare its independence if a sovereignty-association agreement cannot be reached with Canada within a period of negotiation of no more than two years?" Of course, Mr. Chairman, I said two years, but it could be a little more or a little less. What matters is that there's a time limit so that there's progress in the negotiations and they don't go on indefinitely.

The question that I'm suggesting focuses on what is essential. Are Quebecers prepared to have Québec become a sovereign and independent country? If they aren't prepared, in my opinion they have to resign themselves to living under the current federal system without any major changes. For history has shown that this system is incapable of fundamental change. If they are prepared, moreover, there is every reason to hope that Québec will be able to maintain its close economic relations with its Canadian neighbours through an association agreement. For this is in their interest as much as ours. But even if this agreement should prove impossible, in the beginning, at the very least, Québec could continue to trade with the rest of the world, including Canada and the United States, under the GATT accord and other international agreements, and it wouldn't necessarily be isolated.

And there, Mr. Chairman, are the ideas that I wanted to submit for your consideration. I hope that they may be able to help define the broad consensus among our fellow citizens and within your Commission which I have spoken of. And thank you for inviting me to come and present these ideas this evening.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Bernard. We'll begin with questions from representatives of the Government party. Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bernard, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this Commission. Your appearance is of great interest to the Commission on several counts, because of your brief, but also because of your experience on so many levels: first of all, as deputy minister of Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs during the 1960s and early 1970s; as someone involved in policy-making with the Parti québécois at its very inception; and then, a little later, as

secretary of the government until 1985, where you left your mark; now, as a banker; and I'd also like to add that you were the government's advisor on Meech Lake. And we greatly appreciated your judicious advice. Therefore, it is with great interest that we receive your brief this evening.

You start from the principle that the system under which we currently live, and I'm referring to your conclusion on page 8 that history has shown that this system has been incapable of fundamental reform. Therefore, you're saying from the outset that, in your opinion, it's impossible to reform federalism. Professor Dion told us that it would perhaps be a good idea if we could establish what we want together and then tell English Canada: this is what we want, and within two years - let's say two years - if we haven't got it, then we declare independence. Because in the question that you would ask in a referendum, you make a distinction between independence and sovereignty-association. So, in this context, my first question is: can we truly, without any hesitation whatsoever, reach the conclusion that it is impossible to fundamentally change, in accordance with the needs of Québec, the federal system under which we live?

Mr. Bernard: Mr. Chairman, my response is categorical. I don't believe that it's possible to reconcile what could be called a "Meech-plus," in other words, the five conditions of Meech Lake, plus Québec's traditional demands: health, labour, social security, and communications. If we made up a Meech-plus, I think that it would be impossible to get the rest of Canada to agree to this arrangement. Pursuing this line of thinking would be a dead end. The major risk is finding ourselves at the end with a failed Meech-plus and a super June 24 and a referendum on hard-line independence which would pass with 70% of the vote. Because what would actually happen? We'd make our demands, we'd do another Meech, we'd add our traditional demands, and we'd go to Ottawa. We'd say, listen, we're serious. It's the war to end all wars, it's your last chance, take it. They'd sit there, looking at us. We wouldn't, under any circumstances, want to botch the negotiation, it'd be the last. We'd build up the pressure. We'd say, this is it, we're going to have a referendum. It's going to be independence. Our business leaders would pack up and go see their colleagues in the rest of Canada. They'd say, it's serious this time, etc. And I'm convinced that they wouldn't say yes to us. Why? Because they value their national government as much as we value ours. And from this angle, what you're asking English Canada to do is cast off the powers which are essential to the English Canadian identity in order to accommodate Québec. And you're asking them to give up on themselves in order to build up

Québec. You're asking them to destroy Canada to build Québec. And I think that they'd have the same reaction that they had to Meech, which was much more moderate. They'd say it's impossible. They'd say if you want to be independent, go ahead and be independent. And we'd come back to Québec and say, if that's how things are, then we'll do it and we'd have a parade with three times as many flags and the referendum would pass with 70%. But what's going to happen after this? We wouldn't have a common economic framework. We'd find ourselves with an independent Québec, of course. But in my opinion, it isn't the best solution. The best solution is to have a sovereign Québec that has an economic association with Canada. Because you'd have set people against one another. You'd have a failure, because it's a dead end. That's why I'm very categorical in my response, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Rémillard: Very well. I'm familiar with your concern for detail and accuracy. In your question, you therefore draw a distinction between independence and sovereignty-association. But the first option you refer to in your question is that of independence. Do you agree that Québec should declare its independence? From the outset, you ask for a mandate on independence if, after no more than two years of negotiation, an agreement on sovereignty-association cannot be reached with Canada. You make yourself very clear. You aren't proposing a second referendum, as some people have suggested. You're telling Quebecers, be careful, give us a mandate for independence, but we won't declare this independence if we succeed in creating sovereignty-association.

Mr. Bernard: Precisely.

Mr. Rémillard: You have, no doubt, weighed all the possibilities. And now, I'd like to address myself to the banker in you, for the banker is also appearing before us. And I'm asking, have you also considered all the economic consequences that all this could mean?
(9:30 p.m.)

Mr. Bernard: Listen, I'll answer first as the negotiator, and then I'll answer as the banker. When negotiating, I think that, if we want to do what is called last-ditch bargaining, we have to come to the bargaining table with a maximum of bargaining power. We have to be in the strongest position we can. I think we have to have the referendum under our belt when we sit down to the table to negotiate association. It's the best way to get it. Unions have known this for a long time. A strike vote is taken before the last round of talks, not after. And, in fact, people hope that they won't have to strike. They hope to have a good contract that will avoid their having to go out on strike. The analogy is

somewhat the same for the referendum. We have to have maximum bargaining power in hand; we need our referendum as a foundation. And the referendum must be clear: it must be on independence.

Mr. Rémillard: If I understand correctly, Mr. Bernard, you wouldn't necessarily ask for, or have in hand a referendum, a strike mandate, but you'd ask your workers to desert the plant?

Mr. Bernard: No, we're simply asking people to say whether they want...

Mr. Rémillard: Independence would be deserting the plant, wouldn't it?

Mr. Bernard: No. A strike, obviously, does not mean closing the plant. Even when there is a strike, it can happen, but in general, in 99% of strikes, the plant is closed temporarily and then opened. And it's thought, then, that productivity will increase, there'll be a better contract, lost time will be made up, etc. Obviously, strike votes aren't taken so plants can be deserted. I don't want to push the analogy too far. I'm simply saying that, if Quebecers want to solve the constitutional question, they must be prepared to say yes, if need be, we're prepared to go all the way to independence. We're ready to go that far. And when they've made this gesture, the Québec government will be able to approach the bargaining table with maximum bargaining power and we'll have the best chance possible of saving our economic relations within the Canadian economic framework.

Mr. Rémillard: And you also said that you'd answer me as a banker...

Mr. Bernard: As a banker, I feel that any strategy which accelerates matters is a good strategy under the circumstances. Uncertainty is the worst thing, under the circumstances. If matters drag on for a very long time, the Canadian dollar, the Québec economy, and the Canadian economy may well suffer. So, any strategy which aims to settle things quickly is a good strategy. There's no way of... The best thing, obviously, would be for the problem to disappear. But you and I both know that it's not going to disappear.

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

Mr. Rémillard: Simply, if I understand correctly, in your context of sovereignty-association, there would be a common currency, a Canadian community bank...

Mr. Bernard: Well...

Mr. Rémillard: While, under independence, there would be a Québec currency...

Mr. Bernard: Yes, yes.

Mr. Rémillard: Is this one of the major differences there'd be between the two systems?

Mr. Bernard: What I see are two countries which already do a lot of trading with each other. And certainly, under these circumstances, it would be to the advantage of both to have, for example, a common currency. It's often thought that Québec would be the one to greatly benefit from having Canadian currency. But I can tell you, if you look at the other side, Ontarians have a tremendous interest in Québec having the same currency. Because if we could compete with Ontario products in the United States, in lumber, paper, etc., with a different currency, it obviously wouldn't do Canadians any good. So, I think that it's in the interest of Canadians, and Quebecers, who do a lot of trading and have economic institutions from the Atlantic to the Pacific, it's obviously in their interests to have a common currency.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now move on to questions from a representative of the Official Opposition party, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: First of all, welcome to the Commission, Mr. Bernard. I must say from the outset that I agree wholeheartedly with your thoughts on our parliamentary system. I am among those in the Parti québécois, my political party, who, for some time at least, have been defending the idea - quite well-received, I must say - who've been defending the idea of keeping a political system which we are familiar with, which we have assimilated, and which has become ours, in the end. All the more so since your sound argument is absolutely pertinent; it isn't the time to do everything at once. We could, in several years, if we want, reflect once again on the matter and set up a presidential system if we so desire. I agree with you completely there.

You are - this is somewhat along the same lines as the minister's questions - a veteran of constitutional conferences. As a senior bureaucrat, you've worked with great skill, savoir-faire and integrity, at nearly all the rounds of constitutional talks, I believe, since 1967; therefore, for over 20 years. And this includes the last round, the big party of June 1990, which lasted a week. As such, you therefore have very extensive experience. Apparently in Paris they now say "you have a very strong personal feeling for."

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: Well. And you say that history has shown that the system is incapable of radical change. Why - I'm coming back to this - in your opinion, haven't constitutional talks ever, ever, to this day, at any time, given Québec satisfaction? Is there a fundamental difference between the two views of federalism, that of English Canada, and that traditionally championed by Québec? Are we, in the end, faced with a sort of collision, a clash between two incompatible and contradictory visions, and, with this in mind, have you therefore reached the conclusion that we mustn't waste any time trying to radically change federalism?

Mr. Bernard: I do think that a lot of these successive failures are, I'd say, Québec's fault. Perhaps we asked the system for things the system ultimately couldn't give. You know, the federal system is a system with its own laws. As with any system, there are internal rules of operation. Federalism is the sharing of powers and it implies that this distribution has a certain balance; there's a balance between the central and the member governments and a balance among the member governments themselves. If the distribution of power is unbalanced, the central government has too much or the member governments have too much, it's a distortion of the way federalism works.

And I heard Mr. Chrétien when he appeared here, and I think that it's for good reason that he hesitates to talk about reforming or changing federalism, because he realizes that, in the end, this system isn't flexible enough to be able to do just about anything. And it's somewhat the same thing with Mr. Mulroney. He also talks about a nicely reformed federalism but when we ask for details... This is normal, of course. And I don't think we should blame them. I think it's realistic of them to say: listen, this system we have, federalism is federalism. You cannot be independent under federalism.

And I think that Québec, over the years, and in particular over the last few years, has started becoming a nation. We haven't always been a real nation, I think. We have become a nation. And now we want to enjoy all of our powers. We want to run things here. We want to have everything that's important. You can't raise one important issue - just ask Quebecers - and ask: would you be prepared to give up this issue? Quebecers are in a mood, they've adopted the attitude that they want to take possession of the powers they need to consolidate their emerging nation.

So we find ourselves in the position of wanting to have everything. We go to the bargaining table and we say: we don't want to leave you anything, we want to have everything. And the rest of Canada, quite obviously, has a tendency to say: and what about the rest of us? Our country isn't very populated, given its size,

and it has different histories, with different elements; we do need something like a melting pot, somewhat like the United States. We do need something to bind us together. What does bind us together? Well, there's the CBC, the Canada Health Plan, and the Canada Pension Plan, all things we want to have in Québec, but Canada says: we can't destroy ourselves just to please you.

So, when we ask ourselves how it is that they aren't prepared to give us what we want, well, it's because we're perhaps asking for something that isn't reasonable, given the current framework. And that's why I think that we have to get an idea of how things really are. We can't have everything. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. So, we have to tell ourselves that if we want to have our traditional demands, the powers that I mentioned - you can perhaps add a few that will be cited before your Commission - if we want to have all that, well, we'll have to renounce federalism. And if we want to have federalism, well, we'll have to renounce a good deal of all that. Not all of it, but a good deal of it.

I believe that if your Commission, upon reflection, sees merit in what I'm saying, you'd be doing Quebecers a great favour if you'd say to them: listen, you can't have everything. You can't just have Canada adapt to the reality in Québec without taking into account the Canadian reality. You have to take into account the fact that there is an English Canada. It is a valid political entity that we have to help as much as we can, just as they have to help us. We have minorities in English Canada just as they have minorities in Québec. I'm talking about linguistic minorities, because although Anglophones are Quebecers too, they're a minority nonetheless. We have all sorts of things in common. All sorts of things that must be kept, but what's happening is that over the years - if you look at the last 10 or 15 years - all this is deteriorating, tensions are mounting, it seems as if we like each other a lot less than we used to and I think that if things go on as they have, we're going to like each other even less. We're going to finally end up with two completely separate countries when it isn't necessary to do that. We should be able to have our own affairs, and they theirs, and preserve the economic framework which benefits both of us.

Mr. Brassard: To summarize what you're saying, Mr. Bernard, you believe that we have to understand ourselves, identify and clearly define our aspirations, what we want, but this shouldn't prevent us from trying to understand them as well and from realizing that, in the end, wanting to satisfy our aspirations under the framework of the federal system is, in fact, asking them to destroy themselves or destroy their country, what they consider to be their country. I'll give

you an example. I have a lot of respect for Mr. Dion but Mr. Dion told us that the list of Québec demands should include the Québec Charter which would apply only to Québec and not the Canadian Charter entrenched in the Constitution. I think this is asking too much, and they couldn't accept it. It would mean renouncing their own idea of Canada, and we have to take note of this. I think it's important. For this reason, your brief is important. And Mr. Rocheleau, from Hull, also said something along these lines. And when you say you're growing more and more convinced that the presence of Québec in the federation is keeping English Canada from defining itself, I couldn't agree more.

Mr. Bernard: You know, English Canada hasn't had an English Prime Minister for quite some time. English Canadian leaders, like any society, need leadership. They have to identify with something...

Mr. Brassard: They don't have any at the moment.

Mr. Bernard: ...but they feel obliged, nearly always, to refer to Québec, to define themselves in relation to Québec, to always take Québec into account, etc. So it's very difficult for them, at a given moment, to say: OK, listen. We already do a lot for you, we take a lot into account and then, in the end you ask us to practically disappear altogether. That's why I've finally realized... I haven't always thought this, but upon reflection and after seeing how things operate, by talking, etc., I'm convinced that the federal link is not appropriate for governing relations between Québec and Canada. I think that...

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Bernard.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We'll now move on to questions from members. There were nine requests, and seven people among those who made requests are still present. I've put the two who spoke to the preceding expert at the end of the list, so we'll begin with Mr. Larose, followed by Mrs. Campbell Steer and Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm tempted to say the exact same thing for the major points of the brief, and this immediately brings me to the question you've formulated. Today, we've had three variations. You're the third variation in the series. The CSN is suggesting a referendum in June, with the question: "Do you agree that the National Assembly should proclaim its sovereignty no later than June 1992, once a constitution has been negotiated and drafted?" Mr. Turp is suggesting

a referendum in June 1991, but proclamation of sovereignty and negotiations for a year so as to have an economic union. And you're suggesting a referendum - we need to know when but I assume that it must fall approximately within these dates - but you're suggesting a referendum on independence, which could possibly, potentially interfere, after two years of negotiation, with negotiation on sovereignty-association. What I'd like to know is, will negotiation be focused on association, or sovereignty and association? (9:45 p.m.)

Mr. Bernard: Well, I don't know why you're making this distinction. I mean, if negotiation is focused on association, it means that sovereignty is achieved. Now, sovereignty has elements to be negotiated as well, because there's the whole question of sharing, the transfer of power between governments, etc. So even sovereignty can be the subject of negotiation, but I do think that it's essential, from the beginning, to convince Canada to sit down and talk about what this economic association could be, what has to be shared for the Canadian economic framework to be maintained.

Mr. Larose: But wouldn't it be more orderly if English Canada immediately concentrated on defending its own interests in the negotiations? In other words, we'd go in with the mandate of sovereignty taken for granted, to be proclaimed later or immediately, depending on the methods, so that Canada, for its part, would be obliged to consider its own interests to handle the situation. I don't know if I'm making myself clear.

Mr. Bernard: Even sovereignty, you'll notice, implicates the interests of Canada. I think I honestly don't see the need for making the distinctions you see. Perhaps I don't understand them, but I think that English Canada is involved in the sovereignty of Québec, it is involved in economic association, it is concerned about the entire problem, whether you look at it from the sovereignty point of view or the association point of view, I think that you'll have to come up with the same... I don't see the...

Mr. Larose: When should the referendum be held? When you say that things should be done relatively quickly, it's...

Mr. Bernard: Well, as soon as we're ready to hold it. If, for example, your Commission succeeds in turning in its report within the time allowed...

Mr. Larose: The chairmen certainly intend to. They keep telling us so every day.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Consider that it can be taken for granted.

Mr. Bernard: And if the report of the Commission is unanimous, or nearly unanimous, then things could obviously move faster. I'd say that we should move as quickly as possible without being hasty. If we're ready in June, there's no reason to wait until the fall. But if we're not completely ready in June, let's wait until the fall.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Campbell Steer, followed by Mr. Dufour.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bernard, going back to your third main idea. You say that it's to Québec's advantage that Canada continue to exist and that Québec be able to form an economic association with it. The Canadian GNP, without Québec, would be reduced. It would remain number seven in the group of seven major economic powers. Québec would rank fifteenth and an economic union could favour Québec economically, especially at the international level.

Because you say that this association is advantageous, could you explain in greater detail the concept of the association you envision? What sort of monetary union?

Mr. Bernard: I think that, if both parties sit down together to determine the best legal framework for organizing the maintenance, and even the development, of the economic framework — because you know, the Canadian economic framework is said to be a common economic framework — but there are still a great number of barriers within the Canadian economic framework. This is probably because, even within current structures, we haven't succeeded in negotiating these things.

If Canada and Québec both sit down to talk about how they're going to organize the maintenance of the common economic framework, they'll no doubt be inspired by what's going on in other parts of the world where people are faced with the same problems. For example, in Europe, they're starting from a position of much broader economic integration and they want to increase it even further. Here, our economic integration is fairly well developed and we want to maintain it. So, I feel that it shouldn't be more difficult to build institutions for maintaining a common economic framework than to build one from scratch. I think that by deriving inspiration from models such as these, we'll be able to determine specific methods.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: ...a common currency

or a central bank with proportional representation or...

Mr. Bernard: I think that it would be advantageous for both Canada and Québec if there were a common currency, to avoid the abuse of what I'd call competition in foreign markets. Because there's competition between industries in Canada and Québec and, if each had its own currency, the temptation would be to use the exchange rate to favour one's exports. And that could lead us into an economic war which wouldn't benefit either one of us.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: What margin of manoeuvre will we have, in your opinion, to set up economic policies which differ from those of our Canadian neighbours?

Mr. Bernard: Economic policies as such, if we're talking about major economic policies, I don't think the situation will be much different from what it is now.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I don't either. Most likely in the same vein as the European community.

Mr. Bernard: If we have the kind of economic association that I'm referring to, I don't believe that we'll have Québec economic policies that differ widely from Canadian policies.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Like the European community.

Mr. Bernard: The difference would probably be that we'd have more to say about defining economic policy than we do now.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But that we'd at least have to move towards a certain harmony in policies and in...

Mr. Bernard: Precisely. We'll have to add some water to our wine. We can't have everything.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: And to avoid any investment overruns or whatever.

Mr. Bernard: Exactly.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: OK. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Dufour, followed by Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Bernard. Of the five ideas that you've presented today, there are two which are perhaps newer in the sense that they haven't

necessarily been identified here by participants. The first is the maintenance of internal political structures; Mr. Brassard mentioned it. I'd like to talk about the continuing existence of Canada. I think that you're the first to really clarify the problem. And it concerns me a great deal. You're afraid, in fact, that Canada will break apart if Québec becomes sovereign, and I think that this analysis has to be done because the Eastern provinces are seen completely, for example... "Completely," because they aren't necessarily thinking of a strip of land in the area of Sherbrooke, which is going to link Ontario and the Eastern provinces.

Already, those who've been to Vancouver recently and who talk with the business community can feel a certain tendency to eye the United States. There's the Reform Party, in the West, which is becoming very important. In any event, I'm making your concern mine as well. And, in fact, when you talk about this concern, you're expressing an economic concern which, moreover, is very much related to one of the concerns expressed in your first section on internal structures, when you say that with sovereignty we'll truly head off into unknown territory. I think we can all agree on that. I'd like to ask you how afraid you are.

Mr. Bernard: Well. How afraid am I. Let's say that everything we do involves a certain risk, and perhaps since I've been at the bank, I better understand the fact that, basically, risks are just part of life. At the bank, we reward risk and the bank always has the choice between lending and not lending. But not lending is also a risk, because if you never lend, you'll go bankrupt. So, you have to take risks. Eating is also a risk; you could get food poisoning. But if you don't eat, the risk is even greater.

Mr. Dufour: Am I putting myself in the 50-50 range?

Mr. Bernard: I think that, with regard to maintaining Canada, its integrity, its continued existence, there's a risk in doing nothing. There's a risk in leaving things to worsen, as they currently are, when Québec is becoming the catalyst for increasingly developed autonomy in the West, in certain provinces. Québec is taken as an example. People say, if Québec has it, we want it. And then, because the more you have the more you want, the role of the provinces increases, etc. So, you're thinking in those terms...

Mr. Dufour: I think that you're clarifying a very real problem, and that it's a problem we cannot avoid. Quickly, perhaps, a second question. Some of your colleagues in banking recently said that perhaps we need to rethink Canada in terms of regions and think of a future

Québec on account of this possible disintegration; notably bankers from the West, they talked about a Québec-Ontario association. What do you think of this?

Mr. Bernard: Well, listen, this is really in the distant future. Personally, I think that if we act quickly in Québec, if we put our cards on the table and make our decision, English Canada is strong enough right now, it has enough common values to get through and preserve its existence. I think that, with time, I'll be less optimistic. For me, it's not a matter of Québec and Ontario, it's Québec and Canada. Fifteen years from now, I don't know what it would be.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Turgeon, followed by Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Turgeon: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bernard, I, like Mr. Rémillard and Mr. Larose, am preoccupied with your question. After all, when all is said and done, the population will have the last word, so the question will have to be clear. In my opinion, it's much clearer than the 1980 question. But it's still not totally clear because it gives the impression that, in fact, we're going to negotiate sovereignty at the same time as economic association, while you say in your text that only sovereign nations can establish economic association. The question that arises is, why not solve the problem of sovereignty first, once and for all, and address economic association later? That's one thing.

Mr. Bernard: In response to this, I think that the question is really about Québec's independence. I think that this is what's important. Quebecers must make a decision on whether Québec should be independent.

Mr. Turgeon: But if they're ready to move towards sovereignty now, do you think that, in two years, they'll be ready for hard and fast independence? This sovereignty they're moving towards... they say that they'll give themselves the mandate for sovereignty, and then negotiate it. If the negotiations fail, we'll have sovereignty all the same. We'll have the independence you speak of.

Mr. Bernard: Yes, that's it. I think that if Quebecers come out in favour of independence, they've reached a decision on independence. But, as we've seen, both in the opinion polls and as a result of our reflections, it's desirable to maintain a common economic framework when we have independence.

Mr. Turgeon: Absolutely.

Mr. Bernard: This is why the question must state that, ultimately, we want to reach an agreement with Canada to establish an economic community; however, if this doesn't work, are you ready to achieve independence?

Mr. Turgeon: Do you make a distinction between independence and sovereignty?

Mr. Bernard: For the purpose at hand, I do. I've already taken part in drafting a question. I know that it's not easy.

Mr. Turgeon: ...that's what I'm asking.

Mr. Bernard: And one always wants to make it as clear as possible. What I want to emphasize is that everyone in Quebec understands, I think, that there is one thing called independence and another thing called sovereignty-association and, in general, if you give them a choice between the two, Quebecers would prefer... if you tell them that they have a choice, that they can do what they want, I think they'd prefer sovereignty-association. In any case, that's what I'd choose. If you gave me the choice of being completely independent or having a system of sovereignty-association, I myself would choose sovereignty-association. I think the polls say the same thing. I'd tell Quebecers that what we propose as a system of government, that what is being proposed by those asking the question, is this system. But it must be very clear that association cannot be achieved unilaterally. The other party has to agree to it, too. And the other party may say no. So, you don't want to take that road if you aren't ready to go all the way. And, if things don't work out, then you have to be ready to accept complete independence. For this reason, in my question I try to combine sovereignty-association as the desired goal along with independence as a possibility that... (10:00 p.m.)

Mr. Turgeon: Mr. Bernard, you'd like this Commission to identify the elements of a national consensus.

Mr. Bernard: Yes.

Mr. Turgeon: A consensus on what?

Mr. Bernard: A consensus on the fact that, for example, when given a choice between federalism and Québec's traditional demands for powers, the people choose powers for Québec. I think that if you were able to reach a consensus on this, if there were a choice between giving up federalism and giving up our powers, the people would renounce federalism. Secondly, once the step was taken to renounce federalism, the people would want to maintain a common economic framework with Canada. I

think that you'd be able to reach a consensus on this point. Then, to obtain this association, Québec would have to go to the bargaining table. And to go to the bargaining table with the maximum bargaining power, Quebecers would have had to reach the decision to accept independence.

Mr. Turgeon: One last question, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, you state that it's in Québec's long-term interests to have Canada survive as a distinct political entity. Very well. But, don't you think that it's a little insulting to English Canadians for us to be afraid that, once Québec is gone, Canada would get crushed, let itself be taken over by the Americans? It's as if we thought that they didn't have any backbone, that, ultimately, there was no reason for them to decide to go on living together as English Canadians.

Mr. Bernard: I hope that what I said isn't taken in this way, because I feel no contempt for English Canada, in fact, just the opposite. I think that it's a very worthwhile society and that it deserves to continue. I hope it continues, and continues in harmony with us. I think we have a lot to share with English Canadians. We share many values. We can support each other. When you compare the American way of doing things, you see that the Canadian way is different. And we share many values with them, so it's not at all contemptuous to say that we hope that they continue as a dynamic society.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you.

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

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. Basically, Mr. Bernard, there are two groups now in the Commission, two schools, two ways of seeing things. Some think that English Canada can be convinced to make the modifications Québec wants in the current Constitution. Others say no, this is impossible, they will refuse. And, therefore, because of this impossibility, we must ensure that Québec has a strong bargaining position, so that when it goes to the table again, it can get the changes it wants. A question of analysis, prognostication, conjecture arises here: are they going to want to, or not? Mr. Dion, for his part, thinks that it's still possible, so much so that he wants to include in the modifications the absolute subordination of the Canadian Charter to the Québec Charter. Whereas, earlier today, Mr. Libman stated unequivocally that one of the reasons Anglophones, at the very least those in Québec, were disturbed by Meech Lake was that they were afraid that the recognition of Québec's distinct character would alter the integrity of the Charter of Rights.

So, we clearly see that there's a fundamental problem, and now you come along. In the first place, you have a great deal of experience; you've been involved with the whole Meech Lake episode - twice, in fact. You were Mr. Lévesque's right-hand man and were closely associated with him to the end. You were involved with all the negotiations and, after the departure of Mr. Lévesque and the arrival of Mr. Bourassa, you accepted Mr. Bourassa's offer to work with his government, which was federalist at the time, to try to bridge the gap between us and English Canada again, to try to draft an agreement called Meech. You succeeded. Then, at the end, you returned, again at the request of Mr. Bourassa, again during the month of June, in a move that seemed extremely daring to many, including myself I must say, to try to save the Meech Lake Accord again, even going so far as to weaken it a little, according to some. Others denied this. We'll leave that debate open. But a letter was added, a complicated, contorted letter that was referred to in the agreement itself and therefore was recognized by the first ministers. It watered down the accord; no one really understood what it meant, but it was an attempt - in any case, according to some people - to claim that recognition of Québec's distinct society had been watered down. They went up to that point, they went to the bitter end, further than most of us would, to save the Canadian conception of our country, to save the integrity of a unified territory, etc.

You, too, witnessed your last hopes fade there. Today, you come before us to tell us that it's impossible to convince English Canada to make the kind of changes that we want. Even if we went back to Meech, as low as Meech, because they have their own conception of the country, their country, the country that they have in their heads, in their hearts, the country where they feel at home, which they don't want to give up. It's legitimate. And we don't ask that of honourable people. We can't ask them that; they'll say no again. Because they feel it's their duty, because it's their identity.

So, what do we do now? We're back to the question of bargaining power. And secondly, to an adjustment. We're saying yes, but let's not ask them for things they can't give. Since they need their own country and we need our own country, we'll have two countries. However, we'll do it as harmoniously as possible. We'll take no chances and do everything possible to maintain an economic union. This involves a bargaining position that's a little different from the one that I, for one, and Mr. Turp spoke of earlier. This means a bargaining position... Sovereignty is declared right away, but is postponed and won't take effect immediately. It's postponed while we're working out ways to maintain an economic and monetary union, etc.

Here, we're told to watch out: they won't

be rational, they'll be emotional, they won't want to negotiate, we'll be wasting our time and, in the end, we'll be obliged to do it all the same, under impossible conditions. You, however, turn the thing around a little and say: no, we won't do it right away. But we'll decide now to do it later if they refuse to have an economic union.

My question is the following: what makes you think that your approach will convince English Canada to act in a more rational way, will convince them to really sit down with us and try to set up an economic association? What makes you think that they're more likely to act as you hope rather than as we on our side hope?

Mr. Bernard: Well, first because it's a more straightforward approach. No threats will be made. We won't tell English Canada that if they don't accept, we'll threaten them with independence. We won't tell them that. Instead, we'll say to Quebecers: listen, we have to solve our problems, we have to take charge of our nation. We must assume the powers of a sovereign State. This isn't a threat. When we ask Quebecers the question, it won't be in response to a threat, or to carry out a threat made to English Canada.

We'll ask Quebecers if they want to be a sovereign people, if they want to assume their own powers. And when they tell us yes, at the same time they will have answered the question: do you want to exercise this sovereignty in the modern way, in interdependence with your neighbours, to maintain a common economic framework? That's what we'll ask Quebecers. So, when we go back to English Canada, we won't make threats. We won't tell them to do this and do that, or else... We'll tell them that we've made our own decision. We've decided that we want to be a country and, if you're interested, we're ready to establish an economic association with you. It's a little like the French who went to the Germans and told them that they wanted to create a common market. The Germans weren't insulted, they didn't feel threatened. They told themselves that the French were offering them something.

So, we make a decision to create a country here, where we are sovereign, and, at the same time, we say to English Canada: do you want to establish an economic association with us? Because we've made our decision, the people of Québec have made a decision. And we're offering to establish an economic association with you. I think they're more likely to tell us: fine, we'll at least sit down with you to work out the possibilities of a common economic framework, what it would consist of, what a Canadian economic community would mean, etc. Why? Because it's not insulting. We simply made our own decision and are making them an offer.

But if we go to them in the traditional way and say, we want this, we want that, and if you don't give it to us, we'll do this, etc., it seems to me there's less likelihood of succeeding, less likelihood because perhaps they'll say to themselves: fine, maybe in the end they won't do it, they don't know whether we really want to, etc. I think this way of proceeding is a better way to save Canada's economic framework and maintain good relations with our Canadian neighbours.

Mr. Bouchard: In other words, the referendum would force us to make a decision on the principle of sovereignty.

Mr. Bernard: Yes.

Mr. Bouchard: Secondly, it would include an offer to English Canada to set up an economic community.

Mr. Bernard: Right.

Mr. Bouchard: And, thirdly, it would stipulate that sovereignty wouldn't take effect until the deadline for setting up association had expired.

Mr. Bernard: Yes. Well, to ensure that the game is fair, so to speak, and also to clearly show the rest of the world that we're reasonable people.

Mr. Bouchard: To allay Me Beaudry's fears about the transition period.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Me Beaudry has a chance to ask one last question. He and Mr. Béland are still in luck, since we have a little time left.

Mr. Beaudry: So it's Mr. Béland and then me?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Béland first, Mr. Beaudry afterward.

Mr. Béland: I won't use as much time as Mr. Beaudry, so...

Mr. Beaudry: I'm not sure about that.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Béland: A little while back, Mr. Rémillard reminded us of your remarkable career. I think this gives you complete authority to express the point of view that you've presented this evening. They say the law prepares you for anything, and so you've become a banker. I wanted to explore this aspect in particular with you, but one thing that struck me in your brief is that, in addition, you've been one of the few

to bring up the cultural question, and you're a banker at that. I really liked what you said about nationhood, that the one thing we must protect is the fact that we are a nation in this world, which is a blessing for the world and deserves to survive. We haven't seen this kind of thing too many times in the briefs. You say that, whether we like it or not, we are a nation and we must be aware enough to admit it and courageous enough to take all its consequences if we want to make our contribution to the progress of humanity. This is very fine and does credit to you. But let's get back to your experience as a banker. Many people have come here - well, maybe not many but some - predicting economic stagnation. And some people, who haven't appeared before this Commission, have said in the papers that we'll never have sovereignty because it'll cost too much. What I've noticed is that these people are never asked to back up their claims. They don't have to bear the burden of proof. It's the people who say we'll establish sovereignty who are asked to prove that it won't have any ill effects. As a banker who proposes sovereignty, since I know you to be a serious-minded person, what is your assessment of the risk of economic stagnation, or of sovereignty costing us so much that ultimately we'll discover that it was a really bad idea? How do you see this?

Mr. Bernard: Well, I don't see it as being very realistic or probable but, on the other hand, I can't say it's absolutely... We can't prove it won't happen. We could conjecture that the transition period could perhaps be more difficult if, through a stroke of bad luck, we have a combination of unfavourable circumstances. No one, I think, could give you insurance against that. You can't go to Lloyd's and ask them to insure you against the possibility of something or other happening that will make the period more difficult. All I know is that Québec is a society with a sound financial footing that can overcome periods of difficulty. We can hope any disruptions will be as painless as possible, we can believe there will be hardly any or there will be some. As a society, however, I think we have a solid enough basis to get through them. I don't see any problems in this area.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Beaudry, you now have to demonstrate that you can be briefer than Mr. Béland.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bernard, you have almost answered my question in your answer to Mr. Bouchard. Even if we don't always have the same ideas, occasionally we do agree.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: My question has to do with your question, in fact. You ask people if they agree that Québec should declare independence after a period of negotiations, an agreement on sovereignty-association, and you say in your report or brief that we can't do everything at once, that we have to take the time to digest the actions that have been taken. If we become sovereign, we'll take on all our powers by declaring ourselves sovereign.

My question is the following one. Do you see the possibility or could you be won over to the idea of asking the following question: Do you agree that Québec should declare its independence if, after a period of two years, Québec agrees to take on full powers in culture, education, family policy, immigration and health? We will list them precisely, the powers that we want to have immediately. If this isn't achieved in two years, we'll declare independence. Does this type of question... Because with this, we still have a type of sovereignty-association. We're interdependent all the same.

Mr. Bernard: Mr. Beaudry, I couldn't be won over...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This will be your last answer, Mr. Bernard. You're entitled to finish it.

Mr. Bernard: I couldn't be won over to this because, in my opinion, it dooms this last round of negotiations to almost certain failure. I think it would be very dangerous, if we want to maintain good relations with Canada, if we want to maintain a common economic framework, to centre the last round of negotiations on a subject or viewpoint that, in my opinion, has little chance of succeeding.

I think it's a real trap to believe that, to obtain the kind of powers you refer to, it would be easier to negotiate truly decentralized federalism with Canada than to negotiate sovereignty-association. I am profoundly convinced of this.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Bernard, for giving us the benefit of your reflection and experience. I'd like to remind the members of the Commission that we'll start work here again tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m., 9:00 sharp and not 9:30. The steering committee, of course, which always gets started early, will meet here at 8:00. The hearing is now adjourned.

(End of sitting, 10:16 p.m.)