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

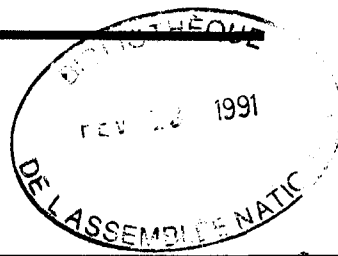
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Montréal, Wednesday, January 16, 1991

Hearing of organizations and experts

(9:05 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. I remind you that the mandate of the Commission is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to formulate recommendations in this regard. Today, we welcome guest experts who have submitted briefs and other groups that have also presented briefs.

The speakers will be: first, Mr. Pierre-Paul Proulx, guest expert; next, the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain; next, the Polish Combatants' Association; next, Mrs. Juanita Traoré Westmoreland, a guest expert; next, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (Montréal Branch); next, the Maison d'Afrique; next, the Société franco-manitobaine; next, Mr. Edmond Orban, a guest expert; next, the Comité de coordination sur la place des communautés ethniques et raciales; the Québec Federation of Home and School Associations; the United Church of Canada; the Comité hongrois de Montréal and the Association canadienne libanaise/syrienne du Québec.

At the end of our sittings in December, the Secretariat and the Chairmen held a small Christmas party. A few small gifts were given by the staff to the Chairmen. Each of us was given a referee's whistle to keep order and I mentioned that I would use it. So, if you would please quiet down, I... The session has begun.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I have virtually no intention of using it in the official exercise of my duties.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear the presentation of Mr. Pierre-Paul Proulx. Mr. Proulx, you have the floor.

Mr. Pierre-Paul Proulx

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, I have chosen as the title of my summary introduction this morning "Un État à la recherche d'une nation, une nation à la recherche d'un État" - A State in search of a nation, a nation in search of a State. I feel this aptly summarizes the substance of what we will probably be concerned with this morning. I wanted to emphasize and focus attention on the fact that, when there are several nations in a State, this results in some

instability and raises, in my opinion, a very important element, that is the need for cohesion in order to function in a changed world in which States are entities that, in certain cases, are up against a wall and are losing powers. I have therefore lent great importance to the underlying fact that nations are essential, as are States, but that, to play on the international rink if you will, nations must be highly cohesive.

There are many interrelated factors and reasons, including technological change and the institutional changes that accompany it, the tertiarization of our economies, the increasing importance of multinational firms, in short, the various changes that create two basic trends which have been widely discussed and which may be summarized in two words that are, in fact, in the title of the brief. These trends create, on the one hand, the interdependence of countries but, on the other, and this is rather interesting, also generate nationalism, which is what we are seeing throughout the world. I have also used these two themes in my brief; they stem from this analysis of the international and domestic changes that create interdependence, on the one hand, and nationalism, on the other.

These phenomena mean there are changes in both directions. On the one hand, there is a search for larger entities, such as the European Community, G7, the GATT, the Free Trade Agreement, to determine the rules of the game, over which States are gradually losing control. Therefore, on the one hand, there is an upward movement from a supranational standpoint to accommodate these basic changes in our economies and in our international world. On the other, because of technological changes, subnational, regional units and others are being created that force large cities and regions to group together and work in tandem so as to adapt to the new world context of interregional competition.

What I maintain is that we must group together and cooperate to compete more effectively on an international scale and make our way in the globalized economy. An effective State is required, but is in no way sufficient in a globalized world. These upward movements, which States cannot control and which mean that matters are decided at the supranational level and trickle down to other levels and jurisdictions... The fact that there are many capitals, including Ottawa, that are up against a wall, for control over macroeconomic monetary, trade and financial policies, to which could be added control over a number of domestic policies, because of the rules of the game that force us to place constraints on the use of domestic policies... Thus, control over macro-policies is slipping away from many States, and

the factors that determine national competitiveness are often found at the local and regional levels and involve policies that, in Canada, are the responsibility of or involve the provinces, the municipalities and the regional governments. These are closer to the people and have not been affected by the demographic deficit of the supranational units.

Therefore, one of the basic things is the upward movement that is slipping away from the control of States, and the downward movement that requires changes in the attributions, duties and powers of the various levels of government.

Last July, I came back from a year in Europe where I tried to understand why certain European regions assumed more importance, more scope, and others lost importance, scope, in an integrated space. We are not in the Europe of the 12; we are in North America, where, with the Free Trade Agreement, matters have become blurred. We are also beginning to have a market that is somewhat integrated. So I tried to understand why certain regions assumed more importance, became competitive, and why others were in decline, to try to see whether this was pertinent to us in Québec.

Upon my return, I noted things because, during the year, certain phenomena occurred. I noted that the debate had become polarized, a fact that concerns us today, and that there were protagonists whom I would place in four categories. Yesterday, we heard Mr. Courchene, who is in one of these. I believe I can place the people who have come before the Commission in these three or four categories.

First, there are centralizers, who want a stronger federal State. I think there are more of them in the Anglophone provinces than in Québec. Second, if I try to group the protagonists, I find centralizers who want to treat all the provinces the same way. This is another subset, if you will, that imposes rather special constraints when we are seeking formulas. Third, there are the more flexible decentralizers, who would like to have an opting-out federation, and/or a participation federation, an opting-in federation. Mr. Courchene is more in this group, which is more flexible in attributing jurisdictions according to level. Then, fourthly, there are people who believe that Québec's distinct character requires such asymmetry that there is no acceptable solution in a federal or confederal framework because the asymmetry would mean that Quebecers would vote on national laws, that small provinces would not want to group together in a region, and so on. I could add to the list.

There is one thing that has struck me since my return. People have become polarized and subgroups have been created. They revolve around three or four subsets, if you will.

The other thing that has struck me is that

many matters are being discussed while, previously, the discussions were somewhat more restricted, although still quite broad. Various aspects of the question, including socioeconomic, cultural and political ones, are being discussed, as they should be. And I, as an economist, cannot arrive at a conclusion, solution or proposal without necessarily viewing it from this broader perspective, and I find that interesting.

When preparing this little talk this morning, I also asked myself: What sort of plan or analysis would I carry out if I were trying to structure my thoughts so as to arrive at an appropriate solution, which I was unable to do, in short, as an individual? In a few words, what I would do? I would look at the social scene. I would conduct a study, first of the social, economic, cultural and political environment; I would examine two or three scenarios, including that of what I call broader sovereignty, because there is no complete sovereignty in the integrated world in which we live, and associations, with an "s", because, to my mind, there is a principal association with the rest of Canada, but there are essential associations in an integrated world.

So, I would draw up a sovereignty scenario with associations, with an "s", and I would prepare scenarios for opting-in federalism - I don't think opting-out federalism is viable - and a confederal scenario. After that, I would make a study of the transition required in the various scenarios and I would examine the resulting advantages and disadvantages. This is approximately the plan I would follow if I had to carry out somewhat more extensive work. I can certainly offer you, this morning, what I have discussed in my brief.

One of the elements on which my work and attention were focused, especially in Europe, but here as well, is the question of what is actually happening in Québec's economic space, since I submit that, in this integrated world, we have to look at what is happening in our economic space, for this will direct the choice of policies and powers of States and of their protagonists in a changing economic space. So there, briefly, are the findings of my analysis, because information is pretty hard to come by and I did not have the means to go into the matter in more detail.

So, what I noted, generally speaking, is that our markets in the rest of Canada, with the exception of the Atlantic Provinces, are losing importance in relation to our American and overseas markets. According to recent studies, Québec is - there is a mistake in the text, isn't there? - a net importer of primary products and will achieve a balance in the long term, i.e. with no surplus or deficit in regard to secondary sector ones, and will have a deficit in regard to our tertiary or service sector, if you prefer. This recent analysis, which I cite in the brief, indicates that, if the composition of its exports

is examined, Québec exports more secondary sector products. This is not, I believe, a standard profile... Québec is, in fact, said to export more secondary sector products than Canada without Québec. This is a special classification according to UNCTAD data. Other studies will have to be conducted to confirm or invalidate this since it presents a somewhat new profile. I believe this was the one that was given. So, the fact that we export more secondary products than the rest of Canada, and we have to look at the main exports of each, is an interesting element in an economic discussion, if you will, about a sovereign Québec and a Canada without Québec.

I believe, however, that the Toronto region and, on a smaller scale, that of Vancouver, and this is glaring, it is now obvious, are a step ahead of Montréal in regard to the tertiary sector, a factor that is disturbing for the whole of Québec, for a region or a province without a dynamic, international city, and this is true in Montréal's case, is destined to decline. There are 14 or 15 main reasons for this, not one or two simple ones. There are 14 or 15 reasons why Montréal is in relative decline and why Vancouver will, in 25 years, in 50 years, slip ahead of Montréal, and Toronto has made a good start. In my opinion, it is very disturbing for Québec to be following such trends, so I have tried to find something in a new system that would lay more emphasis on attributions and powers at the regional level as well.

My study of international trade data for the primary and secondary sectors of each province compared with 19 American regions and the whole of the United States over the period from 1976 to 1987 indicates that, despite the constant decline of the United States in world trade, which can only be disturbing to us because the United States is our biggest customer, with between 70% and 75% of our shipments, Québec's North-South trade in the primary and secondary sectors increased more rapidly — some 15% a year over this 10-year period — than its somewhat more restricted East-West trade in manufactured goods. So North-South vigour has been much more sustained than East-West vigour. This is true for all the provinces with the exception of Alberta and British Columbia. Note that this is a period... (9:15 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Proulx, we are coming to the end of the time allotted. We have already exceeded the 10 minutes a little. Without absolutely forcing you to...

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Please.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...you would perhaps like to outline the other main points...

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...and the rest could be given in your responses.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Fine. Since my visit here with the Chambre de commerce de Montréal, I have obtained new data on the entire flow of interprovincial trade including the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors — this was new; I didn't have them — and they indicate, briefly, that there has been growth of 14% to 20% plus in Québec's share of international shipments in relation to its GDP. What this means is that, with the exception of Newfoundland and British Columbia, Québec is the least dependent. If we consider the entire flow of these markets in the rest of Canada, while, from the manufacturing standpoint, it is among the most dependent. So, internationalization is taking place, but we are far behind.

According to the data, even the most recent, Québec is a province that has not become as internationalized as it should have, if I have correctly understood the international context. This is therefore one of the elements of the brief. The second is as follows: What should be done from the standpoint of economic policies, particularly in an open space, in a space that is, in short, North American, in a space that is undergoing change? And I concluded that we must go in the direction that suggests policies we can control, for a number of these policies are slipping away from us, as I tried to point out in my introduction.

I have a proposal that, for the time being, has five points: one, that we have to have what I call a very synergetic, local, regional environment. This means increased, diverse forms of collaboration, and I have noted them under item 7 in the brief. And, secondly, we need a network of cities. We must strengthen interregional bonds between Québec's cities and business firms because, to penetrate international markets, we have to have an efficient internal structure. Thirdly, we need critical masses to penetrate these markets. I have listed them in what I consider their order of importance on the basis of my analyses of international trade. Next, we must, in a new system, enable governments — I have finished, Mr. Chairman — at the municipal and regional levels to act internationally, as I saw in Europe. Municipalities and regions are acting more and more with international paradiplomacy. Lastly, certain policies are more pertinent than others. These are education, training, innovation, infrastructure, information, competition and industrial adaptation policies.

Lastly, I concluded that an opting-in solution or a confederal solution is unlikely given the developments I witnessed during the year I was away, and that sovereignty will

associations, the main one of which would be with Canada, appears to be one solution, despite a costly transition period, and I'll stick to my guns on this. The sovereignty-associations approach, associations in the plural, is viable, but only if the Francophones, Anglophones, Allophones and aboriginal peoples of Québec agree on the objectives and work together to achieve them. I propose these objectives for discussion.

And finally, a last comment. The debt and sharing of the debt with Canada have been discussed at length. I submit that formulas with at least three elements must be found. One would take into consideration the revenue we earn, for this is more or less what determines our contribution; secondly, the share of assets on Québec territory would be around 14% or 15%; and of our population as well, but certainly not only of the population. This is just one detail, and I don't know whether it has been discussed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Proulx. We will now hear the questions. First, Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning and welcome to our Commission. Your brief is really very interesting and is in keeping with many other analyses that have been presented. It is also interesting to see that, basically, the entire brief presented by the City of Montréal, yesterday morning, as you undoubtedly had an opportunity to see, focuses on many of the fears that you voice in your own brief and the expectations of the City of Montréal in this regard.

I'll go back to your summary to begin with, which also refers to your presentation before us this morning. You say: "We conclude that neither a strong federal system, a solution incompatible with Québec's distinct society, nor a confederal system, which would be unacceptable to the provinces other than Ontario, because, among other things, they depend on a strong, central government for transfers, is probable or desirable". I would like you to elaborate a bit on this because, obviously, one of the debates that went on for a good many years maintained that Québec was more of a winner with transfer policies - we realize that this is no longer the case - and that it was therefore very much in our interest to remain in the Canadian system. So, I would like you to elaborate on that, and then I will go back to the transition period because this is a matter that is obviously of paramount concern to us.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Thank you very much. The Province of Ontario, where more than 50% of Canada's manufacturing output is concentrated, has obvious stakes in the matter.

It has tried to maintain the flow; a common market, at least, a free trade zone for access to the markets of the Western provinces and the Eastern provinces is essential, and I submit that this is one of the reasons why, in Ottawa, they would like to have a government with rather broad jurisdiction in regard to the flow of trade and the obstacles that the provinces can place in its path.

Therefore, in regard to Ontario, it seems clear that it would be preferable to have a common market and a heavier flow of trade, even if, from the standpoint of intergovernmental transfers, should any remain, it would cost them money.

As for the Atlantic Provinces, they have also turned much more toward the South, but there are, in fact, differences and disparities in revenue from wealth. The weight of transfers from a central government is now such that, in the budgets of these provinces, there is a very high percentage from that and we may take this to mean... I submit that, if they were left to make their own decisions individually, the provinces would want to have a somewhat stronger federal system so as to have transfers.

In regard to the West, things are a bit more complicated. I maintain that British Columbia may want to be quite autonomous eventually because of the trend I have seen and its links with life in the Pacific region, which is extremely dynamic. Fascinating things are happening in Vancouver and British Columbia in general, which we should try to emulate to a certain extent. Why do they have such viability? Yes, perhaps. In the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, it's a little different. I think that, because of a variety of factors, they are perhaps less antagonistic toward federalists since they have obvious links with and a very obvious role in supplying the American market.

So, it's not all black and white, but, looking at the provinces, I understand why they want to have a stronger federal government, all the more so since the trade-offs, the choices, the costs of strengthening the centre from the standpoint of jurisdictions, and sociocultural realities are not as considerable, although there is a mosaic up to a certain point, but there is more homogeneity and the costs of this centralization are therefore less apparent.

If this economic argument is added to a number of other necessary elements, I believe I understand why they want to have a rather strong central system. If it is weakened, transfers to the provincial level cannot be effected. If it is weakened too much, the common market cannot be maintained to favour and facilitate what is going to come in any case. However, I submit this as one of my arguments because if we have the GATT and the Free Trade Agreement, there cannot be too many obstacles. The common market is going to

reestablish itself slowly after the transition period we could discuss. But, nevertheless, I believe that there are good reasons why Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces want a rather powerful federal or confederal central system. It's a little more difficult for British Columbia.

Mrs. Marois: Which obviously leads you to the conclusion that, in the final analysis, Québec's distinct character cannot be expressed if the system is a very centralizing one.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Let's say it's a question of costs and benefits, and I feel that all the costs and benefits, especially the sociocultural costs, are such that, in the whole "package" if you like, that makes me a bit more sceptical, since I was normally talking about a Louisiana scenario.

Mrs. Marois: Yes.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): I wanted to bring out clearly the fact that a possible improvement, but I do not say necessary, of our standard of living, which would allow a richer sociocultural reality, may not be achieved by us and may not accompany this higher level of wealth. There are elements that may have the opposite effect.

Mrs. Marois: My other question obviously deals with this famous transition period, which, you say, may be costly. What are the parameters on which you base such a statement, especially from the standpoint of the scenario? Could you outline the rules? You mention, for example, the division of the debt. We can imagine a whole series of projects, hypotheses; that would mean we could minimize the insecurity arising out of a lack of information and, therefore, actually lower the costs of a transition period.

So what are your elements or the elements on which you base your statement that the transition period may be costly?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): OK. It is based essentially on years of follow-up and study and analysis of economists' models, which necessarily have weaknesses but have been used to examine the benefits of integration. If we examine the benefits resulting from free trade zones, the European Common Market, all the studies that have been conducted to examine the benefits of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, they all have static models that fail to pinpoint the resulting benefits.

The benefits were overestimated. I always claimed that. I can return to my writing to show you this, but I always claimed that. The effects of the liberalization of trade and its costs were overestimated. The reality is not quite so extreme. So if we add... Therefore, according to the static estimates of all the models of general

equilibrium and the whole range of economists' models, there are benefits to integration, to eliminating tariff and certain non-tariff barriers that place us in about... This varies from 2% to 10%, but it is around 3%, 5% of the GDP, which would be the positive effect of the Free Trade Agreement we signed with the Americans and which would come from the common market.

So, adding the dynamic effects that are less apparent in these models, the proportion rises a bit to about 5% to 7%. If we take the path of a little less integration, which is, in my opinion, inevitable in a sovereignty-association approach, I say that the common market will be reestablished, but after a certain period of time. In fact, I submit that we are already paying the costs of the transition and have been paying them for 10 years. This is already under way. Given the head offices that have moved, given the lack of certain investments, Québec is already paying the costs of the transition. Part of them are already being paid, but there is still a part that will have to be paid.

Although there are benefits to greater integration, there are costs involved in a certain weakening of the operation of the Canadian common market. These costs must be counterbalanced by the benefits from other aspects of a function, of a society that has objectives other than financial ones.

Mrs. Marois: But then, isn't it uncertainty that could cause fear, restraint, decisions or the absence of decisions? But if the transition rules and time are defined, won't we lessen this fear, thereby avoiding the costs that you feel are possible?
(9:30 a.m.)

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): You can see in my analysis that I have dealt with the decision-making networks that are influenced by the action of States, the definition of the rules and everything else.

Mrs. Marois: Yes.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): But there are people who are concerned more or less with States and less and less with the international economic and financial transactions of States. Many firms make their decisions from a continental or world-wide standpoint, and there would be a very clear project - there would have to be - that would have... There have already been and there will continue to be people who would be uncomfortable with the uncertainty that we could try to dissipate, but which is a reality in investment decisions. I am therefore fully aware that we cannot escape this and that these estimates are more or less accurate, but in my calculations, I arrive at a transition period, the length of which is difficult to predict for it depends on the nature of the discussions and

negotiations that will be held. And all this uncertainty cannot be dissipated when there are at least two parties involved in such negotiations.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now give the floor to Mr. André Ouellet, who will be followed by Mr. Nicolet and Mr. Turgeon.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to say that I have read Mr. Proulx's brief with much interest and what surprised me was that, at the very end, when he provided a sort of summary of his thoughts and advocated a constitutional reform, he discussed the sovereignty option, the confederal system and more centralized federalism. He completely forgot more decentralized federalism.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): OK.

Mr. Ouellet: I like the remarks at the beginning. How could you forget the... since this is also a possible option?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Let's say that so-called more centralized federalism is the opting-in federalism I was talking about, but, in the definition of our colleagues from Queen's University, who are working with the BCNI in Ottawa, opting-in federalism begins with autonomy and subsequently involves centralization. The term may therefore be confusing. Opting-in federalism is watered down, very weak federalism. It depends on what people want to make of it. So, I used this term which is identified with potential federalism, but where the attributions it would have would be those... And there is a rather interesting list drawn up by Courchene that we saw yesterday, which could result from this approach. I maintain, on the contrary, that the sociocultural reality, despite the economic costs of the transition... Because I did not forget to say that, at the end of the transition period, the effect may be positive because of this need for subnational concentration, integration and cooperation, which is the need to work on the international link.

This said, I will return to the question. I maintain and have concluded that the national government in Ottawa, like the governments in many countries, is losing control, is losing its powers, is finding itself cornered. It has to go to the supranational level. There are constraints on the formulation of its national policy. I was very recently looking at the maximum disparity in real interest rates; it was 2.5 percentage points between Canada and Germany during the 1980s. Throughout the 1980s, there was a difference of 2.5 percentage points in real interest rates. This is the maximum disparity.

This means that there are increasingly serious constraints on the use and attributions of States, therefore on our State in Ottawa. So, I see powers slipping away, weakening - this can't be controlled; neither Quebecers nor anyone else decides this - slipping away from national States because of this phenomenon of integration, and there are also decisive competitiveness factors that are dragging us down. I am therefore inclined to seek formulas that reduce the power of the national government and give more power to the local and regional levels and, since we are in a Québec political context, to the provincial level.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you for the explanation. I would like to go back to a point made by Mrs. Marois concerning the revision of economic policies. You suggest that economic policies be revised to enable Québec to play its full international role. But a little further on in your document, when you explain how Québec could take over this new economic space, it seems to me that all the factors you list are within Québec, provincial jurisdiction and that, in the final analysis, regardless of the political, constitutional context, what there is to be done must be done by the Québec government. I find it odd that you jump to the conclusion that there must be sovereignty for Québec to play its role from the standpoint... I would like you to explain how you arrived at this conclusion, since in your text, if I have understood it properly, there is a set of factors that call for Québec policies in the hands of citizens, firms, regions and elected municipal and regional officers. All this is already within Québec's jurisdiction.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): In the brief, I believe, because it is perhaps in another text, I in fact mentioned what seems to me to be more pertinent policies for operating on an international scale and, looking at the list, we see, as you so rightly say, that many are already attributions of the province and in the hands of citizens and regions, but in the list, there are many joint powers. In short, there is much action taken by the two levels of government dealing with training, various aspects of innovation, and research and development. Go down my list and you will see that these are joint powers in many cases. This is where changes have to be made, where attributions have to be clarified, but to the extent that my economic analysis...

This idea was reinforced somewhat for me when I was in Europe. I was coming to that conclusion here but I did not see it as clearly. If the competitiveness of the units of the European Common Market really depends, and I maintain that this is very, very true here, on the quality of human resources, people, training and education, which is intimately tied to cultural

values, then this cannot be dissociated too, too much... If this competitiveness depends on the ability of people and regions to innovate, since some regions are innovative and others are in decline, and, when we take a look at why this is so, it seems to be partly linked to the ability to innovate with regard to goods, services, production processes and market penetration... Therefore, if these are very local factors, I maintain that the less allegiances are divided, the more attributions are clarified, the more this aspect, which we still have, is strengthened because the other is slipping away from us. And in Ottawa and Québec, it's the same old story, the other aspect is getting away from us.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So we...

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): So, we are left with matters we have to concentrate on, which are now joint ones in many cases.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now give the floor to Mr. Nicolet, who will be followed by Mr. Turgeon and Mr. Holden.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first of all like to refer directly to your text. On page 11, I read: "Let us take the opportunity to write that Québec's regional policy must be changed and that elements completely missing from Québec's municipal policy must be introduced. The present regional policy tries to favour Québec's regions with the exception of the Montréal region, and the departmental committee, etc." Could you elaborate and specify why you come to the conclusion that the regional policy, if there is one, the regional development policy favours the regions outside of Québec City?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): I will begin by responding to your last statement about whether a policy exists, since we shouldn't pretend there is a very strong, articulated regional development policy in Québec, at least according to my reading. But, when I take a look at the annual reports of the OPDQ, among others, which is one of the agencies that, theoretically, has tried to focus on regional aspects and the regional effects of our various sectorial policies, we see that Montréal is used as a reference point. The income disparities between one region and another are compared with Montréal, and I in fact note that, for reasons peculiar to it, the Montréal region is in decline and, if we try to follow the lead of a region in decline, we will all be in decline.

I look at what is happening in Ontario. Ontario has not had to deal with regional aspects of development as much because the vigour of the central region has been spread

around to a greater extent, which has not been true in our case because of the weakness of the Montréal region. They, on the other hand, have begun to think about northeastern Ontario. They have, in fact, started to think about regional policies. What I maintain is that to operate in an international space, on the international hockey rink if you like, we have to work pretty closely together from this standpoint because we can't afford to be brushed aside in the relations established between the resource regions and the United States, between certain regions around greater Montréal and Europe, and between other cities in Québec and elsewhere. Therefore, we must follow the main trends developing here and there on the international scene. We have to participate in them but, to take advantage of them, we have to establish relations among ourselves if we want to have a society that is in any way viable. This has already happened in the European policies I mentioned. An effort is being made to favour networks of cities, to favour... The firms in Lac-Saint-Jean and those in Québec City and Montréal have complementary features. We would therefore do well to favour networks rather than try to target Montréal, which is in decline. This is more or less what I was trying to get across.

Mr. Nicolet: What you are in fact indirectly criticizing in your affirmation are shortcomings in planning and policies for the Montréal metropolitan region.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): In part, but it is also the lack of awareness on the part of the protagonists in Montréal and the other regions, who do not work together. Because I'm talking about the primary need, which is an synergetic Montréal milieu, then relations between our firms and institutions and the rest of Québec.

Mr. Nicolet: My second question is broader; it deals with your discussion of Québec's economic space. What interests me, naturally, is mainly the development of this space and, more specifically, the primary sector. You started to discuss this a moment ago in your general statement, and I wondered about the depth of your analysis. Did you look at the primary sector in detail, sector by sector? For example, in regard to the agricultural sector, which was discussed at length before the holidays, did you have an opportunity, first of all, to establish its dependence on the Canadian and North American economic context and to assess the impact of an affirmation or declaration of independence on it?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): I admit that I relied on old research, which is not...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You don't have much time for your answer, Mr.

Proulx, but you may bring up the matter and pursue it, perhaps when responding to another question.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Fine. If we look at the data, although it dates back to 1974, on interprovincial trade in primary sector products, which is what your question deals with, the only sector in which Québec has a surplus with the others is the forestry sector. In agriculture, there is a rather considerable deficit; in fishing and trapping, metal mines, fuels and even non-metal mines, there is no cover for our exports beyond a... In other words, it is a surplus only in the forestry products sector, but that dates from some time ago. Perhaps this has changed. Since then, many events have occurred, phenomena in the energy field relating to gas and petroleum that may have changed this, but let's say that the mid-1975 picture showed a surplus in forestry products but a deficit in agriculture and in the other primary product sectors, since we are, along with the rest of Canada, net importers of primary sector products. We are a balanced exporter but a little... We compensate for our international deficit in imports of secondary sector products by a surplus in secondary sector exports. If we put the two together, there has been a deficit as a general rule, except in 1982.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now give the floor to Mr. Turgeon, who will be followed by Mr. Holden and Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Proulx, you propose no strategy to achieve sovereignty-associations with an "s". Is there a reason for that or wouldn't there be one or more strategies that would make the transition period less difficult for us?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Frankly, no. I have not studied these aspects in detail since I have no particular comparative advantages to use in examining this type of question. But what is apparent, and this is according to what Mr. Ouellet said a moment ago, is that there are many steps within our jurisdiction that we could now take that would reduce the transition costs and hasten the stage when making this move will be considered positive. So, if you look at the list of proposals there, this means that, in the Québec private sector, between business firms and Québec unions, but in our government training and innovation policies as well, there are steps we can begin to take immediately that will cut the costs of the transition a little and hasten the period that will have positive aspects.

This is one reaction we could have. There are things we can begin to do. We don't have to wait; we don't need to wait; there are

possibilities. We won't be able to go as far as we would like, but it is important for us to set things in motion right away. This is one reaction that could be helpful. But I frankly have not thought about more specific negotiating strategies.

Mr. Turgeon: Mr. Proulx, how can we explain or get across to people that economic development is closely linked, as you say, to social, cultural and linguistic policies, and therefore to all Québec's political power?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Let's say I maintain that, in the integrated, worldwide, globalized economic space, one of the matters we have to understand is the location of the means of production. Decisions about the location of the means of production and decisions about the location of head offices and business firms in the tertiary sector in many large cities and regions depend on what may be summarized as aspects of the quality of life and the quality of the environment, which depend a lot on the quality of the human resources available, on the richness of cultural life at a given location, hence on aspects that are not strictly or directly economic but that have a fundamental impact on choices and decisions regarding the location of the means of production. This means that the quality of life must be enviable - and this is one of the six or seven objectives I list toward the end - for this is an essential factor in determining the location of production activities.

Mr. Turgeon: One last thing. There are therefore two main options that may materialize: sovereignty and the confederal system, and you believe a Canadian confederation is unlikely. Why?

(9:45 a.m.)

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): I believe it is unlikely because there would have to be too much asymmetry to satisfy the parties involved. In short, I think asymmetry would weaken too much what would be in the centre. There is also a desire - I tried to explain it a moment ago, but perhaps inadequately - for more power at the centre, on the part of Ontarians and the Atlantic Provinces, than what I believe is going to be acceptable and is acceptable to Quebecers considering the weight they give to various objectives. Hence, asymmetry in the potential solution seems neither plausible nor desirable because, I believe, if there is so much asymmetry, Quebecers will not be happy with it, on the one hand, and what we will have pooled will escape us, on the other. And we will also fail to achieve the overall objectives.

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr.

Holden, followed by Mr. d'Anjou and Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Holden: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Proulx, I want to go on a little with what Mrs. Marois has said on the subject of your remark about the rather costly transition period. You say that the Province of Ontario has the greatest interest in hastening or cutting short this period of transition. But you must be aware that it is as much a matter of politics as of economics. And Mr. Rae's election, and he will be there for at least four years... Traditionally and historically, the New Democratic Party is the most centralizing of all the political parties. Then, when you consider the question of transition and the time, will there be a tendency to extend this period with the election of Mr. Rae?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Right. What I want to see, in the interest of all the provinces, Ontario and Québec, is a speeding up, a shortening of this transition period to the greatest extent possible because, it is Mr. Peterson who said it I think, very recently, between Québec and Ontario... Ontario's exports are in the region of \$16 billion and ours are in the region of \$13 billion. We therefore have a deficit. This is the only province. There are extremely important ties between us which, I put it to you, are going to slacken a little. In short, there are decision-makers in the private sector who, in the face of a sovereignty process, could cool off. There are transitions, movements that are going to continue up to a point as well. Therefore it is in the interests of Québec and Ontario to hasten this period of transition.

The coming to power of a more interventionist government, if you wish, in Ontario, has clearly... But I am in no position to discuss that. I hold that that is going to run counter to a major trend which, on the contrary, places greater emphasis on the market, in the allocation of resources. For a period, the people of Ontario will remain opposed to this. They are acting a little as we did here in Québec at a certain period. We have taken another turn the aim of which is to allow the public allocation of resources to cohabit with the decisions taken in the private sector. But the rules of the game we are talking about, and which we are seeing enter the international arena, exert a great deal of force and put constraints on governments, including the Ontario government. Therefore, even if one professes a more interventionist ideology, reality may not necessarily correspond to it. This is what I saw in France. The French government was chastised for being very market-oriented despite its declared socialist adherence. I therefore submit to you that the countertrend in Ontario will reverse itself. And the very powerful market forces are going to take over again at this level.

Mr. Holden: One remark, by way of conclusion. The fact is that Mr. Peterson, who was very well disposed towards Québec, was defeated. And I believe that one of the reasons for his defeat was the way in which he appeared to accommodate Québec. That is a comment and I do not expect you to answer it. But I believe that is going to make things very difficult for Mr. Rae, for him in his province, and for him vis-à-vis Québec.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): If that is true it would mean Ontario would take a harder line with regard to the sociocultural reality of Québec. And this leads me to the suggestion that a confederal system would be very difficult and demanding for Québec.

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

Mr. d'Anjou: Mr. Proulx, in your brief you say that Québec is in a deficit position with other countries as a whole, in its trade, its trade in services and so forth, and that this is offset by its surplus position with the rest of Canada. Do you think things will continue the way they have been for the last 10 years or will they tend to improve? That is my first question. Second: You say in your brief that the transition period would mainly affect the people of Québec, the most unprotected, those who have little schooling, while others could benefit from such a period. I would like to hear more from you on this.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Yes. With regard to... If we look at the trade balance, primary and secondary, of Québec and its evolution over time with a critical eye, because the question is new, I do not see any particular trend towards either improvement or deterioration. As a general rule, primary, secondary deficits in fact. As far as the tertiary sector is concerned, there are very few measures available; one can therefore speculate with a clear conscience. The total foreign trade balance swings between positive and negative and is tied to international phenomena. In the entire balance there is both positive and negative. However, in the primary and secondary sectors it is as a general rule negative. You mentioned the surplus with the rest of Canada, which is in slow decline and which offsets the international deficit. As concerns the redistributive effects of the phenomenon of a slackening in the period of transition, I think that would go into reverse, interprovincial movements.

Yes, I believe that because Québec is becoming a little more active internationally. The fact of its changing its political status is going to create new functions and activities. Entering the international arena means that certain kinds

of jobs will become more plentiful than others. It is not by chance that the people working in the international field are the ones with the best education and training, among other things. The question I would ask is, if the transition period has negative effects, who will find himself without a job? It will be the taxi driver, the truck driver. In a period of transition it will be those with the least schooling, the blue collar workers, who will suffer most. There will be an increase in unemployment and it will not affect all alike. I therefore see the creation of jobs at higher levels; but more unemployment in the transition period, especially for the occupational, the vocational level and the people with the least schooling.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Proulx. I want to pursue what you were talking about with Mr. d'Anjou. You said: The choice of sovereignty seems to us viable for the medium term, although costly during the transition period. I imagine that you are a member of the Association des économistes, which came here to tell us the same thing, but they defined the transition period as one of about 10 years. I don't know if you feel the same. You went on: This is above all true for Quebecers who have little schooling. You have answered this in part, but we know that the rate of illiteracy is 29% in Québec, which means about a third of Québec's manpower. When you say that you are almost in agreement with Mr. Chrétien when he says that some 2000 middle-class citizens would be placed in a favourable position. This is also what you say because it is the others who could benefit from sovereignty during the transition period. And, finally, you are a little more pessimistic when you say: As for the status of sovereignty, it will be initially costly we think, but possibly profitable. As an economist I agree with you. Your crystal ball doesn't guarantee you anything, and therefore you must go with what is possible and probable. I would like to hear what you have to say, not only about the risk you warn against, but about the duration of the period of transition.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Okay. First, I was president of the ASDEQ, but I am no longer a member, as it happens, because I chose to do something else, if you like. I have therefore not been involved in their work or their estimation of how long the period of transition will last, or anything else. Okay.

I maintain, and I have said why, that there will be a period of transition, the costs of which have been exaggerated, and that these costs can

be cut down through certain policies. The results, and I maintain this as well, will be redistributive insofar as the creation and reduction of unemployment are concerned.

It was therefore about a Québec that was potentially viable, and that comes from an examination of the composition of our exports, that I was speaking. I was somewhat surprised to find that Québec exported more from the secondary sector, but that must be checked, and we must look again at these exports for they are one of the essential driving forces internationally. It is a fairly positive, promising situation.

The other thing that remains unknown is whether we will stop during a period of negotiation and discussion – and this answers Mr. Turgeon's question in part – everything we are now doing. There are many things that can be done now about training our human resources, about our research, development and innovation policies, and certain other policies that I have mentioned, such as concerted action in the community and integration into the networks. There are policies that can shorten this period of transition. You ask me about the length of such a period. In all honesty, I have not studied the matter, but I would not be surprised if it were five years. I say five years, but that is just a guess. The 10-year period suggested by my colleagues is also a guess I believe. These things cannot be really estimated. Briefly, the data we work with are not all that accurate, but the fact that they are subject to variation does not invalidate the concept or what I am maintaining.

Mr. Dufour: Between 5 and 10 years!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): A very short question demanding a very brief reply.

Mr. Dufour: Yes. Do you agree with Mr. Watts of Queen's, from whom we will not hear I imagine, who says it will be very difficult – and we are going to hear this – to negotiate an economic association with English Canada?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): My own personal reading of that is no clearer than anyone else's and there are differing views about how it will end. The fact that we have different views, that there are so many views in Québec, as there are in the rest of Canada, does not make it easy to discuss these matters.

So, I maintain that it is going to be a fairly difficult period, but before that, I tell myself as an economist that we do not have to wait before acting. There are all sorts of things that can be done to speed up the process. They are going to go in what I consider an inevitable direction and we possess many things to help them on their way.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We go on now to Mr. Dauphin, but before that I want to remind the members of the Commission that the briefs which have not been heard should not be cited until they are heard. Doubtless this happens because of a lapse of memory.

Mr. Watts has not been heard publicly because he was not free to come this week, but we have agreed with him that he will be heard during a sitting yet to be determined. That said, to clarify things, when I say we, I refer to the Steering Committee, the members of the Commission not being informed. It is no more complicated than that. And now we pass to Mr. Dauphin.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I want to welcome you to our Commission, Mr. Proulx, and to thank you for accepting our invitation to share your expertise with us.

Of the political activities from which Québec gains a certain room for manoeuvre, you mention in your brief, on page 14 I believe: establishment of a synergetic community with a maximum of horizontal and vertical collaboration among businesses, universities and governments; establishment of strategic alliances between businesses, institutions and city governments and competitive and complementary regions in Québec and elsewhere. Could you elaborate on these points a little?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Yes, of course. I have seen, in Europe particularly but also in Toronto and Vancouver, greater efforts and more means invested in rallying people quickly for the study of issues involving them in competition between regions and, more and more, internationally. In Ontario, particularly in the Toronto region, there is Metro Toronto with five municipalities that are very much part of Toronto but that have a regional outlook. Here at home that is in fact beginning. You are aware that there is a network of boards of trade, the COPIMM, which have been collaborating for two years now. On Thursday I called the first meeting of all the industrial commissioners: Laval, the south shore and the Island of Montréal. We are only just beginning such cooperation in Québec, particularly in the Montréal region.

On the other hand we have what I might call a coolness between Québec and Montréal. This makes things difficult for the networks and for relations between the cities and towns in the province, which we must try to improve. In the BATAR in France, for example, and even in the programs set up by the European Community, city networks are being forced to do it; the people, entrepreneurs and institutions in the different cities are being forced to work together so that they can face the rest of Europe and the rest of the world more

effectively. This is the right path, but it takes an individual to call together people who should... It happens elsewhere too. All of a sudden people are talking together. If one wants to make a regional proposal in an aeronautics case, one does not have to begin looking for people to get them together. There are mechanisms for achieving this. There are organizations for this. We do not have them. To operate on the interregional and international planes, it seems to me essential that we have ready access to such mechanisms. In this way, if there is a distribution after review of the attributions of orders of government, if one of them should disappear, that gives a little more room for distribution of attributions between Québec and the regional and local levels. It seems normal to go up and essential to go down. It is something of this kind that underlies my thinking.

(10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Dauphin: Okay. Thank you. I would like to go back, if you will allow me Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Nicolet's question earlier about Montréal. You do of course favour the development of Montréal, that is understandable. But in your regional tour as members of the Commission, the majority, virtually all those who spoke asked the opposite of us: Try to decentralize, do not give it all to Montréal or Québec City. I wonder how a formula could be found to enable the other towns and cities in Québec to have a window on the world.

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Let's say that there is a serious problem of perception and analysis, and with a political program in this matter. We must try to carry out analyses to show that there are substantial complementary aspects among our cities, to show that things will come together, not necessarily from one year to the next but over a period of time. There are many international studies and much literature that demonstrate this.

When a region has a focal point which moves, the rest also move with time, in certain cases. We also have need of critical masses to operate on the international level. Nor must they be too small. We must have, and this is a matter of networks, we must come together to find the critical mass necessary to operate internationally.

If we examine the infrastructures, which are very expensive, we cannot increase their number in order to achieve what is required to work on this level. It is in the Montréal area that one finds the infrastructure for the multimodal transport of goods and information services: voice, image, data and text.

There is, then, a particular role. Toronto plays it, Vancouver is beginning to play it. Montréal does not play it effectively. The south shore, the City of Laval, for the moment, it is beginning there, but it is oddly cold. If we think

of our relations with other cities in Québec, we find this opposition, but in my opinion we really have to take it up and change it because it is together, and not one against the other that we'll succeed. It is true that the interests of the Côte-Nord are greater because of these transactions with the United States, but if we want to attain certain objectives of greater added value in the manufacturing sector, some of the people in the Montréal region must work much more with the people of the Côte-Nord with a view to innovating in the fields of goods and services and, together, export abroad. There are going to be fewer Côte-Nord primary products exported. There will be things of more interest which will depend on the comparative advantages of Québec and its resources, hence this suggestion of trying, on the contrary, to change this perception, and it is not Montréal against Québec City, against the north shore, it is together, therefore these city networks that... I believe that it does not exist, this policy, these elements, at the moment and we don't need to wait for Québec to do it, on the contrary. Municipal authorities of regional governments can begin to do this. It is beginning in the Montréal region, but late. It is very late.

Mr. Dauphin: Is there any time left Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have a couple of minutes.

Mr. Dauphin: Good. Perhaps one last question. And a comment at the same time. You opt for sovereignty. It seems to me that you do so without any great enthusiasm, for the reasons you gave earlier, perhaps the transition period, certain costs. However, should a confederal system become acceptable to the other provinces, would you then favour a confederal system rather than a form sovereignty?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Good. Two things. If I have given the impression that I lack enthusiasm it is because I have tried to stick to an economic analysis. When I put everything on the table, my choices, my preferences and sociocultural, linguistic and economic tastes, I am a little more enthusiastic, if you wish. The impression of a lack of enthusiasm therefore arises from the study of the strictly economic questions that are in the package. But if I put everything together I am more enthusiastic because, as I suggested, the alternative is Louisiana. That I do not want. Therefore, on the contrary, I am very, very enthusiastic, despite the period of transition because there is no free lunch. There are no benefits without costs. It is often one of those fads of the economists. There are costs, but they are, I think, offset by other

elements and by the possibility of considerable viability; and that depends on Quebecers if we do in fact succeed in accomplishing what seems to be indicated.

With regard to a confederal system that would respect some of these elements and the minimum I feel would be acceptable to everyone, allow me to say, from the cultural and social standpoints, yes, it is a solution that might be accepted, but I have my reservations as to acceptability on the other side. This is what disturbs me most. The constraints on the other side disturb me more than our own.

Mr. Dauphin: Is...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have a minute left.

Mr. Dauphin: One minute. With regard to the federal debt, you said at the beginning, in your statement, that you had an opinion about that, that we should not think only about our portion within Canada, 25%, but that we are going to have to find \$100 billion of that debt tomorrow morning. Will you comment on that?

Mr. Proulx (Pierre-Paul): Yes, of course. To push the argument to the absurd, let's say we have... and it is not correct, I am going to absurd lengths... If federal government funds were used to develop infrastructures to the maximum extent in the Western provinces, in order to work with the countries of Asia bordering the Pacific, where a great deal is going on, let's say we have 50% of the assets that were paid partly in taxes, but also by putting Canadians in debt, why would we, Quebecers, with 10%, 14% of the debt, pay 25% of this total? It is therefore necessary to take account of our ability to pay, which is the income we earn, in proportion and in relation to the others. This is the first element of my formula.

Second, I would take account of the division of assets. This is the argument with which I began. If assets are distributed in a certain way, an inequitable way - and I understand why, in a federal system one tries to discriminate, but this is difficult in ours - if it is inequitable, it would seem, according to the estimates I have seen, that it is unequal. We must I think take all this into consideration, and I feel that using population figures as a criterion for the division of the debt is totally inadequate.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This ends the highly interesting presentation of Professor Pierre-Paul Proulx, who responded to our request to submit a brief and agreed to come

here today to answer your questions. Thank you.

I now ask the representatives of the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain to come to the table because we shall be ready to proceed in a few minutes.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:07 a.m.)

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

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We are now going to hear from the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain. The presentation will last no more than half an hour. That means five minutes for an outline of the brief. Mr. Saillant, I believe, is the coordinator. Please introduce the members of your group and then you have five minutes for the presentation. You have the floor Mr. Saillant, and I ask members to take their seats and the assistants to ensure silence as far as possible. Mr. Saillant.

Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain

Mr. Saillant (François): Good morning. I first want to introduce the members of my group. On my extreme left, Pierre Lagrenade, community worker at the Châteauguay CLSC, who works with LRH tenants and applicants in the Châteauguay region; Caroline Brisebois, student, and president of the FRAPRU; Denyse Labelle, worker with the FRAPRU, who is particularly concerned with cases of discrimination among applicants for low rental housing; and, finally, on my right, Richard Saint-Pierre, who works for the Association des locataires des Habitations Jeanne-Mance, which is, as you know, probably the largest LRH project in Québec.

The FRAPRU is a Québec-wide group of some 40 agencies that have for 12 years fought for the right to housing. The FRAPRU tries to act as spokesperson for the hundreds of thousands of tenants who spend 30%, 50%, 70% of their income on rent, for the 15 000 persons who, in Montréal alone, do not even have a permanent dwelling. We told you, when we demonstrated before this building on November 14, what we think of your Commission, on which the Québec of businesspeople and of politicians is lavishly represented but the Québec of the poor, of women, of the young, of the aboriginal peoples, of the ethnic minorities is completely absent. Allow me to say as well that in addition to the discomfort of being here there is another, that of having to come to a decision, at this time, on Québec's collective future, our future as a people, at the very moment when armies, claiming to act in our name, are about to destroy the collective future of other peoples, and ours as well.

Having said that, the FRAPRU opts unequivocally for independence for Québec, for the repatriation of all its political, social, economic and cultural powers.

We are for independence, because it is we, the working people, who foot the bill, who are the victims of national oppression in Québec. I will take just one example, that of housing, which is of most concern to us as an organization. With 25% of the population of Canada, Québec has 28.5% of the inadequately housed and receives only 16% of the federal housing budget. If we add to this the fact that the Québec government has still not had the courage, despite years of pressure from popular organizations, to propose a national housing policy, and is content with the shortsighted policy of administering policies that come from Ottawa, we can see that the poorly housed of Québec will unfortunately remain so unless there are changes. It is for this reason that we choose independence, but not just any kind of independence and not independence at any price.

We can see nothing in the brand of sovereignty that you have unfortunately talked about since the beginning of this Commission. We see nothing in this sovereignty to indicate that it will change anything, at least for us. We cannot see ourselves as part of a sovereignty of business. What we want is a sovereignty of the people. We are not interested in your having more powers, if these powers only serve to strengthen the already upwardly mobile Québec bourgeoisie. What we want are basic changes, changes at the national level and changes on the social level. We would like a Québec that no longer obeys the dictates of the almighty dollar and that will launch a battle to the finish against poverty, which, in Québec, affects one person in three; a Québec which will attack poverty and not the poor, as the Liberal government did with its infamous Bill 37. Attacking poverty means something quite specific. It means attacking the problem of the distribution of wealth in our society. It means questioning the order of things... rather the present economic disorder.

We want a Québec that will fully recognize the existence and the claims of the aboriginal nations, nations which, like the Québec nation, must have complete freedom to rule themselves. We want a Québec in which there is equality for women, for minorities, for the young and for the old. We want a Québec where freedom and justice reign and, I would add, a Québec of peace where our money is used not for arms but to combat poverty. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): In this presentation you indicated, at the beginning, and you had a perfect right to do so, that you are not in agreement with this Commission as

regards its composition or anything else. I said to you before you began that I wished to make your use, in your brief, of the word "legitimacy" a little more precise. You were, if I may say so, restrained in your approach to this matter in your presentation, but I want to remind you that in a democracy, when the people who are democratically elected are unanimous in their choice of a mechanism for analysis and recommendation, this Commission for example, it is not only legitimate, it is rather rare in modern society. On the other hand, the fact that we have to make recommendations does not in any way mean that this Commission is going to choose in the name of the people of Québec, whatever the choice. Since your presentation was very modest...

Mr. Saillant: Let's say that we contest a certain popular legitimacy.
(10:15 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That would be an expression I would concede to you voluntarily, but words being what they are, legitimacy, in a democratic society, it was adhered to in every detail and more, in the creation of this Commission. I don't want to make a debate out of this. It is not my intention to make you feel ill at ease, but, as I have said it to others, I must say it to you as well. This said, let us go on to the questions. You have the floor, Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad you raised this point because I was going to do so. The point has already been made before this Commission. You have in your brief various recommendations; one in particular concerning the aboriginals. On page 3 you say: Whatever happens with regard to the constitutional future of Québec, these nations must be recognized and negotiations must be undertaken with them as equals to settle their land claims. Several groups of aboriginals or first nations have come before this Commission making these same land claims, but none of them spoke of a specific territory. You probably followed in the papers, as we did, the Oka crisis last summer, and know that there are groups of aboriginals who said then that their territory represents about 85% of the territory of Québec. Do you feel that, in a sovereign or independent Québec, if this was the claim of the aboriginal peoples, you would favour granting this claim to such a vast amount of land?

Mr. Saillant: First, just to clarify one point, we are not the ones who are going to make the claims on behalf of the aboriginals; they are going to make them. Therefore, the first thing...

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, but you say you are

in agreement with that. You say this in your brief.

Mr. Saillant: No, but what I want to say is that it is not up to us to define what they want. Are they claiming 85%, 80%, 75% of Québec's territory? It is up to them. What we are saying is that these people, first, have the right to... First they are nations; I think this is the first thing to be recognized. Second, they have claims. Some of them have made clear territorial claims. I am thinking, for example, of the Conseil des Attikamek et des Montagnais, which for some years has been making clear territorial claims. We, what we say is that it is necessary to sit down with these peoples and negotiate on the basis on their claims. I don't think there is any aboriginal nation that is considering ousting the Quebecers. When, for example, the Mohawk nation said that the Mohawk ancestral lands included the Island of Montréal, I don't think for a moment that they were demanding that Quebecers move out. I don't believe that anyone thinks like that. But, there are claims to this territory, and we have to sit down with these nations and recognize fully the justice of the fact that these peoples were here before us, and on these grounds see what accommodation can be made. I don't believe for a moment that they want all this territory, that they are saying: We are going to take 85% of this land and throw the rest of the population out. On the contrary, they want a certain say in what happens on these lands. One case that would be very interesting to discuss is that of the Cree, who want some control over the economic developments that are going to take place on their territory.

Mr. Beaudry: Okay. I have a second question. You have opted for independence and you say, on page 8 of your brief, that your movement does not, however, believe that this should be at any price; you mentioned it as well in your presentation. You say: "We definitely reject the present trend towards social unanimity, the grand national consensus, advocated by people like Lucien Bouchard, Jacques Parizeau, even Robert Bourassa, who, in the name of the so-called greater national interest, would silence all those who do not agree". What, then, is the independence you propose? Because we have had different kinds proposed to us. What is yours? How is it going to be achieved?

Mr. Saint-Pierre (Richard): I think we stand firm as regards the criticism of unanimity in our brief. When we think of a blueprint for society, we are trying to improve the lot of those we represent. And we are trying to define the parameters of the nation we would like to have, and how we want to live with other nations. When, to our regret, we see certain sovereignists

get up in the House or in Parliament, to vote on the integration of Canada, for example, and of Québec into a free trade market in which we are going to be dominated, and, clearly, we are dominated by oppressor countries, when we see the same people get up and vote on the GST, which impoverishes the people of Québec even more, when we see the same people rise in the House to vote against the right of Québec women to have control over their own bodies and when we see the same Québec independentists and sovereignists get up in the House and vote to send Canadian and Québec troops to the Gulf, with everything that that means, we do not recognize in this conception a unified Québec nation. The real nation is, for us, to be found in the grass roots. It is made up of the Québec people, who spend 30%, 50% 70% of their income just to house themselves every month. These are not the habitués of the grand houses. You do not find them in the grand houses or the grand hotels. Our people, they are the backbone of Québec, citizens who produce and who make this society work.

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

Mr. Laberge: Good day!

A voice: The five minutes are over.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The five minutes are over. Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: Pardon me?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The floor is yours, Mr. Laberge.

Mr. Laberge: That's what I thought I understood...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Fine.

Mr. Laberge: ...before you interrupted me.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I am not interrupting you.

Mr. Laberge: So, thank you for coming. I don't need to tell you that I agree with your positions, except when you speak about the legitimacy of the Commission. Everyone could not be represented on the Commission. Of course some are missing. We said it ourselves many times; it's obvious.

Now, when you say that you don't want to discuss a national blueprint without at the same time discussing its social content, well, I think all the trade unions said that. We don't want a sovereign Québec simply for the pleasure of having a sovereign Québec. We want a sovereign

Québec that will be progressive. We want a full-employment policy and suitable housing. We want to recognize the rights of aboriginals, the rights and privileges of Anglophones, all of these things. We are quite comfortable with that. We are quite comfortable with that, except that you seem to say, or maybe I'm mistaken: The government must enact low-cost housing legislation before anything else. That has nothing to do with this process. The government can enact legislation giving us adequate housing, but that has nothing to do with the workings of the Commission. One doesn't preclude the other. Do we agree?

Mr. Saillant: I don't agree. We even say that we mustn't wait for Québec to be independent, but that the Liberal government must have the courage to table a housing policy.

Mr. Laberge: Yes. Except that there are things...

Mr. Saillant: We've been talking about a housing policy in Québec since 1977. So we shouldn't have to wait for independence to get it.

Mr. Laberge: Well, no, that's very obvious. We agree on that.

Mr. Saillant: It is not central in our brief. What we say, for example, is that an independent Québec should urgently tackle the issue of poverty in all its forms.

Mr. Laberge: We all agree with what you say on that: All ethnic and cultural minorities will be respected, the war against inequality, impoverishment as it is experienced... We all agree with that. In fact, this was included in our briefs. Some went into it in more detail than others. As for ourselves, we didn't want to confuse the issues too much. We said to ourselves: Let's go straight out for a sovereign Québec. And of course what we want from a sovereign Québec is a progressive Québec, an open, democratic Québec, a Québec that will provide itself with a full-employment policy and with all the rest, obviously. Fine! You referred to Jacques Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard. I, myself, find they are right in what they say. Just because they're advocating and pressing more and more for Québec sovereignty doesn't mean they're unaware of other issues, not at all. It could be interpreted that way, but I don't think it's the case.

Mr. Saint-Pierre: What we say... it isn't only the question: We can wait, we don't need independence to settle some of these problems. We maintain that independence should be a response to a general, overall problem, which is that of national oppression of the Québec nation. And

this is also illustrated by the fact that Quebecers have poorer housing conditions, and have a lesser share of the federal budget for housing at their disposal than they pay out. And this happens in other areas as well. A while ago, when Mr. Dufour cited the fact that we have a 29% illiteracy rate in Québec...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Since Mr. Dufour is absent and will not be speaking this time, would you please continue on the same subject...

Mr. Saint-Pierre: Very well.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...but without this example, it would be more useful.

Mr. Saint-Pierre: Very well. But if we have a 29% illiteracy rate in Québec... The problem must not be seen in relation to the 2000 middle-class Quebecers, but in relation to the fact that, if Quebecers are undereducated, this is also a phenomenon of national oppression. And when FRAPRU takes a position in favour of national independence for the Québec people, it is not only taking a stand on the French language, it is taking a stand against all these phenomena of oppression as well, which are linked, ultimately, to national and social oppression, closely linked.

Mr. Laberge: So the speaker whose name we must not mention... we don't always share the same opinion either. But if my memory serves me well, and I didn't read it in books, in the 1970s, when we were given a good going-over, it seems to me that it came from a Canadian army, or something like that. I was there.

Mr. Saint-Pierre: Yes, the one that's just been sent to beat up another nation, and the ones that beat up...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Let's not confuse the navy with the army, but your time has run out, Mr. Laberge. Mrs. Hovington now has the floor.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the Commission, which is very legitimate as far as I'm concerned, but we won't belabour the point. You have a very particular way of seeing things. First, it is appropriate for us to examine the economic system which would be implemented in Québec once it achieved its independence. You say this new system would make it possible to fight against poverty, and against American cultural domination as well. So, what is this economic system which is being suggested by FRAPRU, which would be close to miraculous?

Mr. Saillant: There is no miraculous system.

I don't think we're proposing any miracle solution.

Mrs. Hovington: What kind of economic system are you suggesting...

Mr. Saillant: What we do say, on the other hand...

Mrs. Hovington: ...do you envisage?

Mr. Saillant: What we do say, on the other hand, is that the present economic order is not miraculous. When we consider that in Québec one-third of the population is living in poverty, we don't see anything miraculous in the way our society is structured at the present time. When we see how the wealth is distributed in our society, and how the gap between rich and poor has widened over the last 20 years, we don't think this economic system has worked any miracles. We don't know exactly, and we haven't claimed in our brief to have a blueprint for society spelled out in black and white, saying: Here, we have this, how is it that you hadn't thought of it? Perhaps we know what we don't want, better than what we do want. But what we don't want is the present system, a system in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. We think there are other ways. For example, when fiscal issues were discussed, it perhaps could have been done differently than it was; it could have been in such a way that the gap between rich and poor was narrowed and not widened. That is basically what we are saying. We are saying that we have no blueprint to propose to you. We won't say, we'll do it the way it's done in some other country in the world. Obviously, we are also very critical of the way things have been done in other countries of the world, for example, in the Eastern European countries. But what we are living with at the present time is not a model for us either. And since it's the one we live with, it's the one we want to get rid of.

Mrs. Lacelle (Denyse): One thing is certain on that score, and that is, we are not living in an impoverished society, we are living in a society which generates a lot of wealth, which is, as if by coincidence, all in the hands of the same people, even with regard to housing alone. While people are condemned to live in the streets, the government, both levels of government, loses \$2 billion in tax shelters which, in turn, serve to pad the pockets of those who turn property to profit. And all this while people are sleeping in the streets, while mothers of families pay the rent and don't feed their children. This kind of Québec, we don't want.

Mrs. Hovington: So you are suggesting that Québec break away from the capitalist model. Do you think all Quebecers hold this position? If not, do you think it would be undemocratic, in

that case, to move in that direction?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Saillant: We, ourselves, what we know... actually, people perhaps don't have big words to express how they feel, and don't put labels on those words, but the people with whom we work, people on welfare, retired people, people living in poverty want changes, they want profound changes. Moreover, I find it very surprising to hear sovereignists trying to lure these people into accepting sovereignty by telling them that sovereignty, basically, won't change anything in their lives. I think people will be ready to commit themselves to projects as long as they see there is something to gain from it, and as long as it won't be the same rich few getting richer from it.

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

Mrs. Hovington: Very well. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Alright. We carry on now with Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me pleasure, on behalf of the Opposition party, to welcome the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain. Of the groups which have come before the Commission, and it has heard many, as you know, you are the first to bring up housing. In listening to you, I remembered that the main problem people talk about when discussing their poverty is housing. Housing is at the heart of increasing poverty. You mention two things in your brief: The impossibility of radically reforming the Canadian Constitution, and you conclude, on behalf of FRAPRU, that Québec independence is necessary. I would like to tell you about the inadequacy of federal policies in relation to housing, about the real situation. Tell us what it's really like in housing.
(10:30 a.m.)

On pages 5 and 7 of your brief, you state that, among other things, Québec has consistently lagged behind Ontario. You say that Québec gets a smaller share of the federal budget set aside for housing. I would like to hear what you have to say about that. No one has spoken about this so far. Yet, housing is a provincial jurisdiction, so it would not be one of the powers we would have to repatriate, whether it be under renewed federalism or sovereignty. It can't be added to the list of powers we want to have, since we already have it. So, despite everything, there are problems with powers under Québec jurisdiction, and obviously, they are linked to federal spending power, which sets the rules of the game, rules which are not defined by Québec. I'd like to hear what you have to say. Why are we in this

deficit position?

Mr. Saillant: I think there are two things. The problem of distributing government funds in Québec... I think there are two aspects involved. The first is that Ottawa never really gave Québec its fair share, and still doesn't. In fact, historically, we have lagged behind and this has...

Mrs. Harel: Agreed. You state it in your brief, but I would like you to tell us why this is so. It isn't necessarily because they are mean and don't like us. The reasons must be linked to the fact that their objectives are different from ours in matters of housing. Can you explain and illustrate why this is so?

Mr. Saillant: I don't know that I would define it in those terms. What we do know, if we look at the bare facts, which I think we should look at first, is that, historically, we have received less than the rest of Canada, particularly Ontario. Ontario has always been the big winner in federal housing programs. First because we have lagged behind historically. In Québec, we started to build low-cost housing in 1964. We began to ask for federal funding in 1964. It was already a problem, but in Ontario, they have been building low-cost housing since the late 1940s, which already explains part of the problem. On the other hand, there is the fact that policies correspond better to the situation in other provinces. For example, the present method of allocating federal housing funds corresponds to the method Ontario uses. They function in terms of numbers of units, regardless of the cost of the units. And since it costs more to build housing in Ontario than in Québec, then obviously, Ontario gets more money.

Mrs. Harel: Because the programs are in proportion...

Mr. Saillant: To the number of units, at the present time.

Mrs. Harel: ...to the number of units and the cost per unit.

Mr. Saillant: That's it.

Mrs. Harel: So the higher the cost per unit, the larger the subsidy from the federal government; with units being less costly in Québec, federal subsidies are smaller. Is that what must be understood?

Mr. Saillant: That's it, that's it. It's linked... This is the second aspect that, I think, we should keep in mind. Because we don't want to throw stones only at Ottawa. The other aspect is that the Québec government, and unfortunately, this is just as true of the Parti

québécois as of the Liberal Party, was never able to muster the courage to adopt a national housing policy. Housing, in fact, comes under provincial jurisdiction. Québec has had all the power needed to do something in this area, but has always refused to do it. It's even worse with the Liberal government because it abolished the four already existing programs, which were Québec programs all the way. Now we're nothing but administrators. We administer units coming from the federal government, but we don't propose anything. We have no strategy whatsoever in the field of housing, and, unfortunately, when we listen to the person who is so conspicuously absent here, just as he is absent from the field of housing, that is Claude Ryan, speak about housing, it doesn't appear as if we are moving in the direction of a national housing policy either. One has the impression that the government for a long time to come will remain an administrator, and the people will remain badly housed.

Mrs. Harel: So you are telling us that Québec administers federal funds even if the jurisdiction is provincial. Therefore, in addition to the Québec housing policy you wish to have, you need funding.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This is your last question, Mrs. Harel. Fine, go ahead.

Mrs. Lacelle: I think the question reveals the essence of our argument here today. We've come to say this: Yes, we want an independent Québec, but not just any kind of Québec. The frame must be chosen to fit the painting it will contain. Housing is a good example. Yes, Québec can enact legislation in matters of housing; yes, Québec could repatriate all the funds. Unfortunately, what we've observed over several years now is that, even with the room to manoeuvre it has at its disposal, it does nothing of any great import. A good example is the recent Rent Supplement Program in the private sector. Québec uses the money at its disposal in the worst way possible. So in this area, as in all areas, what we want to resurrect is the notion of doing something significant for the people who are oppressed, for the poor people of Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This brings this presentation to a close, a presentation which echoed many, albeit not necessarily the majority, of the views already heard before the Commission. I thank you for your presentation, and I would ask the representatives of the Polish Combatants' Association to come to the table.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:35 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:37 a.m.)

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

We will hear the presentation of the Polish Combatants' Association. It is a 30-minute presentation. So, you have five minutes for the general presentation of ideas expressed in the brief, but I would first ask you, Mr. Trzcinski, to begin by introducing the people who are with you.

Polish Combatants' Association

Mr. Trzcinski (Jan): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Commission, I am honoured to introduce my compatriots, who together prepared our brief. On my left is Mrs. Anna Wybranowska, who has worked for many years at the Polish library in Montréal; on my right, Dr. Andrew Kawczak, professor at Concordia University, vice-president of the head office of the Canadian Polish Congress, whose headquarters are in Toronto; Mrs. Elizabeth Kawczak, who is a professor at John Abbott College in Montréal; she teaches, gives courses at this institution.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I will begin my speech... I will perhaps start out on a personal note. My first contact with Canadians was in the prisoner of war camps in Germany. I fought in the war in 1939; the war defending against the invasions by Hitler. I was a prisoner of war from 1939 to 1945. During the years 1943-1944, the Germans held a number of officers from the Canadian army. They were flyers. Their planes had actually been destroyed during the bombing of Germany.

After the liberation in April of 1945, I had occasion to visit Canadian units stationed in Germany alongside Polish combat units of the first armoured division under General Maczek's command. This is how I formed my first impression of Canada. I chatted with officers of all ranks, and my impression of them was truly very favourable, as was all of Europe's. I asked myself at that moment, what kind of nation is this that defends the individual and collective rights of its country, that also took part in the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War, and now, in fact, we are witnessing members of the Canadian army on guard for the rights of Canadians, for the rights of other nations. We hope they will return to the bosom of their families, safe and sound.

But the Canadian nation is not only represented on the international scene by its army. The Canadian nation is known throughout Europe as a very progressive people, a young people, a dynamic people, one which has brought to other nations and to all of humanity, values, ideas and suggestions which are constructive. It is a country which is represented in the field of

science, of technology. Canada is a country with the largest communications network. In a world of global communication, Canada is privileged to stand at the forefront.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, my compatriots and I are convinced that our generation has great responsibilities; not only to ensure further progress, greater prosperity for our generation, but also to assure the coming generations of this prosperity, progress and development. Our ambition should be to provide better education for the generations to come. The Polish community has always been very interested in all the events surrounding political, economic, social and cultural life in Canada.

In the 1980s, the Canadian Polish Congress presented the federal government with suggestions concerning our constitution in the making, concerning the democratic spirit of this constitution. In 1980, during the Québec Referendum, we collaborated with the Canadian Polish Congress to place articles in the *Montreal Star* and *La Presse*, calling for Canadian unity. Our community considers that, given its great responsibility to the present generation, to the younger generation, the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec will have a positive outcome, will serve to light the way for Canada's history in the making.

And we know, we are convinced that these events, this work by all our intellectuals will take time. We must not act in haste or make hurried decisions. The debate must continue. Our efforts to really ensure peace and creativity in Canadian society must continue. For these reasons we have one simple suggestion, Mr. Chairman. As soon as the work of the Commission you are presiding over comes to an end, Mr. Chairman, we suggest the creation of a constitutional commission which will study the constitution in depth, reformulate it and adapt it to the needs of modern Canadian society. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Trzcinski. We will start the questions with Mr. Benoit.
(10:45 a.m.)

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Trzcinski and your team, thank you for coming here today. And I think your community has always been very involved here in Québec. It is a hard-working community. And it is good that you give your point of view with respect to the ongoing constitutional debate. There are Polish people who have stood out in the history of Québec. I'm reminded of the wife of the Leader of the Official Opposition, and any number of others who were great Quebecers, who, ultimately, have made their mark on the history of Québec.

In your brief, Mr. Trzcinski, on page 2, you mention that you more or less support the status quo with respect to the Constitution. You are

aware that very few people came forward to tell us they wanted to keep the status quo. People in Canada wanted change as well. I'm not only thinking of Québec. It is clear now that the rest of Canada will follow suit with a reform movement of some kind, and I am somewhat surprised that on page 2 of your brief... Let me cite you: "We would simply like to express our confidence in the present system of Canadian government". And you make no suggestions for improvement or change. Can you explain to me why you took this position?

Mr. Trzcinski: On the subject of change, Sir, we, in our community, have discussed all the problems concerning Québec, concerning Canada as a federal State. We consider that, in general, of the 10 federal systems in the whole world, Canada, as I mentioned in my brief, has one of the most democratic, most flexible, most humanistic, when one looks at it in relation to the other systems. That is why we advocate the preservation of our political and cultural institutions. We advocate that many of these institutions be kept as a way of strengthening our nation, our Canada. Because the stronger Canada is among the nations of the world, the stronger the provinces will be, the stronger its position and negotiating strength will be in all areas. But this does not rule out, and we totally agree that our federal system must be studied in depth, and even if it is the best in the world, this does not close the door on change in keeping with the aspirations and needs of Canadians and Canadian life.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Trzcinski, a bit further in the document you say that you recognize Québec as a distinct society, and I cite you once again: "We can clearly distinguish the differences between Québec and the other Canadian provinces". Do the other members of your group...? Because if I understand correctly, you are a Canadian organization. Your group, the Polish Combatants' Association, has branches everywhere in Canada. You are Branch No. 7. Do the other branches in the country recognize Québec as a distinct society? Is that what is being heard at your meetings?

Mr. Trzcinski: That's a good question, Sir. I was privileged to work for the railroad for many years. I travelled in Canada from east to west, from north to south, and I noticed one thing, that Western Canada is not hostile to Québec, does not have negative feelings for Québec, and I believe this can be proven historically. But I realized one thing: That there is a lack of knowledge concerning Québec's cultural aspirations, concerning the traditions and values of Québec culture. There is no in-depth understanding. But I think that efforts could be made in this area in the future, which

would change this attitude and lead to a meeting of minds, where they would no longer stand on the sidelines but become involved in matters of specific concern to Québec.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Trzcinski.

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

Mr. Parizeau: I observe, Sir, that in the two pages you gave us, was the first affirmation, as Mr. Benoit said a while ago, that the Commission has received so far on the usefulness of maintaining the constitutional status quo, with perhaps one modification, which would be considered by a certain number of Quebecers to be a backward step, and that is, within the present system, the abolition of any veto, probably because you are influenced by the role played by the liberum veto in your country a few centuries ago. I am somewhat surprised. Still, it must be remembered that the liberum veto at that time in Poland was held by each member and not by the governments. We are not talking about the same thing. But I have no further comment to make, Mr. Chairman. On our side, we have no more questions.

Mr. Trzcinski: May we reply to the Leader of the Official Opposition?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Of course, Mr. Trzcinski.

Mr. Trzcinski: One short comment. We have discussed this problem and we agree that Québec's position as a province is altogether specific. The principle of the democratic majority cannot be applied absolutely here. It is an entirely specific situation. We based ourselves, when first considering it, on the word "veto", the veto having played a disastrous role in the history of Poland. The veto in the United Nations, as we all know very well, in the Security Council, where Russia sat as a permanent Council member during the Cold War, and, for that matter, still sits as a permanent member of the Security Council, where it used the veto 162 times to prevent the whole civilized world from concluding anything positive. So this is where the danger lies. But the structure... what has been accomplished between the Canadian provinces is different. They have a particular character, different aspirations, origins and traditions, and that is why we decided to withdraw our remarks concerning the veto, because in our final discussion, this position was not positively tenable with respect to Canadian constitutional questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Do you have any other comments, Mr. Parizeau, following this clarification, which eliminates the

veto question from the presentation?

Mr. Parizeau: No, Sir.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So we continue with Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am convinced that you are keeping an eye on the international situation. Furthermore, you are the Polish Combatants' Association in Canada, branch No. 7. You've also written your name in Polish. I'm convinced that your eyes are riveted on what is happening in Eastern Europe. If my memory serves me well, we must have been together on December 13, 1980 on Pine Avenue when we protested against what was taking place in Poland. Perhaps it was you, but someone told me that Lech Walesa was a great trade unionist, but that, first and foremost, he was an individual fighting for the freedom of Poland, which already was a nation. We had just come through the Referendum. We had decided, as Quebecers, not to give ourselves a country.

In your presentation, you never mention "the Québec people". Does this really exist in your mind? Secondly, you, whose eyes are riveted on what is happening in Eastern Europe, how do you explain the somewhat turbulent goings-on, what is happening in Lithuania, in Estonia? What is happening, to be exact, with respect to the tensions in Yugoslavia, in Czechoslovakia? If there were a Québec people, would there be similarities with the aspirations of those in these situations?

Mr. Trzcinski: Sir, distinguished member of the Commission, indeed, I have the impression that we in Canada, living in a Western democracy, have not really taken a long hard look at what is happening and what has happened in Poland, and now, the terrible things going on in Lithuania. It's easy to be mistaken here. Naturally, apparently, the tendency is the same: Quebecers want their independence, Lithuanians are also fighting for their independence. But what a lack of understanding there is! I assure you, Sir, that if the Lithuanians were to find themselves here in Canada, on Québec soil, they would be the happiest nation in the world. There is no comparison. They are defending themselves against invasion, against brutal occupation, against persecution, against the Red empire, a doctrine which is not accepted, the Marxist doctrine, which has already been declared a complete failure, and proven to be so, which has fallen into disrepute, which is being blamed, which is compromised the world over. So, they are defending their people because they want freedom, which they don't have at all. We, honourable member of the Commission, have complete freedom. It's simply a question of orchestrating our efforts.

I have lived with my family in Québec since I arrived here in 1951. So, having been here for some 40 years, I have spent more time here than anywhere else. So, I see the conditions which the Canadian people have created, and in looking at history, I also see how the participation of the Province of Québec has been a creative factor.

Mr. Larose: The Québec people, do they constitute a province, a region, do they exist? The people living in the territory of Québec, all the people who live in the territory of Québec, do they, in your mind, constitute a Québec people?

Mr. Trzcinski: Absolutely. Yes.

Mr. Larose: OK.

Mr. Trzcinski: Sir, I participate in cultural life, even in political life. I am a member of the executive of the riding of Rousseau, Mr. Robert Thérien's riding. I collaborate with Quebecers every day, you know, working within the organizational framework of the Liberal Party, of which I've been a member since I first came to Canada.

Therefore, I find that we have living conditions... the opportunities are enormous, and I believe we mustn't destroy these opportunities. We must consider, and devote a great deal of time to letting the people of Québec and the people in the rest of Canada get to know each other better, to creating a truly creative climate, a truly cooperative spirit, so that our future opportunities are not destroyed. If not, the generations to come, in the years to come, will reproach us and say that the mission of our generation was not accomplished.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So this presentation comes to a close. All that remains is for me to thank you, Mr. Trzcinski, as well as Mrs. Wybranowska, Mr. Kawczak and Mrs. Kawczak, for having agreed to present your ideas and answer questions from the members, so as to facilitate the research of the Commission.

Mr. Trzcinski: We thank you very much.

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

We now welcome Mrs. Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré, who is a person who responded to our call for briefs from experts. Thank you, Gentlemen.

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

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:01 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:02)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I invite all the members of the Commission to return to their seats. Mrs. Traoré, you have 10 minutes in which to present the main ideas in your brief, or to present one particular aspect only, if you so wish, and then we will go on to questions. The floor is yours, Madam.

Mrs. Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré (Juanita): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good day to all the members of this distinguished Commission, to the Leader of the Official Opposition, to the MNAs. I have decided simply to make a few comments as a follow-up to the text I submitted to this Commission. You are aware that we are necessarily limited when trying to answer questions, but I think that with this approach, at least we know that we are answering questions which are of interest to the Commission.

What are the main problems confronting Québec? I have addressed the immediate causes first, that is to say, that the present causes of the crisis date back to the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, a repatriation which was ratified unilaterally. Secondly, the reason for the conflict, in my opinion, also rests on the fact that there is a Charter of Rights entrenched in the Canadian Constitution. Changes as fundamental as these, adopted without Québec's consent, call into question the nature of the Canadian federation.

On the other hand, I emphasize that, in my opinion, one of the sources of disagreement is the lack of effective communication, not only among leaders and those in authority in our society, but also at the level of public opinion. My appraisal is that there is a certain isolation right now, not only between the two partners, but also at the level of other components of this society. Few efforts are truly being made to promote mutual and reciprocal understanding of the realities of the different regions, the different, very important groups that are emerging in our society. In my opinion, the absence of representatives of the aboriginal peoples on the Commission itself is symptomatic of an underlying problem. Despite pressing demands from the aboriginal peoples, we still have not succeeded in integrating them into the constitutional process, and this fact leads me to believe there are still some who would wish to create monolithic, dominating powers.

Finally, the new political and constitutional status should necessarily take into account the multicultural and multiracial character of today's Québec. Ethnic pluralism as well as other facets of social pluralism should be expressed in French, while allowing multilingualism among individuals in their social and cultural activities.

The need to reconcile ethnic and racial diversity with linguistic requirements is not particular to Québec. The State should favour neither the majority nor the minority. The State creates an environment which is conducive to the development of all. We were questioned concerning the powers which should be attributed to the different constitutional orders: full jurisdiction, joint jurisdiction. I have tried to make a few suggestions.

With respect to full jurisdiction, I began by considering the cultural question. I believe that in this area, there is a need to dwell on and examine Québec's cultural distinctness. This also raises the question of knowing the range of powers the State should wield in the area of culture.

In Canada and in Québec, the political authorities have separated the questions of language and culture. In this way, they hope to resolve the complex issues posed by the coexistence of several cultures within a State. For the Canada of 1971, the year its policy of multiculturalism was announced, the existence and vigour of many cultural groups in the country had to be recognized. This phenomenon of ethnocultural pluralism is not particular to Canada; it exists in all countries where there has been large-scale immigration, either during the colonial, post-colonial or modern era.

In modern history, States have experienced population movements toward the south. Today, the movement is the opposite; population movements are going from south to north, not to mention the large-scale internal movements within a country or a region. What is particular is the political choice of defining the State as both pluralist and dualist: pluralist in the cultural sense and dualist in the sense of two official languages. If I were to comment on this aspect, I would say that the growing respect for individual rights at the international level encourages this movement of peoples and individuals across frontiers and, at the moment, I am not only referring to political refugees, but to economic ones as well.

The new sharing of powers should take the complexity of Québec and Canadian societies into account. The model of a national State, coexistent and coextensive with one language and one culture, and one or two religions, is, in my opinion, outdated. To be practicable, the new cultural jurisdiction should limit itself to issues concerning the arts. It should incorporate the concepts of ethnocultural pluralism and allow policies which accommodate the presence of several cultures. The real difficulties faced by many large nations today are the result of suppression or failure to actively recognize the presence of cultural minorities.

With respect to language, the protection of the language is essential for French American culture. The sharing of jurisdictions should

recognize the Québec government's exclusive power over the French language in Québec. The federal government and the other provincial governments could continue to enact legislation in matters of language within their own jurisdictions, provided it doesn't encroach upon Québec's exclusive linguistic jurisdiction.

With respect to joint jurisdictions, I have pointed out that some joint jurisdictions officially exist right now: that is, immigration, agriculture, but there are also, by force and through history, *de facto* joint jurisdictions, because the federal government spends, has spending power and, in this way, meddles in fields under provincial jurisdiction.

In my opinion, we should redefine, in more concrete terms, the fields of jurisdiction of both orders of government. I believe it is important to always recognize that there are fields where there must be cooperation. I mention immigration, I mention education and communications, and I do so because, if there is a federal framework, consultation is necessary on issues which affect both orders.

With respect to education and communications, if the separation is absolute, it will be difficult if not impossible to maintain a feeling of belonging to a federation, or a spirit of togetherness.

I note that in certain institutions today, it is difficult to speak of Canadian citizenship. People have to make a choice, and I say to myself, if we think that, in the areas of education and communications, there cannot be any collaboration whatsoever, it will be difficult for public opinion to maintain feelings of solidarity.

This being the case, in my opinion, education and communications should come back under provincial jurisdiction, and these jurisdictions should have preemptive powers in these fields, always with the possibility that the federal State maintain a certain presence.

I was astonished on examining, and I admit, in a way, perhaps, I wouldn't want to call it superficial, but I haven't had the spare time to study it in depth... I was astonished to see that within the institutions of the Group of 12 of Europe, there is now a social charter, and projects as well, actively concerned with unemployment, programs for the chronically unemployed, research projects and recommendations made within the Group of 12 of Europe to try and find solutions to chronic problems, problems for which the pooling of certain information can be useful.

I am not being unrealistic. I don't claim that these services have actually been integrated yet, but I see that there is growing collaboration on many levels, even in these social areas, whereas we usually think of the European Community more as a base for economic integration.

Another field I point to, in relation to joint jurisdiction, is the field of protection of

rights. The adoption of the Québec constitution will be an occasion to entrench the specific nature of Québec institutions. This fundamental document should also conform to the vision of the progressive and pluralist society we want to build. An integral part of this constitution will be a charter of rights and freedoms which will set forth the right to self-determination, the principle of the secular character of the State, the individual and collective rights of citizens and minority groups, new rights, such as the right to a safe environment, economic and social rights, the right to equality and the promotion of equal opportunity for all underprivileged groups.

The constitutional document should provide for a special amending formula for any changes to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The constitution should also make provision for the status and rights of aboriginal peoples. These provisions should emanate from direct discussions with the aboriginal peoples and be the fruit of agreements and of consensus.

(11:15 a.m.)

The impact of certain decisions... It is important to provide for a constitutional arbitration process which respects the federal nature of the State; a federal system can respect and preserve Québec's identity. Québec alone can see to the promotion of its identity. This identity is necessarily complex, multidimensional, and evolving. The majority of Québec is of French extraction. Its culture is based on the accommodation and contribution of the aboriginal peoples, interrelationships with the community of British extraction, the presence and contributions of the other ethnocultural groups, the North American influence, all in a society which is increasingly mediatized.

It is true to say that the Québec of today is a more multiracial society. Montréal is an integral part of Québec, in the same way as Québec City is, or the City of Val d'Or. Montréal is another reflection of Québec's identity. Among its official policies, the Québec government has embraced the policy of interculturalism, which seeks to improve communications, to improve communications and understanding between communities.

Policies are aimed at rapprochement with the majority Francophone group. They further the integration of people coming from minorities, respecting the differences within a harmonious and egalitarian society. Given the development of the multiracial and multiethnic character of society, there is a growing urgency for the State to incorporate into its policies and increasingly bring to the fore, antiracist measures aimed at informing people, on a large scale, about the different causes and manifestations of racism, as well as about appropriate ways and means of fighting against it.

The essence of the challenge confronting the modern Québec State lies in its role of

projecting the image of a society with a French majority, which is also pluralist and multiracial.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This has made us somewhat exceed the time allowed, Mrs. Traoré, but I believe you presented the main points in your brief. There may be other points you might like to mention briefly before going on to questions?

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: Québec should hold on to certain economic levers, if it is to take into account its own particular reality. At the same time, we know that during a recession, there is a great deal of interprovincial migration. Between 1979 and 1988, Québec had a negative interprovincial migration balance. At the same time, all social and economic development is based on considerations related to identity and equality. Studies on the incidence of poverty in Québec emphasize the need for effective investment or training programs as much as the need for change in attitudes.

And I mention the importance of affirmative action programs. If possible, I would like to see a legislative and mandatory basis for these programs, in the best interests of a modern Québec, of a renewed Québec identity. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. We carry on now with questions. First, Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: So, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was telling my colleagues that I had the pleasure of taking your course in municipal law at the Université de Montréal. They were astonished to learn that you were an expert in the complex Cities and Towns Act, and I have very fond memories of your course. You have chosen to answer the questions submitted by the Commission Secretariat. You did, however, interpret the questions formulated, and this is evident on page 3 of your brief, when you presuppose the maintenance of federal ties. I, myself, think that neither the Chairmen, nor the Secretariat wanted to presuppose anything whatsoever in formulating the questions. I don't know if it's an indication of your preferences as well. It may simply be a way of interpreting the questions asked.

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: Thank you. I return the compliment related to our academic association. The lists of questions submitted to experts, and I wouldn't want to lose any time over it, but when I examined question 2, for example, I realized that the terms full jurisdiction or joint or shared jurisdiction were used. They are terms, perhaps, which refer to certain preconceived ideas we already have, which imply the sharing of powers. So, I said to myself, there! But I am also conversant with what is being expressed in discussions. I will say

straightaway that I prefer a federal or confederal system, and I will tell you why. Because I believe that, in the changes among peoples at the present time, we have a tendency to group together, to look for areas of agreement, to improve interrelationships for our greater benefit. I know that we can have a mainly Eurocentric vision, but we can look at what is happening on other continents and see that, indeed, there is a tendency to group together. Also, in interpersonal and community relations, we have favoured processes leading to rapprochement, to understanding, to efforts at integration, at cooperation. In my view, it is possible, if one is enlightened, to seek negotiation, and powers which are appropriate for the State of Québec as it is today, again within a federal or confederal framework.

Mrs. Harel: If you will allow me to insist on the fact that at this, the end of the present century, at this very moment, we are witnessing this strong tendency to broaden economic areas, to globalize markets while, at the same time, witnessing the strengthening of national identities and nationalist movements. Nonetheless, I would like to take advantage of your presence here and your expertise, and examine what you are recommending, through your perspective, and while respecting it.

You say, on page 6: "The sharing of jurisdictions should recognize the exclusive power of the Québec government over the French language." So, these are not insignificant matters. It's exclusive power in matters of language. You say on page 8: "Québec should be able to immediately admit applicants accepted for humanitarian reasons." That isn't insignificant. It's the admission, notably, of refugee status applicants for humanitarian reasons which Canada has always refused to do and which it still does not recognize, even in the context of the present agreement. We sometimes forget that the present...

(A power failure forced the Commission to suspend proceedings at 11:22 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 1:03 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would ask the members of the Commission to return to their seats. With Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré's permission, since we are late, we will begin just the same, even if everyone has not yet arrived. We will begin in a few minutes.

After this interruption caused by a power failure, we are now back to work. I would like to thank Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré particularly, and also the members of the Canadian Ukrainian Congress, who were scheduled to come before us at noon and who agreed to postpone their

appearance until now. This will allow us to still finish within our time limit.

So, Mrs. Harel, you were asking Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré a question, and I think it would be prudent to allow you to ask it again, rather than begin right away with the answer. So, go ahead.

Mrs. Harel: Within the context of maintaining the federal link, which you analyse in your presentation, you propose, on page 6, that the Québec government be recognized as having exclusive power in linguistic matters, exclusive power over the French language. You propose, on page 8, that Québec have the power to immediately admit applicants accepted for humanitarian reasons, therefore, a power to admit people for humanitarian reasons. On page 9, you propose the principle of the secularity of the State, without forgetting that an amendment to the British North America Act would be necessary, since section 93 only gives confessional guarantees, which is why we have such an anachronistic school system. You propose, on page - I think, 13 - a court which would be constituted in accordance with the federative principle. Well that is a whole new challenge to the method of appointing judges. You propose all that and my question is: How do you think all this can be accomplished with an amending formula which provides for none of these changes without the consent of 7 out of 10 provinces which represent 50% of the population? So where are we going with your proposals? Don't you feel they're more academic than political?

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: I know there are political realities, that strategies must be devised. But being at a bit of a distance from the seat of power, I can nonetheless try and ponder these questions, and answer them in a theoretical context. Secondly, I know that very often, when negotiations are under way, the real work is done by civil servants in their offices. It isn't done in front of journalists or even with the political leaders present, and many things are negotiated. Following that, these issues come up when an agreement has been almost reached. So, I don't begin by saying that what I propose is impossible. I know that, as far as the language is concerned, because of recent developments, there is a new questioning, not only in Québec but elsewhere, on the matter of language. With respect to other questions as well, I think the appointing of judges, for example, there's a fundamental debate going on there too. We've lived through one agreement that was not concluded, where the proposals had been accepted in principle, and the questions which led to the failure of this agreement were not related either to the issue of immigration - in fact, an agreement has just been signed in this area - or to the matter of appointing judges. Therefore,

I'm not saying it's a simple matter, but the proposals that are there are proposals which have already been in circulation.

Mrs. Harel: Still, we must understand each other. Québec did not get exclusive powers in matters of immigration. In the final analysis, it's the Cullen-Couture Agreement, signed in 1979, which has been renewed and reactivated, with sums of money to make it operational, ultimately. But it involves about 48% of immigration, I think, that is, of people who come to Québec's territory.

I have a question. I would have many others but I understand, given the circumstances, that we must hurry. I was hoping that you would describe to us in a little more detail, your conception of a "notwithstanding" clause formula. You say on page 10 of your brief: "If the State wants to reserve for itself the right to intervene without constraint, in the context of emergency measures, the formulation of the clause should be modeled after the convention on civil and political rights." An international convention, I believe, on civil and political rights. You seem to prefer this clause, which you do not describe. I would like you to compare it with the "notwithstanding" clause we know, the scope of which we know as well. So, what makes the clause from this convention so much more interesting?

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: The clause... I'm referring to the pact on political and civil rights. In the pact, obviously, there are certain restrictions with respect to the exercise of individual rights, but these restrictions are not formulated in a broad or generalized way, and only allow the government to override rights in certain circumstances. So, if we want to examine the provisions which permit overriding, we see that it can only be done in time of war, or in the event of a natural disaster. And also, for a certain period of time, there are restrictions on the power to override rights. It has to be in a certain context. In our present Constitution, we can invoke an override clause, of course, in accordance with certain modalities, and for certain provisions, for a period of five years, etc., but there is no restriction on this exercise. I believe that basic freedoms should be protected when they are most vulnerable, and its fundamental character does actually provide for protection of those who need it at these times. So, I advocate, since Québec and Canada have already adhered to the International Pact, that these override questions be reviewed and be made to conform more to the principles of pacts, such as the International Pact relating to civil and political rights.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, we carry on...

Mrs. Westmoreland Traoré: If I may, Mr. Chairman...

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

Mrs. Westmoreland Traoré: ...Mrs. Harel asked me a very important question, the first question, and in her introduction... She prefaced it by saying that it is true there is a trend toward grouping together for economic reasons, but as far as national identities are concerned, there is nonetheless a resurgence throughout the world. I would like to say that, in my opinion, this resurgence occurs very naturally, especially in places and countries where there has been repression, where there has been no real recognition of identity and ethnicity. And I believe that ethnic durability is, in fact, strengthened when there is suppression or oppression. I don't deny this reality. I think we must come to terms with this reality, but I think we can do so together, as groups, with well-conceived policies that recognize the rights of groups as well as the rights of individuals.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you for this further clarification. We carry on now with questions from Mr. Larose, who will be followed by Mr. Desjardins and Mr. Holden.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was not acquainted with Mrs. Westmoreland as a specialist in the complex law of towns and cities. I was more familiar with her as an expert and specialist in the rights and conditions of integration of the cultural communities. Mrs. Westmoreland was the first chairperson of the Conseil des communautés culturelles, for which she did a colossal amount of work, and I want to commend her.

What I am interested in discussing with you, Mrs. Westmoreland, since this is perhaps one of the best opportunities we will have to do so, are the conditions we as a society must create specifically to integrate newcomers. We know that two kinds of failure can quite easily be observed in our societies: either integration is accomplished by assimilation, by extinguishing differences, or by ghettoization, by driving the communities into ghettos where they can maintain their own culture but where there is no interaction with the dominant culture.

Furthermore, we also know that around the planet few societies are actually required to come to terms with ambiguity the way we ourselves have to come to terms with ambiguity. I would give France as an example. When a person immigrates to France, this takes place in French. When a person goes to Brazil, it is in Portuguese. Here, things are not the same and I know that certain solutions have been implemented. I would cite Belgium and Switzerland, where the

use of language depends on the territory. The Chairman does not want us to quote from any of the briefs we are going to hear; I am not quoting from them, but I am saying that a couple of these briefs mention territoriality as a means of resolving that issue.

When talking about language and culture, you have made the distinction in your presentation and in the brief. What I would like to know, in order to accept the challenge of integration, which is still a major challenge, not only for our societies, but, in this ever-changing world, there will be a lot of moving around. Yes, there is the question of language, but there is also the question of culture. So, what conditions should be established so that integration, while being neither assimilation nor ghettoization, means really participating in the mainstream, as it were, of the global community?
(1:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: That is a complex question. First, personally, I have trouble calling myself an expert. I have always avoided the label of expert. I am quite simply here by invitation. The question that interests me, and has always interested me, is integration and the conditions of integration. I believe that for integration to be successful certain basic information is required. People who are evolving in a society, whether they are newcomers or already established, must have a better knowledge and understanding of their neighbours and of newcomers. I think that through the education system we have certain concepts, certain information which is important, although it is sometimes static. Therefore, to begin with, I would say that to promote real integration the conditions we require are mutual appreciation and understanding. The educational sector is not the only one called upon to participate in this work; there are also the media.

In a society, there are certain rules we must follow. Normally, these rules are established democratically by Parliament, and Parliament must be as democratic and as representative as possible and should set the tone for us. I believe that we must inform people and have them participate in those proceedings and that integration will be achieved in the process. Sometimes I think that we are setting prerequisites for ourselves and that at times these prerequisites are obstacles.

Therefore, I see information and effective participation and integration as being important. How is this attained? In my view, it is attained when these people have access to the workplace, because work paves the way for their integration. We cannot always rely on the usual rules of competition and training to provide them with such access. Sometimes this access must be facilitated through programs, through active recruiting, even through affirmative action. The presence of people of different origins promotes

understanding, because through daily contact bonds are formed and stereotypes dissipate. There are also important housing programs and measures, as well as important measures that can be taken with regard to young people. One of the greatest preoccupations of today is integrating young people, whether they are members of cultural communities or of the majority group, so that they have the chance to freely get to know one another.

So, in my view, the essential elements are information, laws, legislation, human rights and social programs which eliminate certain inequalities and allow true participation. Perhaps we should also stop labelling people according to stock, either theirs or ours, and identify ourselves in more pluralistic terms.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Desjardins, followed by Mr. Holden.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to our Commission, Mrs. Westmoreland. For me, your brief is fundamental. It is fundamental not so much in the way you suggest distributing jurisdictions in your document, because I think there is room for a great deal of discussion here. But you deal with two points at the beginning of your brief which, for me, are fundamental, which are often forgotten in the current debate and which I see as being at the source of the crisis we are experiencing: the lack of communication or the inability to communicate in this country. And this is where, Mrs. Westmoreland, you put your finger on the problem. In my opinion, the problems we have had for the past 30 years in the country lie in this inability to talk to one another and to have a vigorous dialogue between English Canada and Québec. This results in two different types of behaviour. One is to throw in the towel and say: You have to draw the line; the other is to tell us that Québec has evolved, that it has in fact flourished over these past 30 years and become a fully developed society, so we must take one last chance to continue.

So, Mrs. Westmoreland, how do we restore lines of communication which have been weak for decades? Is this because the country is vast with its population scattered in regions which are separated by great distances? Is it the result of the people's refusal to engage in dialogue and the refusal of certain leaders to put trivial matters aside to rise above the confusion, as you claim? I would like to hear what you have to say about this. Is it still possible? Do you feel that communication can be restored in this country at this point? And if so, if one very carefully reads your brief, I imagine that the possibility of establishing communication would be even greater if Québec decided to remain in the Canadian federation rather than become independent. That is my first question.

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: OK. I think that communication is possible. I know that we have been subjected to some budget cuts in this rather critical period and that these cuts seem to be weakening certain regions just at a time when we require a better knowledge of the regions. But I think that first we must become aware of a lack. Once we have observed the lack, measures can be taken to remedy it. In my experience of participating in certain symposiums, I have at times felt... I am beginning to see the very great diversity and distinctiveness of other regions in Canada. When I am on Canada's west coast, not only is the culture different, this we know, not only are the people different, this we know, but the expectations are also different.

Mr. Desjardins: But, Madam, when you say: This we know...

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: Yes.

Mr. Desjardins: ...do you think Quebecers know? Because, although we may have the impression that English Canada does not understand us, I personally think that the opposite is also true, that Quebecers know little about the problems of the Maritimes, of the West. Do we agree on this point?

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: That's right.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This is your last question, Mr. Desjardins.

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: All I want to tell you is that we can become familiar with a milieu when we have to participate in it and we can sometimes ask the media to use reports that have more of a social perspective. We often steer toward what is new, toward the immediate, and this is important, this is essential, but at the same time I think that we can also encourage communication on social matters. This does not mean denying differences, denying the legitimacy of claims, whether made by Québec or other regions. But I think that once there is an awareness, an effort is put forth and that improvement is possible.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Actually, you have time for one more, you have about a minute, as long as it is brief.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you. I would not want to pass over the aboriginal question in silence. If there is a lesson to be learnt from Meech, it is that the aboriginal peoples, and the message is very clear, you tell us that it should be structured around examining and solving the native issues. Whatever constitutional future Québec chooses, it should take the native issues into account.

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: Yes. I think it is a question of justice, it is a fundamental question. I think it concerns all of us. I cannot be more categorical. I tell myself that there is already a certain recognition in the Constitution which was not there before, that of the pre-existing rights of the aboriginal peoples, although these are not defined. I think it is time to go back and put the finishing touches to this document.

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

Mr. Holden: Merci, M. le Président. Mme Westmoreland, la distinction que vous faites entre la culture et la langue m'intéresse. Comme vous le savez sans doute, mon élection est en partie due à une petite dispute que nous avons eue au sujet des droits linguistiques de la minorité au Québec, et lorsque vous dites, vers le milieu de la page 6 que: "The rights of cultural minorities will be protected by the Constitution. Their language rights will be respected insofar as they relate to cultural expression and according to the proposed restrictive definition." Je crois que cela se rapporte à notre discussion sur la culture. J'aimerais que vous précisiez les restrictions dont les droits linguistiques de la minorité pourraient être l'objet. Iraient-elles au-delà de la définition que vous donnez de l'expression culturelle?

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: It is always a difficult task to strike a balance between freedoms, because we are told, and I believe this is true, that there is no absolute right and that every person who is entitled to rights also has obligations and that every person who has rights must accommodate the rights of others. Therefore, what I am suggesting is that the Constitution reflect the language of Québec's majority, that it raise this language to the status of official language as the Charter of the French language does now, but I also recognize the minority cultures' right of expression. Since language and culture inevitably influence each other, the minority cultures must also be able to express themselves through their language. As a compromise, I am suggesting that French be enshrined in a constitution as the official language and the language of communication and of the other uses, but that the minorities be able to use their first languages for everything related to their cultural and social life. At present, I think that we allow people to preserve and promote what is distinctive and enriching while allowing for the creation of a certain solidarity in our society and the furtherance of the recognition of the rights of a nation which also constitutes a minority, the French-speaking people of America. For me, this is an attempt to arrive at a compromise. In all compromises there are advantages and disadvantages. They must be

as fair as possible, and this is the compromise I am suggesting.

Mr. Holden: You have read the Brown Shoe decision. Do you believe this decision was justified, or are you in favour of the "notwithstanding" clause?

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: What I am doing here is canvassing. I believe that the Brown decision was based on the clauses as they stand. My proposal deals with entrenching, if you will, the French language here in Québec and protecting the minority languages. I know that we currently have some protection under the Québec Charter in that the cultural minorities have the right to preserve their culture and to have their own institutions, but there is no mention of the language of expression. Here I am suggesting the recognition of a zone where these minorities can express themselves in their own language. I am not saying this is an egalitarian proposal. I am saying that this proposal is a measure of accommodation. By separating language and culture, I am giving greater importance to the cultural presence, to ethnic plurality, and I am advocating a positive and progressive measure for consecrating these cultural rights.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Guy Bélanger now has the floor.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Good day, Madam. We are very pleased to benefit from your experience and abilities today. Although you decline the title of expert, I think you have already demonstrated a broad knowledge which our Commission has found very enlightening.

Along the same lines as the question Mr. Holden just asked, I would like to return for a brief moment to page 3 of your text, where you speak of an ethnic plurality and the other facets of social plurality, having French as the language of expression and allowing individuals to use their multilingualism in their social and cultural activities. In practical terms, how can one reconcile French predominance and this possibility of multilingualism, as you call it? This is still a subject of intense discussion in Québec. Many people say, for instance, that teaching English puts French at a disadvantage or... I would like to hear your comments on this matter.
(1:30 p.m.)

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: I have read some studies and know that in a situation of multilingualism there is a certain tendency toward assimilation. This is caused by numerical, economic, historical, and social or class realities. Therefore, the ground is never neutral where several languages coexist.

If we want to preserve the French language, a status must be given to this language. At the same time, we cannot ignore the relation between

language and culture or the rights of minority groups in Québec society. In order for cultures and minority groups to fully develop, they must also be able to use the language which is the vehicle of their traditions and community life. So, I think that in a Québec society we can further the preservation of cultural first languages in many ways, such as teaching them in the schools, not only to the minority groups but to all young people, and through the media, we already have certain means: television, the ethnic press, which are often ghettoized however and reserved for certain channels. It could become more commonplace to have and to hear some of these presentations in other languages and other locations.

In addition, we can allow people to express themselves in their mother tongue on certain occasions when they associate. I know that in business certain people are already exempted from the Charter of the French language. To a good rule there are always exceptions. It must never be carried out with rigidity or with a categorization which is too exhaustive. Therefore, here, I am advancing the principle that there can be predominance of a language without necessarily eliminating the use of minority languages of origin. And, in my opinion, attempting to eradicate certain realities only brings about a heightened attachment to these realities.

Perhaps I could use what I heard in Bulgaria as an example. People who have Turkish names can no longer use them, they must change their religion, etc. In certain cases, this is an attempt to eliminate a reality which is perhaps found to be unpleasant, although it is possible within the reality to find a place for these modes of expression to be used, which would result in a just appreciation of all members of the society.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you. I have a second question. On page 6, you tell us it is important to enshrine the explicit obligation of affirmative action in the Constitution, which is quite different from simply mentioning affirmative action or the possibility of positive action. So, you want it to be an obligation. Do you think this constitutional obligation could be respected without creating further problems? And I would go further. Anyway, I personally would have fears about doing that, fears that the French-speaking community would come out as losers or suffer negative effects. After all...

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: I know that I am not here to ask questions, but to exchange ideas. In my view, we have a right which is consecrated, whether in the federal Charter or in the Québec Charter, and this is the right to equality, to exercise rights with full equality. In following this principle, we cannot treat everyone the same way. Treating everyone the same way

often amounts to reinforcing inequalities. If I take a group of people with varying degrees of mobility and I say: I am giving you the same chance to take public transport, all I am in fact doing is limiting the opportunities, the opportunities for the success of those who have a mobility handicap.

If I want equality, I must accommodate this disability, I must help, and then I will achieve the conditions of equality. In so doing, I am taking nothing away from the majority. All I am doing is levelling the playing field, so to speak, and allowing people, according to their ability, to reach their potential. Otherwise, there are always these barriers. Therefore, affirmative action programs must be planned around certain realities. A program will not produce any results unless there are certain rules. We must become aware of what percentage a certain minority represents within the population.

Therefore, in the public service for example, we do not say: We are going to hire public servants, 50%, and this way we will exclude other names. We look at the people who are currently members of this public service. Are all groups in our society represented equitably? Temporary measures are taken until we arrive at a representation which is equitable and representative.

I think there is sometimes a fear arising from conjecture as to what these programs are. But the programs I am talking about here are planned in accordance with the reality and are aimed at equality.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you. On page 11. I am jumping from subject to subject. I have many, many points.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This is your final comment, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): If I may, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Of course.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): On page 11 of your text, you tell us that the economic ties with the rest of Canada must be reexamined; either they are maintained with reforms or they are renegotiated after a declaration of sovereignty or independence. So, in your opinion, which of these two scenarios is the most likely to achieve favourable results for improving the economic ties Québec has with Canada? In your view, which scenario would appear to facilitate these matters the most?

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: To be successful in negotiations, I think we must have a clear idea. We must be able to express this clear idea.

At the same time, I believe that we must go in with the conviction that we are going in to negotiate, and the two parties must agree that change on both sides is possible. These are the conditions that must be established if negotiations are to succeed.

In my opinion, it would be easier to negotiate new agreements if we first recommended and outlined the preservation of certain ties with the federal government, which would be renewed and adjusted. I cannot say it is easy with all the arguments which have been presented before this Commission, since attempts have been made in the past and today's political context is what it is. However, if you are speaking in general terms, I think it is easier to start by negotiating the reworking of economic powers in a federal context. Once the federal context has been taken care of, we will be in a position to negotiate, to negotiate matters of interest to both sides, and how we present it is important. But, as others have said, a risk is involved, and we must know how to handle the risk at that stage.

Today, I cannot predict the outcome of negotiations once the break has been made. I don't know whether this answers your question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger):

Madam, I now have only to thank you not only for submitting a brief and answering questions, but also for agreeing to do so in two sessions separated by a power failure, which has surely caused a few problems in your day's agenda. Thank you for returning with us and for thereby contributing to the progress of our work.

Mrs. Westmoreland-Traoré: It has been an honour.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. We will now hear the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch, and I would ask the representative to come to the table.

(Proceedings adjourned at 1:40 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 1:41 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If the Commission members would kindly take their seats, we are now going to hear the representatives of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch.

Before going on to this, however, since the power failure interrupted some of our routine procedures, I have a message for the Commission members, which I should have read to you at noon, and which was to remind you to vacate your rooms at the Sheraton by 2:00 p.m. In light of the outage, those who have not done so will be allowed a little extra time. And, second message, since a little hail or something of the

kind has been forecast, instead of leaving at around 8:00 p.m., the bus for Québec City will leave exactly 15 minutes after the end of this evening's sitting, so at around 6:45 p.m.

I am sorry, but this has not cut into the time allocated for your presentation and I would ask you now, Mr. Czolij, to kindly introduce the members of your group and to take five minutes to present the main lines of your brief. But, first, I would also thank you for agreeing to taking a break and returning after an impromptu lunch. Go ahead, please.

Ukrainian Canadian Congress (Montréal Branch)

Mr. Czolij (Eugène): For the introduction, I will begin on my left, where my father, Mr. Yaroslav Czolij, manager of the Caisse populaire ukrainienne de Montréal, is seated; next, Mr. Yaroslav Kulba, chairman of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch; on my right, Mr. William Tretiak, chairman of the Ukrainian Canadian Professional and Business Association of Montréal; and my name is Eugène Czolij. I am vice-chairman of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch.

Messrs. Co-chairmen and distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the debate on the political and constitutional future of Québec is certainly one of utmost importance which will have a marked effect on all Quebecers, personally and collectively, in the relatively near future. For this reason, Montréal's Ukrainian community could not remain silent during your deliberations. This is why the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch, having received the appropriate mandate from its members, has submitted a brief to this Commission, and it is our pleasure to discuss with you today the various points it raises.

As we mentioned in our brief, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch, is an umbrella group for 32 community, social and religious organizations, as well as veterans groups, youth, business and professional associations, a school advisory committee and a social services centre.

Essentially, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress is a mouthpiece for the Ukrainian community which, according to a 1986 census, is composed of close to one million people of Ukrainian origin in Canada, more than 22 000 of whom are in Québec. Next year our community will commemorate the centenary of the arrival of the first Ukrainian pioneers in Québec and Canada. Those first immigrants came over knowing only a few words of French or English, but they have persevered and have contributed to enriching Québec and Canada, all the while preserving their cultural heritage and close ties with the Ukraine. As you are no doubt aware, these ties have recently been strengthened, and the Ukrainian

people, along with the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, have taken advantage of a pseudo-democratic wave in the Soviet Union to throw off the yoke of Moscow and regain their independence.

In light of the Ukrainian people's constant struggle in a system where the most basic human rights have been violated for over three centuries, where terror still reigns, where the policy of Russianization persists, where persecution and intimidation continue, where political arrests are multiplying and where massacres are again becoming wide-spread, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch, wants you to know, and I say this with a strong conviction, that Québec and Canada are still the envy of most of the world's peoples, despite all our difficulties.

We live in a democratic country, which guarantees individual and collective rights and, believe me, this is saying something. In addition, many have laid down their lives for this ideal which more often than not we take for granted.

Furthermore, we must be aware that Quebecers and Canadians enjoy a very high standard of living and some of the best social programs in the world. In contrast, we cannot ignore the fact that at this very moment many Ukrainians are faced with the fear of starvation. The difficult conditions of subsistence of the Ukrainian people make us selfishly realize each day just how lucky we are to be on this side of the Atlantic and to benefit from this country's wealth.

I have set this backdrop to illustrate the motives that the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch, had in stating in its brief that, in spite of the constitutional failures which have been experienced, the dialogue between the Québec and Canadian governments toward finding a mutually satisfying solution must continue.

We agree that Québec's population is distinct from the population of the rest of Canada, that Québec's linguistic and cultural claims must be recognized and protected. At the same time, minority rights must also be respected. We are aware that over the years the Québec people have amassed many assets that allow them to look toward the future with assurance and optimism. Nevertheless, we believe that preserving some kind of federation which is mutually acceptable is still essential to maintaining a privileged position on the world's financial market. We also note that, in Europe, democratic countries are seeking a certain kind of federation, and to use the words of Mr. Albert Juneau in his editorial entitled "Vers une Europe fédérale" - "Toward a Federal Europe", which recently appeared in *Le Devoir*: "Québec can draw many valuable lessons from the European Community, not as a model to follow, but as an example of an association whose members are seeking the most appropriate forms of political cooperation within an economic framework that requires very

close coordination".

Finally, we would strongly encourage this Commission, whose report will be extremely important and influential, to recommend that the Québec government ensure that all Quebecers are well informed of the choices they will have to make with regard to the future of Québec, so that they can participate in it to the fullest extent possible. Moreover, we believe that any new proposal aimed at redefining our relations with Canada should be accepted by the Canadian population as a whole in order to ensure a *de facto*, not simply a *de jure* cooperation.

To conclude, we thank you for the interest you have shown in our brief on the future of Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Czolij. We will now hear Mr. Larose, followed by Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to this Commission. I have two questions to ask. When you say that you want the Canadian Constitution to recognize Québec's distinct character in relation to Canada as a whole, does this mean its national character should be recognized, in your view? In other words, do you believe we are a people here in Québec? And, secondly, does this people have the right to self-determination? And this brings me to the other question, which is about your final paragraph in which you indicate that a mandate should first be approved by Québec's entire population and also by the entire Canadian population. I want to know who decides what in all this transformation.

Mr. Czolij: First, with regard to your first question, I think it is obvious... and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress acknowledges that all nations have the right to self-determination. I don't think I have much to add. I think this is obvious. I believe that our people have always fought for this principle and that they are not willing to restrict or to limit its rights when another people, to which we belong here in Québec, exercises this right.

As for our brief and the statement that all new proposals aimed at redefining our relations with Canada must be approved by the population as a whole, this was included for the good and simple reason that, in order to redefine and to speak of relations, this requires the agreement of two parties. We cannot impose anything; this would be undemocratic. And even if something is imposed, there is absolutely no guarantee of development, which is what we all want and are seeking. For this good and simple reason, we say in our brief that the proposal must be accepted by the entire population, which will be governed by newly established rules.

Mr. Larose: If I understand correctly, this

is a self-determination project, it is up to Québec to decide upon it, but if part of it deals with association, which is what you are suggesting, this redefined association is to be put to the entire Canadian population. Is this what you are suggesting?

Mr. Czolij: I mean to say that Québec does of course have to decide its future. Insofar as this future involves the relations between Québec and Canada, the entire Canadian population must agree to it. This is essentially our viewpoint.

Mr. Larose: O.K. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, welcome and thank you for your contribution to the Commission's debates. I, for one, find your brief interesting; it is enlightening and gives rise to some very precise questions. I will tell you that I am pleased, because we do not often hear this, your reminder that we are living in a democratic country, which guarantees individual and collective rights, that our country's inhabitants enjoy a high standard of living and social security programs which are probably among the best in the world, that these are accomplishments in which you take pride. I don't think anyone here would argue with that. The subject of debate is entirely different, although I do think it is important to recall these basics, these achievements, and I am glad you have done so.

I have two questions about this, because you say on page 5, and I quote: "Any unilateral decision will have negative effects on the welfare and prosperity of Quebecers and other Canadians." You know very well that many experts who defend the argument for independence say that there may be a period of disruption, but that in the medium term things will settle down and go well. I would like to hear your comments on this.

My second question. You refer in your text to the distinct society, saying that you would like the Canadian Constitution to recognize that Québec forms a distinct society. You know very well that the entire Meech debate was centred on this issue and that English Canada said no. Do you think that by making another attempt we can succeed in getting English Canada to agree that Québec constitutes a distinct society and that this should be enshrined in a constitution? These are my two questions.

Mr. Czolij: I'll try to answer both at once. If I manage, so much the better; if not, I will get to the other answer. I think that, although it could fail, another attempt is possible, for the good and simple reason that Québec is not facing an anti-Québec monolith, in our opinion.

Mr. Desjardins: So, for you, the rejection of Québec... It is not all of English Canada that is rejecting Québec. You refute the argument that English Canada is rejecting Québec. Because we could show you surveys and statistics which indicate that the majority opinion in English Canada was opposed to Meech. I am being the devil's advocate here, but I want you to defend your statements.

Mr. Czolij: No, I understand your position. I am not saying that the Canadian population as a whole, outside of Québec, agreed to Québec's demands in the last constitutional debate. I followed it along with the experts. Perhaps I do not have the surveys to which you are referring, but the fact remains that, even though the Accord was not passed, the federal government and seven provinces still ratified it.

Mr. Desjardins: We came close.

Mr. Czolij: We came very close. And the two provinces which rejected it also rejected it by a very close margin.

Mr. Desjardins: So, in response to my first question, what you are telling us is that you see a possibility of English Canada agreeing to recognize the distinct society. I would like to return to my first... In any case, I can leave you with that, but I don't want to forget my first question.

Mr. Czolij: Look, we are talking about strategy. The sovereignists are clearly in favour of severing ties and then re-establishing them in the relatively long term. I think the Congress would prefer that new negotiations be held, which will produce more tangible results than those of last summer, at least we think they will. I am certain that... What I am putting forth today, I cannot be sure this is the right path, far from it. Still, this is the path we favour, for the reasons I outlined earlier. That is, the last demands made by Québec in the Meech Lake debate were still ratified by seven provinces and by the federal government. I tell you, the political situation is changing. We live in a dynamic country. There are many things we cannot foresee. I think that by maintaining a steadfast position, remaining calm, discussing... I believe that the debate before this Commission will in fact transform the other into a dynamic one. And I tell you, I wonder how many of the distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission two years ago would have bet a lot of money on the NDP gaining power in Ontario?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): On this point, Mrs. Bégin has the floor.

Mr. Desjardins: What about my first question?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): No. Mrs. Bégin has the floor. You have already gone over your five minutes.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, on behalf of my group, I would like to thank you for presenting your brief. Upon reading it, one notes that you would like Québec to continue negotiating with Canada, because you say that we still enjoy a good standard of living and that Canada, as it were, is its own justification. When you say on page... I would really like to say this, that despite both the failure of Meech Lake and the 1982 constitutional failures, you want us to continue to negotiate with Canada. When you talk about pursuing a dialogue with Canada, are you referring to a dialogue between Québec City and Ottawa or one with the federal government and the nine other Canadian provinces? (2:00 p.m.)

Mr. Czolij: I don't think the Congress is that far along. We are speaking more in terms of a strategy. After the failure of Meech Lake, I think that Québec should try all the methods available to it in order to obtain the results it is seeking today. Whether this should be through a debate, bilateral negotiations or negotiations with all the provinces, I could not tell you.

Mrs. Bégin: Because the problem we are facing now concerns the conditions for amending the Constitution. I am going to exchange ideas with you. If Québec City decided to negotiate a new constitutional agreement with Ottawa, do you think it would be necessary... You mention in your document that it would be necessary to go to the Canadian people and obtain their support through a referendum or perhaps an election. Do you think, in the event that the Canadian population said yes to an agreement between the federal government and Québec on a new constitutional base, that it would be legally acceptable to be opposable to the governments of the nine other provinces. You do understand what...

Mr. Czolij: Yes. I couldn't tell you whether or not it would be legal. I assume that if the federal government negotiated this base with Québec, it would be because it felt its population as a whole had given it the mandate to do so. If no one disputed the federal government's power, so much the better.

Mrs. Bégin: And upon entering into negotiations with the federal government, do you think that Québec, in light of the failures we have experienced, the 1982 failure, the 1990 Meech Lake failure, should threaten to secede from the country if the negotiations are not successful, saying: This is the last chance for negotiations with you? We'll go into them, but if they are not suitable, this is another solution we are

recommending. What do you think of that solution?

Mr. Czolij: Look, I am a lawyer by profession. I have negotiated with opponents on a few occasions and it depends on the context. Sometimes, more often than not, threats are a temptation for the opposing party to say no. Sometimes threats result in the debate being focused on the threat rather than on the real issue. So, once again, I think it is a question of strategy. Once the Commission submits its report and the government decides on the course to follow, it will decide whether or not the threat of independence is appropriate under the circumstances.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those were my questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. Mr. Léonard.

Mr. Léonard: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments about the brief. First, I have the impression that you feel there are not really many problems in Canada, that things actually seem to be going rather well and that you wonder if Québec really has any problems. I think this is virtually the sense I get from your brief, since you say: Things are going so well, all there could be to discuss are details, and everything we have been talking about in Québec for years and years, the relations between Québec and the federal government, has actually been nothing but a lot of chatter.

I cannot help but summarize in this way, because, honestly, this is denying a certain reality in Canada and Québec which has caused a lot of ink and saliva to flow for a very long time.

I would like to look at the final paragraph of your brief because, in my opinion, it lends itself to ambiguity. You responded to Mr. Larose's question on this, but I would like to return to it because you say: "Any new proposal aimed at redefining our relations with Canada must be approved by the Canadian population as a whole in order to guarantee our future development." You said that Québec could decide on its own destiny. I understand this very well. But, at soon as it decides on its own destiny, its relations with the rest of Canada become involved. I would like to hear you say very formally that this does not mean having all proposals or decisions made by the people of Québec on its own future ratified through a Canadian referendum.

Mr. Czolij: First, I want to correct your observation that our brief does not take reality or history into account and that it can essentially be summarized by saying there are no problems in Canada and what is Québec actually looking for, since everything is fine? You see, my glass is half full. You can look at it and say: It is

half empty, and I can look at it and say: But there is still some water in it. Coming from a country where there is no water, I am happy to see it is at least half full. This was the objective of our brief, to quite simply make Quebecers understand that, despite the difficulties, the entire world thinks this is still one of the finest countries, one of the finest provinces people can live in.

As far as your question is concerned, if I understand correctly, are you asking me whether, if Québec decided to separate from Canada following a referendum, this question should then be put to the Canadian population as a whole?

Mr. Léonard: That's the gist of it, because, in the end, this involves relations with the rest of Canada. Basically, it would mean changing their own country from within.

Mr. Czolij: Look, I don't think that Québec needs a second Canadian referendum to separate from Canada. On pages 6 and 7 of its brief, the Congress mentions that, if we want to redefine relations with Canada, we will need to have the consent of the entire population concerned.

Mr. Léonard: Now, all the same, numerous attempts have been made to fill the other half of the glass, for decades and decades, practically since the signing of the Canadian Constitution in 1867, and these have not succeeded. Now, how do you plan to persuade the rest of Canada to fill the other half of the glass? Eventually, this has to stop!

Mr. Czolij: Look, I believe that by holding our ground, by building upon what we have already gained, I am thinking among other things of the agreement between the federal government and the Québec government on the question of immigration, which was made subsequent to Meech Lake.

Mr. Léonard: Look, that's not even a drop!

Mr. Czolij: Let's say that it is a drop, because it was one of the five demands made at Meech Lake. In my view, it is more than a drop and, by adding more, in the end we will fill the glass!

Mr. Léonard: This is an administrative agreement, not by any means a constitutional one. If you read it, you will admit this. It does not give us any right to make choices.

Mr. Czolij: Of course, my argument is not based on this agreement. I am not telling you: Here, the miracle solution has been found since last summer. I cited this example only to indicate that there are at least foundations upon which we can build. At least one glass is half full.

Maybe one drop has been added since the failure of Meech Lake, and I encourage, or rather the Ukrainian Canadian Congress encourages the Québec government to continue along this path with the belief that it will eventually fill the glass because, as I pointed out in my answer to one of the questions, I think it was Mr. Desjardin's, English Canada is not a monolith. There are changes, politicians change, some are going to change, some are going to leave earlier than others, but the fact remains that by remaining steadfast, discussing seriously and demonstrating a serious attitude, English Canada will help us to fill this glass yet.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The time has now elapsed. Perhaps you have a final quick question; it would have to be really quick.

Mr. Léonard: Well, I think demonstrating a serious attitude, it seems to me that in its constitutional negotiations Québec has demonstrated a serious attitude for a very long time. They had better not ask us to be serious! In fact, particularly in 1982, the glass was completely emptied. When you think of filling it, you will find a hole in it, and it will never be filled until this Constitution has been amended.

Mr. Czolij: Possibly. That is your opinion.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There, the question and the response. This leaves me only to thank you, Gentlemen, representatives of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Montréal branch, Messrs. Czolij, father and son, Mr. Kulba and Mr. Tretiak, for submitting a brief to the Commission, for coming to defend it and, in so doing, for contributing to the progress of our work.

Mr. Czolij: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you especially for agreeing to the delays in the timetable, which may have disrupted your afternoon; it was kind of you to cope with the circumstances.

We will now greet the representatives of the Maison d'Afrique, and I would ask them to come forward to the table.

(Proceedings adjourned at 2:11 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:13 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, if the members of the Commission would please take their seats, we are now going to hear the representative of the Maison d'Afrique, Mrs. Hekpazo, who now has the floor. You have the floor, Madam.

Maison d'Afrique

Mrs. Hekpazo (Jacqueline): At the suggestion of the Commission on the political future of Québec, I am going to share some brief reflections. The sittings of the Commission on the future of Québec can be equated with what is happening in other parts of the world. In Africa, for example, conferences are being held on what are called the vital forces of the nation, which have brought together people with different leanings, even opposing ones, from various social strata. These conferences are being held to review the country's current situation, to contemplate its future and to decide on the type of development it wants. It must be emphasized, however, that these eminently democratic exercises have become essential as a result of the worsening of the people's living conditions and the pressures they have exerted on their leaders. Likewise, in Eastern Europe, what officials call the awakening of nationalities or what we call the awakening of nations and the renewed struggle for self-determination started when these countries reached a dead end.

The fact that a Commission on the political and constitutional future of Québec has been instituted clearly indicates that Québec is at a crucial point in its historical development. The constitutional framework in which Québec has, in one manner or another, evolved until now has become too narrow, too restricting. Québec has expanded so rapidly that the cage of the federal Constitution, the British North America Act, 1867, is no longer able to contain it. If we extended this metaphor of a bird held captive in a cage, the bars of its cage, no matter how golden, must be opened so that it can spread its wings to finally take flight and soar high into the air. For, by constantly knocking against the bars, doesn't our bird risk injuring and in time wearing away its wings? A bird is meant to fly as free as the wind with its own wings, even if it is exposed to the risks represented by possible hunters or other predators.

For those of us who are natives of countries which have fought to a greater or lesser degree for their independence, we must admit that political independence is a necessary condition for, but not enough to ensure the development of our countries. The emigration from our countries clearly illustrates this. Political independence is not an end in itself. It is a means, a tool for choosing and controlling one's own development with a view to securing better living conditions for the nation as a whole, to enabling all people to reap the benefits of a good life, as Kwame Nkrumah used to say.

However, unlike our countries which, for the most part, do not have the economic means to achieve real political independence, Québec has the minimum economic bases required to

ensure the pursuit of its development and to allow it to be the sole architect of this development. To achieve this, Québec has only to take hold of the lever of political independence, which is within its reach.

We have a few comments to make. We deeply regret the absence of First Nations on this Commission on the future of Québec. In light of this situation, we newcomers question what place will actually be reserved for us in a new Québec and what place will be reserved for the first inhabitants.

Although all of the social categories are not formally or proportionally represented on the Commission, we hope that the members of the Commission will take the various viewpoints of these very underrepresented sectors into account. These groups are not as well organized or funded and include the ordinary people of various communities and neighbourhoods, including a great number of nonunionized workers.

Initially the vices and virtues of Canadian federalism as compared with those of Québec nationalism will have to be analysed, but the Commission should then examine the forces that are present as the new Québec takes off, because, for us, the sovereignty issue, the national issue involves preparing some kind of blueprint for society.

If we go back to the example of our countries, in their fight for independence, rarely did they tie this effort in with the question of their society's internal operation, and this has resulted in the European "master colonists" being replaced by African "neocolonizing leaders".

Therefore, this is not a question of merely moving the furniture around. Today, to say the least, our countries have not gained very much by doing this. We think it would be advantageous for the Commission to say what Quebecers are actually confronted with: independence, yes, but for what purpose? This is why we require a blueprint for society; this has not yet been defined, but the Commission's work can help to produce one. National independence must not be reduced to the single issue of economic profitability. It involves the future of a nation, building a new country as well as a collective identity for Québec, based on the values of justice and social solidarity, which we see as being synonymous with democracy.

We recommend holding a referendum as soon as the Commission's report is published and before the general elections. Why? This way, we will be sure that the people of Québec are really deciding on their future and we will avoid having one of the political parties taking over.

Second, asking a clear and simple question in the referendum, such as: Are you in favour of an independent, democratic State of Québec?

Third, following the referendum, a representative constituent assembly of all society's forces, including those that were not

represented on the Commission, should be held. This assembly should prepare a draft constitution to be ratified by the people.

In the referendum, the right to vote, the ultimate democratic right, should be granted to landed immigrants or people who have resided in Québec for at least one year, if not three, but who do not have Canadian citizenship, whether because they are not legally eligible or have chosen not to apply for it. These landed immigrants to Québec are part of its population and should therefore be able to participate in collective decisions.

Once independence has been declared, the time to negotiate methods of pooling on an equal basis, with its geographical neighbours, Canada and the United States, will have come. The example of the European Economic Community is often evoked, but it has evolved on the basis of nation States, which are equal partners forced by economic realities to create certain ties, which will begin to materialize only in 1992. However, each country maintains control over its national interests, which are clearly defined.

To conclude, not only are we favourably inclined toward Québec sovereignty, but we also have a bias for the national independence of Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. Mr. Williams now has the floor.

Mr. Williams: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of our group, I would like to thank you, Madam, for your presentation. Straight off, I have a few questions to ask you. Thank you for clarifying the five themes mentioned in your brief. You tell us that independence is not an end but a means. You stated: The most important thing is the blueprint for society which could be implemented once independence is achieved.

But if we could find the formula, the federative or confederative formula, that would make application of this blueprint for society possible, could you accept it? Do you have any comments?

Mrs. Hekpazo: Could you speak a bit louder, because I am having trouble catching what you are saying.

Mr. Williams: I'm sorry. Very quickly, I'll repeat what I said. You said that independence is not an end, it is a means.

Mrs. Hekpazo: Yes, yes.

Mr. Williams: If we find a way other than independence to realize your blueprint for society, would you accept the other federalist or

confederalist model?

Mrs. Hekpazo: With the example we have just seen, if we consider that the 1867 Constitution excluded the First Nations, if we consider that the 1982 Constitution excluded Québec, in terms of the status of blacks, for example, in the framework of Canada's federal system, these people are completely left out of the official history, but they have been here since the first colonies. And of course when we consider the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, which dealt with the questions of Canada and Québec, I have trouble seeing that, with the experience acquired over all those years, from being a French colony to being an English colony, to gaining the status of a province, I have trouble seeing how this course, the people's course toward their future, could lead to anything but independence. But this is the starting point for building a new State, a new society. And this is why it is important that all the elements of Québec's population be taken into consideration.

Mr. Williams: OK. Thank you. You recommended that directly following this Commission, upon the publication of our report, a referendum on our recommendations be held to protect democracy and to take the next step. But, in order to be democratic, should we take the time to hold a public debate, to gather other suggestions? If we hold a referendum immediately after the report, would this not be going against your objective of following with a democratic step? Would you comment on this?

Mrs. Hekpazo: No. The Commission is useful for clarifying certain stakes, certain social issues which, unfortunately, have not taken place until now. The fact that we have been invited to this Commission proves that there is still a slight interest in recent immigration. Landed immigrants are part of Québec's and Canada's population now and, for the most part, their point of view, especially the view of those from third world countries, has never been considered.

Therefore, if we consider, for example - I am still referring to the situation of blacks in Canada - if we take the indicator which is used to determine a group's place in a society, if we take the indicator of representation in the Canadian public service, for example, we see that, although visible minorities account for slightly more than 6% of the work force, an average of barely 2% to 3% of the various national groups subject to federal regulation are in the federal public service. And these are always found in semi-specialized or administrative support positions, very rarely in decision-making positions or in positions of any influence.

This is a learning experience for the Commission, as many have said, and I think that those of us who have been in Québec since around

1975 have carefully followed the course of the Québec people and what is happening in English Canada. Even if we have never officially been put on the map as representative of opinions which are perhaps not in circulation or circulating only now, we are following the situation very closely and this is a matter our members have been discussing for quite some time.

We come from countries which have fought for their independence and have a great deal of varied experience; therefore, this is nothing new for us.

Mr. Williams: Do I have the time, or...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have enough time for another short one.

Mr. Williams: A very short one. A little like your experience with African currency, the whole debate on collective rights, I am thinking of a good basis in African countries... We have had several questions during the Bélanger-Campeau sessions here, on the questions of individual and collective rights. Can you give us a few comments on your perspective of the balance between collective and individual rights?

Mrs. Hekpazo: As we say in a proverb, for example, one person's freedom ends where another's begins. OK. For us, an independent Québec would start us off on the road to building a new country, with a voice in everything concerning the different principles to be put in a constitution. And, precisely to avoid repeating the errors of the federal multiculturalism policy that mean that, in principle, in reality, immigrants particularly of African origin, and especially blacks, still don't have a second-zone citizen status but are rather stuck in the third zone. It doesn't mean that we don't exist, but we're there anyway. So, we would insist that each immigrant who arrives here, who is a landed immigrant in Québec, be considered a full-fledged citizen with the same rights as old Québec families, to use the familiar expression.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I shall now turn the floor over to Mr. Léonard.

Mr. Léonard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam, thank you for your brief. You represent the Maison d'Afrique, and I understand that the situation is different between Africa and Québec, of course, but I am dying to ask you a question. The African countries experienced a special situation. They gained their independence around the 1960s. It was the basis of the decolonization movement. They are still experiencing economic difficulties, generally of all types, but the question I would like to ask you is: Do you believe that many of these countries would like to go back to the old system?

Mrs. Hekpazo: Absolutely not. Since the 1960s, the symbolic date of nominal independence, but that was only the beginning... The next combat or... Not the next, but what is shaping up at the present time in terms of struggles within the countries in Africa, is the conquest for economic liberation, because we are in a Third World situation, with North-South relations that are hardly egalitarian, to say the least.

What we would expect of an independent Québec is that it take a stand. A good role as spokesman within the French-speaking world. Because, even if not the entire majority of peoples who speak French, that is, are French-speaking, in Africa, there are still 21 Francophone countries that have been counted as part of "La Francophonie". Therefore, Québec has a role as a spokesman. I would say even more, for a truly progressive Québec, that is to be the champion and defender of the revival of what we called the North-South dialogue at the time. And it is at that level that we have major expectations.

Mr. Léonard: As far as you're concerned, and with regard to the countries that make up Africa, you think there is not one that would return to the prior situation despite all the difficulties it has experienced?

Mrs. Hekpazo: Definitely not.

Mr. Léonard: Definitely not.

Mrs. Hekpazo: Right. I think that the future of any people is to become independent, to gain its independence to finally be able to decide freely what it wants to do.

Mr. Léonard: Now you are speaking of a societal project. Would you agree that, from the outset, sovereignty must be acquired, and that then we would hold discussions and preserve, obviously in a constitution, different avenues for discussing societal projects, but that these societal projects will constitute a second sort of phase in the democratic life of the Québec population?

Mrs. Hekpazo: I don't think we should proceed by phases. At this point it's simultaneous, if I may say so. We can't put off forever what we can do right now. Why shouldn't we fight for true stakes, true things in society, true life, while this debate for the political future of Québec is going on? It's high time. That's why we're saying that independence, the juridical means, is formal, but it's the first phase, if you like the concept of "phase", for Quebecers to define what they want as a society.

Mr. Léonard: In relation to various societal projects, would you see or want unity, the

vastest possible, of all Quebecers to gain sovereignty and carry out societal projects?

Mrs. Hekpazo: Of course, to the extent that they are asked, not only constituted groups, or... like those that are representative here, that always have a voice in the matter. There is what we refer to as "grass roots" Québec that exists, that is real, but that doesn't often have the opportunity to express itself... for that alone.

Mr. Léonard: Do you share the fears of the people who came here, particularly from a number of minority groups, regarding the question of individual rights in a sovereign Québec? Do you find that the administration of the Québec Charter of human rights and freedoms leaves something to be desired and that, in the end, in a sovereign Québec, the situation would deteriorate or would risk not improving?

Mrs. Hekpazo: No, absolutely not. The Québec people, like all other peoples in the world, once they have acquired democracy, or social rights, even if they have policies that make them regress temporarily, want to hold on to those rights. If certain minorities are fearful, we must reassure them; we must explain to them what stakes are involved and what is going on now because there is a tremendous amount of ignorance also on... well, in terms of the history of Québec, of the knowledge of history, and of English Canada and, in a more global perspective, relations between Canada and the other countries of the world.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The presentation of this brief has now come to an end, Mrs. Hekpazo. It is my pleasure to thank you for having given us such a precise, clear and elegant presentation. Thank you very much. We shall now hear from the representatives of the Société franco-manitobaine.

(Proceedings adjourned at 2:33 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:35 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If the members of the Commission would please take their seats, we shall now hear from the representatives of the Société franco-manitobaine. Mr. Raymond Bisson, the president of the organization, will make the presentation. Mr. Bisson, will you please take the floor?

Société franco-manitobaine

Mr. Bisson (Raymond): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Commission, it is my pleasure to introduce Mrs. Cécile Bérard, general manager of the Société

franco-manitobaine, and Me François Dumaine, consulting attorney, of the Fédération des francophones hors Québec.

We are pleased to be here to tell you about the aspirations of our community. We represent the Société franco-manitobaine, whose terms of reference are to safeguard the interests of, and to act as the official spokesman for, French-speaking Manitoba. Québec is still dear to the hearts and the minds of the Franco-Manitoban community. The media throughout the country have informed us that the Québec people in general are leaning towards sovereignty. We believe that, in the near future, Canada as a State will undergo profound changes and that, within this scenario, Québec not only has the right but the responsibility to decide on the direction its future will take constitutionally. We hope that, whatever their decision is, the men and women of Québec will choose to include us in their constitutional restructuring, since we believe that the development and growth of the French-language community is a commitment that we share.

Our province is relatively young. However, despite a number of setbacks, we have survived. The attitude of our young Francophones is not that of prior generations that were often obliged to hide to express themselves in their language, or to suffer from the complexes that spring from life on the fringe of society. Our people are changing.

Identifying us as a "dying" community can only be detrimental to both Manitoba and Québec. Despite our minority status, we have aspirations of our own and, little by little, by submitting demands and concerted efforts, we are managing to go forward. The Francophones of Québec, as opposed to Francophones elsewhere, control the media in their province. Let them profit from that to convey encouragement and positive messages to French-speaking Manitoba; that can only help us grow.

The brief that we have submitted tells our story: a rich history of a proud, talented, tenacious people, deeply attached to the people of Québec. We recognize that, over the last few decades, Québec has evolved, and now feels ready to become master of its destiny. We believe that, like it or not, we are part of this destiny and that there is a way for Québec to progress in its development, while cultivating bonds with the members of the Franco-Manitoban community. We have obvious traits in common, but it would be naïve to believe that proximity or common traits are enough to repatriate the men and women of French-speaking Manitoba to Québec. There will be no exodus to Québec. Our men and women are rooted in the Western Plains and plan on staying there. However, since Québec has an impact on our lives, we are aware that we have such an impact on Québec. Whatever happens, our futures are interrelated.

Recognizing that Québec is master of its own destiny, we hope, Ladies and Gentlemen, that Québec will stay within Confederation, but that Confederation will be redefined, taking into account the fact that the status quo does not reflect Québec's aspirations. Québec must define its own direction by granting the necessary importance to the needs of all its people, and we hope that it will choose to grant the necessary importance to the needs of Francophones outside its borders.

We are recommending a reformulation of the Canadian Confederation that will take into account not only Québec's aspirations, but also those of Francophones outside Québec. This can translate into a constitutional commitment for the two official language groups. We want to keep the Official Languages Act, and we also want to safeguard the language guarantees that already exist within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We will know a new Canada. The initiative of setting up this Commission is a major factor in moving towards this renewal process.

The final result should meet the aspirations of the various components throughout the country. To believe in the status quo would be to neglect to see and recognize the reality of Canada. We fully recognize that a future constitutional agreement would be defined taking several factors into account, such as the economy, culture, international representativeness, the sharing of powers and so on. But today, we want to place our bets on a unique feature, constitutional commitment toward both official language groups.

We recognize that there will be a place for the Anglophone community in this new Québec of tomorrow. However, we want Francophone communities in the other provinces to have the same rights, as well as the same status, as those that you will give to Anglophones in Québec. It is essential that the Québec people be just as sensitive to pan-Canadian Frenchness as it has been and will be with regard to its own minority.

We do hope that Québec will assume its own identity and will go its own way, but may it do that in consideration of all the stakes in advance, and may it be truly to the advantage of all Quebecers, men and women, and to all Canadian men and women as well. Thank you. We are ready to answer your questions.

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

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, Madam, Gentlemen, I should like to welcome you to the Commission and thank you for having been willing to participate in our work and our deliberations. You remind us very accurately of the unceasing struggles of the Franco-Manitobans for their very survival. You gave us a brief

summary of the many phases of that struggle, recalling the racist campaigns that were directed against the Francophone Metis. Allow me to give a bit of background on that point, to recall the role that Québec had attempted, at the time, to play in the Francophone Metis rebellions under Louis Riel.

It would perhaps be useful to recall that, at the time, the elite of Québec had demanded mercy for Louis Riel, and all the municipalities of Québec, without a single exception, had sent a resolution to Parliament begging for mercy. We know the results. They were laughed at and the ultimate result was the hanging of Louis Riel.

All this to say that these struggles that had been... We can recall that that happened under a Conservative government, followed by the election of a Liberal government, which repealed section 23 of the Manitoba Act on bilingualism, making English the sole official language. These are struggles you came out of with difficulty for some time. Yet you tell us that, increasingly, young Franco-Manitobans are more dynamic, have more pride and, to express it a bit in your terms, fewer complexes. We are very pleased about this.

In your brief, however, you express fears. Curiously, the Franco-Ontarian groups, the Société des Acadiens and, I should say, the Franco-Americans, do not seem to share your fears as to the impact that a sovereign Québec could have on Francophones outside Québec. The Société des Acadiens, like the Franco-Ontarians, seem to see no problem in this situation and suggest that we could, and they could, ultimately become invaluable partners, invaluable for strengthening the language, but also as economic partners throughout Canada.

I should like to understand why you feel fear when faced with the decision, which seems increasingly probable, of sovereignty in Québec. Is it because you are further away, not as close to Québec? What is the explanation for this fear?

Mr. Bisson: The Franco-Manitoban community has several black pages in its history and no doubt the dates 1890 and 1916 are dates we remember very well. I feel that we are in the process of correcting this injustice. I think that, during the last two decades, we have set up several Franco-Manitoban institutions and organizations to make sure that our community can truly develop. We are in full development and facing a rupture. If the rupture of Québec is a clean break, clear and definitive, in relation to the rest of Canada, we are of the opinion that we will not disappear because the vitality of the Franco-Manitoban community depends not only on Québec, but especially on our own community. However, we have benefited from the presence of a Québec within Canada. We are convinced, whether Québec separates or not, that there will be negotiations. How will the Franco-Manitoban

community come out of these negotiations with the rest of Canada and Québec? That we can't say for the moment, but we are of the opinion that the more Québec is included in the folds of the Constitution, the better our chances will be for development. I feel it is a matter of the scope of the sovereignty of Québec that will assure greater links with Québec, or fewer links with Québec. I should also say...

(2:45 p.m.)

Mrs. Blackburn: But, Sir...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The time is up.

Mrs. Blackburn: Just one short question, if you will permit me, Mr. Chairman. I've behaved myself all day.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): True, but I wouldn't want that to stop, Madam.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Blackburn: I promise.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): A short one.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, thank you. Don't you feel that, on the contrary, a strong Québec, master of its own development, which has its place among the nations of the world, which has its place as a country within the French-language countries – because at present, the place of Québec is exactly the same as that of New Brunswick within the Francophone countries, in relation to its participation in the Summits – don't you think that it would be in a better position to establish special relations and support the Francophones outside Québec? And how do you think we can change the Canadian Confederation, you who are in a particularly good position to know the degree of intolerance of part of the English Canadian population toward Québec?

Mr. Bisson: We believe that it is also perhaps a question of political will on the part of the other provinces, specifically on the part of Manitoba as regards us. But I think it would no doubt be advantageous to the communities outside Québec, to the Franco-Manitoban community, for Québec to play a vaster, broader role as to the pan-Canadian French-speaking world. Outside Québec there are some 1 million Francophones. I think there should be bonds established, and we believe that with those ties established in a confederation, things would be much easier for the Franco-Manitoban community.

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

If I am to stay within our limits, Mr. Nicolet, Mr. Turgeon and Mr. Dufour, only you three, I shall have to cut you off after three and a half minutes rather than five minutes. So, I should let you get started. Mr. Nicolet, followed by Mr. Turgeon and Mr. Dufour.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, quickly, to follow up on what Mrs. Blackburn was saying, isn't the political will of the other provinces, on which you are counting, normally a reflection of the reality of the electorate of the other provinces?

Mr. Bisson: I am very pleased that you asked that question. I think I should like to take this opportunity to put the situation in Manitoba and the Franco-Manitoban community into perspective.

We have had the chance, during the last two annual meetings of the Société franco-manitobaine, to have the Premier of the province, Mr. Filmon, address us in French, and also to ratify certain agreements with the federal government concerning the Canada-Manitoba agreement, to make sure that the Franco-Manitoban community can develop better through these fiscal agreements from which we can benefit.

I think we should continue to work and claim our rights. However, it is absolutely imperative that we make sure that the governments in power in our provinces can have this political will to permit and encourage the development of the communities, such as the Franco-Manitoban community. So, I think there is still a will, and I feel we shall have to work to make sure that the will becomes even stronger.

Mr. Nicolet: I should like to refer you to page 11 of your text, at the bottom of the page, where you say more or less that, "being a minority, nevertheless, we must be extremely vigilant, because with all the ravages of assimilation and of other factors, such as the reticence of our governments to ensure the necessary protection of our language, our community runs the risk of crumbling away". Two short questions. First, do you have recent figures on the rate of assimilation of the Francophones in Manitoba? And, second, in your view, what would be the effect of a declaration of independence by Québec on this relationship that you are trying to develop within Manitoba with your government, which is obviously the product of a society with a non-Francophone majority?

Mr. Bisson: Concerning the rate of assimilation, the rates are relatively high. I don't remember the exact figures, but I think that in Manitoba it was 43% as an assimilation factor, and that, I believe, was in 1986. We want, we hope, that this assimilation rate or assimilation in

general can be checked. This can't be done overnight. We have had our French-language schools since 1970 only. That's just 20 years ago. I spoke of the last two decades as being very important, and I think we are on the verge, with the administration of our French-language schools that we shall have a year and a half down the road... I truly have the impression that we shall be able to check that assimilation rate. We won't be able to eliminate it completely. I think we have to be realistic. On the other hand, it's very important to allow our community to truly go forward and to attempt this development that is so necessary. To do that, the presence of Québec, a strong Québec within a redefined Canada, would, in our opinion, be highly advantageous for us, since we can't recognize, since we do not know the political will that could develop in a Canada that would very clearly see Québec become a separate entity.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you. I would like to try to understand exactly what you expect of Québec. On page 17 of your brief, you speak to Quebecers, saying that the respect we have granted the Anglophones of Québec is commendable, but a reciprocal attitude equally respectful is required outside Québec for Francophones. From whom do you require that reciprocity? Do you mean, in other words, that Québec should help you obtain that? Should it help you, in your view - this is not what I am proposing - but does that mean: Tell Canada: Protect your Francophone minority well; otherwise, we will hurt our Anglophone minority? Is that what you mean?

Mr. Bisson: We mean two things. First, we want to absolutely ensure that the majority communities, the Anglophone majority outside Québec, grant the same respect to Francophones as Quebecers have granted the Anglophones of Québec for decades, even centuries. We know very well what respect you have given the Anglophones of Québec. That is what we want.

The other is that Quebecers, regardless of the scope of the sovereignty of Québec, give support to the communities outside its boundaries. It is very difficult for us, as a community, to realize that the Québec government intervenes sometimes before the courts against Francophone communities. I think that you remember Québec's intervention as to the education of Francophones, its intervention before the Supreme Court. It is very difficult for Francophone communities like ours. If we had a role at both levels, if we had respect at both levels, I think both our communities would be in a better position to

develop fully.

Mr. Turgeon: So, when you say that constitutional commitment must be demanded for language groups, does that mean a constitutional commitment for Québec?

Mr. Bisson: I think that should be worked out with several parties. Québec will make a constitutional commitment towards its minority, I think. We feel that that constitutional commitment on the part of Anglophones outside Québec should be just as laudable and should respect to the same extent the Francophone minorities, like the Franco-Manitobans.

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

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should first like to note that you are highly privileged observers of the constitutional issue, since we should not forget that it was in Manitoba that Meech fizzled out. I also note that, perhaps contrary to the Fédération des francophones hors Québec, which has not taken a very firm stand, your coming from Manitoba means that you are taking a very firm stand, saying that Québec must stay within Confederation. And it is truly as privileged people in this debate that I should like to ask you the following question, which does not refer specifically to Francophones. How can the Anglophones of Manitoba react tomorrow, as spokesmen for Québec, precisely to negotiate this new Canada of which you are speaking?

Mr. Bisson: I should simply like to specify, first, what we stated in our brief, and what I stated today. That is that we hope that Québec will decide to remain within the Canadian Confederation.

Mr. Dufour: Right.

Mr. Bisson: We haven't said "must stay". We shall respect whatever Québec decides because we must respect...

Mr. Dufour: What you are saying is: "We recommend that..."

Mr. Bisson: Yes, we recommend that Québec stay in. However, we are also indicating that we shall respect what is decided.

Mr. Dufour: Yes, true.

Mr. Bisson: It is not up to the Franco-Manitoban community, for example, to tell the Québec people what road they should take. Concerning the role of Franco-Manitobans as to the bonds between Québec and Manitoba, I shall

simply ask Mrs. Bérard to reply.

Mrs. Bérard (Cécile): It's obvious that we want to have ties with Québec. I think that the idea of a partnership... It's advantageous for both groups to have ties. Looking at the arts, I think there could be exchanges between Québec and Canada. We have seen artists from Manitoba, and I'll name a couple: Gabrielle Roy, the writer, and now you have Daniel Lavoie who is very popular in Québec; these people have gone to Québec from Manitoba. We also receive a number of artists from Québec, in show business, over the radio, on TV. And we appreciate all that. Economically speaking, I think we could also mention the Mouvement Desjardins, which has established liaison with the caisses populaires in Manitoba. Once again, this is the type of exchange that will permit both communities to progress.

Mr. Dufour: But I have no problem with that. I know there is cooperation and we can enrich that cooperation further. My question is perhaps, very quickly, the following: Can the Anglophone community of Manitoba, at the present time, be our spokesman to amend that Canada of which you speak in your brief? Is it more broad-minded than it was, if you will permit me, in June?

Mr. Bisson: I think that we have learned a few lessons from Meech Lake. And I think that the major lessons we could have learned are that, as a country, as a group within this country, we don't know each other well at all and we don't understand each other. We know very well that the Western provinces feel alienated, that there are economic problems. But I think we should work on that openmindedness and try to better communicate the aspirations of the respective groups, whether those of Québec or of Franco-Manitobans. I think it would be advantageous for us to develop this communication to eventually arrive at that constitutional reform, if you will, that will present an attempt to respect the different groups throughout the country. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall go on now to Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bisson, thank you for having come all this way to express your views on Québec's constitutional and political position before the Commission. As Mr. Dufour was saying, your recommendation, if we can call it that, or your wish, is that Québec remain within the Canadian Federation. This is all the more remarkable if we recall that your organization, or Société, was the only one that, in 1980, was for the "yes" vote, outside Québec.

On page 2 of your brief, you say that you

want to be included by Quebecers within the constitutional restructuring. My first question is: What restructuring are you thinking of? And, how do you see the way in which Québec would include you within such a restructuring?

Mr. Bisson: We believe that, further to the deliberations of this Commission and those of other commissions, like the Spicer Commission, or commissions that have been set up in different provinces, there will be a certain direction taken in the different parts of the country. We firmly believe that there will be future negotiations, whether to establish constitutional agreements between Québec and the rest of Canada, or negotiations with Canada to simply ensure a rupture and ensure the sovereignty of Québec. I think there will be negotiations. That is why we are speaking of constitutional restructuring, because we believe that the status quo cannot be maintained. So, that is why we are advancing this thesis.

Mr. Maciocia: How do you think Québec could include you in any future negotiations?

Mr. Bisson: If Québec decides to stay within the folds of the Canadian Constitution, and given that perhaps the status quo cannot be maintained, I think that this constitutional commitment toward both official language groups is capital... Because we recognize full well that Québec will no doubt give guarantees to its minority, the Anglophone population of Québec, and that these same guarantees and that same status should be granted to French-speaking minorities outside Québec. So, it is in this context that we feel Québec can help us so that we can have the same type of status that you will grant your minority community.

Mr. Maciocia: I should like to repeat the question that Mr. Dufour asked in another sense. After the Meech Lake failure, in your opinion, does the political and constitutional climate in Manitoba, and particularly in Western Canada, do you see changes precisely because of the Meech Lake fiasco? In other words, do you see a possible openness, broader still, in negotiations, given that Québec, and this is clear to me, will ask for even more than it asked for in the Meech Lake discussions? In your view, do you truly see that we have possibilities for negotiating with a more open view on the part of Western Canada? If so, it would be very interesting to hear about it, Mr. Bisson.

Mr. Bisson: I think there have been several stakes involved since the Meech Lake debacle. And I do not have the mandate to speak on behalf of the Anglophone community in Manitoba. On the other hand, according to certain observations, I feel that the people of Western Canada are

perhaps much more concerned today with their economic position than with any constitutional agreement. That is my own observation. Perhaps there is much less preoccupation with Québec, since that has been a very difficult debate for everyone, I feel: for Quebecers as well as for other Canadians. And I think that, further to Meech Lake, there are certain political realities. Consider the Reform Party that is growing in the West. But why is it growing? Perhaps because of a certain crisis that is a political reality, at the present time, in Canada. So, it is absolutely clear that there are changes on the political plane. On the other hand, I think that that is par for the present situation. There should be more openness. But I think that the recommendations of this Commission will be very important as to defining the Canada of tomorrow.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So this... unless you have one last question, Mr. Maciocia?

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, I have just one short last question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): A short one. I don't trust short ones, but go ahead.

Mr. Maciocia: Mr. Chairman, the question is a very serious one. I am really asking myself: Are they aware that if we truly give one last chance to the rest of Canada to preserve this Federation, it is vital that concessions be made so that Québec can grow within that Canadian Federation? Are they aware of the gravity of the moment and of the gravity of the decision that Québec must take very soon, and that it would be the break-up of Canada if Québec were truly to separate?

Mr. Bisson: I don't think that, at least in Manitoba, I don't think that the Anglophone community is paying as much attention to the political reality of Québec today as I would like. If we are here today, it is to communicate the aspirations of the Franco-Manitoban community to you. We believe in, and accord tremendous importance to, your Commission, because we can see how seriously Québec, and her people, want to progress and decide on their own future. What I find a bit unfortunate is that in the other provinces, and I am thinking of our land, Manitoba, the same importance is not being given to that today. On the other hand, let's hope that, in the coming months, this political situation that we shall live through over the years to come will be able to take on the desirable dimensions and, also, that the men and women of Québec will be granted the place they deserve; but, on the other hand, we would also oblige our Anglophone community to pay us the same respect that is our due.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Unfortunately, we have no more time for this most interesting presentation. I should like to thank Mr. Bisson, Mrs. Bérard and Mr. Dumaine for coming here today and for having been willing to answer all our questions. Thank you for coming all this way, and for your contribution to our work. Now, after a brief break, we shall hear from Mr. Edmond Orban, a guest expert.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:07 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:10 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We ask that members of the Commission be seated so that we can listen to Mr. Edmond Orban, who accepted our invitation to submit a brief, which he will now present. I urge members to take their seats.

Mr. Orban, you have 10 minutes in which to make your presentation.

Mr. Edmond Orban

Mr. Orban (Edmond): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am fully aware of what a responsibility it is to appear before this Commission, which is extremely important for the future of Québec.

For this reason, from the outset, I would like to clearly delineate the confines of my presentation. Bearing in mind the questions which have been asked, I will focus in particular on the first and last questions. This means that, with regard to a number of points, I will present scientific evidence based on my experience and research. Obviously, my response to other questions will be speculative. In this regard, I have a number of opinions, although I have much less evidence to support them. Based on a number of observations I will make, the process I have followed is logical.

My presentation will last 10 minutes. I will endeavour to be brief and limit myself to the 10 minutes, which will not be easy. There are two sections. The first section is, I believe, of vital importance, as it concerns the functioning of the federal State. The second section focuses on the confederative experience.

Right from the start, I think it worthwhile to mention that, when we examine the functioning of American, Swiss, German or Canadian federalism, such federalism is presided over by a federal State. This is an intrastate federalism, that the Germans call *uns staar*, with one essential component: the State. If we look at the Nordic countries or the members of the European Economic Community, we can also talk about federalism, except that it is a federalism of another kind. It is what is called interstate federalism, or *staaten und as* German writers

such as Kelsen would have it. I have tried to clearly delineate the problem – we must discern the problem when we are discussing such grave, important matters – the problem I have delineated, or my hypothesis is that everyone is in favour of federalism, in the broadest sense of the term. In the 19th century, Proudhon said that either the 20th century would be the era of federalism, or we would experience 1000 years of purgatory.

At the outset, I have made a fundamental distinction between intrastate federalism, involving a federal State, and interstate federalism, between States. To be more precise, because at some point I think we need to be precise, the problem in Québec is not federalism in itself, but the presence of an increasingly powerful federal State. It should, I believe, be stressed that a federal State is not a matter of actors or a question of personalities, but a question of a system. It is a matter of a federal State which is incapable, despite the willingness of its actors, to relinquish its essential powers a fortiori when there is a lack of willingness. I have a great many arguments in this respect.

I have written – I beg your pardon for mentioning it – book which has required 10 years of research and sojourns abroad, and is also based on field work in addition obviously to the not only theoretical costs but practical ones – because I am a practical man – entitled: *La dynamique de la centralisation dans l'État fédéral*, in which the preface is written by a well known, but alas, deceased American by the name of Dukacek, in which I demonstrate scientifically – I believe that this is important in terms of the ensuing debate – that these States, which are the most advanced with respect to federalism, that is, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, all are characterized – here we have a sociological or economic law; I am willing to engage in debate with anyone on this vital point – they are all characterized by the heavy centralization of essential powers, those governing defense, foreign policy and the macroeconomic field. All of them! It is sufficient to read various constitutions and amendments to the constitutions, to read, to even cursorily analyse the most basic decisions of the supreme courts.

At present, we are publishing with foreign collaborators – European, American, Canadian and German – the role of the constitutional courts. The problems related to these decrees are apparent; we see the aim of the texts which show us how, whether we like it or not, the supreme courts tend to centralize in the name of "nationalization". If we also examine the constitutions, the manner in which they are applied, residual powers, explicit powers, implicit powers with the elastic clause, as it is called in the United States; if we also examine special powers, emergency powers; if we examine

financial questions; if we regard the sections and clauses which confer supremacy on the central government – I am taking, for example, the case of Germany where there are numerous competing powers, but there is a brief clause at the end that says that the federal government has the last word.

In terms of observable facts, indicators, it took me a long time, perhaps, but I did manage to make an observation – in this respect my answer is scientific – that the framework of a federal State, if you want, intrastate federalism, I have observed, is incapable, regardless of the willingness of its actors... And, in this perspective, repatriation, which is a failure, is entirely logical when it is refused by Québec. Moreover, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord is also logical. This federal State is incapable, I repeat, of relinquishing any of its essential powers. And I said – it must be said bluntly – that the federal government of Canada is behaving in the same way as the German federal government, except that the structures here are entirely different. What do you expect in Germany? We do not have the equivalent of a Québec which deems itself – quite rightly – to be a nation, with its past, which is extraordinary when compared with the history of other peoples. The framework of a federative State which may suit other peoples, I have concluded – it is not a matter of sentiment, it is not a question of emotionalism, it is a scientific observation – I am absolutely convinced that this framework will never be able to satisfy the demands of a nation such as Québec. I think that Québec must continue to formulate its demands, otherwise it will lose its vitality. In the long run, it is a country or a nation which will not become assimilated, but slowly disappear. Obviously, this will take time and the country will sink into mediocrity and hybridism. I will not dwell on other formulas. I have also studied the laws of assimilation and they have strongly influenced me, especially when we look at the long term. Obviously, we have to take the long view here.

Now the second section, as we must respect the timing. If, on the basis of these premises, we reject not federalism in the noble sense of the term but federalism with a federal State because it is the target – this will be the main obstacle and, from this standpoint, we must not delude ourselves – if we wish to achieve sovereignty, there will unquestionably be a period of transition. The second section: On what basis can we engage in a bit of futurology? I said earlier that the Scandinavian and EEC models impressed me. Now, I must point out that these are not models that we can copy, not even partially, but both models are worth studying because of the basic dynamic we must consider here.

Why, for example, is the European Economic Community heading toward a form of confederation

with some delegation of powers and limitations on sovereignty, while the Nordic Council, made up of five countries – I won't say Scandinavian because the Scandinavian countries are four plus Finland – here, we have no positive power? This is an entirely different model, one which, it must be acknowledged, also has its weaknesses. It is not a model insofar as it is something to be copied as such, but it does nonetheless teach us something fundamental in terms of our own undertaking, that is, that before we establish a confederation, we must be sovereign, and it is based on this step that we must decide which powers are to be shared...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Orban, we've reached...

Mr. Orban: ...and duties.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We have gone over the 10 minutes, but I believe you should conclude in the order you like.

Mr. Orban: Yes. Essentially, that's it. If I endeavour to stick with logic, I repeat: The framework of a federative State is unable to satisfy the demands of Québec society, of the Québec community, at least the majority of it and, consequently, we have to look to other models which are situated outside the framework of a federal State. The other models are those found in the framework of an interstate federalism; I gave two examples among others which are relatively accessible in that they apply to industrialized societies. There.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Orban. We now turn to the questions. Several members wish to speak. In principle, if everyone stuck to just under five minutes, it would probably mean everyone can have a turn. We'll begin with Mr. Proulx, followed by Mrs. Campbell Steer and Mrs. Pagé. Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Orban, you discuss two models in your brief, that is, the model of the EEC, the European Economic Community, and that of the Nordic Council. You provide a number of details, you don't necessarily recommend that they be transposed to Canada, but I would like you to dwell further on this matter and explain why you reject the EEC. In my view, were we to apply, for example, the model of the EEC to the Nordic Council, on that basis we would have defined sovereign States. Some details are missing, in any event, which would enable me to understand why you reject, almost out of hand, the EEC in particular.

Mr. Orban: Yes. In the brief, I mention the ambiguity surrounding the EEC. The people who

don't want to change any aspect of the current situation will say: Look how out-of-date you are. Look at the EEC, which is moving inexorably toward a manifest supranationality. There is a court of justice a number of whose decisions I studied with an expert. One chapter of the book which is about to be published is devoted to the matter. There is also a Parliament, but one which has not, until now, legislated. It has hardly legislated at all. There is an executive branch which adopts quasi laws and a body of civil servants. What we have here are the components, in the embryonic state in any event, of another State: it might be said that a new European State is about to be born. I have attended a number of international congresses and have delivered various papers recently. I have spoken to the English, the French, the Germans, and they have bluntly said: We are undoubtedly more and more aware of interdependence, of the need to limit a number of our powers. On this we agree. What we will never relinquish is our complete sovereignty. I could give you the names of important people who say this.

So, if we take the rather utopian model of an EEC combined with a federal State as the outcome of this development, I maintain that this is not the model we must choose because, in reality, the EEC is halfway between a confederation and its supranational institutions. So, yes, if we take the EEC as it now operates; no, if we say that the EEC will ultimately become a federal European State, one which, ultimately... The trend is toward a twofold State which, at some point, tends to behave like a centralized unitary State, although it is highly decentralized from an administrative standpoint. It is highly centralized as far as major political and economic decisions are concerned.

Now, with respect to the Nordic Council, a dozen or so years ago I wrote a short book which nonetheless demanded a fair amount of time, *Un modèle de souveraineté-association?* Obviously, the question mark was predominant. I never claimed that I was proposing a model that could be applied here.

Honestly, on the basis of the experience, I must say that I concluded that it is an interesting model but one which is too weak because unanimity must be achieved on all matters. Each State - this has not changed, although I thought it was changing - each State preserves its complete sovereignty. The partners consult each other, collaborate, establish commissions. It is apparent that there is a sort of Parliament which is really not a Parliament at all, there is a council of ministers, widespread consultation, but when all is said and done, each member is responsible for its own decisions. The rule of unanimity prevails. In this regard, we are talking about a confederation in the strictest sense.

In my view, this is a bit too much. There

are, nonetheless, fields in which powers must be shared. There are domains in which majority rule must prevail, although this will be fairly hard to clarify. Insofar as principles are concerned, it may be said that the principle of complete sovereignty is entirely different from what we observe in the EEC.

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

Mr. Orban: I beg your pardon?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I was giving the floor to Mrs. Campbell Steer for another question, because the five minutes were up.

Mr. Orban: Fine.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Madam.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Orban, I would like to continue somewhat in the same vein as Mr. Proulx. You advocate a type of economic and political association between Canada and Québec which at times resembles the EEC and, at other times, the Nordic Council.

Both proposals respecting association are based on the sovereignty of Québec. If I understand rightly, you are saying that this is possible even though it is not, in your view, realistic that the rest of Canada not react negatively. The ASDEQ told us that negative reactions may carry an unnecessarily high price for sovereignty.

On page 5, you give me the impression that the reason for which, or one of the reasons for which you suggested this is that you think that if we cannot thoroughly alter the current federal Constitution there is hardly any other alternative. One such alternative would be for Québec to put the central government before a fait accompli and only negotiate with Ottawa.

Yesterday, we heard Dr. Courchene from Queen's University. He suggested that we should perhaps give all powers to all five regions. He suggested five regions. If the regions don't want to exercise the powers, then they will be returned to the federal government. In his opinion, doing so would perhaps be in the interests of the West and perhaps, later on, in the interests of British Columbia because, in several years, they, too, will have to deal with a distinct society which is different from the rest of Canada.

Do you think that this idea, before we make a final gesture, of making a gesture in favour of sovereignty, which may be costly, do you think that Dr. Courchene's idea may be valid?

Mr. Orban: I must say that I reason in a highly practical, immediate manner. Perhaps I am

mistaken in this, but what is most important is the future of Québec. If the other provinces wish to group together in regions and demand all or part of various powers, we can negotiate, agreed, but as for priorities, Québec's status comes first.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: It is because of the ASDEQ brief that I wanted to discuss the matter with you. In the brief, they said that perhaps the price we would have to pay would be higher than it should be. As both of your suggestions are predicated on sovereignty, I said to myself: Could Dr. Courchene's idea be valid under the circumstances, especially for us?

Mr. Orban: Yes. I think that the weakness, and I understand it because people may be afraid of it, is that at some point, even under Mr. Dion's proposed confederation, we must not beat about the bush. At some point, if we are talking about confederation, we simply must... To this end, it is sufficient to study all of the confederations which have operated in the world to realize that at some point, it is necessary to be sovereign. I could read you the section of the United States Constitution because the U.S. is indeed a noteworthy example in this regard. The United States is a confederation. It consisted of sovereign, independent States which decided at some point to associate, for military reasons, especially at that time.
(3:30 p.m.)

That is my conclusion. Perhaps I waited a long time to reach this verdict, because we do have to come to a conclusion at some point. I have come to the conclusion that if we truly wish to negotiate something valid, we must start with Québec's sovereignty and, I repeat, if we can achieve the sovereignty of the other regions, so much the better. We can attempt an experience similar to that of the Nordic countries, although I am a bit skeptical. As for Québec, I believe that there is a fairly significant force which will manifest itself, but there is also a powerful force apparent in the other regions of the country. That is the observation I can make.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now turn to Mrs. Pagé, followed by Mr. Beaudry and Mr. Assad.

Mrs. Pagé: Good afternoon, Mr. Orban. I must say that I read your brief with considerable pleasure because I had the impression that I learned something, because not many witnesses have spoken about the Nordic Council. Much has been said about the European Economic Community, but little about this institution involving the Scandinavian countries. It was very intellectually satisfying to learn something when I read your brief. I also found it interesting to note that, when you mention on page 4 of your brief - and I think this is important to clarify debate - if

English Canada occasionally finds it hard to satisfy Québec's aspirations, it is not out of bad faith, but really because of the federal system itself, of the dynamic of a federal regime, and I feel that these are factors which have perhaps not been sufficiently emphasized during our discussion.

As you have talked about the Nordic Council, I have two questions to ask you. First, do you think that Québec can avoid initially declaring its independence or sovereignty before it establishes a new model since you remind us, among other things, that Norway had to clarify its status before joining the Nordic Council? Can Québec avoid declaring its independence or sovereignty? Have you thought about how Québec should proceed? First question.

Mr. Orban: Yes.

Mrs. Pagé: A second question, which I had not anticipated, but it's your answer to Mr. Proulx that has drawn my attention: You have told us that one of the weaknesses of the Nordic Council is the rule of unanimity. However, in the event there were just two partners, Canada and Québec, how can we escape the rule of unanimity, because if we agree on something else, the numerical majority would prevail, which would necessarily put Québec in a position of inferiority in relation to its other partner? I would like you to clarify the matter when there are only two partners in the model of association.

Mr. Orban: Fine. Obviously, one point, a sensitive one especially if we are looking at the long term, is how to extricate ourselves from the ascendancy a federal State exercises over Québec. When we talk about sovereignty, this means that Québec laws prevail within its territory. A declaration in this respect may be made, even if it means suspending it, there may be a one or two-year moratorium, to allow time to negotiate a formula for associating in a number of fields. If that doesn't work, we must be prepared to go it alone. I think it takes a great deal of courage to say so, although there is a good chance that a number of agreements will be possible.

In strictly legal terms, this is a point that bothers me, especially in light of the general mentality now prevailing, which is a conservative mentality where people are afraid to leap into the unknown, but I believe that any advance in history is the result of small leaps into the void which are in no way revolutionary.

Mrs. Pagé: What a pleasure it is to listen to you, Sir. Say that again: all progress is achieved by small leaps into the void. I find that very refreshing.

Mr. Orban: I'm trying to understand. You

know, it takes courage to talk like that, but I must say that I am not afraid of a fact because it is based on numerous facts that I have observed. As we are talking about the Nordic countries, once again I am not saying that this is a model, but consider the rupture, if I may put it thus, in political and economic terms, that occurred in 1905 between Norway and Sweden. Norway had always been culturally and economically dominated by Sweden.

I have met many Norwegians. Not one has claimed that Norway's attainment of sovereignty has not contributed enormously to the country's development, a small country with 4 million inhabitants which, incidentally, is one of the most interesting on the planet because of its social democracy and its resources, the manner in which it develops its resources. How did they proceed? This somewhat resembles what has happened in Québec and I hope that the dissension we have observed among Quebecers will come to an end. We have seen this dissension all through Québec's history. Take Honoré Mercier, the 1867 Constitution, or Antoine-Aimé Dorion, who came up against the centralizers, already at that time. This dissension existed between the parties and it is hard to see how things crystallized at one point. But they did so, several years before the attainment of sovereignty.

That is to say, at some point, both parties joined forces and decided, through the legislative route, to attain their independence. Things happen fairly quickly in these cases. The Swedes said: Yes, but that's not how things are done. We must hold a referendum. So, here it's Sweden which demanded that a referendum be held. There were threats. Armed intervention. But the Swedes were divided. There were people, especially on the Left, but really it's not a question of Left or Right, because ultimately, the matter was above party politics. People finally forded the river together, although it meant reviving various divisions afterward. The Swedes were divided; there were foreign powers, especially Great Britain and Germany that said: Yes, but there mustn't be any trouble. This is a region in which we have economic and strategic interests.

So, everything had to be done in a peaceful manner. There was a consensus because of foreign pressure, because of internal pressure in Sweden. Above all, above all, because of the virtual unanimity at one point among the Swedes. A referendum was held. As a result, over 95% of the people voted in favour of sovereignty, then a number of agreements were negotiated, all within a year. Obviously, here it would take more time because there is the matter of agreements which we must try to settle together. However, in my view, in one year we should be able to sign the most important agreements to be included in a treaty and a treaty into which could be incorporated a constitution, all subject to a referendum.

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

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Orban, we're at the heart of the matter. I think that everybody is dodging the issue and because we're here we'll keep on talking about it. Fine. You have told us, especially in your brief, that you wanted to focus on something based on the Nordic Council. This is what you say on page 17 of your brief. You have also indicated, during the questions which preceded, that if we talk, for example, about a Nordic Council, we are talking about a sovereignty under which powers are subsequently delegated to the Nordic Council.

However, on page 18 of your brief you indicate your own choice. You say: "We personally are largely in favour of a new agreement with the rest of the country based on a respect for the principles spelled out earlier". (translation)

Mr. Orban: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: And you add: "Were such an operation doomed to failure in terms of its essential components, Québec would then have only two choices: resign itself to remaining in a political system in which it would increasingly become a minority, or separate from the rest of the country while negotiating some sort of minimal *modus vivendi*" (translation). If I follow your reasoning and you say, if I have understood correctly, that the system you prefer is that of the Nordic Council; you are telling us, in other words: Let's sit down with Canada and discuss on what basis Québec might seek these powers, and if these discussions fail, then you'll reach a decision, because either you are doomed to remaining a minority in a country with 10 provinces where you're unhappy, or you separate. According to page 18, that is your personal choice. So, first you say to us: Sit down and try to reach an agreement. That's your first choice. Have I understood what I read?

Mr. Orban: Yes, but this transitional phase is a sensitive matter. I would say – and this is a question to be discussed – that the ideal procedure, especially if we want decisions that transcend the political parties, would be a referendum, but I might add that this is entirely hypothetical. Are you in favour of Québec's sovereignty and possible association with Canada?

Mr. Beaudry: So we come back to sovereignty-association.

Mr. Orban: Do you mind if I finish...

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, yes.

Mr. Orban: ...because I really must finish.

Mr. Beaudry: I beg your pardon.

Mr. Orban: Second, the Assembly declares sovereignty. I know that this is audacious. But sovereignty would only come into force after one year, during which we would discuss a broad range of agreements which could be included in a treaty. Then, how can I say it, one year later there would be a referendum dealing with the basic facets of the treaty and a new Québec constitution.

Mr. Beaudry: What you are suggesting here is somewhat different from what you said in your brief.

Mr. Orban: No, no, because my idea is that what we must seek in these agreements, as far as possible, is to safeguard the essential elements of a common market.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, yes.

Mr. Orban: That is to say, the free movement of goods, persons, capital and services, which implies a minimum number of common institutions.

Mr. Beaudry: And negotiations.

Mr. Orban: Yes. How will these common institutions operate? That's another matter. I tend to favour parity, except perhaps with regard to the currency. There.

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

Mr. Assad: To pursue what Mr. Beaudry was saying, you take the Nordic countries as an example, you look at the procedure they followed, Norway and Sweden, where 90% or 95% - you say 90% in your brief - opted for sovereignty. First, you propose a referendum with association, to establish, if you will, a framework to be discussed with the rest of Canada. Indeed, at that point, nobody can accurately predict the outcome. I don't believe that we'd reach 90%. Fairly important divergences would appear. Regardless, if we managed... In your view, the rest of the country, the other provinces except Québec and the territories would form a sort of common front, on the basis of which there would be a series of negotiations on the main points, with a view to achieving, as you mention here, integration, cooperation, association and all the terms which are necessary.

If I understand correctly, failing agreement with this common front involving the rest of the country on the most important points related to association and cooperation, which is essential, a second referendum would be held.
(3:45 p.m.)

Mr. Orban: No, the underlying idea is that

the first referendum was... We have to make up our minds once and for all if we want to be a sovereign State, unless, I repeat, we take a year or slightly more before it comes into effect. It will be applied regardless of the nature of the agreements. I would like to see as many agreements as possible, in any event a minimum number of agreements which would ensure the functioning of a Canadian common market. That's it.

Let us say, in the most negative scenario, which strikes me as entirely improbable given various convergent interests, that strong interdependence with the rest of the country was maintained. In this scenario, the most pessimistic - and I reiterate that it strikes me as entirely improbable - Québec would go it alone and apply the referenda, the... how should I say, the outcomes of the referenda. Ideally, of course, we have a series of agreements whose density cannot be specified at the present time because it is a matter for negotiation.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Turgeon, followed by Mr. Nicolet, who will be the last member of the group to speak.

Mr. Turgeon: That's very interesting. That's what is so dizzying, the small leap into the void. So, a referendum. If it is positive, a declaration of sovereignty within one year. In the meantime, we negotiate as many questions as possible and what has been negotiated is incorporated into treaties between two sovereign States.

How will we go about it, Mr. Orban, from now on, to convince English Canada that it is in its interests to proceed thus? What language should we use from now on?

Mr. Orban: I have been working with English-speaking colleagues now for a long time. I recall that over 10 years ago, scarcely anything was said about it, but there was a sort of university commission which brought together various professors from the Université de Montréal, Laval, York, Queen's and other universities in Western Canada, and we examined four models. One was total sovereignty, another sovereignty-association, federalism with the status quo, and, between the two, what I would call a modified federalism about which very little was said. One thing that struck me at that time when discussing with English speakers like Smiley, for example, was that they were obviously in favour of a modified federalism, certainly not sovereignty-association, and even less, total sovereignty. However, even such cautious, conservative individuals as Smiley - I only mention him because there were many others like him - even he, like many other Americans said: If Québec becomes a sovereign State - it was hard for him to speak French but he said - well, this will be a fait accompli and we'll have to

negotiate.

The fact that we seriously examined the four scenarios is, all the same, revealing, and this was a dozen years ago. This was an extensive research project which resulted in a two or three-volume publication. Three volumes. We published a book on procedures for constitutional amendment.

All this by way of saying that it will perhaps take a shock to break the log jam, to provoke a thaw, and declaring sovereignty would be just such a shock.

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

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a brief comment, Mr. Orban. Yesterday, we heard a witness who defended the European Economic Community and who compared the Nordic Council and the EEC. Ultimately, he concluded as follows: Why defend a model, the Nordic Council, which doesn't work, compared with one that is changing rapidly and growing vigorously. To prove his point, he obviously cited the positions currently adopted by Norway and Denmark. I'd like you to comment briefly on this matter.

Mr. Orban: Between the time I wrote *Un modèle de souveraineté-association: le Conseil nordique* and the present, I must confess that a number of major changes occurred, or more precisely, that no change took place. What I mean is that, in the end, none of the five Nordic countries wished to sacrifice one tiny shred of its sovereignty. This is what the reports of the Nordic Council reveal. What is happening? The member countries harmonize their legislation, they consult each other, but there is no supranational agency. There is not even a supranational Parliament because it is the delegates from each of the countries involved who meet, then they go back to their respective countries. In this perspective, it is rather disappointing for anyone who might think that a Nordic State had been created, for example.

In this perspective, yes. However, I do not share my colleague's analysis of the European Economic Community because, once again, he is among those who think that it is moving toward a supranational European State. I think it would be easy to show that this is not what is happening at all. What is happening is not as radical, not as theoretical. As you know, there's an enormous gap between theory and practice. It's often in between. The European Economic Community falls between a confederation and certain facets of supranationality which, to some extent, are, I concur, part of a State. But between that and a State with full capacity to exercise its powers, jurisdiction over its jurisdictions, there is a wide margin which, in my humble opinion, cannot be

spanned. In any event, one thing is certain, the gap has not been spanned. On this point, I am categorical.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Orban.

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

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Orban, I would like to welcome you to the deliberations of the Commission and thank you for accepting our invitation to appear as an expert to enlighten us further on the Commission's mandate.

I would like to return to a number of questions put to you because it is perhaps I who have not understood. I would like you to elaborate further. Did I understand correctly when you said you were suggesting adopting a confederal model?

Mr. Orban: Yes, but we must agree on the meaning of "confederal".

Mrs. Pelchat: No, up to that point, everything's fine.

Mr. Orban: Yes.

Mrs. Pelchat: The procedure to follow in order to arrive at a confederal model would, first and foremost, be to make a unilateral declaration of sovereignty.

Mr. Orban: Yes, in my view we no longer have a choice.

Mrs. Pelchat: Fine. So...

Mr. Orban: Even if we're afraid, we no longer have a choice.

Mrs. Pelchat: ...Québec would become an independent State.

Mr. Orban: Yes, sovereign.

Mrs. Pelchat: Do you think there's a difference between "independent" and "sovereign"?

Mr. Orban: In Article II of the Constitution, the Americans put them on the same footing. They say: A sovereign and independent State.

Mrs. Pelchat: A number of experts who have appeared before the Commission have clearly stated that a sovereign State and an independent State were the same thing and that the concept of sovereignty-association as such did not exist.

Mr. Orban: Yes, that's right. That's right.

Mrs. Pelchat: You agree with that?

Mr. Orban: Yes, yes.

Mrs. Pelchat: OK. Now, how would we go about declaring our sovereignty? First, how could we go about it under the current system, as you say that the current system cannot function? We would have to make the declaration of sovereignty through a referendum in order for it to be legitimate.

Mr. Orban: The first step would be the referendum, addressed to all Quebecers, with a clear question or two questions, two choices. The second step would be a declaration transcending both parties, which endorses or states before Parliament the people's decision.

Mrs. Pelchat: Are you not afraid that a unilateral declaration of sovereignty might hinder future negotiations with the federal State or other States likely to become members of this new confederation, that is, the other provinces?

Mr. Orban: That would push them up against the wall. Because the other regions have many common interests, whether they like it or not they would be compelled to negotiate a number of things, especially if we want to achieve, how might I put it, a common market with the free movement of goods, persons, capital and services. We are compelled to negotiate or else we'll have to reject this model.

Mrs. Pelchat: Why do you say they are compelled to negotiate? On page 16, you clearly point out that it is in the interests of the federal State and the other provinces to negotiate a common market with Québec, or even more. I would like you to explain what makes you state that it is as much if not more in their interests to establish a common market.

Mr. Orban: If not more, because I think that we are becoming increasingly aware that Québec's economic development lies on a north-south axis, not an east-west axis, although the latter is very important. In the long run, given free trade, I believe that we cannot escape this change, just like Norway and Sweden. The main axis is not the east-west axis, it is, increasingly, centred on the European Economic Community, especially Great Britain, France and Germany.

Mrs. Pelchat: Professor Orban, I'm having trouble understanding the difference between a unilateral declaration of sovereignty and what you say on page 18, that is, resigning ourselves to a political system should the other provinces not accept the confederal system. "Québec would then have only two choices: resign itself to remaining

in a political system in which it would increasingly become a minority, or separate from the rest of the country while negotiating some sort of minimal *modus vivendi*" (translation). How, if we fail to negotiate a confederal system with the other provinces, could we continue after separating, although I see no difference between becoming an independent State and becoming a State separated from the other provinces, how could we then negotiate some sort of minimal *modus vivendi*?

Mr. Orban: The minimum covers, for instance, some aspects of a common market. It also encompasses assets and liabilities. Because everyone on the other side is interested in sharing debt, at least. This would be the strict minimum. As for the maximum, I'm coming to that, this would cover the basic agreements in a treaty, which doesn't exclude other series of agreements.

Mrs. Pelchat: Don't you see any other way of establishing a confederal system without proceeding, before anything else, with a unilateral declaration of independence?

Mr. Orban: I think... I'm not especially partial to this procedure because it unquestionably entails risks. However, I fail to see how we can function in terms of a thorough transformation and with such a far-reaching demand. I do not see how we can achieve this within a federal State, given the constitutional amending formula...

Mrs. Pelchat: Yes, but the framework will stay the same, Professor Orban. The negotiating framework will stay the same.

Mr. Orban: No, it won't. We have already begun to function outside this framework, as the current Québec government has decided to operate only on a bilateral basis. If we maintain these positions, we have set a very narrow course.

Mrs. Pelchat: But you do agree with me that to change the federal system into a confederal one, we will at least need the consent of the provinces.

Mr. Orban: No. The main question is to find out what Québec wants. As for the rest, I don't think it directly concerns us, even if we hope that the other provinces will agree and we are able to establish a common market. So, by and large, the most basic elements which now characterize the economic system would persist, except that the political superstructure would be very different. We must not overlook it, because, once again, the ascendancy of the federal State over Québec's territory would no longer be obtained. In other words, the Québec National Assembly would be sovereign. However, it is

obvious that it would normally sacrifice a portion of its powers. It will delegate part of its powers. This is where we touch upon the interstate aspect of federalism.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Orban.

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

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Orban, I would like to broach two questions in the 10 minutes available to us. The first deals with the European Economic Community; in the second, I would like to come back to Confederation.

First, you repeat an argument advanced by many federalists, starting with Prime Minister Mulroney – he has often repeated it – which goes as follows: The European Economic Community is moving rapidly toward a United States of Europe. This is an idea which appeared during the 19th century: Victor Hugo believed in a United States of Europe. The idea is not new but it is irreversible. The European Economic Community is moving towards a United States of Europe, a European State with a European government, a European Parliament which enjoys genuine powers to legislate. That is what Mr. Mulroney has been telling us. That is what we're moving toward. What you are telling us is that the true situation is something else again. The United States of Europe has yet to be born. Consequently, we're engaging in political fiction. We're engaging in political fiction. We're imagining things and imagining that Europe is moving in a direction we'd like it to move in. But this is far from certain. Basically, what you are saying is, and I quote: "In this perspective, a superficial mind will perceive Québec as moving against the tide of change". So, in your view, Mr. Mulroney would seem to be a superficial mind...

(4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Orban: On that point, yes.

Mr. Brassard: On that point, yes. You are categorical when you say that the European Economic Community is not a federal State. We're still a long way from a federal State. The EEC is still a confederation and even if there is a dynamic, even if there is change, there is no way of telling that it will, over the short term, become a federal State.

Mr. Orban: Certainly, I mean I agree entirely with what you are saying.

Mr. Brassard: Consequently, it is fallacious to maintain that, by hoping for Québec's sovereignty, we are going to associate economically with the rest of Canada. It is misleading to claim that we are going against the tide and that we are moving against change in the modern world. Voilà!

Mr. Orban: Yes.

Mr. Brassard: We agree on this?

Mr. Orban: Absolutely.

Mr. Brassard: Good, now I'd like to return to what Mrs. Pelchat said earlier. What I have understood with regard to your comments on confederation is that confederation is impossible without the sovereignty of the member states.

Mr. Orban: Yes, at the outset.

Mr. Brassard: The basis for a confederation is that the member States are sovereign political entities which enjoy sovereignty. We must be clear on this because as soon as the States are not sovereign, the member States are not sovereign and fully sovereign, you no longer have a confederation. We can no longer speak of a confederation at this point, and this strikes me as essential. What you are saying is, that to achieve a confederation between Québec and Canada, the desirable objective, Quebecers must first decide to make Québec a sovereign State. This is a precondition, an inevitable starting point.

Mr. Orban: Yes.

Mr. Brassard: We must be clear on this. That is what you are saying.

Mr. Orban: Yes.

Mr. Brassard: When you talk about a declaration of sovereignty following a referendum – I hope I understand you on this – following a decision reached by a majority of Quebecers, that doesn't mean that the declaration of sovereignty comes into effect?

Mr. Orban: No.

Mr. Brassard: That doesn't mean that Québec immediately becomes a sovereign, independent State?

Mr. Orban: No, there's an interim...

Mr. Brassard: There's an interim...

Mr. Orban: ...before applying it.

Mr. Brassard: There's an interim period, one year, 18 months, let's say, during which to negotiate with the other partner, the other part of this confederation, and negotiate what is to be pooled and the institutions which are to be established. I would like you to talk about this matter. What is the basic difference between confederal institutions and federal institutions? I think there is a great deal of misunderstanding and

confusion over this question.

Mr. Orban: Obviously there is no federal State in a confederation, no element which transcends the other States. A confederation is made up of sovereign entities which decide to pool a number of powers. At some point, the confederation is not a true confederation because it has been decided to jointly exercise a number of powers with respect to foreign policy and all matters related to major economic decisions, among others, that is, those powers likely, for example, to ensure a common market.

In a confederation, each State maintains its sovereignty and may leave the confederation. This is not the situation in a federal State where there is a constitution. Few constitutions provide for a right to secede. Even though such a right is enshrined in the Soviet constitution, we have seen, for all intents and purposes, what the result is. Fortunately, we're not in the Soviet Union. It is important to mention here that the common institutions have certain powers. They may even have sufficient powers, but they are freely granted and are not attributed irrevocably because they are delegated. The very principle of delegation means that, at some point, the powers in question may be withdrawn.

Essentially, a confederation is built on a pact, a treaty, while, I repeat, a federal State hinges on a constitution, a constitution which is extremely hard to change. Look at the American Constitution, it is virtually impossible to change. That is why there are so many informal amendments which, ultimately, have created another constitution alongside the Constitution drawn up in 1789. It is extremely hard... In a confederation, members may secede even though, in practice, this is occasionally hard to do. When the States are confederated and there are many economic links, there are so many links that it is virtually impossible to secede from the confederation. I am thinking, for example, of the European Economic Community in which, despite the threats of secession, all of the States stay put because they have more advantages than disadvantages in this system.

Mr. Brassard: You know...

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

Mr. Brassard: Just a very brief question. Since 1967, since Mr. Lévesque left the Liberal Party, sovereignty-association has been widely discussed. For a long time, sovereignty-association was the central option of the Parti québécois. I imagine you have looked at it. Is not sovereignty-association basically a form of confederation? In your view, is there a difference between what Mr. Lévesque called sovereignty-association and a confederation?

Mr. Orban: Yes. If we rewrite history, when we refer to Mr. Lévesque, for whom I have a great deal of respect, when he invented that concept, I think that he wanted at all costs to show us that Québec wanted its sovereignty. At the same time, he was very much aware of the interdependence between Québec and Canada and other countries around the world. The notion of association was part and parcel of a desire for openness which is extremely noteworthy and progressive, knowing Mr. Lévesque.

Now, in terms of concepts, it is obvious that sovereignty-association is not one. Basically, what Mr. Lévesque wanted, if I correctly understand his thinking — I do think I have studied it sufficiently — is a confederation, but a confederation of the sort we have just defined, because we also talk about the Canadian confederation and the Swiss confederation, but they really aren't confederations. When we say "confederation", we must agree on the terms. We must talk about a State when that is what we mean, and perhaps return to the German concept of a *Staten Bund*, or association of States. *Staten Bund* means State, an association of sovereign States. That is what a confederation is. We must understand each other on this point. Once we say "sovereign" we no longer have a choice, I beg your pardon, but we no longer have a choice.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Is that alright, Mr. Brassard? Mrs. Pelchat had two minutes left, so take them.

Mrs. Pelchat: Mr. Orban, I would like to add with regard to the procedure and the model that you are suggesting that I agree entirely with you. Perhaps where our viewpoints diverge somewhat is on the method...

Mr. Orban: Yes.

Mrs. Pelchat: ...how can we go about it? I do appreciate the openness of my colleague, the MNA from Lac-Saint-Jean, when he says that there would be a waiting period between the application of the outcome of the referendum and the attainment of sovereignty as such. In this respect, his viewpoint coincides with that of his former colleague, Verchères MNA Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, who came here to tell us essentially the same thing as you have, although he is not an expert as such. Thank you. This is something to think about.

Mr. Orban: Obviously...

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Orban.

Mr. Orban: ...if I may be allowed to add something. When I wrote my brief, I did so quickly. I was about to go overseas and it was

after reflecting that I read the questionnaire and said to myself: There will be precise questions which must be answered. I hesitated a great deal to do so because I like to stay on a strictly scientific footing. However, if I am asked to take a stand and be logical in relation to what I said about the federal State, a State under state control, whether you like it or not I say that we will not escape a declaration of sovereignty followed, I think, by numerous agreements on cooperation with the rest of the country, with an interim period to permit negotiations on all of these questions. This is the shock that should unblock the overall process.

I am convinced that this will work. But it will work... I would like to reiterate - it's a shame to say so, it's so elementary - we must absolutely ford the river by casting aside partisan divisions. After, we can dwell on these divisions. But we must ford the river or we're lost. This is tragic, but I am aware of the seriousness of the situation. If we are not united, we will not ford the river and I believe that we'll never ford the river.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Orban. Thank you for answering our questions. I would like to remind the audience that this is a parliamentary commission, that members of the audience are not allowed to applaud within the Parliament. I would appreciate your complying with this rule.

Thank you, Mr. Orban. We will now hear the Comité de coordination sur la place des communautés ethniques et raciales.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:10 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:13 p.m.)

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

I would like to ask the Commission members to please take their seats so that we can hear the representatives of the Comité de coordination sur la place des communautés ethniques et raciales. Mrs. Houda-Pepin, among others, will make the presentation. Before you begin, would you please introduce your colleagues. You will then have five minutes for the general presentation. You now have the floor, Madam.

Comité de coordination sur la place des communautés ethniques et raciales

Mr. Myrtil (Maxime): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the Comité de coordination sur la place des communautés ethniques et raciales is a coalition of 80 organizations. Before the Commission, it is represented by Mrs. Fatima Houda-Pepin, president of the Centre Maghrebien de recherche et

d'information; Mr. Jérôme Di Giovanni, president of the Association multiethnique des personnes handicapées du Québec; Mrs. Flora Fernandez, of the Réseau provincial des femmes des communautés culturelles du Québec; Mr. Carlos De Jesus, founding member of the Association des professionnels et entrepreneurs portugais du Québec and editor of the newspaper *La Voix du Portugal*; and myself, Maxime Myrtil, director of the Carrefour multiethnique de Ville Saint-Laurent.

Mrs. Fatima Houda-Pepin and Mr. Jérôme Di Giovanni are the spokespersons for our committee. They will take turns presenting the brief and will answer the questions of the commission members. I now give the floor to Mrs. Houda-Pepin.

Mrs. Houda-Pepin (Fatima): Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chairman. On December 10, 1986, by a unanimous vote in the National Assembly, the Québec government made a declaration on interethnic and interracial relations and thereby recognized the demographic importance and the economic, social and cultural contribution of Quebecers from ethnic and racial minorities.

In the wake of the recent constitutional debate, around 40 cultural community organizations met on July 21, 1991 to express their desire to actively participate in the important process of reflection on the future of our society. During this meeting, the participants discussed the place of ethnic and racial minorities in Québec society and their role in defining Québec's political and constitutional future. They decided to set up a coordinating committee whose mandate would be to facilitate joint group action and to organize a day of reflection, in which 120 representatives of community and institutional organizations participated on November 3, 1990.

As of their first meetings, the members of the coordinating committee reached a consensus on four points: First, federalism, as implemented before, during and after Meech Lake, has had its day, and we believe that there is an urgent need to break the constitutional status quo that is poisoning federal-provincial relations and deeply affecting the social climate.

Second, the members of the coordinating committee recognize Québec's distinctive character and its right to self-determination. This right was exercised during the 1980 Referendum. It is now being exercised through this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. These two experiences, the Referendum and the Bélanger-Campeau commission, are very reassuring with regard to Québec's ability to define its future while respecting democracy, freedom of expression and basic rights. This, however, should not allow us to forget that the cultural communities, which represent a large segment of the population, are not adequately represented on the Bélanger-Campeau commission.

Third, Quebecers from ethnic and racial

minorities are not a homogeneous group, ideologically speaking. Like the majority, they embrace a wide range of views. They haven't reached a consensus on a particular political option, but they do agree on the need for a fair and equitable blueprint for society. We want a society that is free of discrimination and racism, where minorities can participate, as full citizens, in the development of society. We are also concerned about the exclusion and marginalization of other underprivileged groups: in particular, young people, the poor, women, etc. We are deeply concerned about equal employment opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities and about the presence and visibility of these minorities at all decision-making levels.

Fourth, we have noted, unfortunately, that Québec's identity, as defined by most public opinion leaders and the general public, does not include ethnic and racial minorities. Although Québec society has evolved considerably over the past three decades, the concept of Québec's identity is still the product of a limited frame of reference and is somewhat exclusive. Even today, some opinion-makers refer to Québec as a homogeneous society and talk about immigration as if it were something new. As for the coordinating committee, we believe that ethnic and racial minorities are an integral part of Québec society and that they constitute one of its basic features.

Québec is currently a pluralistic Francophone society and it will continue to be so in the future. It is important to officially recognize Québec's pluralistic character by taking its intercultural, interracial and interconfessional nature into account.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I don't want to interrupt you, Madam, but you're going to use up all the time allotted to your presentation unless, perhaps, you hurry up and present your recommendations or conclusion.

Mrs. Houde-Pepin: Very well. I will now give the floor to Mr. Jérôme Di Giovanni, who will continue.

Mr. Di Giovanni (Jérôme): It is important to understand that, while Québec society is justified in defining itself to its immigrants as a host society, it must be said that once these immigrants, these newcomers have become citizens or have lived here for several generations, it should stop defining itself to them in these terms. Québec, Québec society, is also our society. We work here, take part in it, and ensure its development.

It is important to understand how we define the distinctive character of Québec society, which, in our opinion, is a multiethnic, multiracial and multiconfessional society, where people live in French. And Québec culture, which is a

specific culture in itself, is a product of this distinctive character. Succeeding generations of immigrants are responsible for this important contribution, and it also explains why Québec culture is the way it is.

We therefore recommend that the Bélanger-Campeau commission recognize the specific and distinctive character of Québec society and ensure that ethnic and racial minorities, that Quebecers who belong to ethnic and racial minorities, are recognized by all constitutional proposals; in other words, that they have the right to participate in the decision-making process and in all matters of constitutional importance. When this distinctive character is not recognized, we often find, unfortunately, that Quebecers from ethnic and racial minorities are asked to sit on ethnic advisory committees. And the make-up of your commission, Mr. Chairman, is a glaring example of this. None of its members represent Québec's ethnic and racial minorities.

We would like to present four proposals to ensure equality in a democratic Québec society through the observance of these differences.

First, fundamental economic and social rights should be enshrined in all constitutional proposals.

Second, the recognition of the multiethnic, multiracial and multiconfessional nature of Québec society should be enshrined in all constitutional proposals. This is very important to us.

Third, the responsibilities of the different levels of government, both provincial and municipal, should be identified, and all public and private organizations should be obliged, under the Constitution, to fight, to refrain from discrimination on the basis of race, skin colour, religion, or ethnic and national origin.

Fourth, it is extremely important for us and for all democratic societies to criminalize all racist acts and hate propaganda aimed at any member of society.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having welcomed us here. We are ready to answer your questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The first speaker will be someone who, obviously, does not belong to an ethnic or cultural minority, since he is a member of this commission. Mr. Maciocia.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank you, Mrs. Houde-Pepin, and the members of your committee for appearing before the Commission to present the views of the Comité de coordination sur la place des communautés ethniques et raciales. Thank you very much.

My first question. In your brief, you express your desire for the full and harmonious

integration of cultural communities into Québec life. I agree with you entirely.

My question is: How do you think that this integration can best be achieved? And, secondly, do you think that Québec currently has the tools needed to carry out this task properly?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: The first part... To respond to Mr. Bélanger's comments, we recognize that Mr. Maciocia is a member of a cultural community, and we are proud of the fact that a cultural community member is in the position he is. We feel that Mr. Maciocia represents his party and is bound by the party line, while the members of the various cultural communities support a wide range of parties. And when we say that we would like to have been adequately represented, we mean that cultural communities should have been represented by people who are not affiliated with political parties. This in no way takes away from the qualities and competence of Mr. Maciocia. Excuse me, I've forgotten the first part of your question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): He'll be pleased to know, mind you, that you appreciate his qualities.

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: Of course. We're always pleased, Mr. Chairman... we always consider it an asset when a member of a minority is present and visible in the places where decisions are made.

Mr. Maciocia: The first part of my question was: How do you think that this integration can best be achieved?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: All right.

Mr. Maciocia: Do you think that Québec currently has the tools needed to attain this objective?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: We think that the Québec government already has powers that could make it possible to integrate cultural communities within these jurisdictions. When we talk about Québec's identity, it is not something that should be defined in Ottawa. It should be defined here, in Québec. This is a task that we should do together, as a society, so as to learn to recognize our distinctive character as a collective asset. Pluralism is therefore the second variable that should always be associated with the French fact. We are still not ready for this. We're prepared to promote a Francophone Québec, but not everyone is ready to promote a pluralistic Québec.

In the last hours of Meech Lake, when it was dying, a certain number of Québec businesspeople came to its defence: Mr. Castonguay, among others. I can say that the day people like Mr. Castonguay or bodies like

the Bélanger-Campeau Commission work toward integration, integration will be possible. Integration efforts will be on the right track.

Now, the second issue: powers. As far as powers are concerned, there is an Immigration department which has certain powers and can do a number of things within its jurisdiction. I agree that we would have more means and integrate people more effectively if we had complete control of these powers and of the resources related to their exercise.

Mr. Maciocia: Precisely, Mrs. Pepin. I understand. Since time is running short, may I interrupt you briefly?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: Of course. You're entitled to do so.

Mr. Maciocia: You know very well that Québec, regardless of its situation, whether inside or outside the Federation, has the means and power to integrate immigrants, especially as a result of the new immigration agreement which it signed very recently with the federal government. Therefore, regardless of its constitutional situation, so to speak, Québec has the resources it needs to integrate immigrants into Québec life.

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: But it wouldn't hurt to have more powers...

Mr. Maciocia: Certainly. Certainly.

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: ...to have more latitude, let's say, and to manage this integration. I'd say that Québec has some control over the selection of immigrants, for example, but I wouldn't say that we have a policy for integrating them. We still have to formulate an integration policy, and I hope that this is one of the projects that will be carried out during this mandate. (4.30 p.m.)

Mr. Maciocia: Certainly, Madam.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is up, Mr. Maciocia. Five minutes. Already up. We will now hear from Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, of course, advocate the intercultural vision that you describe in your brief. I have always thought that there is perhaps only one way to be a French Canadian, but 100 ways to be a Quebecer, and you have proven this here today. Nevertheless, I have an important question. You said that you were pleased to see members of ethnic minorities in positions of power, as in the case of Mr. Maciocia. And I asked myself the following question: When does a person cease to be a member of an ethnic minority? Can a person belong to an ethnic minority and be a

real Quebecer at the same time?

You feel, for example, that Mr. Nicolet, who is of Belgian extraction, I believe, and has lived here for a long time, Mr. Sirros, who is of Greek extraction and who sometimes takes part in the work of the Commission, and Mr. Maciocia, who is of Italian extraction, are members of the Commission. On the other hand, you don't feel, for the reasons you gave, perhaps because of party members' political allegiance... I don't know what the reason is... Perhaps, in Mr. Nicolet's case, it's because he represents his association... But when does a person cease to be a member of a racial or an ethnic minority?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: The day he starts exercising power that is proportional to the demographic importance of the group to which he belongs.

Mrs. Harel: And do you see yourself as having power?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: No, not at all. As my colleague, Mr. Di Giovanni, said, we have been asked to sit on the advisory committee. But, when it comes to decision-making, we're not in places where decisions have to be made. We sincerely believe that, if cultural communities had a representative on this Commission... I think that extremely important work would have been done.

Mrs. Harel: Mrs. Houda-Pepin, this discussion is very important to me. You say that when you occupy decision-making positions, you feel that you have power. But when a member of an ethnic or racial minority occupies such a position and exercises power, doesn't he then cease to be a member of his racial or ethnic minority? In other words, are all those... Of the six members of the Opposition who are sitting on this Commission three have a spouse who is a Quebecer by adoption and we often think about this question. When, as you wish, members of ethnic minorities exercise power, do you still see them as members of ethnic minorities? Or, at that point, have they not decided to work within the institutions of the majority and you no longer feel they belong to ethnic minorities?

Mr. Di Giovanni: Excuse me, but this can be answered in two ways. On the one hand, this is a question that Québec society must think about and resolve: How does Québec society or the Francophone majority perceive these Quebecers? Does it see them as belonging to ethnic minorities, even though they have lived here for two or three generations? This is something that people will have to think about. Ultimately, the answer must also come from Québec society, from Francophones. That's why we said...

Mrs. Harel: Mr. Di Giovanni...

Mr. Di Giovanni: ...that Québec must stop perceiving itself as a host society for these Quebecers.

Mrs. Harel: We must not only think about this question but also discuss it with others.

Mr. Di Giovanni: I agree that it must be discussed.

Mrs. Harel: It must be discussed because, if people are to participate in the institutions of the majority, they also have to stop seeing themselves as members of ethnic minorities. And the main question... There's another one. I'm so anxious to take advantage of the expertise of all of you and, in particular, of Mrs. Houda-Pepin. Isn't there a kind of schizophrenia? Because this question of identity is the central issue of almost all the briefs that have been presented to us. You want to be recognized as real Quebecers. Shouldn't Québec assert its identity first? You see, and I will conclude here, Mr. Chairman, the historic event that we are witnessing here is that the vast majority of representatives who speak languages other than French or English express their allegiance to Canada. We saw this almost all day yesterday and are seeing it again today. Eighty percent of the groups that have appeared before us and whose members are, for example, long-established Quebecers, have either criticized federalism or, in some cases, expressed their support for sovereignty. And it must be noted - I'm not blaming anyone, we just have to think about this - that the allegiance of people who speak languages other than French or English is to Canada rather than to Québec. And this is a fact. People tell me that their allegiance is to Canada first. It can also be to both. When people go to France, they're French, even though they are residents and are waiting to become citizens. When people go to Italy, they're Italian. When people come here, are they Canadian, French Canadian or Quebecers? The Commission should also try to resolve this question of identity. I would like to hear your comments on this.

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: Mrs. Harel, the fact that we're asking for recognition from the majority is not symptomatic of schizophrenia or, at least, we're not expressing our views this way. I think it's a legitimate demand.

Mrs. Harel: Mr. Chairman, society as a whole is schizophrenic. It's not you.

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: Oh! All right. Fine. Excuse me, I misunderstood. I think it's a legitimate demand that should be taken into

account. For my part, I would be terribly disappointed if we had to make the same demands 10 years from now. If people don't understand that some issues have to be settled before it's too late, things can turn out quite differently. You said: Québec has to assert its identity. I agree with you. We're saying the same thing. However, this identity has to be defined. If we're included, we'll define it with you. But if we're excluded, we'll seek refuge elsewhere. This is what has... it's the chicken and the egg. If we are real Quebecers, make room for us, and we will draw up this definition of society and of Québec's political option. As I said, and I repeat this, minorities are not necessarily opposed to independence. The proposal has to be explained. You have to explain what place they will have in this society. This is the responsibility of the majority and its institutions, because many groups are very vulnerable. Not everyone is ready psychologically to take their place when they know that some people are unwilling to make room for them. Therefore, if you can tell us that this will be achieved by the work of this Commission and by continued reflection in political circles, etc., I will be the first to rejoice. At least this will be a tangible result. But I'm telling you, Mrs. Harel, that if you want us to participate, then define Québec officially as a pluralistic Francophone society.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear from Mrs. Pagé, who will be followed by Mr. Libman and Mr. Larose.

Mrs. Pagé: This is not the first time I've had the opportunity of meeting you, so you probably won't be surprised to hear me say that I'm in favour of a pluralistic French society, that I support the kind of Québec in which you would be a member. A person is a Quebecer because he has decided to live here and take part in defining this society. In this sense, I have no problem subscribing to the vision you have presented.

Moreover, I think that many representatives of cultural communities, in particular their leaders, will soon find themselves in a critical situation where they will perhaps be asked to take part in defining a political proposal. As leaders, they have come not to contest but to express reservations about this proposal, about the proposal to maintain a link with the federal government. And this will be very difficult for the leaders of cultural communities. I think that we should take note of this, without making judgments. It isn't our role. But this will be very difficult.

In this regard, you recommend that certain rights be enshrined in the constitution, that our multiethnic, multiracial and multiconfessional character be protected. I have two questions. The first is: Apart from the actual writing of

the Constitution, do you think that other mechanisms involved in drawing it up could provide additional protection for the character that you would like to see defined in it? I'm thinking, for example, of the setting up of a constituent assembly in which more equitable representation would be guaranteed, in which Québec as we know it would be more accurately represented. This is my first question. My second question concerns the recognition of Québec's multiconfessional character. Mrs. Traoré, whom we heard early in the day, discussed, in her brief, the question of recognizing a non-religious state. In her opinion, the only way to secure the existence of a multiconfessional state is to ensure that it is non-religious. This makes it possible to assert its multiconfessional nature. I would like to have your opinion on this. To meet the need for multiconfessionalism, don't we have to ensure the existence of a non-religious state?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I will ask you to give a thorough, of course, but, if possible, brief answer so that we will have time to hear the other two people who have asked to speak.

Mr. Di Giovanni: I will answer part of the question and then give the floor to Mrs. Pepin. First, I would like to comment on the impression that you both seem to have, you and Mrs. Harel, that our allegiance is solely to Canada or to federalism. I think that we said in our brief that we have not taken a position on this political option or system because a consensus has not been reached within the cultural communities. This is true throughout our society. I don't understand why you want to label these Quebecers. As far as I know, we don't say that all women think the same way. Do all Québec women support sovereignty, sovereignty-association, federalism, renewed federalism, or a confederal form of government? Do all married men have the same political opinions? I think we should stop saying: Do you, the cultural communities, Quebecers who belong to cultural communities, adhere to this or that political opinion?

Mrs. Pagé: Mr. Chairman, I would like to correct Mr... I'm sorry, but I'm obliged to say that 80 percent of the briefs that we've received, that have been tabled by representatives of the cultural communities, have supported the federal option. I don't read anything into that... I've been listening to briefs for two months. I'm obliged to keep tabs and realize that, in 80 percent of the cases, the representatives of cultural communities... This is legitimate. I'm not challenging their right to favour this option. I have no choice but to take note of what I've heard. I just want to say that I don't read anything into that, nor do I mean that everyone shares the

same opinions. I'm simply obliged to take note of the recommendations submitted by the various groups we have heard.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Could you please go on to the second question?

Mrs. Houde-Pepin: If I may, I would like to explain my colleague's message. I would say that, it's true, there isn't an ideological consensus in the cultural communities. I would also say that it's wrong to think that all cultural communities support one particular option. Secondly, you haven't heard all the cultural communities during the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, but only certain groups. Moreover, I don't know what criteria were used to select them.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The criterion was very simple. All those who submitted briefs were asked to appear.

Mrs. Houde-Pepin: Thank you for explaining this, Mr. Chairman. Nevertheless, I can say that, since minorities have matured to a certain extent, there has been a change in their electoral or political behaviour, so to speak. Secondly, political parties, political forces, will have to make an effort to attract minorities. This is part of the debate about taking one's rightful place in society, and we have to make room for people. All I can say is that the cultural communities are not afraid of independence as such. They say: If independence must be declared, we want guarantees and we're here to participate in this blueprint for society.
(4:45 p.m.)

Now, to answer the second part of your question about a non-religious state... You know, Mrs. Pagé, from having had the pleasure of working together on several occasions that, personally, I am in favour of a non-religious state. Moreover, the State of Québec is already non-religious in some respects. The only structural resistance is encountered in the educational system. You therefore have work to do. But you can count on the minorities to help you with your plan to make the school system take this diversity into account.

It can be said, and this is guaranteed by the Québec Charter of Rights, that parents have the right to educate their children in the religion of their choice. Therefore, the school system should take this basic right into account and allow certain changes in order to respect the diversity of Québec. As far as I'm concerned, public school should teach children the history of religion and the values of the major religions to allow them to get to know one another and establish ties. Religious education, on the other hand - learning how to pray and so forth - should be taught by specific religious institutions. But this viewpoint is entirely...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear from Mr. Larose and Mr. Libman. If possible, please limit yourselves to one short question. First Mr. Libman, and then Mr. Larose.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like Mrs. Pagé, I too am a bit surprised that Mrs. Pepin is reluctant to admit that most of the members of cultural communities support the sov... the federalist option.

Voices: Ha, ha ha!

Mr. Libman: Excuse me, Guy, but...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You keep bad company, Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: I hope it stays that way. We shouldn't be ashamed of admitting the truth. But one thing: I agree with Mrs. Houde-Pepin and, with all due respect for my colleague, Mr. Maclocla, I think that the National Assembly and the Québec government have missed an opportunity to make an important gesture by appointing an official representative from one of the cultural community organizations. Some people tried to make amendments in the National Assembly so that the Commission would include one such representative. I think, and I must repeat this, that we have missed the opportunity to make such a gesture.

At the beginning of these hearings, we often heard that Québec society was very tolerant of and very open to its minorities. Obviously, this is true, for example, with regard to other governments and countries, but we still have a long way to go. Freedom of expression was suspended recently. Cutbacks in the public sector...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Libman, you surely would like to get an answer to your question and, really, time is passing...

Mr. Libman: I'm almost finished. I said that we have a long way to go. In the weeks ahead, we will begin writing the report in order to make recommendations. It's very easy to put concepts, words, and so forth into these recommendations. But I think that more effort should be devoted to heightening public awareness. How would you suggest we start making people more aware? As I said, we can make recommendations, but they will only be words. How can we make people work toward this goal, toward the better, more open and more tolerant society that you would like to achieve?

Mrs. Houde-Pepin: Thank you for your question and comments. Mr. Libman, people who know me know that I'm never ashamed of my opinions. It's not really in my nature. We may

have different perceptions of reality, but I don't think that it's up to you to make this kind of judgment. What I said was, and I repeat: Ethnic and racial minorities do not all behave in accordance with the same ideology. This is a fact. Secondly, I can say that racial and ethnic minorities are not fiercely opposed to the idea of independence. What I am saying, however, is that the majority of Quebecers, who are in the process of defining themselves politically, are responsible for defining a blueprint for society, for defining it in a fair and equitable manner, for including minorities in it and for encouraging them to participate in drawing it up and implementing it. In this sense, I'm saying that the situation has evolved. That's all I'm doing, and it's not because I'm ashamed of one thing or another. In any case, that's not the way I operate.

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

Mr. Di Giovanni: Yes, just a minute. I'd like to explain one more point.

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

Mr. Di Giovanni: We mustn't forget that this committee represents 80 organizations made up of Quebecers from the various cultural communities. Its position is shared by all 80 organizations.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you for pointing this out. Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Thank you...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Excuse me?

Mr. Libman: The answer to my question... I'm still waiting for an answer. That was a comment on my remarks. I'm waiting for an answer to my question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But technically, Sir, you asked her a question, and she chose to answer. Like all the other speakers who have answered without necessarily satisfying the person who asked the question, she is free to answer as she pleases. This is your answer, Madam?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: Excuse me. Which part of your question didn't I answer?

Mr. Libman: The part about heightening public awareness. I said: Our recommendations may be vague; they'll be nothing more than words. How can we heighten public awareness and make this society more open and more

tolerant?

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: Well, the educational sector as a whole must play a determining role. And, as I said earlier, I also think that the day we have men and women in politics who promote equality, who promote a blueprint for a pluralistic society, we'll have started, and only then, to heighten the awareness of the general public.

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

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Part of your message says: Make room for us; we're going to take our rightful place in this society. One way to do this is, in particular, to enshrine collective rights, or group rights, such as equal opportunity programs, etc. But it seems to me that, and, in this sense, the Commission has helped to clarify things, I think... I argue that recent or long-established immigrants have been successfully integrated, in the sense that they belong, because they have been integrated into the majority, which, as you said, is not homogeneous. But the determining factor... We have to admit this, because I don't like it when we play on guilt. I think that we have to look at situations objectively.

Belonging... belonging to the Canadian majority is still the determining factor. We have seen numerous examples of this. But the situation is changing. I think that your message to us, as a society, is: Behave like a majority. Assume your responsibilities as a majority, and integration, in the sense of becoming a member of one group or another, will be clear. This is the first message that I have received. The second message.... I would like to ask you the following question: Don't people too often take advantage of the fact that our own society is a minority, with the result that, when we demand our own rights, we have the impression that we're taking them away from others? This is the way that minorities react. At some point, will the multiethnic and multiracial population of Québec be able to demand its rights as a people, while demanding them for all its members, including minorities, what we qualify as minorities? But at some point, we have to know when people no longer belong to a minority. But as far as cultural components are concerned... It seems to me that considerable effort should be devoted to clarifying this.

Mr. Di Giovanni: I think that the people of Québec, and we acknowledge that they form a distinct society... To answer your question, Mr. Larose... If, of course, as a people, as a society, they opt for X, Y or Z as a blueprint for society, as a political system or a constitution, they are sovereign and have every right to decide what they want to do with their political

and constitutional future. And if they do so by recognizing that this is a multiethnic, multiracial and multiconfessional society, then we will ask. We will ask that we be recognized as Quebecers, that this society be recognized as our society too; that, regardless of whether we have been here for 10 or 15 years or for two or three generations, this is our society. We define it as our society. We want to take part in this process and decide our political, constitutional and cultural future together.

A voice: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen. We have had a lengthy debate and, as a result, we are even further behind our schedule today. However, it has been very interesting. You have been able to note that, regardless of the reasons for the make-up of this Commission, the Commission itself is not responsible for these decisions. Moreover, the Commission has made a point of inviting all the cultural and ethnic groups which submitted briefs to appear. I am very pleased to have heard you this afternoon. I thank you for the contribution you have made to our work.

Mrs. Houda-Pepin: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear from the Québec Federation of Home and School Associations.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:57 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:59 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Will the members of the Committee please be seated. We will now hear the presentation of the Québec Federation of Home and School Associations.

Would you please introduce the members of the group and name the person who will make your five-minute presentation. À vous la parole.

Fédération québécoise des associations foyers-écoles

Mr. Percy (John): Merci, M. le Président. À ma gauche, M. Calvin Potter, président de notre comité des droits, qui s'intéresse depuis de nombreuses années à la question des droits linguistiques et éducationnels au Québec. À ma droite, M. Steven Drake, membre de longue date de ce même comité. Je suis John Percy, co-président de la Fédération québécoise.

M. le Président, j'aimerais d'abord faire quelques remarques, puis demander à M. Potter de résumer les principaux points de notre mémoire.

La Fédération québécoise des associations foyers-écoles remercie la Commission de lui

donner l'occasion d'exprimer son opinion sur ce sujet très important.

Our presence before the Commission reflects the desire of our members to play an active and responsible role by discussing the social and economic framework in which their children will be raised and educated.

Notre mémoire, qui est devant vous, privilégie de toute évidence un fédéralisme renouvelé, que nous considérons comme le meilleur espoir d'avenir pour le Québec et le Canada. Il exprime également notre profonde inquiétude devant l'érosion constante de la communauté anglophone et nos craintes de ne pas la voir survivre au Québec. Fidèle aux principaux intérêts de notre organisme, il est essentiellement axé sur l'importance vitale du système d'éducation pour cette survivance.

J'aimerais maintenant demander à mon collègue, M. Potter, d'élaborer brièvement sur ces remarques.

Mr. Potter (Calvin): Merci, John. En tant que parents, nous sommes considérés comme une minorité provinciale sur les plans religieux et linguistique. Nous sommes inquiets du bien-être éducationnel de nos enfants et des possibilités d'avenir de notre communauté. À cet égard, nous nous sommes posés la question suivante: comment interpréter l'impasse constitutionnelle qui est à l'origine de la présente Commission et de son mandat qui est de proposer un nouveau programme constitutionnel à l'Assemblée nationale du Québec? Ce mandat est de prendre un nouveau départ; il est semblable à l'objectif de la Loi constitutionnelle de 1867.

À cette époque, il avait été reconnu que l'Acte d'Union de 1841, dont l'intention était d'assimiler le Québec français, avait échoué comme toutes les tentatives faites depuis 1753. S'il faut en croire les débats qui ont précédé la Confédération, les quatre colonies devaient non seulement se fondre en une seule vaste province, qui ne serait toujours qu'une colonie éloignée, mais en quelque chose de plus grand encore: Un partenariat à parts égales de deux cultures fondatrices constituant le cœur des colonies fusionnées d'où émergerait une nouvelle nationalité, voire une nation qui figurerait aux côtés de l'Angleterre et des autres nations souveraines du monde.

En conséquence, l'objectif premier de la Constitution que nous nous apprêtons à mettre de côté était l'union nationale. La loi de 1867 avait pour titre Acte concernant l'Union et le gouvernement du Canada, de la Nouvelle-Écosse et du Nouveau-Brunswick. Tout le texte parle d'ailleurs d'"Union" et non de Confédération.

L'intention de l'Acte était l'égalité des droits des cultures fondatrices. Toutefois, la répartition numérique des anglophones et des francophones était non seulement inégale, tant au Canada qu'au Québec, mais aussi inverse.

Autrement dit, au Canada, les anglophones formaient une majorité et les francophones, une minorité. Au Québec, en revanche, les francophones étaient majoritaires et les anglophones, minoritaires.

Notre mémoire décrit en détail cette double dualité linguistique qui survit grâce à la souplesse de la structure fédéraliste qui partage les pouvoirs entre les gouvernements fédéral et provinciaux. Il précise également certaines dispositions protectrices enchâssées dans la Constitution afin d'assurer l'égalité des droits des minorités en matière de religion, d'éducation, ainsi que de préférences philosophiques et linguistiques. En quelque sorte, une charte des droits des minorités.

Le gouvernement fédéral a été désigné comme protecteur des droits religieux et éducationnels par l'article 93.3; il peut, comme vous pouvez le voir à l'article 93.4, adopter une loi corrective et ce, au cas où l'une des provinces bafouerait ces droits des minorités. Le gouvernement fédéral devait être le gardien des droits des minorités, mais on s'attendait à ce que toute violation soit partout condamnée.

Si nous adoptons comme principes généraux de l'unité nationale que la majorité linguistique du Québec doit pouvoir conserver sa langue, sa religion et son droit civil en vertu de l'égalité des droits et que les provinces doivent avoir représentation égale, on peut comprendre les motifs qu'avait Henri Bourassa de cautionner la première décennie de la Confédération. On peut aussi apprécier la prévoyance de Christopher Durkin selon qui la structure fédérale ne pouvait que rendre la majorité linguistique du Québec agressive, en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs provinciaux.

Les grandes espérances suscitées par la Confédération n'ont pas duré une génération. Nous connaissons tous la triste histoire de la Manitoba School Act de 1895 et le rôle des décisions du Conseil public dans l'accroissement des pouvoirs des provinces et dans la réduction de la capacité qu'avait le gouvernement fédéral de défendre les droits des minorités par la Constitution. Nous pensons...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): M. Potter, le temps est épuisé. Vous pouvez soit passer aux conclusions, soit résumer le reste de vos remarques. N'oubliez pas que les membres ont lu le mémoire.

Mr. Potter: D'accord. Merci, M. le Président. Nous croyons également que l'Assemblée nationale du Québec devrait abroger l'article 59 de la Constitution canadienne, ce qui uniformiserait de fait les droits des minorités linguistiques officielles dans le domaine de l'éducation à travers le Canada. Nous croyons que la Loi constitutionnelle de 1867 et les modifications subséquentes ont contribué à faire passer le Canada du statut de

colonie à celui d'une nation souveraine respectée à l'échelle mondiale pour la grande qualité de vie qu'elle offre à ses citoyens en matière d'égalité sociale, de bien-être économique individuel et de tolérance collective envers la diversité culturelle. Nous ne croyons pas qu'il faut accroître considérablement les pouvoirs provinciaux. Nous pensons plutôt qu'il faudrait ressusciter l'intention originale d'union nationale, soit un partenariat à parts égales des deux cultures linguistiques officielles et l'égalité des droits comme principe général de l'unité nationale. Merci.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, the first person to ask questions is Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin with a few comments and then ask a question. First of all, when I think...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have five minutes. You may do whatever you wish with that time.

Mr. Chevette: Mr. Chairman, it is not my habit to disregard the rules, especially since I was consulted about them beforehand.

First of all, when I think of the parents in Saskatchewan who have to sell sunflower seeds in order to keep their French schools going, and I am comparing rights that have always been recognized for Anglophones here, I am surprised to note the flagrant lack of confidence you have in Quebecers. On page 4 of your brief, you state that the survival of the minority depends essentially on the constitutional guarantees of the federal government. It's as though the people of Québec could not recognize rights within a Québec constitution. That I see as practically an insult to the people of Québec who have always respected your rights integrally. When you think only of recognition, for instance, of the legalisation of pupils who, from a linguistic point of view, were attending school illegally, when you think of the energy and money spent, of the entire system of education the English minority has in Québec and that we are proud to give them too, I find this part of your brief extremely disappointing. I don't understand why you don't trust the French-speaking people of Québec to recognize your acquired rights in a Québec constitution and why you depend solely on a central power, a federal power, as though the people of Québec could not recognize your rights. Explain that to me.

Mr. Percy: À notre avis, ce que vous dites peut être vrai en théorie, mais en pratique... L'expérience montre que la position actuelle de la communauté anglophone serait bien pire si la législation fédérale n'était pas intervenue pour protéger notre communauté. Notre position a été

affaiblie mais la législation fédérale a sans doute contribué à ralentir cet affaiblissement.

Mr. Chevette: But supposing that Québec...

Mr. Percy: Notre expérience ne concorde donc certainement pas avec l'opinion que vous exprimez.

Mr. Chevette: If your acquired rights are recognized in legislation, in a Québec constitution, what does it change for you?

Mr. Potter: C'est la nature de la protection assurée à la minorité qui changerait. Il y a actuellement deux couches. Le Québec est souverain en matière d'éducation, sauf en ce qui a trait aux droits des parents, assujettis à l'article 93, mais l'article 92 de la Constitution confère tous les autres pouvoirs au Québec. Nous perdriions donc la protection que l'article 93 a toujours assurée à la minorité. L'article 93 n'a pas donné de pouvoir à la province. Il permet au gouvernement fédéral de protéger la minorité. Cet aspect n'est ni plus important ni plus défavorable que les autres dispositions de la Constitution qui, comme l'article 92, protègent la province de Québec en traitant des droits à la propriété et des droits civils. L'inscription des droits à la propriété et des droits civils dans l'article 92 exigeait que le Québec soit exempt de l'article 94, qui uniformise les principes. Le Québec est donc une société distincte, ce qui est dû en partie au fait que ses droits constitutionnels sont enchâssés dans l'article 92 de la Constitution. Nous ne faisons qu'évoquer un autre article de la Constitution pour obtenir une protection égale. Nous ne...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your five minutes are up. We will now hear Mr...

Mr. Chevette: ...

The Chairman ((Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, but it will take another five minutes.

Mr. Chevette: No, it will only take 30 seconds, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Take 30 seconds, then. I'm timing you as of now.

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not only are you not satisfied with the status quo, but you are actually asking that, if any constitutional changes are made, the present situation be improved upon. Yet we live in a province where private English schools are subsidized. The English public system is subsidized, the Jewish English system is subsidized. Don't you think you are being rather greedy compared to the rights of some groups that are asking for

money from the government which is limited in its power to give more?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your 30 seconds are up, but I think you are entitled to an answer. Pourriez-vous répondre très brièvement?

Mr. Potter: Je serai très bref, M. le Président. Je ne vois pas... Je ne comprends vraiment pas la discrimination qu'il semble voir. Nous ne demandons qu'un traitement égal. Nous ne voulons pas de meilleur traitement. Nous voulons seulement un traitement égal. En quoi un traitement égal serait-il insultant pour qui que ce soit? C'est un compliment qu'on leur fait de penser que nous sommes égaux.

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

Mr. Libman: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Bienvenue à nos invités. Depuis le début de la Commission, j'ai eu l'occasion de soulever la question de l'article 23.1 a) et du fait que l'Assemblée nationale du Québec autorise sa mise en vigueur par l'intermédiaire de l'article 59, comme vous l'expliquez dans votre mémoire. Je pense qu'il importe que la Commission envoie un signal positif à la communauté anglophone au cours des mois à venir, pendant lesquels nous rédigerons le rapport. Je ne peux concevoir de signal plus positif, à l'heure actuelle, à part l'élimination de la clause "nonobstant", que celui en vertu duquel la Commission suggérerait à l'Assemblée nationale du Québec d'adopter l'article 23.1 a), permettant aux enfants dont la langue maternelle est l'anglais de fréquenter les écoles anglaises. Il importe que les Québécois se rendent compte de ce que ce groupe représente seulement 1 % du secteur francophone, mais une injection très souhaitable de 10 à 15 % dans le secteur anglophone. Je pense que c'est là un signal positif attrayant. Nous consacrerons d'ailleurs beaucoup d'efforts à cette recommandation pendant la rédaction du rapport.

Mais vous avez dit et expliqué longuement vos sentiments dans votre mémoire. Vous avez même dit que c'était une condition préalable à un Canada uni. Pourriez-vous préciser? Comment pensez-vous améliorer les relations entre la majorité et la minorité linguistiques du Canada, s'il s'agit là d'une recommandation, ou si le Québec modifie la loi?

Mr. Potter: D'abord, M. le Président, cela nous assurerait des droits égaux dans tout le pays en ce qui a trait aux droits linguistiques de la minorité dans le domaine de l'éducation. On ne reconnaît généralement pas que les droits éducationnels de la minorité sont plus limités au Québec que partout ailleurs au Canada. Je le dis et j'ai d'ailleurs la confirmation du premier

ministre qui reconnaît que compte tenu de l'article 59 de la Constitution, les droits de la minorité linguistique officielle du Québec sont plus restreints que dans le reste du Canada. Ainsi, l'adoption ou l'abrogation de l'article 59 et l'entrée en vigueur consécutive de l'article 23.1 a) assurera l'égalité des droits de la minorité linguistique officielle partout au Canada. En outre, comme nous l'avons suggéré au premier ministre du Québec au printemps dernier, l'adoption de l'article 59 par l'Assemblée nationale du Québec serait justement le type de geste que le reste du Canada pourrait interpréter comme une étape dans la bonne direction. Et nous sommes certains que si le premier ministre du Québec avait accepté notre suggestion, l'accord du lac Meech aurait été signé.
(5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Libman: Je voudrais juste vous remercier. It must be repeated before this Commission that, this gesture would affect only 1% of the student population in French schools. It is a gesture, a signal, that this Commission can send to the English minorities that would be of major importance. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. d'Anjou: Mr. Chairman, such a gesture may one day be made, but the fact remains that on page 14 of your brief, you say, "While the protection of minorities outside Québec is reinforced by section 23 of the Charter", since this section applies to Canada as a whole, this means that, outside Québec, minorities had to be given greater protection, which was not the case in Québec. And you add, "This same protection of minorities is limited and reduced in Québec by Bill 101, Bill 107 and Bill 178." I don't see what Bill 178 has to do with education, but Bill 107, which was adopted by the National Assembly, clearly states the right of both linguistic groups to have and to administer their own schools, rights for which Francophones outside Québec are still fighting, while here, you have enjoyed those rights for centuries and they have been confirmed once again in the new Education Act adopted by the National Assembly. Do you want to return to Bill 22 which you fought so strenuously, so vigorously, and which used the mother tongue as a criterion for admitting children to English schools?

Mr. Potter: Mr. Chairman, on page 23, there is a table. At the bottom of the table, you have interprovincial migration. In five years, 41 600 English Quebecers left. À cet égard, ils sont comme les "boat people" mais à pied. Nous voulons seulement que les membres de l'Assemblée nationale tiennent compte de la façon dont les choses sont interprétées. Si la loi 107 prévoyait l'élection de conseils linguistiques par les

membres de l'école ainsi que leur protection par la Constitution, nous l'accepterions. Nous voulons des garanties constitutionnelles et, malheureusement, nous avons dû nous contenter de garanties religieuses interprétées comme des garanties linguistiques, ces dernières ne figurant pas dans la Constitution canadienne sauf en ce qui a trait aux tribunaux et à l'Assemblée nationale.

Mr. d'Anjou: Les garanties que vous avez vous assurent de fait des écoles administrées par des commissaires anglophones. Vous le savez.

Mr. Potter: Oui.

Mr. d'Anjou: Vous savez également que le projet de loi 107 reconnaît à tous les anglophones du Québec le droit de constituer leurs propres commissions scolaires et d'administrer leurs propres écoles. Je peux vous dire en plus que la Fédération des commissions scolaires...

Mr. Percy: L'Assemblée nationale peut modifier le projet de loi 107. Elle ne peut pas changer la protection que nous avons actuellement.

Mr. d'Anjou: Je le sais et nous sommes d'accord avec vous pour dire qu'une nouvelle constitution, le cas échéant, devra garantir ces droits. C'est ce qu'ont demandé les anglophones, les protestants, les catholiques et les francophones. Nous sommes d'accord.

Mr. Percy: Nous avons actuellement ces garanties. Nous n'accepterons rien de moins.

Mr. d'Anjou: Nous les avons actuellement et quels que soient les changements apportés à la Constitution, nous sommes d'avis que ces garanties doivent y demeurer.

A Voice: Nous sommes d'accord.

Mr. d'Anjou: Si nous sommes d'accord, vous devriez être content.

Mr. Percy: Pourquoi avoir créé des conseils linguistiques entre-temps?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Sur ce, la parole est à M. Williams.

Mr. Williams: ...The Québec Federation of Home and School Associations for your brief, but I would also like to congratulate you for all the work you did previously. I noticed in Schedule 2 the list of all the briefs you have submitted to the various governments. I believe education is very important for the people of Québec and each group of parents that gets involved in issues such as these, which are essential...

Thank you, in the name of the parents, thank you very much for your participation.

Je pense qu'il importe que nous nous penchions maintenant... et je vais poser une question très générale à la fin, et examiner certaines parties du mémoire pour remettre ensemble tous les morceaux de la situation plutôt complexe qui est celle des minorités du Québec et du Canada. Dans différentes parties de votre mémoire, et je voudrais me pencher sur certaines d'entre elles, vous parler du contrôle ou de la gestion des institutions. De toute évidence, c'est là un point critique de la protection des minorités anglophones ou francophones, hors de la province ou autre.

Vous dites avoir le sentiment que certaines institutions sont constamment érodées et je dois dire que je partage l'avis d'autres commissaires qui n'éprouvent pas également votre frustration quant à... Vous pouvez professer une opinion différente sur le projet de loi 107, par exemple, mais nous pourrions débattre longuement la question de savoir si les droits éducationnels des anglophones sont ou non protégés.

Je tiens compte du point que vous mentionnez en page 4 et j'y reviens. Vous dites que "les membres de l'Assemblée nationale ressentent une frustration suite aux compromis inhérents à une minorité". Vous parlez ensuite de l'appui ou du manque d'appui envers l'asymétrie. Enfin, vous présentez l'article 59 de façon très articulée et je n'ai pas l'intention de commenter les principes d'application de l'article. C'est toutefois une question intéressante, du point de vue pratique, puisque de toute évidence, le choix importe en principe, mais la réalité... Ainsi, 60 % des enfants inscrits à la commission scolaire que fréquentent mes enfants suivent des cours en langue française, par choix. Les élèves qui choisissent cette option sont donc de plus en plus nombreux. Je comprends le point de principe, mais en regardant vers l'avenir, nous voyons à quel point l'éducation en français langue seconde est importante.

Ma question est donc la suivante: regardant vers l'avenir, vous avez exposé le compromis que pourrait accepter la province de Québec en faveur de la communauté anglophone. Quel compromis pourrait faire le reste du Canada compte tenu de la frustration qu'éprouve la minorité représentée par le gouvernement provincial du Québec et que vous avez mentionnée au bas de la page 3 et en haut de la page 4? Qu'est-ce qui mettra un terme à ce cercle vicieux? Quand viendrons-nous à bout de la méfiance qui semble transparaître dans certains mémoires et qui s'est manifestée jusqu'ici?

Mes observations finales - je vais vous donner l'occasion de répondre à ma question - sont celles-ci: quand d'autres groupes essaient de protéger quelque chose avec trop de rigidité, il s'ensuit un problème tout aussi difficile à régler que s'il y avait un excès de souplesse. Have you any comments on that?

Mr. Percy: J'aimerais d'abord faire observer qu'on trouve, dans les provinces anglophones, un vaste réservoir de bonne volonté à l'égard du Québec, ce qui semble pourtant se perdre dans toute la rhétorique suscitée par les cris qui s'élèvent contre les groupes minoritaires de diverses provinces.

Voici des exemples classiques: trouver assez de professeurs pour les classes d'immersion en français relève parfois du cauchemar. Deux cent cinquante mille élèves fréquentent ces programmes d'immersion en langue française au Canada. Pourquoi donc s'ils ne font pas preuve de bonne volonté? J'ai des parents à Terre-Neuve qui participent à un programme d'immersion en langue française parce qu'ils savent à quel point le bilinguisme est utile au Canada ces temps-ci.

Mr. Williams: Pourrais-je vous demander, alors, ce que vous voulez dire quand vous prétendez comprendre la frustration qu'éprouvent les membres de l'Assemblée législative suite aux compromis inhérents à une minorité? Quelle solution faudrait-il adopter? Je vous demande de préciser ce point de votre mémoire.

Mr. Potter: Nous pensions que notre suggestion quant à l'article 59 pouvait être un point majeur et répondre à l'offre du Nouveau-Brunswick de mettre l'article 88 en vigueur afin de protéger les droits des francophones ou de la minorité linguistique au Nouveau-Brunswick. Nous avons toutefois du mal à croire que le désaveu de l'article 59 de la Constitution par le Québec constituerait une bonne façon d'assurer l'égalité des droits linguistiques de la minorité officielle par tout le Canada. Quel geste plus probant pourriez-vous poser envers tout le Canada, autre que celui d'accepter l'égalité des deux nations fondatrices?

Mr. Williams: Do I have time?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have a few seconds left.

Mr. Williams: O.K. Ma question était plutôt... Je comprends votre point de vue, que vous avez d'ailleurs exposé très clairement. Ma question était la suivante: si nous étudions des possibilités de partenariat et de compromis, quel pourrait être le message du reste du Canada au Québec en ce qui a trait à certaines des préoccupations de la province, soit les préoccupations que vous reconnaissez dans le mémoire et qui sont liées à la frustration qu'éprouve la minorité linguistique qui y vit? C'est ce genre de réponse que j'essaie d'obtenir.

Mr. Potter: L'autre aspect serait d'enchaîner les droits linguistiques dans la Constitution et dans nos négociations relatives à la Constitution.

Mr. Williams: Merci.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Bien. Je vous remercie tous de nous avoir présenté un mémoire bien documenté qui exposait des vues sans détour ainsi que d'avoir bien voulu répondre à nos questions. Merci d'avoir participé à notre travail. Écoutons maintenant les représentants de l'Église unie du Canada, chapitre de Montréal et d'Ottawa.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:26 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:27 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear from the representatives of the Montréal and Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada. Please introduce your colleagues and then take five minutes to present your brief.

Montréal and Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada

Mr. Purdon (Burn): Thank you. I am Burn Purdon, Chairman of the Montréal and Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada and a pastor in Granby for the past 16 years. I have with me Mrs. Maureen Scott Kabwe, who is program and leadership development staff person for the Conference; and the Reverend Bill Jay, chairman of the Church in Society Committee of our Conference and pastor of Chalmers Wesley Church in Québec and the Valcartier Village United Church.

On behalf of the Montréal and Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada, we would like to thank you for inviting us to speak before this Commission. As a regional conference, we encouraged our parishes to reflect on the future of Québec in their community. We would like to encourage them to participate with the members of other Churches and other religious communities so that we may understand and overcome the barriers between various groups. In this respect, we are open to the suggestion of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops to call a summit of the Churches to discuss the fundamental elements of a new society in Québec.

There are a number of points in our brief that we would like to emphasize. First of all, the relations between Anglophones and Francophones. While we recognize French as the official language of Québec, we would like to see the rights of the Anglophone minority respected.

Secondly, economic justice. We are concerned about the poor in our society and would like to have a discussion with respect to a just society.

Thirdly, human rights. There are signs of racism practically everywhere in our modern world. We want a Québec that recognizes each member of society as equal, a Québec that

safeguards these basic human rights.

And, fourthly, the rights of the Native people. The 33rd General Council of the United Church of Canada, which met in London, Ontario, last summer, issued a declaration on the Oka crisis and Native rights in Canada. This declaration was sent to Prime Minister Bourassa and I would like to quote it in order to highlight the importance this point has for us.

"We demand that the First Nations be recognized as founding peoples of Canada and be included, as equal partners, in any process of constitutional discussion or negotiation. We demand that the governments of Canada and the provinces set up immediately a process by which all the rights and territorial claims of the aboriginal peoples across Canada be satisfied. We demand that the Québec government include the aboriginal peoples in any procedures undertaken to redefine its future." We are therefore very disappointed that the Native people are not represented on this Commission.

I would like to conclude with a short theological reflection. We are created in the image of God in order to reflect that image. We want a new Québec where that image of God can flourish in each child, each woman, each man, and we want the rainbow reflected in our differences to be the sign of a new covenant, the promise of a new day, an example for the rest of Canada and the whole world of a truly just society. We pray that the Kingdom of God will come among us and that his will will be done in Québec as it is in Heaven. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Purdon. We will now go on to Mr. Assad's questions.

Mr. Assad: You have submitted a brief; I recognize the United Church of which I was a member for 21 years. I was proud to see that you were in the forefront in many things, as with respect to economic injustice in our country, and even your former moderators, such as the Reverend Mr. Forest and Dr. McClure, who played a major role and were important figures in the country, and your involvement in many other issues, whether the Native people or anything else. And particularly, your stand, which was very courageous, on the Palestinian problem in the Middle East.

To get back to the point, in your brief, you mention linguistic justice for Anglophones in Québec. Here is what I think is the main problem in the entire discussion of linguistic rights: as you know, the law in Québec forbids signs outside. All the rights of individuals are recognized and that is what you advocate, but that is the heart of the problem, that collective rights in Québec where Quebecers would like... Most of them, according to the surveys, would like to see collective rights given priority over

individual rights in linguistic matters. And that is the problem. I would like to hear how you think they could settle this point, if they want to keep their culture strong, if they want to maintain French as the language of work and so on. Can you see a way of equitably satisfying both sides on this point?

Mr. Jay (William): I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that ways must be found to improve the French of the Anglophones. We suffer a lot from the loss of our young people. After finishing high school and university, most of our children leave for Ontario and the other provinces because their French is lamentable. Ways must be found to encourage our children to practise using their French. I suggest, for example, on-the-job training in government services for high school students, or rather, college and university students, where they would work as full members of today's society in Québec.

I have noticed something else. It is easy for a new Quebecer to get language training, free courses, incentives, but for Anglophones who actually come from Québec, there is not enough incentive. Look at my French. It is not perfect because I have not yet taken the proper courses. I am always too busy with my pastoral work. I am "pastorized" but not francized.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Jay: Ways must be found to encourage greater participation and I think something can be done.

Mr. Assad: In other words, in Québec... You know that, throughout Québec's history, minorities have been very free. You cannot say otherwise. Formerly, the Protestant School Boards... I am myself the product of an English Protestant school and never had any trouble, on the contrary. You realize that, in spite of everything, the French language and culture, you could live with it, if you will, that irritant, if I may use it as such, that is, that collective rights have precedence, in linguistic matters at least. Are we agreed on that point, that you could live with that?

Mr. Jay: Of course. I think so.

A voice: Definitely.

Mr. Assad: Good. Thank you.

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

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Purdon and your team, for coming here today. It is always good that people of your quality come to remind

us of what you say in your brief, of that behaviour found at the moral and ethical root of political man and political woman. So, we appreciate your presence here today.

You offer to pray for us and I think we are going to need those prayers. So, we will accept any prayers you would like to offer for the Commission, now and in the weeks to come, until we submit our report.

I would like to come back to Mr. Assad's question. You propose a structure that asserts the French fact and protects the English-speaking community. In concrete terms - your brief is pleasant, it is philosophical - but, very specifically, in Granby, where you live, where the two communities have coexisted for many years, a city that has become francized over time, in concrete terms, how can we make the experiment work, the coexistence of the two communities and the preservation of French, in a world, after all, where there are 300 million people speaking English?

Mr. Purdon: I can only say that I know I have parishioners who think they have lost their linguistic rights. The municipal library doesn't have any English books. Things like that. There are old people in homes where it is difficult to get services in French for them because we are such a small minority. I do not have a solution. I am only speaking for our members who have the impression their rights have been taken from them.

Mr. Benoit: You also point out in your brief that people are moving away from small communities. Your churches are involved in a number of small villages. We still see your churches, sometimes abandoned now. We have been hearing this throughout our sittings, throughout Québec, the problem of the exodus from the outlying regions. People go to get educated in the major centres, then stay there because there is no work. Here again, do you have any practical recommendations to make to this Commission? We have identified the problem you describe in your brief.

Mr. Purdon: Could you repeat a bit what you...

Mr. Benoit: Yes. You speak, in your brief, of "people who are moving away from small communities." "Des gens qui quittent les petites communautés." Avez-vous une solution concrète à ce problème précis, soulevé au cours de nos déplacements à travers le Québec?

Mr. Purdon: We don't have a solution.

A voice: It's a fact.

Mr. Purdon: We are talking of the reality that exists and that we have to live with.

Mr. Benoit: This Commission must look ahead. It must look at the future as well as today's reality. The purpose of a Commission such as this is first to make observations and then to look to the future for the coming generations. You speak in these terms in your brief. You say: the first to come, the new arrivals and future generations. And us, we are here, undeniably, for the ones to come. Are there any solutions to this problem of people moving away from the outlying regions that your churches are experiencing in a very specific way?

Mr. Jay: Mr. Chairman, I would like to share a personal experience I had here in Montréal while working for The Montréal City Mission, a community ministry within our Church which I served for 13 years, working with itinerant people, the homeless. And when we shared our experiences and the experiences of the other social and religious workers across Canada and the United States, everyone who worked with the homeless, we came up with ideas, with common solutions. We used our experiences, our contacts with colleagues from other countries. We worked with the Société d'habitation du Québec on housing, the rental centre that responded to the needs of itinerant young people - young people existing on the margins of society - who come from every region of Québec.

I would simply like to point out that we have no concrete solutions but I think we can offer to participate, as we have done here, in the network of people working with the homeless throughout Québec, not only in Montréal. We would like to emphasize that we would like to be as involved as possible in the future of our Québec. This is perhaps a very general answer, but I hope it shows our desire to work for the future of our Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is up, Mr. Benoit. We will now hear from Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome you to our Commission. I would also like to congratulate you, as others have done before me, on the dynamic character of your community, of the people in the United Church, and on its progressive nature. I think it is important to point this out. There is something else I want to tell you too. For some days now, I have been astounded to see people from various ethnic groups and various communities or Churches come before us, unable to really converse with us in French. Although I realize it is sometimes difficult for you to do so, using words that are not always the right ones, I think, personally anyway, that it shows a great deal of involvement in Québec society, and I want to

point this out because I think it is important. It is probably the first step towards dialogue and mutual respect.

I agree with you when you say, as other communities have done, that we are very attentive to the problems of people who choose to come to live in Québec, we are very careful to see that they have the opportunity to learn French, to participate in community activities and become integrated, not assimilated, but integrated, with the majority, but that often these same services are perhaps found to be somewhat deficient when members of the Anglophone community want to do the same thing. I say sometimes, of course, and particularly when these Anglophones are a bit cut off from the community in certain corners of Québec.

(5:45 p.m.)

To get back to your brief, which is short, but well written and interesting. You say, "We contemplate a structure that asserts the French fact of the majority but at the same time protects the rights of the English-speaking communities, so that they too can grow and contribute to this society." Would a sovereign Québec that respected such a guideline, such a commitment, be acceptable to you? Do you think it would allow you to grow and to participate, with the rest of Québec society, in your own progress too?

Mrs. Scott Kabwe (Maureen): I was looking for the actual wording... I did not hear the last...

Mrs. Marois: It is at the very end of your French text, of the first page, that is. You say, "Nous envisageons une structure qui affirme la réalité francophone de la majorité, mais qui protège aussi les droits des communautés parlant l'anglais, afin qu'elles puissent, elles aussi, se développer et contribuer..."

Mrs. Scott Kabwe: Yes. In our opinion, it was very important to convey the idea that the thing is not only to ask for linguistic rights, for instance, just for rights, but to assure the Anglophone communities, for instance, or the other communities, that they will be accepted in Québec society. That the majority or society be willing to accept what they have to offer, as we say here, "to grow and contribute". As the other man said, it is very hard to find all the actual solutions. We believe that, perhaps, it could be the beginning of new relations between us, between all the groups of society. To begin, now, to accept the identity of all the groups, the aspirations of all the groups in society, and not just linguistic aspirations, but also their racial, economic and ethnic condition. That is the most important.

Mrs. Marois: Just one last question. I know we are a little short of time. You are very

concerned about democracy, you say so in your brief, too. You would like to see a majority, all the groups, participate in the decision regarding the future of the people of Québec. Do you think a public consultation, or a referendum, would meet your expectations with regard to democracy being respected?

Mrs. Scott Kabwe: Perhaps not a referendum. It is an idea that many people are talking about. The Assembly of Bishops, for instance, has been discussing a new form of social dialogue, of political dialogue. The dialogue must take place in our actual community, at the grassroots level. It is not exactly an accepted democratic process like a referendum, but...

Mrs. Marois: You are saying, in fact, that a referendum is one thing, but that there is also all the dialogue that must take place between ourselves. That is just as important.

Mrs. Scott Kabwe: It is only one way.

Mrs. Marois: Very good. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well, I would like to thank you for having contributed in this way to our hearings. Mrs. Scott Kabwe, Rev. Purdon, Rev. Jay, merci pour votre présentation. Thank you for the way in which you made it, as well. We will now hear from the Comité hongrois de Montréal.

(Proceedings adjourned at 5:50 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:52 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now resume proceedings and hear from the Comité hongrois de Montréal. Mr. François Deak will introduce the group and present the brief. Mr. Deak.

Comité hongrois de Montréal

Mr. Deak (François): First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting us to speak before the Commission. We will endeavour to make our opinion known, that is, the opinion of the Comité hongrois de Montréal which we represent here today.

At the same time, I would like to introduce my colleagues: on my right, Mr. Leslie Jonas – it is written in French – who in his private and civilian life is chairman of the board of Aliments Delsie, chairman of the board of La Lumière et frères and vice-chairman of the board of Unigesco; on my left, Mr. Istvan Tokes, engineer at McGill University. I am François Deak, a priest at Notre-Dame-des-Hongrois parish.

We are aware that our group here is not

representative of all the Hungarians living in Montréal. We are the spokesmen for the Comité hongrois de Montréal which is a committee of the Hungarian organizations, a sort of umbrella committee uniting all the Hungarian organizations: ecclesiastic – Catholic, Protestant and Jewish – as well as civil organizations, literary, social and professional groups.

The Comité hongrois is not a political body. Political contingencies are not within its scope. This is so under its very constitution. Our interest is centred mainly on the life of the community as such, a community that is not seen as a ghetto but as a community that preserves its identity and welcomes new immigrants, that organizes national festivals and endeavours to maintain relations with other groups, and with the authorities and institutions of Québec.

A quick look at our community as immigrants. The first wave to arrive here in Montréal came after the First World War, in the middle of an economic and social crisis. The second wave arrived after the Second World War. Many people were displaced by the war and the first communist persecutions forced us to flee our country. That was my case. The third wave, which was the biggest for the Hungarian community in Montréal, was made up of refugees from the Soviet tank victory over the Hungarian revolution in 1956. There are reliable statistics on this third wave, of course. Statistics cannot tell the whole story, however, since Hungarians do not live only within the current political boundaries of Hungary; there are many... My two colleagues are from countries separated from Hungary where there is a large Hungarian majority which wants to retain its identity.

The new Hungarian immigrants... I know quite a lot about them, since our parish has sponsored some. And since the Hungarian community also has its local centre, first of all, in our parish. They come to us. I see that there is a process of integration here in Québec and we are very sensitive to this, to integration. Especially since Hungarians living outside the Hungarian borders, to the north of Hungary, now attached to Czechoslovakia and Transylvania in particular, tend to be absorbed rather than integrated. Many Hungarians already knew the official languages when they arrived but most learned them here. The children in school are almost all trilingual. Naturally, the degree to which they retain their mother tongue depends on the degree to which the family is aware of its identity. Experience shows that by the second or third generation, they speak French and English rather than Hungarian.

The Hungarians have a history that goes back into the mists of time, but as of the year 1001, they founded a country in the Carpathians, with a constitution and a crowned king. We Hungarians identify with our history which has been very eventful. But at the same time, we are

very sympathetic towards all patriotic sentiment, particularly here, in Québec.

Our experience throughout history has taught us many things, among them, strength through unity. We Hungarians tend to be individualistic. Our union, which also resulted from what we learned from our mistakes throughout history, still presents a challenge: we must not forget it either when faced with the experiences of other people who ask for or look for the benefit or our experience.

And we see Canada, within which Québec has a future full of promise if this wonderful country remains united. We Hungarians are concerned about certain signs of disintegration, given the economic, social and moral consequences, not only for us but for the next generation.

We have ourselves experienced events where the passions let loose left no room for common sense. There have been events in Hungarian history which roused the enthusiasm of the people, such as the revolution of 1848 or the glorious revolution of 1956, but which, after, in a historical perspective, also give us a certain amount of hindsight. Passion often leaves no room for common sense.

The experts...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): May I remind you that the allotted five minutes have already passed...

Mr. Deak: Excuse me.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...if you could ...

Mr. Deak: I will summarize...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...reach your conclusion more rapidly.

Mr. Deak: I will summarize by saying that our historical experience gives us a reference point from which to examine Québec's situation in determining its future. Because of our sympathy for Québec patriotism, we are also committed to a Québec within the Canadian community which also respects, in its Charter, the human rights of ethnic and cultural minorities. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Deak. The first question, Mr. Dauphin.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to welcome the Comité hongrois de Montréal, on behalf of the Government parliamentary group. I am pleased to see you here and to know that you come to express your opinion on the political and constitutional future. Your brief argues that - as I understand it; correct me if I am mistaken - Québec can very well evolve within the current federal framework.

My first question is: Do you think the Meech Lake Accord for which we worked so hard, on our side anyway, was a whim or what do you think of the defunct Meech Lake Accord? What was your position?

Mr. Jonas (Leslie): I cannot speak for all the members of the Comité hongrois de Montréal. I think that a number of us, including myself, were for Meech Lake. I am surprised that a rather high percentage of the people of Québec saw it as a rejection of Québec by the rest of Canada. In my view, it is as though we were walking up a staircase and two steps from the top, we said: "Oh, well; we've completely failed; it isn't working". I think it was a near success.

Mr. Dauphin: Do you think that the status quo can provide the necessary tools to promote and protect our distinctive character?

Mr. Jonas: I think that existing legislation goes a long way. Is everything there? You know, in Meech Lake, there was that clause that spoke of a distinct society, a point I personally think is true. I do not understand why there was so much argument over it.

On the other hand, I believe that Québec's position on Meech Lake was weak because we did not dare identify the effects of that clause. What does it mean in terms of additional power vis-à-vis the other provinces, for example, because Québec is distinct? I think we would have benefited from an identification of the consequences of that clause. It's a fact, but what does it mean, what exactly do we need? I think the rest of Canada was afraid there would never be an end to it. It could apply to anything.

Mr. Dauphin: If I understand correctly, you were in favour. You refer to Europe when you mention Canadian unity. You are aware that in Europe, if I may use the expression, they are setting up federative procedures that may be described as minimal.

Mr. Jonas: You have not spoken enough... I did not understand the words.

Mr. Dauphin: That is, you propose Canadian unity, referring to Europe, which is endeavouring to become more and more integrated. Yet, you are aware that in Europe, the system is based on minimal federative procedures compared to what we have here, which is, if you will allow me to say so, a maximally federative system. So, for Québec, which system would be best? Maximum or minimum?

Mr. Tokes (Istvan): We were really referring to our history. For example, when Hungary was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, there were stages. First, we wanted to be free, because we

were unable to live in freedom under that structure. Then, now, when we go to Eastern Europe, for instance, we tend towards integration again.

Our opinion is that, for the moment – and I think the community too is pretty well in agreement – we have a federal structure that – of course, we are more or less in favour of its being defined – guarantees us a national and cultural experience; it is perhaps unnecessary to go through this stage, whether or not it is emotional, which could eventually have negative economic consequences. And we know very well that in periods of economic difficulty, it is always democracy that suffers.

So, we are really thinking of that experience, but we agree that the existing federal structure must be reconsidered to really give us that chance.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes, you have one minute left.

Mr. Dauphin: One more, Mr. Chairman. With our Meech Lake experience – I myself and several other Commission members have had the opportunity of asking several groups and speakers this question – an experience during which Québec set five sine qua non conditions, and which did not work out, would you be optimistic were Québec to arrive with a shopping list or, say, 30 sine qua non conditions? What would happen to negotiations with the rest of Canada, to the chances of a renewed federalism?

Mr. Deak: The question is addressed to me personally. I feel rather uncomfortable taking up a position, especially since I am a priest in the Hungarian community, which tries to be very respectful of the other communities, who meets Francophones every day in the diocese. We are very attentive to the aspirations, and desires for an identity of the people as such. So I could not speak in the name of the Hungarians, because most of the Hungarians did not fully understand the five proposals, etc., which we received with enthusiasm and interest, and I think there is not enough communication, not enough information on points in question. Especially since a lot of Hungarians... I live more within the people than among those who follow the news as such through the newspapers and the media.

So, most people did not have enough guidance, enough information on the question you asked.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you.

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

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen, good evening. I would like to take up where Mr.

Dauphin left off. You are amazed at Québec's reaction to the failure of Meech Lake, but since you situate your reflections to some extent within the context of your history, you have to understand something of Québec's history to understand their frustration. If you had attended... Perhaps you were here earlier when the Franco-Manitobans came to speak of the difficulties they have been faced with, the harassment, the racism they have been subjected to, the systematic pogroms of which they have been the victims in Manitoba, you would understand the difficulties posed by federalism since its creation.

And in your letter, I imagine that sometimes it might be difficult to understand the real import of words in the second last paragraph when you say: That is why we express the wish that Québec seek and find, within the Canadian community, a satisfactory response to its questions, its preoccupations, its grievances, real or imagined. I find it rather cutting that you think our grievances could be imagined after so many efforts and failures. I understand that you may not know much about our past history, but recent history, the referendum of 1980 where a No should have been a Yes, the unilateral patriation of the Constitution in 1982, which changed the balance of power between Canada and Québec, thus undermining Québec's rights under the Constitution of 1867, without Québec's approval... And then, Meech Lake is rejected while there are two provinces, they say... Obviously, it went further than that, but still. These recent events explain some of the frustration. Personally, what amazes me is that you, Hungarians, from Eastern Europe, seem to have difficulty accepting the struggles of the Francophones, yet the winds of freedom are blowing on all the peoples of the world: in Eastern Europe, in Europe, in South America, in North America and, here, the Native peoples and the people of Québec. And that, I must say that I still have trouble... I always expect you to be more receptive, and more understanding, I would say, of the problems of survival, identification and cultural reinforcement posed by the fact that we are in a country where ours is not the dominant culture. And especially in North America.

Mr. Jones: I must tell you, if I may answer...

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes, yes.

Mr. Jones: First, I must tell you that I think most of our group fully feel this discontent and this bitterness that you feel over what has happened, in the past, and all that. I would say that the majority is for, and this is the fundamental question, in my opinion, is it Québec that should be recognized as a distinct society and a people, or is it the Franco-Quebecers and Franco-Canadians who have a common culture? And when you speak of what happened in

Manitoba, for instance, I agree with you that things happened in the past that shouldn't have. It is difficult, today, to evaluate what happened 50 or 75 or 100 years ago. You know, there were slaves in the United States not very long ago. If we look around the world at how people were treated 50 years ago, and 75 years ago, we don't have the same standards today. We don't have the same customs.

Today, I do not think taking away the right to have signs in languages other than French here in Québec, for instance, I do not think that that is justified by the misdeeds of certain Anglophones 75 years ago.

Mrs. Blackburn: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, it is just that I seem to understand that you do not recognize the people of Québec and their right to self-determination. You say there are two peoples, one Francophone, the other Anglophone, and that they are spread throughout Canada. Do I understand you...

Mr. Jonas: I think it's a fundamental question.

Mrs. Blackburn: So, it's a fundamental question.

Mr. Jonas: I myself was born in Montréal.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes.

Mr. Jonas: And, when I was young, whenever I met a Francophone from Québec, he called himself Canadian. As for me, because I was... I went to school in English, he called me an English Canadian, but he was Canadian.

Mrs. Blackburn: That's true.

Mr. Jonas: The term "Quebecer" didn't exist.

Mrs. Blackburn: You are quite right. Now, perhaps one last question, with your permission, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes.

Mrs. Blackburn: Since you are a big businessman, as we can see here by the references alongside your name, you express certain apprehensions as to the negative effects on the economy of the secession or independence of Québec. Economists have come to tell us that if there are any negative effects with respect to Québec's economic development, they are to be found mainly by remaining in the Canadian Confederation, particularly because of the size of the debt. But it is estimated that almost \$0.40 on each tax dollar is unproductive because it goes exclusively to the debt service. And a sovereign Québec would have a much better chance of rapidly becoming productive and effective,

economically, socially and culturally because it would wield its own economic levers.

So you, as a businessman, if Québec became sovereign tomorrow, would you stay in Québec?

Mr. Jonas: Until the law on signs was passed, there was no doubt in my mind. If Québec were to separate, I would stay. Now, I am on the fence. Recently, I invested heavily here in Québec in a Francophone company...

Mrs. Blackburn: Unigesco.

Mr. Jonas: ...so, my actions speak a little more loudly, if you will, than my words. As for the economy, I meet friends who are rather more federalist than I am, and they say that Québec could never go it alone, and all that. Québec, alone, is already highly regarded throughout the world for per capita income, per capita education and so on. So, I am not one of those who thinks Québec could not succeed alone, but I am convinced there would be a price to pay. There is a whole set of repercussions that will have to be studied before doing something like that, in my opinion.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear from Mr. Beaudry.
(6:15 p.m.)

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To continue along the line taken by Mrs. Blackburn, it is perhaps true that, currently, approximately \$0.40 on the dollar goes to the debt service. But surely, if Québec were to separate, a portion of that money or that debt would have to be shouldered by Québec. And Québec would have to see to that portion, which would also amount to approximately \$100 billion, alone. In other words, we would not escape the debt.

In your brief, you seem to use the Hungarian experience to say... And you use words that are rather difficult, rather hard, because you opt for remaining within the Canadian federation and you say "They learned that uncontrolled passion, leaving no room for common sense, is a poor counsellor. Recent events also prove that it is not a good idea to forget the economic facts because poverty leads irrevocably to the restriction of rights and freedoms". Do you believe that, should Québec decide to become sovereign, the people of Québec would place themselves in a situation such as the one you have described here? Do you believe the economy would suffer to the point that individual rights and freedoms could be affected?

Mr. Tokes: Perhaps the words used in the brief were a bit too strong and too black. There is one thing I know and that you all know. When the PQ government was in power, for

instance, a lot of capital left Québec – because it's psychological. Montréal fell a long way from its former level. Now again, from what I hear from my friends, a lot of Francophone companies are moving across the border for various economic and psychological reasons. Particularly because they think they are better located, perhaps with free trade, near a major market. So, I think that Québec's situation is completely different from the situation of the small European countries; just because of that great economic power America and Québec which should perhaps be more seriously evaluated, as my colleague mentioned earlier. It is precisely this unknown quantity that worries us, I think. You have noticed, of course, that the immigrants, the cultural communities, are a little more fearful than the others, for instance.

Mr. Beaudry: And your opinion is, the fact that Québec would be isolated in the context...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): A short question, Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes. The North American context would place it at a disadvantage compared to European countries of similar size.

Mr. Tokes: Yes. We fear that. And even if I agree with Mr. Jonas that, perhaps, in the long run, we would come back and balance the situation, I think there is a price, that famous price to pay, which it is difficult to evaluate. And I find that, at least at first, in the years to come, or in ten years or so, we are probably going to pay for it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen, Mr. Deak, Mr. Tokes and Mr. Jonas, for an interesting presentation. It is a bit late in the day but, nevertheless, those who remain around the table listened to you. So thank you for coming to speak before us.

We will now hear the Lebanese Syrian Canadian Association of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:20 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 6:22 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Our last presentation of the day will be by the Lebanese Syrian Canadian Association of Québec. Mr. Kalil will introduce the group and then present the brief in the first five minutes. Or Mr. Lawand?

A voice: Mr. Lawand.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Lawand. Well, then, you have the floor, Mr.

Lawand.

Lebanese Syrian Canadian Association of Québec

Mr. Lawand (William): Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, thank you for agreeing to welcome and hear today the representatives of the Lebanese Syrian Canadian Association of Québec. We applaud the work of the Commission and the sincere efforts of all the commissioners sitting on it.

It is my pleasure to introduce my colleagues: on my right, the chairman of our constitutional committee, Mr. Alex Kalil, a businessman; on my left, Mr. Raymond Courey, FCA, member of the committee, and Mrs. Kathleen Lawand, member of the committee. I am William Lawand, committee co-chairman.

Let me give you a brief history of our association. The Lebanese Syrian Canadian Association of Québec was founded in 1919 by a group of businessmen who wanted to set up a recreation centre for our community. In 1949, the Association built its social centre at the corner of Saint-Laurent and Jean-Talon. Over the years, the Association broadened its objectives and became a cultural centre, a meeting place for a number of Arabic-speaking groups.

Officially, our brief is submitted on behalf of the Association. You must not forget that we contacted a great many Arabic-speaking groups in Québec in order to hear their viewpoint. Some of the members of our committee were in fact requested to represent the cultural or religious groups to which they belong. You must understand that this brief was prepared with relatively few resources and is the result of the volunteer work of a small group. Therefore, the comments we presented to the Commission are general and not juridical. During the few minutes granted us, we would like to tell you, first of all, who we are, the impact our community has had on Québec, and then speak of the future of Québec and Canada.

As we pointed out in our brief, the Lebanese and Syrians arrived in Québec over 100 years ago. Since then, our group, along with other Arabic groups in Québec with whom we share many affinities, has grown and prospered. We now have a population of over 100 000 souls and our social, cultural and economic impact is felt in a number of sectors. Our community took root in Québec society, and in the free and open context of that society, we have made our way successfully in professional and business circles. The large number of immigrants from the Middle East who choose to settle in Québec is proof of the fact that our community feels at home here in Québec.

Over the years, the members of our community have established a number of small

and medium-sized businesses in various sectors of economic activity, thus creating thousands of jobs for Quebecers. Our manufacturing businesses export up to 75% of their products to the other Canadian provinces and the United States.

The history of our country teaches us that two major forces are in constant opposition, a centralizing force and a decentralizing force. Today, we must try to find the middle road. A structure must be created that will recognize Québec's special interests as well as those of each of the other provinces. The status quo is no longer acceptable. We therefore call upon the political leaders of both Québec and Canada, upon their innovative and open minds and generous hearts to conceive of and set up a structure that will satisfy our need for change without throwing overboard those positive elements that served us so well for over 125 years.

Our vision of Canada is one of a country, remodelled but united, within which the French-Canadian culture would be protected and safeguarded, and within which minority groups such as ours would be respected. Québec must be unanimous in its decision to reach a fair balance between the legitimate aspirations of the French-speaking majority and the economic, political, social and psychological demands of all its citizens.

The economic, political and socio-cultural forces in Québec have enabled the Lebanese-Syrian community to prosper. These are the precious qualities that have attracted our compatriots to Québec in such great numbers. People like us from countries torn by internal strife, and sometimes by civil wars, we know how to appreciate the peace, serenity, fraternity and unity that reign in Canada, despite the regional linguistic differences that have cropped up in recent years. However, we are convinced that the current crisis constitutes a threat to the stability we would like to enjoy. Consequently, we encourage the Commission and the Québec government, when it states its conclusions, to emphasize the elements required for a return to normal, without for that reason conserving the status quo but pointing out the advantages inherent in a strong Québec within a new Canada where we could continue to live, prouder and more united than ever.

We are now ready to answer your questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you Mr. Lawand. The first speaker will be Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome you to the work of the Commission. I particularly want to congratulate you on your involvement and participation in Québec society. I am amused because last evening we had representatives from the Italian-Québec community who said: We are an example

of good integration in Québec. They said they were the best example. But I think in this respect you are an example also, a very significant example. And you describe it well by recalling the history of your participation in activities here.

(6:30 p.m.)

This being said, I do not agree with the analysis in the second part of your brief. I thought, while reading it, of a line from a song of Jacques Brel, "Rêver l'impossible rêve" - Dream the Impossible Dream. Because essentially, the second part of your brief denies, I think, affective and rational reality, in the sense that you seem to think that everything is possible if we negotiate, discuss, rebuild bridges, as if nothing had happened in the past. This reappears in different places in your brief. I share your wish for unification, but how, in practical terms, after the many failures we have had in attempts to agree on a constitution, how and by what means do you propose we achieve what you are claiming can be achieved?

Also, I agree with you when you say in your brief that this country in which we live has enabled us to realize ourselves economically, among other things. I don't think anyone says that federalism is a gulag, as Mr. Lévesque sometimes claimed; it has in fact enabled us to have great success economically, but this is also a result of the dynamism of our people, of the institutions we have acquired. I think for example of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, which has made it possible for Québec entrepreneurs to build their businesses.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There will be no time for an answer if you don't get to the question.

Mrs. Marois: Yes, I have finished. I want to know mainly what means you suggest for carrying out what you want to achieve, that will have some chance of succeeding.

Mr. Courey (G.-Raymond): To answer your question Mrs. Marois, we and our parents came to Canada to prosper. There are many countries where, at present... Even last evening, I wonder how many of you watched television until midnight to see what would happen? You stayed. And what did happen? The fact that there was no attack at midnight, or at eight Baghdad time, was because everyone wanted to talk. I think our community has integrated into Québec, and we feel that that requires more dialogue. Someone will say to me: Mr. Courey, we have been talking for 20 years. Yes, 20 years. And if it takes another 20 years, do you think that in taking the options available we are going to have a stable economy or one as stable as the one we had, as you have said, in the past? I answer you with your own question.

Mrs. Marois: I'll send the ball back into your court in this way: Let's imagine... I think that ours is a developed country, and a democracy...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'll have to interrupt this tennis match if you play too long. We have exceeded our time.

Mrs. Marois: Briefly, Mr. Chairman. If Québec offered, as was done in the past and as it can do, I believe, a favourable economic climate, political stability, religious, social and ethnic tolerance, would you be agreeable to living in such a Québec, one which would be sovereign while preserving economic relations with the rest of the continent?

Mr. Courey: If you can assure me or assure us that you have read in our brief the words we have written, that this stability will arrive on day one and not in year 15, we are ready to consider it, but we believe that with the sovereignty option of which you speak we are going to have to move backwards before we can advance.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We have now passed... There are four speakers to come: Mr. Assad, Mr. Dufour, Mrs. Campbell Steer, Mr. Beaudry. As always I ask you to be brief and precise. Mr. Assad.

Mr. Assad: I am very pleased that you submitted a brief. You have talked about many things and I recognized in the Lebanese, when they spoke about economic stability... Clearly, a people who are well known, who can be found throughout the world, who have lived as traders... You have spoken about your involvement in Québec, it is true that it was created... I remember when my father came here, in 1906, there were no difficulties in integrating into Québec because there was an affinity. If there was prosperity in Québec it was because the French Canadians, this affinity, were ready to do business with us, and with their collaboration we prospered. I don't think that has been forgotten and our parents and grandparents were especially aware of this affinity, which was extremely important because we prospered, as have our children, in Québec. I don't think that has been forgotten.

Of course, economic stability is of concern to us, and I know that three-quarters of the Lebanese are now, and have been for some years, Franco-Lebanese who are professionals and settled here. It is a sort of question, yes, as Mrs. Marois said. Regardless of the results of the discussions, there will be at least 100 000 Lebanese. No matter what the future brings, we are here to stay. We have succeeded in living well. As Mrs. Marois said, our point of view in this regard is: Do I have good reason to say that

we are here to stay, regardless of the regime?

Mr. Lawand: It is obvious that we are here to stay, because we love Québec. In Québec, if I may go back to Mrs. Marois' question, you accuse us of dreaming in colour. But as an organization that can keep Syrians and Lebanese in the same association, without quarrelling, we can perhaps...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Lawand: If you please. Then, I can tell you... I can tell you that the Arabic-speaking peoples who come here, the Arabs who come here from the Middle East tried to put their old quarrels behind them and endeavoured to contribute to Québec. We want to stay in Québec as long as the conditions that attracted us in the past... If these conditions remain the same, why go elsewhere? We are very happy here. We have married here... I have a French Canadian wife. I form part of this community now. But we wish at any cost to preserve the conditions that succeeded, let's say, in creating the great prosperity we enjoy.

Mr. Assad: Yes. Absolutely. Then, when you have...

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

M. Kalil (Alexander): M. le Président, puis-je ajouter quelque chose à ma réponse?

Oui, notre communauté ici est dynamique. Mais elle ne l'est pas seulement sur le plan économique; elle l'est aussi en ce qui a trait à sa taille, à sa croissance. Nous ne sommes pas une collectivité statique. Notre communauté n'est pas en train de diminuer. Si vous connaissez les statistiques, que vous avez tous lues, vous savez que nous avons contribué autant que quiconque à l'immigration et à la croissance de la province au cours des 5 à 10 dernières années. Songez que notre collectivité a connu une augmentation de plusieurs centaines de personnes au Canada, et probablement de 100 000 personnes au Québec.

Nous pouvons donc nous demander, quand nous examinons la situation du Québec, si nous allons demeurer au Québec, dans un Québec souverain, ou si nous allons partir? Je pense qu'il faudrait formuler la question autrement. Notre communauté est dynamique ici; elle est bien enracinée ici, au cœur du milieu francophone, et nous avons des intérêts économiques ici. Des intérêts à long terme. Mais l'équation comporte un autre membre, soit l'aspect immigration et croissance. Le Québec de l'avenir sera-t-il aussi attrayant pour nos immigrants à venir qu'il l'était pour ceux d'entre nous qui sommes venus par le passé?

Et rappelez-vous que nos immigrants, nos amis et nos parents qui viennent ici, sont des gens qui peuvent contribuer à l'essor de cette

province et de ce pays en termes culturels d'abord, puisque leur culture est l'une des plus anciennes au monde, et en termes économiques, compte tenu de leur stabilité et de leurs compétences financières. De deux choses l'une. Ou notre communauté s'en va ou elle continue de croître à l'intérieur et d'accueillir de nouveaux immigrants.

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

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to stress the importance of the testimony of the Association libanaise-syrienne precisely because of the economic activities of this community in Québec. We have had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Kalil, president of Silonex, a high technology company that exports in great quantities. Therefore, because of this very significant economic commitment you have to Québec, I want to refer you to paragraph 3, page 17 of your brief, where you say: "Our community wishes to export goods and services, while operating in a stable, economic and political environment. Above all we do not wish to lose any of our human resources, a risk that is nevertheless to be considered if a climate of uncertainty should take hold, or if our future should be endangered." This troubles me, a paragraph of this nature, and I would like you to explain further. You speak, for example, of a loss of human resources in another possible context, independence I imagine. I know that several of your firms are in the high technology field. I would like to hear more about that.

Mr. Lawand: If I may answer you this way, there is uncertainty; and if this uncertainty reigns for many years, since we all know that if Québec chooses the sovereignist option, there will be negotiations between it and its partners to establish a common market, if, during these years of negotiation, since we do not see how that could be achieved very quickly... There are going to be many years of negotiation. If Québec's economy begins to deteriorate, we may lose young Lebanese, young Syrians, young members of our community who will want to settle elsewhere because the economy is deteriorating.

But not only our community will suffer. The Francophone community will certainly suffer, too. Québec realizes there have been waves of immigration in its history. People could not find work in Québec and went to settle in New England or in other parts of Canada. Could a period of uncertainty once again cause this loss of human resources? I hope not; we don't want this to happen.

Mr. Dufour: No, no, no one wants this. As a corollary to this, I refer to your second proposal that, to preserve these achievements, to

prevent what could happen to us, our current federal framework, a number of our institutions, must be reviewed. Fine, you are not for the status quo, far from it. I imagine you agree with repatriating immigration, repatriating manpower, repatriating these major domains to Québec.

Mr. Lawand: Yes, we completely agree with repatriating immigration because we have just had an agreement between the... and it has, nonetheless, been achieved while maintaining the status quo. But we hope that certain powers, and I believe this was mentioned in our report, the powers that give Québec direct contact with its people and the ability to preserve the French culture and the French language and all that, and the departments that you mentioned: manpower, family law, etc... We want the repatriation of all these powers and I really think we agree.

Mr. Dufour: Thank you.

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

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I also wanted to ask whether we share the idea of completely renewed federalism. What type of changes do you think will be required? Since you have already answered Mr. Dufour, I will give the floor to Mr. Beaudry. (6:45 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Fine.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have talked to us about a possible Canada of the regions. This idea was proposed yesterday by an expert, Mr. Courchene. He spoke to us about the regions, the Maritimes, the West, Québec, Ontario, etc., and you say on page 18 that Québec has been the leader in Canada for many years. And you invite Québec to take the initiative once again today in finding the formula that will achieve this renewal for Canadians, this new contract among the various regions of Canada.

Have you thought about the ways in which this could be achieved? Do you believe, for example, that the Québec government should approach the provinces and approach the federal government, or should they be told to come back with constitutional amendments? Have you examined this question from the viewpoint of the initiative to be taken and the way in which the question should be approached?

M. Kalil: La méthode que nous proposons consiste à recréer nos relations d'est en ouest et du nord au sud de façon très minutieuse, très progressive et non en posant une barrière chronologique artificielle. Nous sommes ici depuis 125 ans; nous vivons ensemble et ce ne sont pas quelques années de plus... Nous vivrons tous de

façon très aisée, merci, au cours des prochaines années. Prenons notre temps.

Nous, de la province de Québec, nous qui siégeons ici, avons entrepris une introspection très positive, fondamentale. D'autres provinces, d'autres régions du Canada suivent le même chemin. Nous le voyons dans les journaux et à la télé. Grâce à nos relations avec notre famille et nos amis de tout le pays, nous reconnaissons que la pensée se modifie considérablement à l'heure actuelle. Je veux dire au cours des deux, trois ou quatre derniers mois. Quelle doit être la méthode, alors? Essayons d'atteindre un consensus ferme, équilibrable et démocratique et laissons les autres régions et provinces faire de même. Puis, nous nous réunirons et nous regarderons dans le blanc des yeux, sans pointer de fusil sur quiconque et nous dirons: Parlons. Vous allez voir, M. le Président, qu'il y a, partout au pays, une volonté de changer et de former un pays uni. Nous suscitons l'envie. Ce pays est envié de tout le monde. Profitons-en.

Mr. Beaudry: OK.

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

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): You mentioned a moment ago, in response to a colleague who asked you what, in the final analysis, should be done, that we should continue to talk to each other. Dialogue has been very difficult between the federal government and the provincial government for 40 or 50 years. Every time the Québec government has presented legitimate demands to the federal level, they have, in effect, been rejected. This reminds me of when I was teaching at the university and did a lot of work on group phenomena. In the course of my research, I did some reading on ethology, books by Konrad Lorenz, who won the Nobel Prize in ethology. He discusses the behaviour of animals and taught me one thing. Why don't a cat and a dog understand each other? When a dog wags its tail, it's because it is happy. When a cat wags its tail, it's because it is annoyed. So, when a dog that's happy wags its tail in front of the cat that wags its tail because it believes the dog is annoying it, there is a lack of understanding of the signals they are giving each other and this always results in war. They can't manage to get along because they don't understand each other; their signals get crossed. I have the impression that we often have this problem here between the provincial and the federal governments.

We have this exact problem now in manpower training. If Minister Bourbeau were here today, he would tell you that it is... In fact, he doesn't want to participate in those discussions. He says: They won't change anything; there will just be more duplication of structures. We have a

problem. This is to show you that the problem is not that we don't talk to each other enough. It has gone farther than that. There are attitudes that have become increasingly difficult to reconcile. We have to find new ways of understanding each other. But, in any case, I want to go back to your brief.

On page 5, you refer to the world trend toward economic union. You come back to it more specifically on page 16, when you broach the European question in particular. And you draw up a list of factors to be considered in setting up a new constitutional structure in Québec and Canada. These factors could easily be found as well in a minimum federal formula, arrived at one by one, if you will, as is happening in the ECE, i.e. the Economic Council of Europe. There are two things I would like to know. 1. What do you think of this formula for Québec, given that, on page 21 of your text, you seem to propose much more extensive integration than the world trend indicates? 2. Don't you think that the emergence of nationalism in Eastern Europe and the very minimal federalism in Europe, as such, indicate, in fact, the path we should follow?

Mrs. Lawand (Kathleen): Perhaps I could answer that question. I think that question was also raised in a question Madam asked the Hungarians a moment ago. I answered that question. And it made me shudder because the question of the emergence of nationalism in Eastern Europe and so on is often raised. Wouldn't that justify Québec independence? Sovereignty? Personally, I believe and I think there are many people in the Lebanese community who would agree with me that the worldwide historic trend is in the opposite direction. I think nationalism... It's true that nationalism has a liberating effect, that it enables people to take charge in their own culture and enables a culture to grow. And God knows that the Lebanese are experiencing that now in Lebanon. However, I believe that the effect of peoples is more that of an implosion. The Lebanese came to Canada because Canada offered them a multicultural ideal. And that ideal is still conveyed by Canada today.

And if I were asked the question... I was born here, in Québec, in Canada, in Montréal, on the planet Earth, etc. I am a mix of two cultures, for my mother is French-Canadian, a French-speaking Quebecer, of French origin, of French stock; my father is of Lebanese origin. I, myself, have no identity problem at all. My ideal for the future is to live in a country that conveys a multicultural ideal, an ideal that favours the growth of all peoples, of all members of society, regardless of their origin or stock. And all this without denying the importance of preserving the language and culture of French origin. I don't deny that. I don't deny it because I am

part of it. But there is also that other aspect of my ideal, as I said a moment ago, and I will always fight for it.

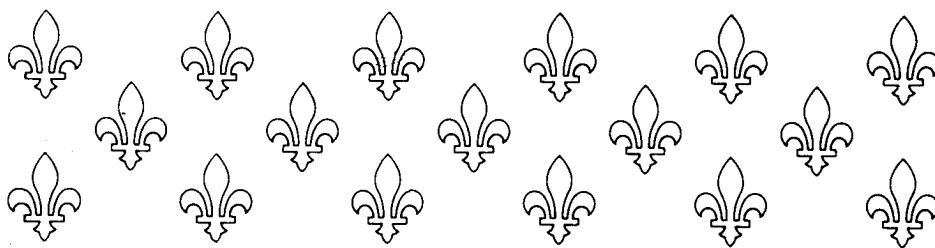
In conclusion, I believe that what the cultural communities in Québec are afraid of is the creation of a nation-State in keeping with the European ideologies of the 19th century, etc. I think history will prove that the world is not going in this direction now. On the contrary, it is moving toward the harmony and community of peoples.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): I don't want to contradict you, but I would like to ask a last question, if I may, Mr. Chairman. It is, in fact, very clear in the brief you prepared. On page 4, you say that, generally speaking, the Lebanese community settled in Québec because of its economic opportunities, its political stability and the social and religious tolerance here. What connection would you make between your choice of Québec for its tolerance and acceptance of a pluralist society, and the rest of Canada, which does not seem to accept the fact that Québec is different?

Mrs. Lawand: I am in complete agreement with you and there is an enormous problem in this regard. However, if we look at the immediate causes of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, I personally believe, and many people in the community would agree with me, that there was a huge problem in informing the Canadian people. Many people, and I think the Hungarians said the same thing a moment ago, heard Québec discussed as a distinct society without it being explained to them what that meant. I sincerely believe that the federal government should assume a major share of the responsibility for this because it made no effort. Until the last hour, it made no effort to sell the Meech Lake Accord, which Québec wanted, to explain why the Accord was good for the whole of Canada and the Canadian people, and this favoured the emergence of opposing arguments. The Meech Lake Accord became a kind of spectre for the Canadian people outside Québec. On the other hand, I feel we also should not forget that of the 10 provinces, most approved the Meech Lake Accord. In that regard, I don't...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam, for the answer. Thank you, Mr. Lawand, Mr. Kalil and Mr. Courey. I remind you, even though it is too late, no matter, that applause is not, etc., etc. I've said this about 25 times. Thank you for your presentation. I remind the members that the bus for Québec is now waiting for them. The sittings resume tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. in the Salon rouge and the bus is in the usual place at the hotel.

(End of sitting at 6:58 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, January 17, 1991

No 27

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* Speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Québec City, Thursday, January 17, 1991

Hearings of Experts and Organizations

(9:38)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. May I remind you of the Commission's mandate, which is to study and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon. Today is devoted, for the most part, to experts invited by the Commission, organizations and individuals, who will present their briefs.

Before beginning, I would like to remind you... I will take the liberty of re-reading part of the preamble to the Act: Whereas it is necessary to redefine the political and constitutional status of Québec; and whereas Québec has already demonstrated its respect for democratic values and individual rights and freedoms...

So, Mr. Patenaude, since your hearing is one hour long, you have 10 minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Pierre Patenaude

Mr. Patenaude (Pierre): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the report you received I stressed the extent to which Québec's independence is undermined by federal powers given the federal government's spending power, its overall power to legislate to ensure peace, order and good government and its encroachment power. I also pointed out the role of the Supreme Court, which I view as centralizing, in this tendency.

Today, I feel it is necessary to emphasize the need for a minority to control, exclusively and sovereignly, all the fields of jurisdiction required to preserve its distinct linguistic, cultural and social character. It strikes me as suicidal for a minority to place its destiny in the hands of another people. History has provided many lessons showing that the majority often succeeds in assimilating the minority when the majority controls the means of handing down the traditional lifestyle of this minority.

French schools in Canada's English-speaking provinces are a case in point. Everywhere, Francophones have had to live under a government controlled by a majority of a different language. Their institutions were closed down for a long time and assimilation has done its inevitable work.

I'm thinking, for example, of Ontario's Regulation 17 and the Laurier-Greenway agreement in Manitoba. And, having been a founding dean of Université de Moncton's faculty of law, I was able to see to what point the temporary closing of French schools in New

Brunswick was tragic for this minority.

Having also chaired a group of Canadian constitutionalists for some fifteen years, I have seen, in my many travels throughout Canada, how English Canada's unwillingness to compromise, until very recently, greatly harmed Francophone minorities outside Québec. Only Québec has succeeded in permanently maintaining a complete French-language education system and in ensuring the survival of Francophones and the development of their culture during a time when this unwillingness to compromise characterized English Canada. This was possible because the Québec legislature had sole jurisdiction in the field of education, property and civil law.

Who could realistically argue that, during this time, the federal government supported the culture and language of Quebecers? Can we be sure that some day this unwillingness to compromise will not once again become the rule in English Canada as it has in all other countries where history's pendulum has swung from welcoming diversity to being unwilling to compromise? Consequently, can we allow the federal government, controlled by a majority whose language and culture are not ours, to preponderantly invade the fields of jurisdiction formerly attributed exclusively to Québec? Moreover, reading the briefs submitted to your commission is enough to convince us, once again, that various new powers should be added to the list of jurisdictions reserved exclusively for Québec, if we want to ensure our cultural development and the permanent survival of our language.

A people in a geographically unfavourable location, subject to the constant threat of assimilation must, at the very least, obtain absolute control of the means for passing on its distinct character. Otherwise, it is condemned to be the victim of the desires of a majority foreign to it. Ongoing demands for constitutional reform are usually met by the federal government and English Canada with mere administrative agreements, which are temporary, provisional and terminable. These agreements are often simply a reflection of the support Québec's spokespersons enjoy at the time of negotiation. The recent immigration agreement is a good example. Temporary band-aid measures such as these may appear satisfactory to the Canadian English-speaking majority, which is accustomed to a constitutional common law system composed essentially of conventions and often unwritten customs, but they provide no guarantee whatsoever for the future of the Québec people. These agreements are effective only for a certain period of time and ensure no protection against a majority which might one day again assume an uncompromising attitude. Substantial

reform of the sharing of legislative powers is therefore necessary, in my opinion, to ensure Quebecers permanent control over the jurisdictions essential to their collective survival.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord and, even more so, the constant refusal to substantially reform Canadian federalism force us to conclude that, unless Québec actually becomes sovereign, no constitutional talks will be effective. In my view, only sovereignty will permit true discussions with Canada likely to result in a new association corresponding to Québec's basic needs.

In my view, Canada will have to be confronted with a reality before it actually agrees to put an end to the status quo. Only then will Québec federalists be able to advocate a new Canadian Constitution. Sovereignists could then propose an agreement between two sovereign States, Québec and Canada, and the choice would be up to the Québec people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Patenaude. We'll now move on to the question period. First question, Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Mr. Patenaude, I note that you are a full professor of law with the Faculty of Law of the Université de Sherbrooke. I read your brief, which proffers the sovereignty option, of course. I have two questions for you. Yesterday, I obtained a document, and I'd like to have your opinion on it. It isn't necessarily related to your brief but it does deal with the option you advocate. It's the document from Geneva "A compilation of international instrument human rights" - I assume you've already seen this document - "The right of self-determination". I think the sovereignty option is based on Québec's right to self-determination. The question I'm asking you - and I ask myself the same question, because I don't have the answer - and I'm not trying to box you in at all, I simply want your opinion. This document states: "Tous les peuples ont le droit à l'autodétermination. Ce droit leur permet de déterminer librement leur statut politique et de poursuivre leur développement économique, social et culturel." (translation)

In principle, all peoples have the right to self-determination. What puzzles me somewhat is section 6 of this paragraph which states - and this is what I would like you to comment on: "Toute tentative dirigée vers la destruction partielle ou totale de l'unité nationale ou de l'intégrité territoriale d'un pays n'entre pas à l'intérieur des objectifs et principes de la chartre des Nations Unies" (translation). It seems to be saying that trying to partially or totally divide the country would be incompatible with the right to self-determination. Have you ever

seen this text and do you have any comments on it?

(9:45 a.m.)

Mr. Patenaude: First, I have not seen this text; second, I have two comments. One, the United Nations is an organization of nations, of sovereign countries. Clearly, no sovereign country would agree to sign an agreement stating that that country could be divided. So, I understand the philosophy underlying this document. My second comment... I'm here to talk about the text I submitted and not about hypothetical questions asked in other areas. When I was chairman of the constitutionalists of Canada for a few years, I learned the lesson that you should only answer questions on a text for which you were prepared. So, I would formally ask you to invite a professor of constitutional law who will tell you about the impact of UN charters on declaring sovereignty, or to read Jacques Brassard's book *L'accession à la souveraineté*, which deals with this in great detail.

I'm sorry not to be able to give you more answers. You are well aware, since you have been here in Parliament for some time, that there is a fundamental lesson that one learns after a few years, and which I learned the hard way when I was young, and that is to answer only on the subject which you prepared.

Mr. Beaudry: Which you submitted. That's right. Well then, my second question is the following: On page 6 of your report, you state...

Mr. Patenaude: Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: It's the last sentence of the next-to-last paragraph: "To do so, it seems to me that only Québec's declaration of independence with an assurance of international support..." (translation). Why did you use the words "with an assurance of"? Is it because in the past you have seen other texts - not necessarily the one I submitted to you, but other texts - that can be interpreted two ways? Before declaring independence, then, we should perhaps conduct a survey, Québec should perhaps make overtures to find out whether we will at least be recognized by other international countries? Is that why you used this term?

Mr. Patenaude: When an entity decides to create its own country, the first step usually taken is to ensure the support of certain important countries.

We can draw on an example experienced in Québec. When we decided to sign our first international agreements and set up Québec delegations, the discreet but genuine support of France at the time apparently helped the federal government to adopt the umbrella policy and to allow some degree of international action by the provinces.

We have to... This is my personal opinion, but I think it would be very dangerous to take any action whatsoever towards achieving sovereignty without ensuring some international support.

Mr. Beaudry: In other words, then, before holding a referendum, Québec should... Because all possible suggestions have been made, some have told us: As soon as the report is tabled, you should immediately go to the people to find out whether they agree with sovereignty or not. You say: Once the report is tabled, we, the members of the Commission – if the option suggested or recommended to the Québec government, assuming that it's the option recommended, if it is the sovereignty option – before entering into this type of debate and eventually holding a referendum, you should ensure that as Québec, as a province, as a potential country, will obtain the assurance of international support to ensure that doors will be open once independence, if this is the case, is declared. Is that what you're telling us?

Mr. Patenaude: My opinion is exactly the opposite.

Mr. Beaudry: Oh!

Mr. Patenaude: I'll tell you why. If we want to have a certain amount of international support, the Government will have to prove that its project enjoys a certain legitimacy. And, for a project to be legitimate within a democratic system, there's nothing like a referendum with a high percentage of "yes".

Mr. Beaudry: But how are you going to make sure...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Pardon me. I allowed another question, but your time was already up. Perhaps your colleague will ask the same question.

Mr. Beaudry: It was just a little...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Béland. Write it down for him, he'll ask it. Mr. Béland.

Mr. Béland: I doubt I'll be asking the same question as Mr. Beaudry, but...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: But you could continue in the same line of thought.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Béland: I ask only those questions that

I prepared.

A voice: Oh yeah.

Mr. Béland: Just like Mr. Patenaude.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

A voice: Me too.

Mr. Béland: Mr. Patenaude, your brief has the quality of being very clear. You are among those who say: It's impossible to even envisage negotiating with Canada without first having repatriated certain powers. And you say: That takes independence. What surprises me is... I took a look at your resumé, I know you and your reputation is a good one. I know that you have a lot of experience with the Belgian Constitution because you taught in Belgian universities for several years, or frequently anyway. They amend their Constitution frequently, if my information is correct; they do so quite blithely, in fact. At every turn of the road, more constitutional amendments. What, in your opinion, makes it absolutely necessary in this case to declare independence in order to successfully negotiate constitutional amendments? Although we have only five minutes, I'd like you to tell me a little about your experience with the Belgian Constitution.

Mr. Patenaude: Well, perhaps it wouldn't necessarily take an act of independence. In my opinion, the Québec people would have to clearly state their will, that is, if there is no possibility, no change in English Canada, on a given set date, Québec could opt for independence.

Let me answer your first question, OK? During the first 15 years of my career, I travelled from sea to sea within Canada and, for some time, I chaired a study group of Canadian constitutionalists with professor Dale Gibson of the University of Manitoba on possible reform of power-sharing. If my memory serves me correctly, we worked seven or eight years within the study committee. We submitted our report and, as you know, it didn't change much where power-sharing is concerned.

So, in 1982, seeing the result of my 15 years of devotion to this cause, I decided to refrain from future participation in study committees on changes in power-sharing because I could see very well that we hadn't... English Canada politely heard us out, but that's all. As I see it, the Quebecers who were there, myself in any case, realized that all the studies we had done culminated in the Constitution Act of 1982. And all this was done contrary to the desires we had expressed to the very great majority of constitutionalists who had taken part in these meetings. So, to force English Canada to change

the status quo, I feel that we need political power, which would be real only if there were a set deadline and a referendum supporting the possibility of Québec's declaring sovereignty if English Canada refuses, once again, to adopt tangible things.

English Canada has everything to gain in keeping discussions going for as long as possible without making any changes. So, in my opinion, Québec... it might not be necessary to go ahead with independence but we must at least envisage independence and hold Canada to a very tight deadline. Personally, I think that Canada won't be able to meet Québec's needs and, personally, I think – and this is my personal opinion – that sovereignty is probably the only solution because since the Tremblay report we have come up against constant, systematic, standard refusal by English Canada to change anything regarding the sharing of legislative jurisdictions, unless it be to increase the federal government's jurisdictions by taking away from the provinces.

Mr. Béland: But why is this not so in Belgium?

Mr. Patenaude: Listen, in Belgium, the Flemish had much more political clout than we do. Let me answer your second question. I don't wish to make any value judgements on what happened in Belgium, but I did notice at least one thing. The Flemish did get cultural security – and I'm warning you I don't want to get into the debate on linguistic territoriality or personality, we could spend days on that – but when the Flemish had cultural security, then they began to think about development and about the economy. And today Flanders is Belgium's wealthiest and most prosperous region. The Flemish have settled there and assimilation has stopped completely in Flanders. I'm not saying that the entire Belgian experience was a success, far from it. I'm going to use this opportunity – a number of you are businessmen, I'd like to do a little advertising. On March 22, we're going to have a Wallonia-Québec symposium at the Université de Sherbrooke on how to possibly live in a federal State and be culturally protected. That's it for my free plug. But Flanders nevertheless succeeded in obtaining this cultural security which has allowed it to develop economically rather than constantly worrying about linguistic and cultural problems. So, it may be possible, but this political clout and the political will of the Québec people must be so well established and so strong that we are able to force English Canada to have a policy uniform enough to negotiate bilaterally.

I'll end on that note. The constitutional amending formula makes this very difficult right now since we cannot amend the Constitution without the authorization of seven provinces representing 50% of the Canadian population. So,

how can we negotiate a constitutional amendment within the current context without declaring sovereignty? I throw out the challenge to those who think it's possible. I'd like them to explain to me how, legally and validly, it can be done.

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

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Patenaude, one of the fundamental questions facing this Commission is that of constantly drawing a fine line between collective and individual rights and, on page 4, you refer... and I quote. You state: "Only the State of Québec should have jurisdiction over language. Clearly, its language policies must respect the fundamental rights written into a future Québec Constitution and interpreted by Québec courts." (translation) (10:00 a.m.)

If we were to talk about posting signs, for instance, to try to determine this fine line, the Québec courts recognize the absolute right to protect and promote the French language, of course, but they also ruled that prohibiting other languages on these signs constitutes a violation of individual and minority rights.

So, based on the decision of the courts, Québec's courts, do you see a need for this legislation in a sovereign Québec, in the redefinition of Québec that you foresee?

Mr. Patenaude: First of all, I don't see it as a debate between collective and individual rights. I see it as a debate between individual rights and the common good. And the ideas of the legislators in this area differed from those of the courts. However, I might point out that the vision of the courts was supported both by the Québec Charter and the Canadian Charter. So, it was within the Canadian context that Bill 178 was legally adopted.

Should Québec become a sovereign State, I assume that we would be justified in thinking that Québec would be as democratic as it had been before, and I assume that rulings would be virtually identical to those within the Canadian context. To begin with, the "notwithstanding" clause was never imposed by Québec. It is in the Canadian Constitution. The courts opted for the protection of individual freedom of expression, and contrary to a law that seemed to be for the common good in Québec, linguistic security, and, in some cases, I would go as far as to say linguistic peace.

The legislators saw things differently. In a democratic State, it is possible to think that in some cases, legislators see things differently from the courts; it's very possible. Naturally, I can understand that you might be worried should Québec become sovereign. This isn't the subject of my discussion this morning but I can

understand that it could be worrisome to be a minority in State of a different language. What I said about Québec can also be applied to you. Entrusting one's fate to a State controlled by a majority whose language and culture differs from yours can be unsettling. Currently, it's the Francophones within Canada that feel this insecurity.

I would hope that a free Québec State – if it were free, since we're dealing in hypotheses – would have a charter of human rights. I'm convinced it would. I think we have always been democratic enough and have protected our minority much better than what I have seen outside Canada for Francophone minorities.

Mr. Libman: You foresee the essential need for a notwithstanding clause even in the Constitution of a sovereign Québec State?

Mr. Patenaude: Listen, you've asked several speakers this question, I assume that their answers have convinced you. Even Mr. Chrétien said that he wasn't necessarily opposed to the "notwithstanding" clause. So, it seems to me that a majority of politicians don't oppose it, at least not openly. The "notwithstanding" clause is an aspect; I don't think it's the fundamental issue facing your Commission.

Mr. Libman: One of the most fundamental issues... Second question, on page 12, you mention... You complain a bit about the generosity which perpetuates de facto the permanence of English-language institutions in Québec. Can this not jeopardize the future of French in Québec? It never ceases to amaze me when the people that come here say that these institutions are getting special treatment. Don't forget that English-language institutions in Québec, like McGill and Concordia, have considerable debts. But don't you take pride, for instance, in the research done at McGill and Concordia on AIDS and cancer? These studies don't speak only one language. And also, in institutions like McGill and Concordia... millions of Francophones graduate from these institutions today. This is a source of pride... that a society can provide institutions like these to minorities. I think that denigrating the importance of these institutions does nothing to advance the sovereignist cause.

Mr. Patenaude: To begin with, my goal here is not necessarily to advance the sovereignist cause, but to plead for exclusive jurisdictions and the respect of Québec's jurisdictions. If you read the report connected to that one – yes, that's the one – my point is the following. It is obvious that we have excellent English-language universities in Québec. However, to my mind, education is an exclusive provincial jurisdiction and if English-language universities deserve

research grants, and they do deserve them, Québec legislators should have sufficient revenues to award research grants to universities. That's my only point. If a university is clearly superior to another in research, it is perfectly normal that it should receive larger grants to assist in fundamental research, regardless of that university's language. But only the legislative body and the government with jurisdiction in this area should be able to act. This is not currently the case.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Hello, Mr. Patenaude. I would like to begin by thanking you for your contribution to our work which, I think, is very important and very interesting. To quickly summarize what I understood from your text, it's a little like what Mr. Larose or Mr. Laberge might say: When you're heading into negotiations, it's best to have a strike mandate in your pocket, it makes negotiating easier. Now, what remains to be seen is whether you want to use your strike mandate to strike at any cost, or as a means for negotiation. In other words... I'll formulate my question differently. In the conclusion to your brief, you suggest a declaration of independence to permit bipartite negotiation... that is, to have the mandate in your pocket.

Mine is a two-part question. Should we conclude that this approach is aimed at finding a new negotiating mechanism for the actual goal, that is, a new association, or does the wish for a new association become all-important, requiring a declaration of independence whether there is an association or not? The second part is: What do you think of the position of Nicole Duplé, another expert who appeared before the Commission, who said that Québec should define a clear position, present it to Ottawa and wait for Canada's response to this offer, wait maybe two or three years and, after that, if the response is negative, declare independence? I'd like you to comment on these two cases.

Mr. Patenaude: I'll answer you on the second point and then I'll ask you to explain your first question. The second point: I feel that the Meech Lake Accord represented Québec's clear position, and it was refused. I think that Québec can no longer ask for as little as what was in the Meech Lake Accord. This is my personal opinion. We could ask again for the exact text of Meech, but the fact remains that it was refused. I think we have to ask for much more. Personally, I would be quite concerned to see Québec arrive with demands considerably exceeding those of Meech, knowing full well that Meech was refused. How could English Canada

accept - unless we had a means of persuasion to help us - much more than what Meech contained? Obviously, I can't answer you, I'm not English Canada, but I know, for example, as regards spending powers, that several English Canadian provinces were very worried to see the federal government's spending restrained even only somewhat.

In my opinion, Québec should ensure that the spending power is eliminated entirely. The power of federal authorities to spend in areas of provincial jurisdiction must be eliminated. Can we honestly believe that provinces as poor as New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba would blithely agree to the elimination of the federal spending power, when we know full well... When I went as a dean to Moncton to create the Moncton Faculty of Law, it was no secret that the funding came from the federal Secretary of State. Without the Secretary of State's funds, I'm not sure the faculty I created would exist today. These provinces are very poor and, obviously, are very grateful to receive gifts from the federal government in areas of provincial jurisdiction. I'm not talking about equalization payments, which are much more in keeping with a federal system. There are no conditions as such. At any rate, there shouldn't be. It is these conditional gifts to member States that cause problems.

I can see that you read my text. You see to what extent federal powers interfere everywhere and so, even if we keep Québec's jurisdiction exclusive in theory, in most areas reserved for the provinces, the federal government interferes and ultimate planning can end up in the hands of the federal State. This is not in Québec's interest, especially in matters of cultural, linguistic and social jurisdiction.

I don't see how we could convince these provinces - let's call them the slightly poorer provinces - to eliminate federal spending power. This is one example, but you know as I do, you've received the reports, that Québec's demands are much stronger than they were in the Meech Lake Accord, and the Meech Lake Accord was refused despite the threats that circulated saying that it would create political instability, that it might cause Québec to separate. The Meech Lake Accord was refused. I'm certainly not the holder of the ultimate truth. I'm simply giving you my opinion as a professor who travelled through Canada for 15 years and I'm telling you that unless we have a clear mandate and maybe even a clearly identified threat, I doubt we'll succeed in getting seven provinces representing 50% of the Canadian population to consent or the unanimous consent for other amendments to the Constitution, those provided for in section 40 of the Constitution Act, 1982. I doubt it.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): So it's

the carrot and the big stick.

Mr. Patenaude: Listen, in politics, I think you're in a better position than me... You know that without a means of persuasion, it's very difficult to get an opposing party to relinquish certain jurisdictions or certain powers. I think that's part of politics.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): So, what our union friends call a power relationship, you call a means of persuasion or a very strong incentive.

Mr. Patenaude: You know, you can call it a power relationship. I don't think anyone will be insulted by this reality. Take the constitutional talks of 1867. One wonders: Why must all Québec legislation be in both languages while Ontario, with a very substantial Francophone minority, never had to adopt its laws in the two languages of the Constitution of 1867? It's very simple. At the time, Ontario Francophones didn't have the political clout that Québec Anglophones had. And, a right which is fundamental for Québec Anglophones - and I believe it is, to have one's laws in both languages - was not considered fundamental for the half-million Francophones in Ontario because, at the time, in 1867, they didn't have the political clout to impose this reality. And, what was done to the Acadians in 1867 is worse yet, since they had virtually no rights. But the Acadians were so poor economically and, at the time, they had been decimated to the extent that they didn't have the political strength to impose this reality from a constitutional viewpoint.

One of the hardest realities for a professor of constitutional law to realize, at some point, is that a Constitution, which should be an extraordinary text philosophically speaking, is, in fact, the reality of the political forces existing at a given point in time. What I'm telling you is that Québec must be strong enough politically to bring the other entity to the bargaining table with genuine offers. And, in my view, without a vote on sovereignty and a referendum on Québec sovereignty, we won't have any more clout in negotiating a future Constitution than we had in negotiating the Meech Lake agreement. That's my own personal opinion, the opinion of someone who, after 15 years of working in English Canada, has returned somewhat discouraged because he saw that nothing very tangible came of it and who is now reflecting on this.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): So, for you, the referendum to seek a mandate is a sine qua non issue, a sine qua non element in the negotiations that we'll have to enter into with the federal government in the coming years. I come back to...

Mr. Patenaude: I beg your pardon, on the condition that we are sure to have an answer...

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): To win it.

Mr. Patenaude: ...to the referendum and that the referendum is clearly formulated enough so that it is really a political "ace-in-the-hole" and not something so lacklustre that, in fact, it carries no weight whatsoever in constitutional talks.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): OK. So, it wouldn't just be an exercise; it shouldn't be a referendary exercise, but a genuine referendum.

Let me come back to the first part of my question. When you say "a declaration of independence to allow bipartite negotiation", are we to conclude that this approach is aimed at finding a new negotiating mechanism or is it aimed at the actual goal, either a new association, or if it is only the wish of a new association, is it important to declare independence?

(10:15 a.m.)

Mr. Patenaude: I think it's up to Québec's politicians to decide what type of question will be asked and what consequences will arise from these questions. If the referendum is held in the context of new negotiations with Canada, backed by the referendum, we can very well enter into new negotiations with Canada. However, I assume that we'll want to ensure that they are the last. On the other hand, we can also immediately get the sovereignty process going and set a date for achieving sovereignty. Then we can see whether perhaps Canada might come around quickly to negotiate a new agreement that might be the equivalent of sovereignty-association, a confederation or renewed federalism.

I think that the Québec people should be the ones to decide. But in my view, if a vote on Québec sovereignty were positive, the Québec government could begin to secure the transfer of powers and jurisdictions, while having sovereignty come into effect only later, to give Canada a chance to reach a position that might be acceptable to Québec.

Let's get one thing straight. The federal system is never a position that satisfies everyone; it's a viable compromise. The current federal system, in my opinion, is not, is no longer a viable compromise. So, Canada might have an offer that's negotiable and, at some point, the Québec people and even our political parties might agree to much more sovereignty for Québec within a confederal framework, within a context of sovereignty-association or even within a far more decentralized federal framework. At this point, the democratically elected individuals would choose and might submit this option to the Québec people once

again. But, first and foremost, if we want Canada to make us an offer, we need a means of exerting pressure to force Canada to do so. Currently, Canada has everything to gain by doing what it has always done, slowing things down and letting us continue discussions.

I've seen people come here to talk about all kinds of federalism. Listen, that's what we did 15 years ago, we talked about all kinds of federalism. Intellectually speaking, it was very exciting. But absolutely nothing came of it. Everyone arrived with his solution for federalism. I even took them to the monastery of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac to work in silence — we were about thirty constitutionalists. We talked but we were surrounded by silence. It was a terrific weekend. But I should tell you that as the weekend drew to a close, all we had established was that there were 35 of us around the table, and that there were 35 solutions to Canadian federalism. And when we tried to find a viable compromise, we always came up with two, three or four viable compromises but no common ground for agreement. This is what we're up against in Canada.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Pardon me for interrupting...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): A quick comment, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): OK. Do you not feel that a declaration of independence following a mandate obtained through a referendum would be perceived as a confrontation or a desire for confrontation with the rest of Canada which might create a negative climate for possible negotiations?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Can you answer quickly, Sir?

Mr. Patenaude: OK. Two seconds. Listen, when the boss doesn't want to negotiate and a strike is voted, it's often seen as a confrontation. But often it's the strike vote that convinces the boss to make a counteroffer and the counteroffer makes everyone happy and an agreement is signed. In politics, the same... Obviously, English Canada is not going to say thank you. That's clear enough!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Just a short comment. I don't want to correct you at all. You spoke of 35 people at the Saint-Benoît monastery, and I've been told that here we're 36.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Patenaude: Well, then you have one more problem than I had.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now turn to Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: And here I thought we had the missing link.

Mr. Patenaude, I read your brief with great interest. It's one of the most detailed analyses we received - I think it's fair to say, anyway as far as I'm concerned - of the perverse effects and anti-independence of Ottawa's various powers: declaratory power, the power to encroach, legislative power and spending power. You are one of the three or four experts that has stressed the importance of the Crown Zellerbach ruling and of the centralizing currents presently running through the Supreme Court. I'd like you to go into Ottawa's powers a little and their current and potential effects. I'm thinking of two elements of your brief in particular. On page 8, when you state that the "declaratory power provided for in section 92(10) (c) of the Constitution Act, 1867" could "unilaterally place under exclusive federal jurisdiction, works such as hydroelectric dams, mines, oil wells...". And the second - obviously there are several that deal with language, culture and education - Ottawa's spending power and its harmful effects on the orientation of university research and, as a result, universities.

Mr. Patenaude: Fortunately, the declaratory power has virtually fallen into disuse since it is implemented very rarely nowadays. However, Andrée Lajoie published a book in which she notes the number of times this power was used and it's a Damocles sword hanging over the provinces' heads, because it could still be employed some day.

The power over peace, order and good government is more dangerous in the sense that now, after the Crown Zellerbach affair - it had been allowed earlier but Justice Beetz overrode the position somewhat in the anti-inflation affair - the federal government is allowed to legislate preponderantly and that's where the rub comes in, in areas of provincial jurisdiction when the issue cannot be efficiently regulated through an agreement between the 10 Canadian provinces and when the issue is considered one of pan-Canadian dimension, or national dimension. What we need to realize is that this power is not of great concern to English Canada since Anglophones wield de facto control over the federal Parliament as regards numbers, at least as regards numbers. But as regards Québec, remember that in 1867 we were convinced that the issues, the areas essential to passing on our culture, our distinct character and our language... we were convinced that these areas had been given exclusively, that is solely to the Québec Parliament, where there was a

Francophone majority.

Minorities controlled by another people clearly have a harder time than a minority that succeeds in controlling the fields of jurisdiction necessary for passing on its culture. The theory of the national dimension combined with the theory of national emergency and the theory of encroachment means that the federal government can now - and let's not forget the spending power - go full speed ahead into jurisdictions which were, at the time, considered our ultimate protection in case one day unwillingness to compromise became the rule once again in our country. A minority must always be sure to enshrine the fundamental rights of protection of its culture in a new Constitution. And there I address Mr. Libman's remarks. He's quite right in ensuring that in an independent Québec the rights of Anglo-Quebecers are enshrined because temporary administrative agreements provide only temporary protection, and that protection is not lasting.

We Quebecers were convinced that the most fundamental rights were enshrined in the Constitution Act, 1867. But through theories, the spending power, the power over peace, order and good government and through the Supreme Court's interpretation of peace, order and good government, we can see that our jurisdiction, which was formerly exclusive, now looks more like Swiss cheese. There are holes wherever the federal government acts. For instance, when the federal government grants money for a city's urban development, it can considerably change Québec's urban renewal planning. And urban renewal has cultural repercussions. In Québec, our cities are not necessarily built in the same manner as in Ontario or Alberta.

As can be seen in the area of health, when the federal government envisages a project and offers significant sums to Québec, it receives the de facto power to regulate this area of health, which should be under exclusively provincial jurisdiction. There you have two examples, but let's look at all of them. University instruction: you asked me the question on university research. If the federal government decides to give considerable grants for university research in engineering but none at all in the humanities, Québec's planning can be altered as regards universities. Québec might need more studies in the humanities but, usually, the federal government gives an amount on the condition that Québec gives a virtually identical amount. So, this changes a field which was ours exclusively, where we had the exclusive power to legislate, and that was our protection in 1867.

Mrs. Blackburn: Which was, moreover, the basis for the sectors of activity exclusive to Québec which you listed. Two other questions since time is flying. Am I right in thinking that the current amending formula traps Québec

because it is easier to obtain 50% and seven provinces on a topic of interest to the Canadian provinces other than Québec, than it is for Québec?

Mr. Patenaude: What happened in 1982, Madam, with a proposed constitutional reform that didn't meet any of Québec's conditions, answers your question. At the time, all of Québec's political parties rose against this constitutional amendment but it was adopted anyhow. Should the same proposal be made today when we need seven provinces representing 50% of the population, except for the reform of the Constitution, the method for amending, reforming the Constitution, a charter of rights... Let's suppose, for instance, that tomorrow we decide to include the right to private property in the Canadian Charter of Rights and that Québec decides that this doesn't correspond to our goals and that we are opposed to this. It would be easy to get seven English-speaking provinces to give their approval, I assume... maybe not for the example I gave. But the 1982 example, in the end, the nine so-called English provinces - one bilingual and eight English-speaking - approved it. It was secured, it happened, but we didn't have Québec's approval. The Constitution was adopted anyway.

You see that if a proposed constitutional reform corresponds to the objectives of English Canada as concerns cultural protection, clearly, English Canada, in a case of cultural protection against the massive invasion of the American culture, might end up by finding a viable compromise and accepting it. Let's say the reform were to protect Québec culture from the English-Canadian culture. I assume that Québec is proposing it - and I don't think I can be far off on that - and I assume that we wouldn't get the approval of seven Canadian provinces.

Mrs. Blackburn: Several speakers have come to tell us that it would be possible to negotiate new powers with Ottawa. In your opinion, can we realistically believe that after Meech we could get more from English Canada without having a strike mandate in our pocket, to use Mr. Larose's term, that is, the power to declare independence for Québec if we were refused? Could we envisage that after Meech we could obtain more power, without a real power relationship... or the shopping list tabled here... and I'm thinking of the *Chambre de commerce du Québec*, which claims 76% of all powers, no more, no less?

Mr. Patenaude: Listen, in politics, anything is possible. But personally, after 15 years of work until 1982 in English Canada and after seeing what happened in 1982, I don't have much hope... I don't have much hope. It seems to me that any Québec government will need the

considerable support of the Québec people and a considerable means of persuasion to get English Canada to swallow the fact that a country built according to their vision could be profoundly changed to meet Québec's vision, which is not always in keeping with the most important points in English Canada. It could happen, it could happen, but I've seldom seen political powers succeed in such an important negotiation without the support of a clear will and unshakeable support for a position which would be one of strength.

Mrs. Blackburn: In answer to a question asked by my colleague, Mr. Bélanger, dealing with the spending power, you showed that the needs of the Canadian provinces, especially the smaller provinces, are radically opposed to Québec's as regards the spending power and expectations related to it, because being smaller provinces, with less revenues and fewer resources, they appreciate the spending power more.

(10:30 a.m.)

Louis Bernard came here to tell us that, in the end, the conclusion we have had to reach since 1867 is that there are two peoples whose needs and aspirations are diametrically opposed and completely different and that, as a result, we don't have the right to ask the English-speaking people to change its country to fashion it after our image and to better correspond to our expectations. This is close to your conclusion when you talk about this situation where the other province can live with Ottawa's various powers, even if there are some recriminations.

But I'm coming to a question that is really an extension of what you touched on in Mr. Bélanger's last question: the referendum issue. You say: It has to be clear. Am I to understand that it shouldn't be exactly the same one as for the 1980 Referendum?

Mr. Patenaude: No, I didn't make any... no, no.

Mrs. Blackburn: No, but by induction.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Quickly please, Madam.

Mrs. Blackburn: What should this question be and could it presuppose a choice? One specialist came to tell us, this week, that a referendum question should offer Quebecers the opportunity to opt either for renewed federalism, although we know that this is virtually impossible, or for sovereignty. Do you see a question offering this choice?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'll ask you to answer quickly please, Mr. Patenaude.

Mr. Patenaude: I'll answer very quickly. First, I'll tell you that I'm not a specialist in the field. So, once again, I can't answer like a specialist in this field would. I'd simply like to point out that if you ask: "Are you in favour of renewed federalism?", to educate the public, you will at least have to mention in the preamble to the question that negotiations have been going on for 60 years and...

Mrs. Blackburn: That's it. OK.

Mr. Patenaude: ...that there has never yet been a positive response from English Canada. And even then... The problem of educating the public is a major problem, in my view, in Québec and elsewhere. Many people read very little and may answer referendum questions without really knowing. Naturally, this is the university professor speaking, who is sometimes frustrated to see what is written in the papers. But I should tell you that I think the Québec government should make it clear to Canadians that until now English Canada has consistently refused to make any changes whatsoever to meet Québec's needs where sharing of jurisdictions is concerned and that, as a result, yes, we are ready to renegotiate perhaps for the last time, or no, we immediately want to have such a strong power of negotiation that Canada might...

Mrs. Blackburn: OK.

Mr. Patenaude: Because you see, my biggest problem is still to convince people, especially the Canadian West, that Québec's problems are not minor everyday problems of adjustment, of politics. It's a fundamental problem of a different society and the protection of our collectivity. Recently, once again, I was at a symposium at McGill University and I was listening to people from throughout Canada who were saying: We have our problems too. There's the fishing problem in the East, and the oil problem in the West and there's the problem of... But the type of problem is not the same, and that's what's complicated.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): On these numerous problems, Mr. Patenaude, I'd like to...

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes.

Mrs. Blackburn: Just a very short comment to draw your attention to a symposium organized by Mr. Patenaude at the Université de Sherbrooke on "Québec, French Community of Belgium, autonomy and distinct character within the federal system" (translation). So, as a specialist on the question, this symposium will be held on March 22, if I'm not mistaken.

A voice: March 2.

Mrs. Blackburn: March 2.

Mr. Patenaude: Mr. Chairman, two free plugs.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): You got two free plugs.

Mr. Patenaude: Just try that with your company.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Blackburn: So, those who took part in the Commission...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Perhaps, if things continue at this rate, I won't thank you for coming...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): ...or for the enlightening comments you have made to the members of this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

Mr. Patenaude: Good luck, my colleagues!

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:35 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:37 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Our work continues. Before the first speaker, I forgot to give the list of speakers for the day. So, right after Mr. Vincent Lemieux, we will hear Mr. Patrice Garant, then, Mr. Guy Laforest, Mr. Simon Langlois, Mr. Roland Arpin, Mr. Gérard Bergeron, all experts and, at 7:30 p.m., we'll be welcoming the Société des musées québécois, then Sports-Québec, the Union québécoise pour la conservation de la nature and, finally, at 9:00 p.m., the Association québécoise des professeurs et professeurs de français.

As I mentioned, our next guest is Mr. Vincent Lemieux, who is also an expert invited by our Commission. Mr. Lemieux, you have 10 minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Vincent Lemieux

Mr. Lemieux (Vincent): Thank you, Mr. Co-chairman. Since my brief is relatively short, I guess my summary of it this morning will also be short. I'll try to summarize the contents of my brief, which is entitled "Making the voice of the population heard" (translation). I think there are three or four suggestions in this brief that were made for the Commission's benefit. The first - and it's not very original - is to suggest

that the population be consulted on the political direction Québec should take through a referendum rather than a general election. I think that there's a rather widespread consensus on that within the population. I also felt I could detect a certain consensus, or at least a majority among you who were of that opinion.

In my brief, I used Maurice Pinard's studies on the so-called referendary election of 1962 in Québec to show that an election is never really referendary, since very precise poll data analysed by Maurice Pinard at the time show that a certain percentage of Québec voters who voted for the Liberal Party were opposed to the nationalization of electricity and that, conversely, some voters who supported the Union Nationale were partisans of nationalization. This is quite understandable since, as you are no doubt aware, an election combines all kinds of things. People vote for local candidates in addition to voting on themes chosen by the parties and voting on the parties' platforms. I think a referendum would give a much clearer answer to a potential question on Québec's political and constitutional future than a general election.

Secondly, I suggest that the goal of this referendum be mainly to send a clear message to those we call English Canadians, that is, Canadians in the other provinces. Therefore, the question should be formulated to get the support of the large majority of Quebecers because, of course... At any rate, I think that this referendum would be seen in English Canada as a message - at least a partial one - sent its way. Having a question that would cause a division like the one we had in 1980 or an even greater division of votes, would, to my mind, be quite disastrous for Québec's negotiating position.

In my brief, I suppose that there is some degree of consensus among parties, at least Québec's provincial parties, on what I call associationism. Clearly, neither views association in the same light, but perhaps based on a concept like this one - which will be up to the government to formulate, since we mustn't forget that, ultimately, it is the government which will be following your recommendations and which, no doubt, will have to formulate the question. Perhaps a question containing such a concept would be more likely to elicit the support of a large majority than a question mentioning sovereignty. This would likely be "divisive", to use an anglicism, unless, of course, the Liberal Party favours the sovereignty option.

In my brief, I also suggest that rather than asking a yes/no question, the question should have voters choose between two options. I feel this is much clearer because, if you ask a question like: "Are you for or against, in favour of, not in favour of a specific option", be it sovereignty, associationism or something else, you might have hardline federalists and hardline

separatists in the "no" category. Personally, I think this could be a source of confusion. We could talk about it. I would prefer to see two options, but only two, because, clearly, as soon as there are three options, we are no longer sure of getting an absolute majority: two options for the population.

In my brief I also suggest that the provincial election, the Québec election that would normally follow the referendum - because like most of you I also think that the referendum should precede the next provincial election - that this provincial election should be an opportunity for Quebecers to choose between parties, taking into account, of course, the constitutional leanings they will have defined at that point, but also their position on many other problems. It is obvious that, although they are important, constitutional problems are not the only problems facing Québec.

I suggest, but I'm less sure of what I'm proposing, that when this election is held, the parties promise that before the end of their mandate there be - for PQ party members this might bring back unpleasant memories, but this is only a suggestion - that they promise that before the end of their mandate there be another referendum, this time on a specific constitutional option. Then, I think it would depend on what happens between now and then. I wrote it in my brief but I'm far less sure of what I'm proposing since it goes a little farther on in time.

(10:45 a.m.)

Finally, my last suggestion, or my last comment, because it's not really a suggestion, is as follows. To put it a bit differently from what I wrote in my brief, I think that time is on Québec's side either in the case of a new constitutional framework in Canada or a new political framework in Canada. I make a prediction in my brief. I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure when I say that political and other problems plaguing the Canadian political system within the next five years will get worse. Many dream of political stability. Where the Canadian political system and its direction is concerned, this dream is not very realistic since I see a period of considerable political instability in Canada within the next five or ten years. It's hard for me to really pin down the time frame. We need simply look at the results of the last Gallup poll, which were published this morning, and which show - and you can tell me if this is going to change - that the Reform Party has almost caught up with the Conservative Party as far as public opinion is concerned. This shows that neither of the other two key parties, the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party, enjoys the support of the majority.

If we construct scenarios, we might think that... I'm going out on a limb here and I don't think Mr. Desjardins will be very happy if I say

it, but the Conservative government has very little chance of being reelected next time around. It could happen, but the chances are very slim. I doubt - and I say so in my brief - that the federal Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party could muster a great deal of public support. At any rate, neither of these parties would probably have much support in Québec, at least it's rather doubtful. There is also the Reform Party. If we stick only to foreseeable electoral results, we might think that we are probably embarking on a period of relative instability. Clearly, there are all kinds of problems - the deficit, problems raised by the First Nations, international problems, and so on - which, all combined, mean that, like it or not, there will probably be considerable political instability in Canada over the coming years. I think that this instability - and I'll end on this note - will encourage the definition of a new political framework since we will, no doubt, realize more and more that something new is needed. As my colleague Charles Taylor says, the Canada of the history books is somewhat outdated.

So, we need new arrangements and, consequently, I think it would be best for Québec - and this is subject to discussion - to be relatively patient in its negotiations which, at any rate, will be long, because a new constitutional arrangement cannot be negotiated like the sale of a company. In any case, it'll be long. I think that time is on Québec's side and, more globally, on the side of those wanting change. This is another point that I stressed in my brief and in which - while I don't know for certain that things will happen that way - I believe quite firmly. That then, Mr. Chairman, is what I wanted to say as an introduction.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Lemieux. The first speaker, Mr. Gil Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Professor Lemieux, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Commission. You are an eminent political analyst. Your reputation for analysing political events and particularly for analysing polls is well known. You are one of the best when it comes to analysing polls. You concluded just now saying: I don't think I'm mistaken. That's already quite something. And, in your brief, you tell us that you are willing to bet that the desire for change could come not only from Québec but also from the rest of Canada, because you see a considerable period of change in the next five or ten years. You said so yourself and you referred to this morning's Gallup poll.

I'd like to ask you this question: Professor Lemieux, the position you presented here today... did you arrive at this conclusion by studying

polls, in other words, by studying polls over the past year? In your view, what seems to be the predominant feeling about Québec's political option? And, what relation can you find between the polls from the rest of Canada that you studied?

Mr. Lemieux: On Québec's constitutional option and not on this foreseeable change in the situation? On both?

Mr. Rémillard: On both aspects. I know you've studied both aspects.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, if I start with the aspect I devoted most of my brief to, that is, the foreseeable political instability, I think that a reading of the polls hints at this, but there are also indications which are perhaps more difficult to express in figures but which exist and which are also related to the points measured in the polls. I mentioned the Bloc Québécois. I mentioned the Reform Party in the West. As concerns the next federal election - and I wouldn't like to go any farther than that and I think it'll probably be before the next provincial elections - it's very unlikely that the support for these two parties, let's call them regional, will drop significantly. I don't see how it could. So, this will create a situation in which, both in Québec and in certain Western provinces, it is very possible that - if not the majority of the MPs elected then at least a high percentage of them - be from these two parties. This means that a majority government is even less probable and that I can't really see how the elected government, assuming it's a minority or a majority and being a minority it would have the support of other groups, could claim to represent Canada as a whole. This was what happened with the Conservatives in 1984 and again in 1988. So, there will be pockets...

Mr. Rémillard: But in that context...

Mr. Lemieux: ...of representation, and I think this is one of the elements that will create instability.

Mr. Rémillard: But in that context... May I? Is it in that context that you reach the conclusion - I think I detect this conclusion in your brief - that we can enter into last-ditch negotiations by stating what Québec wants and entering into last-ditch negotiations? Do you arrive at this conclusion based on your studies of these polls?

Mr. Lemieux: You'll note that, unlike some of my colleagues, I'm not against last-ditch negotiations. I think that even if the situation will be more favourable a little later, that, as of now, yes, there could be a favourable context, or

at least there would be one after a Québec referendum in which the great majority of Québec voters supported the negotiation option. I think that in the years to come that will already create a favourable context at least to begin negotiations. But what I'm saying is that the context will no doubt be even more favourable in a few years. However, I would like... Yes?

Mr. Rémillard: So, you're telling us not to rush into things?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, personally, I...

Mr. Rémillard: I'm trying to get your message.

Mr. Lemieux: What I'm telling you is not so much not to rush into things. In any event, I think negotiations will be long. I think we'll probably have to have a referendum before negotiations or it won't make much sense. But I don't think we could imagine a scenario where, after a few months or even a few years, negotiations - supposing they go well - will result in a new constitutional arrangement. I think that in any event, like it or not, we'll have to devote a few years to them. Once again, what I'm saying is that, in a few years, while negotiations will no doubt still be ongoing, the context will be more favourable. This is a forecast I'm making, I could be wrong, but I'd be very surprised if I came back five years from now, if I had to admit that I was mistaken.

Mr. Rémillard: You spoke of a referendum and you made the very important distinction between a referendum and an election. You quite rightly stated that an election doesn't allow us to elicit the people's will on an option as fundamental as, for instance, a substantial change regarding Québec's belonging to the Canadian federation. I think your brief is very clear on that. But you talk about a referendum that could be held on two aspects. It wouldn't be a referendum for a yes/no answer but rather one of choosing between two options. Would you see this referendum as - to use an expression that has been used here at the Commission - a strike mandate that you'd want the government to have before going to negotiate or is it a mandate that could be sought after negotiations, should they fail, with this strike occurring immediately after the referendum was held?

Mr. Lemieux: No, that's not what I'm suggesting. What I'm proposing is that there be an initial referendum on political orientation and that, after it, we go to negotiate. But it wouldn't be a strike mandate in the sense that, to my mind, this initial referendum should not

include - the second one maybe - because things would become too complicated if we had something like: OK, listen, if this political orientation is not accepted by the others, we'll declare independence or sovereignty. We'd have to ask both questions, and that would complicate matters greatly. I think that we should have a relatively simple question, as simple as possible, whether it deals with a political orientation, whether it be a clear message to English Canada with negotiations in mind. Let me take this opportunity to say something I didn't write in my brief, that is, that a referendum on this issue is entirely appropriate. In a comparative work on referendums published a few years ago, the authors, editors, Butler and Ranney, pointed out that a study of the questions or issues that were the subject of referendums throughout the world showed that most were referendums on constitutional issues or on questions regarding boundaries or constitutional rearrangements. So, I think it would be appropriate to hold a referendum on this topic. But I want to come back to what I've just said: an orientation. I think a referendum on one specific option should be held after an initial referendum.

I'd just like to add a few words on the strike mandate. I think the analogy is used quite often here. I heard my predecessor talk about the power relationship to be established and the strike mandate we hold. I think that this is all true, except that some analogies are a bit misleading. In a strike, the bosses and union members belong to firms or organizations where they are condemned to live together. I'm not talking about the exceptions, but if we look at the example of the negotiations of the Québec government with the unionized members of the public sector, it's obvious that these people are condemned to live together. In the case of negotiations with the rest of Canada, as we politely call them, this is not at all the case. We could say that we are condemned to live together, but we mustn't exclude the possibility which some speakers mentioned before you that the other party might balk somewhat and decide that there won't be any economic association with a Québec which dared to declare independence, or at least sovereignty to start with. I mention this in passing to point out that we shouldn't get too caught up in analogies that are not perfectly in keeping with the situations we are studying.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): If you don't have any objection, Mr. Lemieux, we'll move on to another speaker, Mr. Chevette.
(11:00 a.m.)

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Lemieux. I've negotiated personally for 17 years, Mr. Lemieux, and I've found there are two ways of negotiating. First, there's the approach of clearly making one's demands and

then there's the approach of trying to scare the boss by seeking very specific mandates for action before the demands are made. But, I see the Commission's mandate as defining what we want and even defining the means we could use to get it. When I read your brief, from the first page to the very last paragraph, I don't share your opinion, because I don't think the people who came before us to explain that there was a need for such-and-such a power in the field of manpower training or cultural development are simply frustrated. I think they did so because of true needs in their sector. I'm thinking of the Québec Chamber of Commerce, the Montréal Board of Trade, several groups, including one which consisted of 28 organizations, I think, demanding manpower training. They didn't do it because they're frustrated but because Québec needs tools to develop. Then, I began to think about what you would put on your first ballot, the federalist option and the associationist option.

In your brief, you say it is very important to properly define things because people are voting on the fundamental issue and not necessarily on a label. I'd like you to explain to me, then, what the fundamental issue should be or the arguments to define for me the term "associationist option" because we have to have the power to associate. You can't amalgamate powers you don't have. So, I'd like to know whether you take for granted that to present the associationist option, we need first to be sovereign or independent as a people to form a people with all the powers. In the same answer, I'd like you to tell me whether it's also important, if we put the federalist option on the ballot, to define what type of federalism we want, otherwise we could vote outright for the most perfect status quo possible.

Mr. Lemieux: OK. Obviously, it's not up to me to determine what should be written on the ballot. I'll try to detail my thoughts on that a little. In the option I call federalist - I think I say it indirectly, but in my brief it's quite clear - in my view, it would be 10-member federalism, as we currently know it. Perhaps with some changes, perhaps more decentralized. The option I call associationist - I use this term and I may be wrong, but it seems to me that, if there is a consensus between Québec's two main parties on an option, it could be defined using this term.

Before coming here, I reread Jacques-Yves Morin's brief which, I think, was very useful in explaining certain terms. At one point in his brief, he talks about association between independent States within a federal framework or the association of sovereign States within the framework of a community or a confederation. OK, as I see it, associationism in an association between independent States within a federal

framework means a different federal framework than the one we currently have. It's no longer a case of 10 provinces but, as Jacques-Yves Morin and others have indicated, two States with quite a bit of autonomy. Perhaps the term is not a good one, but once again, what I wanted to say, and perhaps I wasn't very adept, what seems important to me is that within this Commission - I think your chairmen are committed to arriving at a consensus - and then between parties, that at least for the first referendum there be some sort of agreement on defining an option other than 10-member federalism. Because I'd be very surprised to find that in the report at the end of your work, the majority proposes 10-member federalism. I'm saying that to simplify things. Where Québec is...

Mr. Chevette: In your negotiation, Mr. Lemieux...

Mr. Lemieux: Yes.

Mr. Chevette: ...let's assume that federalism is chosen, would it be within the current federal framework?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, what I call 10-member federalism.

Mr. Chevette: It's not the same negotiating content...

Mr. Lemieux: Yes.

Mr. Chevette: If, for instance, we chose the sovereignty option, we would negotiate the common pot and the manner, the schedule for transferring powers. It's not at all the same type of negotiation. It's not at all...

Mr. Lemieux: Of course.

Mr. Chevette: ...the same dynamics at work in a negotiation. Whereas under federalism as it is now, you have to stick to the rules in the Constitution. That is, 11-member negotiations.

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, yes, that's perfectly accurate. Moreover...

Mr. Chevette: Is it because you have opted for the existing form of federalism and the existing form of negotiations that you think that negotiations will be long and arduous?

Mr. Lemieux: No, I think you have misread my brief. If I propose countering 10-member federalism with another formula, which I describe using the term associationism, it's because, personally, like many others, I think that 10-member federalism as it was practiced doesn't have much hope in the future. I propose a

formula such as this one to you simply because I want to set it up in opposition to the associationist option, which has a chance of winning a majority, by an option which, I think, has little chance of being supported by a majority of Quebecers.

Mr. Chevette: But if I read your brief correctly, you suggest and you state that federalism in its current form has little chance in the future. And still you want us to put it on the ballot for the first referendum...

Mr. Lemieux: Yes.

Mr. Chevette: ...whereas it's our duty as Commission members to put something reasonable, something that could work.

Mr. Lemieux: OK, listen, that would be one of the two options between which the people would have to choose. I think it's very important that those outside Québec know how much support remains for 10-member federalism. I think a question of this nature is more likely to send a clear message than a yes/no question, where we wouldn't really know who is in the "no" camp. Once again, let's assume we propose a choice between sovereignty-association - this will doubtlessly not be the term used, because it must be remembered that the existing Liberal government will formulate the question - but something like that.

It's plausible that among those who voted "no", there could be separatists who don't want the association mentioned in the first option, and also federalists. I think that muddles things up much more than if you present the population with two options. That's my opinion.

Mr. Chevette: OK. In two places in your brief, you state... Once you say that the costs would be enormous, they would be considerable - enormous costs, you say so in two places - if Québec declared sovereignty. On what is this based? What have you analysed? What research have you done to arrive at such categorical statements?

Mr. Lemieux: I'd like to specify that I spoke of transition costs. I think that...

Mr. Chevette: Enormous transition costs.

Mr. Lemieux: ...in both cases, yes, in both cases, I spoke of transition costs. I even stated that at the end of this transition, it is highly likely that we might be able to reach an arrangement which could be to Québec's advantage. OK. I'm not the first to talk about that. I think a number of economists told you the same thing, especially in the event that negotiations were long and went more or less

smoothly. Naturally, this would create instability. I think some instability is inevitable for the reasons I gave earlier and, in a word, the transition costs could be considerable. I don't know whether I spoke of enormous costs.

Actually, I think it's highly likely that we would incur such costs. Now, once again, that doesn't mean that once we've passed this difficult period - and I didn't comment on that - Québec would be worse off than it is now. I'd like to add that for the record.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): A quick question, Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Yes, Mr. Chairman. On page 2 - a short comment - you say that top university researchers would not be very happy to lose federal monies. That makes me think about what seniors were told about their pension funds. Just a comment. The question is about...

Mr. Lemieux: Yes.

Mr. Chevette: ...what happens in your second referendum. The contents of your second referendum are determined by the Government after an election. Don't you think - you say that you speak on behalf of the people - that the people should give their opinion on the content itself not only through the voice of the Government alone but through the voice of the much more global National Assembly?

Mr. Lemieux: You'll note that the first referendum also will be a referendum with a question formulated by the Government. I hope that you aren't deluding yourself, Mr. Chevette. You are surely aware that the Commission will make a recommendation and the Government will probably take it into account. It is possible that this recommendation will be in keeping with what it wants. So, I think a referendum question, except in cases of public initiative, is always formulated by the current government with or without the approval of the Opposition party. If we really wanted the people to formulate the question, we would have to take recourse to something for which no provision is made, at least in our legislation, but which exists elsewhere, namely, public initiative. We'd have to demand that a certain number of signatures - the problem would be to determine that number - supported the request that the Government be held, supposing a statute provided for it, to a referendum on the question as formulated by the people. Otherwise, it's the Government, once again, which more or less takes public opinion into account and bases its question on what the public thinks and on what the Opposition parties think. That's its right. We may not agree, but that's the way it is.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Béland.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lemieux, you state, somewhere in your brief, that the Canadian political system seems condemned to instability and you even add a little further on that the situation will be even worse in five years. You're very clear on that. But, at the same time, you state: The transition costs, in the eventuality of a break, will be - and I'll use your term - considerable. Yesterday, certain experts, and others before them, came to tell us: Yes, should there be a break, there might be a turbulent period. Some said: three years, four years, five years. The most pessimistic said ten years. There will be a turbulent period, but after that it'll be better. Given this, and given the fact that, after all, we are a Commission, a special, extraordinary Commission - unprecedented in Québec history, I think - it's because we are truly - and I use Mr. Bourassa's words - at a constitutional impasse. I don't think I, for one, would have agreed to spend so much time here simply to say: OK, let's look at what's happening and then let's go back and say: Let's start again, let's re-negotiate, let's go back to Daniel Johnson's "equality or independence" to the 1960s' "Maîtres chez nous". I don't think we're at that point. The fact that we're here means that there is some urgency to this whole thing.

So, to choose between an even greater instability in five years, because that costs too... A lot of people have come before us, people from employment, people from chambers of commerce, people from manpower training. To my great surprise, I read yesterday: Ottawa to invest \$1 billion in manpower training - that's 1990 for you - despite the positions of Mr. Bourbeau, the Cabinet, the manpower round table on which a number of us sit, where we told the federal government: We want to repatriate manpower training immediately. Despite all this, the federal government says: I'm taking \$1 billion. Duplication continues, dual orientations continue. So, we have to choose and to recommend... to recommend choices, not to make them, but to recommend them to the National Assembly, faced with choosing instability, which will be worse in five years, and transition costs that will lead us to a better situation in five years, if experts are to be trusted... What would you recommend we recommend?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, I think you've stated the dilemma quite aptly. What can we say about it? I might repeat that, in my view, future negotiations will occur regardless of the context. Let's use the scenario of a declaration of sovereignty, independence and then negotiation, or the scenario of lower profile negotiations, where Québec adopts a general orientation and

negotiates on that basis - it goes well or not; there's another referendum or not - personally, and I may be wrong, I think that it'll be long whichever way you look at it, so much so... Do we really have a choice? If we could solve all this in a year, two years, three years, I'd answer: Yes, because it's better to move quickly. There will be transition costs, but we think that after three years it'll be over and we'll be much better off.

(11:15 a.m.)

However, if you think, as I do, that it could be a little longer - and that's basically what I say in my brief - you could say, either way, it's going to be long. And if it's long, it could be favoured - this is one scenario I see - by the fact that the instability in Canada will increase and, with time, the conditions may be more favourable in five, six, seven years, I don't know, than they are now. It's very difficult to answer your question, given that we can't predict the future. However, I tend to think that we can do it quickly in a few years, thus keeping transition costs to a minimum and ending up better off. It's not a scenario I consider very probable but, then, I could be wrong.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move to Mr. Roger Nicolet, followed by Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lemieux, I, for one, am all for the need to formulate a question that will rally the support of the vast majority of Quebecers. I have a bit more trouble, something along the lines of Mr. Béland, in visualizing the process you advocate. Regardless of how we view our mandate, we have, over the past few months, heard a number of briefs and groups largely representative of Québec society, who have come and outlined a relatively tight, complete schedule of certain demands which, in their view, are relatively urgent. You propose a scenario - and I'm quoting your text on pages 7 and 8, page 8 in particular - based on the instability of our spokesperson to enable us to attain the result sought by our fellow citizens. So, we have two speeds: wait for the Québec people, as we view it today, and a spokesperson who, to quote you, will be unable to identify itself as a spokesperson in face of Québec's expectations. You say: 10-member federalism is finished. How do we arrive at bipartite negotiations in the context you are outlining?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes. I understand that many groups and individuals who came before you not only asked for more powers for Québec but also asked that negotiations to this end be carried out rapidly. I think that it would be preferable if this could happen. I'm saying that,

unfortunately, I think that things won't go as quickly as all involved might hope.

You've raised the problem of the spokesperson. As you know, we're a little unsure in that respect. If we accept what I've said in my brief and what I've said in my introduction, I think that if the spokesperson is the federal government, its negotiating power won't be very great in the years to come. Suppose it starts immediately with the current Conservative government, whose public support is 12% to 15%. Like it or not, this government does not enjoy a great deal of popular support. But I don't think that its successor after the next elections will have much negotiating power either. This is, no doubt, one of the reasons which will make negotiations arduous because, assuming the federal government negotiates alone or tries to negotiate with the support of the provinces, it won't, I think - and I could be wrong - have very significant support from the public or from others. This will likely complicate matters.

It's taking that into account that I was led to write in my brief that - taking other factors into account as well - negotiations will no doubt be long and that... Once again, I think that's unfortunate. Ideally, it should be done quickly to minimize transition costs and lessen the instability that businessmen especially were complaining about. But, while I hope things will go quickly, it doesn't seem a very realistic scenario to me.

Mr. Nicolet: In light of what you have just said, what problem do you see with Québec's playing a much more interventionist role, a much more active role in defining the deadline for negotiations?

Mr. Lemieux: Yes. At any rate, I think that Québec will go that route. Now, Québec, the Québec government... which government remains to be seen, naturally, since there could be nuances depending on the government in power or possibly a Parti québécois government that might succeed it in the next elections... But regardless of the government in power, I think it will definitely try to impose this deadline; but, once again, this is something that takes two. Will this pressure be sufficient to convince the others who, in my opinion, will not be in a position to negotiate as a block for the reasons I have given? Will it be enough to convince the others to respect this deadline? It's doubtful.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lemieux, I was particularly struck by two passages in your brief. On page 2, your scepticism concerning the list of powers demanded. You give one example. Do you have

others? The other part, obviously, is the time frame required to undertake a process of negotiation and association with Canada. The case is that clearly most speakers want to maintain ties with Canada and, at any rate, we'd have to negotiate. You tell us that to bring the population into it, it would necessarily take a long time. Is it the population of Canada as a whole that will take time to change and is this what will make the process a slow one in addition to the constitutional constraints involved?

Mr. Lemieux: To answer your first question - I'll also take the opportunity to answer a question, actually a comment made by Mr. Chevrette. In my brief, I didn't want to deal with jurisdictions or powers which should be repatriated by Québec or those that should continue to be shared. I gave a somewhat existential example. OK. Clearly, it would not be tragic for Québec to have full rein not only in the field of culture but also research, science and technology. But I do think that many researchers, in addition to receiving funding from Québec, appreciate... It's true that Québec is the Canadian province making the greatest efforts in this respect - and it deserves to be congratulated for this - but it would, no doubt, be unfortunate for many researchers if they could no longer compete with other Canadian researchers to obtain federal funding because they'd probably feel a little too much focus on us.

Other examples? I spoke with one of the Members before coming in here, I think - and I'll give you a university answer on it - every case must be studied individually. It's not my place to tell you... I'm not as versed in the field of manpower as Mr. Béland or others, but I think that cases must be studied attentively and, based on available information, we must decide: Would it be preferable for these jurisdictions to be in the hands of a government such as Québec's or should they be left to a supragovernmental authority? I think this is the exercise required. When I say that this list of powers reflects frustration, it may be a superfluous remark.

That's not all, of course, I think there may be more deep-rooted causes, but I, too, noticed that when Québec negotiated the Meech Lake Accord with so-called minimal conditions, it seemed that the public supported these conditions, to the extent that this support can be measured. It didn't go much beyond that. I think that it's partially - and I'm not saying this explains everything - due to the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. Perhaps not so much the feeling of frustration but the fact that Quebecers felt, let's say, rejected by others to whom they had said "yes" 10 years earlier. This led to the whole thing being opened wider and to asking for more, not less.

In the list of powers, I think there are things that could be entirely well founded, but I think they'd have to be founded on more detailed studies. This is a university professor's answer. Anyway, people who are more competent than I, economists and others, made statements on this. I wouldn't like to get into it.

Your second question, Mr. d'Anjou... once again, I'd say that I don't see the possibility in the near future — failing the arrival of a great Canadian leader — of having at the head of the federal government or in the federal government, in the coming years, sufficient credibility in this government and in this leader for the Canadian people, to use your term, under this leader's influence, to agree to rapidly commit themselves to significant changes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK. We'll now go on to Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lemieux, in society we are all actors and observers. I'd say you were a specialist in observation. Many of those around this table would more likely fall into the action category. But the meeting of the two should enable us to develop a blueprint. Recently, I've observed a number of significant changes in Québec society, notably the considerable convergence of various interest groups. I've also observed a certain momentum adopted by Québec to confront various challenges. I've also observed a certain democratized leadership, let's call it that. There is a certain power of initiative in several sectors of the population. I haven't observed the same for Canada; you gave a detailed enough description of that.

(11:30 a.m.)

On the national question, I think we are already off track here, around this table, and within the population — the status quo has been rejected. The 7-50 or 100% rule has been overthrown. So, we're on new ground. And change is usually the result of a combination of momentum and leadership to reach a given end. I am somewhat intrigued by the fact that you think we should step back. I feel that we should do the opposite: take the initiative both to end this convergence within Québec and to get our partners back on track. And since you are a specialist in political parties — this is, by the way, patently clear throughout your text — and since I don't want to do the work of our partners around this table... But the Liberal Party is thinking, the Parti québécois has also come a ways... I could easily conclude that a train is going by, the sovereignty train, at the same time that a space is opening up for a quarrel between the Liberal Party and the Parti québécois over the association you referred to.

What will be put into the common pot? What will we put into association? In my

opinion, the people should be asked to settle this common train, that is, the sovereignty aspect, leaving the quarrel to the partisan aspect or practice and letting it decide whether to put more or less into it. In my view, this greatly colours the Commission's approach, which should take us into a referendum. Does this interpretation correspond to recent changes?

Mr. Lemieux: Your interpretation is very interesting, Mr. Larose. I'd be quick to say that if, out of the Commission's work, out of the position adopted by the Liberal Party, the common denominator turned out to be sovereignty, then it should be one of the two referendum options. Personally, I doubt very much that this will be the common denominator. I could be wrong but I'd be surprised if the Liberal Party... then again... I don't know any deep, dark secrets; I haven't in any way been involved in the Liberal Party's internal work; I wasn't invited by its committee; I'm looking in from the outside. But, given the positions held by the current leader of the Liberal Party over the past twenty years, given the game of partisan logic that has the sovereignty option associated with the Parti québécois, the Liberal Party will no doubt try to come up with another option. I could be wrong, but I think it'll approach association, even if I agree that this could also divide the parties. I thought that consensus was more likely on that count. But if, in the coming months, it seems obvious that leanings are toward sovereignty, then, according to my logic, the option to propose to Quebecers to send a clear message to the others, if we are certain that both parties favour the same option... the message will be abundantly clear.

Mr. Larose: But the fact that society's large interest groups, and I'm even including the business world which has experienced lamination and fractionization more recently, but which is not opposed to that question, couldn't that cause a party to say that sooner or later, regardless, the future of this... it's not a country, the future of this province, will go the sovereignty route and it is in our interest to catch the train as it passes, otherwise, it is discarded and left on the platform?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Larose, is this a question?

Mr. Larose: Yes, well...

Mr. Lemieux: Yes, I quite agree with you. Suppose the groups you are referring to really want sovereignty, or least go rapidly in this direction. I suppose that the members of this commission and the members of the Government would take this into account. However, I'm still sceptical about the Liberal Party adopting this.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK. This speaking group has two minutes left. Mr. Bouchard, it's your turn. I'll give them to you if you don't take more than two minutes for the question and the answer.

Mr. Bouchard: I can guarantee the question, but not the answer.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Lemieux, you say: We need a referendum, the Québec people needs to voice its opinion. Why? To send a clear message to English Canada, and this message must come from the people. And because democracy must triumph. Politicians' discussions aside for a minute, let's have a message from the people. Where I lose you is that the message no longer seems clear to me from the time you compare federalism and association, association, which is a vague, poorly defined term, which, moreover, you sever from sovereignty. In his last speech, Mr. Dion himself said that association must be defined more precisely.

So, the answer can't be very clear, if it is associative. One might think that if both parties agree on discarding federalism as we know it, the population will vote for association. What kind of clear message would that be? You yourself admit that it's not clear because you say: Now, the second stage, through their political actions, the parties should define association. So, it seems to me you're contradicting your basic premise: since it's not clear enough, it has to be defined by political party actions for a few years, and, secondly, you move away from the population, then once again you put things back into the people's hands. Don't you think that for a clear message from the people...

Everyone is talking about sovereignty. You know the polls better than we do. For the past six months, sovereignty has been on the rise in the polls. Why, ultimately, if we want a clear message, don't we ask the people what they think? Why not ask for a decision on the question?

Mr. Lemieux: OK. Actually, my answer would probably be much the same as the one I gave an earlier speaker, Mr. Larose. If the two parties rally behind this option, this would be a clear message, clearer than the association one. I admit that association can take many forms. However, I continue to have doubts about the possibility of an agreement between the two parties. You know as well as I that it's important that they agree, because, suppose there was no agreement... Given the fact that opinion is now divided in Québec, suppose that a battle between parties arose, between the Liberal Party and the Parti québécois, we would probably

get a result that wasn't very conclusive. So, that's why, ultimately...

Listen, do what you will with the concept of association. All I'm saying is to try to define a given option, be it in terms of association or otherwise. Have both parties - there I'm in full agreement with you, Mr. Bouchard - forget their partisan divisions, during the referendum at least, and support this option. As for the rest, we might wish to continue to have the people voice its opinion. But, at some point, we do have to act through intermediaries, through representative democracy and have the democratically elected government take certain initiatives.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, Mr. Lemieux, thank you for coming to share your vast experience with us and for having contributed to our work on Québec's political and constitutional future.

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you, Mr. Campeau.

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

(Proceedings resumed at 11:42 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now hear Mr. Patrice Garant, who is also an expert invited to appear. Mr. Garant, like all the others, you have 10 minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Patrice Garant

Mr. Garant (Patrice): Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, I have followed the Commission's hearings from the beginning with much interest. I believe it has been, for me and for you, a rather extraordinary democratic process. In fact I'm somewhat disappointed that you haven't had the same ratings as "Les Filles de Caleb" even though, at some times, there was a strong nationalist flavour to this sacrosanct semi-circle. What's surprised me the most is the extent to which federalism has fallen into disfavour. Federalism must surely be in purgatory, if not at the gates of hell. Be that as it may, I've ventured to propose a federalist plan which you'll perhaps find surprising or even provocative. Yet, federalism, for me, is still a better way to organize power in complex wholes made up of regions, nationalities or groups that want to preserve their autonomy, but also want to pool a certain number of their major powers.

I accept the definition of federalism given by Jacques Brossard in a work which, I think, has become the vade mecum of just about everybody these days, "L'accession à la souveraineté

et le cas du Québec", a definition, by the way, that corresponds to that of most classic authors. Federalism is a principle of organization whose essential features are achieved to varying degrees. There isn't really a typical federal State, so to varying degrees, but within a certain corridor. It's a flexible formula, which can be applied, at the constitutional level naturally, but also at the national level. These days, a very large number of authors term various inter-State and intra-State experiences as federal as soon as there is a sufficient degree of integration. And the criterion of the sufficient degree is that the community or federal authorities have a power to act directly on populations without the mediation of community or federal authorities. As soon as you talk about a political or economic union based on a constitution or treaty, the difference between federalism and confederalism becomes less important even though purists maintain it still exists. The important thing is the degree of integration and what we're currently seeing in the European Community, for instance, is a move from confederalism towards, for some, especially Europeans who really believe in it, something that could likely become a form of federalism. In fact, authors... I quote from a certain number of studies, in particular the most important, by a constitutional expert who is a magistrate of the European Court in Luxembourg, who was a guest professor at Harvard and published an article in the *American Journal of Comparative Law* in 1990 entitled "Constitutionnalisme et les différentes facettes du fédéralisme" in which he compares the evolution of American federalism with what he calls European federalism. However, federalism is a form of constitutional organization that has to adapt to the needs of the aspirations of its components. That's why there are adjustment mechanisms like constitutional amendment and constitutional jurisprudence.

Now, federalism can go through crises and Canadian federalism is in a crisis. This major crisis reached its peak, as we know, in 1981-1982. Attempts have been made to get things started, but they've all failed. To resolve the situation, and that's what I'm suggesting, Québec has to administer shock treatment to its partners. English Canada, and I'm not the first to say this, needs to be rudely awakened. I think that a declaration of secession, a declaration of sovereignty but accompanied by a proposal for a form of political and economic union will save Canada. If you want, it's a bit like going back to 1860-1864, searching for a pact, a new pact between, I think, what can still be called the two founding peoples.

So, my plan proposes a form of association of States in a federal structure, but with elements of confederalism. It's an ambitious project but, in this regard, it has certain new elements. The aspects of federalism it contains, a

very decentralized federalism. First, in terms of the distribution of State authority between the two federated States, Canada and Québec, everything needed to carry out their blueprint for society, that is needed for development, particularly concerning Québec, of the Québec identity and culture. I deal with these issues on pages 4 to 6 of my brief. But also to reserve for the super-State, and I use the term "super-State", which is also found in the literature, to designate the government of the union, the authority related to the institution of an effective economic integration and a certain international presence that corresponds to what I think is a strength of the Canadian experience.

I develop that in my brief. I could also give reasons for the attributions of authority to the two levels. But what I think is very important in the proposed reform is, first, the introduction of the principle of "subsidiarity", the principle of residual authority given to federated States, as is the case with a very large number of federal States, by the way, and in European confederalism.

Second, eliminate indefinitely extensive federal authority: unrestricted federal spending power, declaratory power and the theory of national dimensions that, naturally, was invented by jurisprudence and allows the federal government to intervene in the federated States' areas of exclusive authority.

Third, review a certain number, at least as far as terminology is concerned, of the allocations of authority from 1867. For instance, the outdated distinction between direct and indirect taxation, and many other items of terminology.

In terms of institutions now, I'd maintain a genuine network of political and democratic institutions at the federal level. That's currently missing, I think, in European federalism or confederalism, and the authorities in Brussels are accused, by the way, of being technocrats, so, a democratic Parliament, responsible government and a judicial power, but limited to a constitutional arbitration court. That would preserve, if you will, the essence of 123 years of federal experience and the British style political system we have adopted.

And now some elements of confederalism. In terms of sharing, I think it would be possible to graft inter-State, or federal-federated, agreements to the federal Constitution in a certain number of areas. Those agreements could have a constitutional status and be grafted to the Constitution. The best example would be, for instance, the subject of section 23 of the Charter, for example, everything to do with minority language instruction, could be done, to use an expression from the time of the Lévesque government, through reciprocal agreements.

There could also be reciprocal agreements

in many other areas, broadcasting for instance: Ottawa, Radio-Québec, CBC, major agreements that, would give us, at the, if you will, confederal level, a huge broadcasting enterprise.

At the institutional level now. The main innovation would be the creation of what I call a confederal council that would replace the Senate and would represent the two federated States, Upper and Lower Canada, if you will, on an equal basis. This council, as well as its associated equal bi-lateral commissions, would be composed of experts, would have a policy coordination role and a veto. It would also participate in the appointment and designation of members of major Federation bodies, the Bank of Canada and a certain number of major federal administrative tribunals, for instance the competition tribunal and many others.

That is the essential part of the federal, or neo-federal, structure I propose. In my brief, I've also dealt with the question which, from my point of view, is an excellent one, even if, on some points, I wasn't using legal expertise, but rather my quality as an ordinary citizen, to answer it, concerning the promotion of the Québec identity, the standard of living of Quebecers. As far as maintaining the standard of living is concerned, it seems to me, as a simple citizen, consumer or taxpayer, that the legal continuity I'm proposing can only promote, I think, the continuation, the non-disturbance, the least possible disturbance, if you will, because from my standpoint, even as a simple investor and citizen, the economy is fragile.

I've dealt a bit with historical experiences. It would also be useful for you, members of the Commission, to examine, to reflect on the experiences, particularly instances of federations that have disappeared. There are at least six instances of federations that have disappeared, in most cases for reasons that can be readily understood. For instance, you have been told of the Norway-Sweden Federation of 1905, which disappeared, and a number of others.

There have been cases of secession that should perhaps be considered but, as you were told yesterday, situations such as in the Baltic States or Slovenia, in the Yugoslavian Federation, should not be transposed to Québec too readily. I think we must reflect on the conditions of failure and success of each federal experience and not transpose too much to Québec.

I conclude, Mr. Chairman, on an optimistic note, since I'm an optimist by nature, though conservative in certain strictly political regards, that the new Canada-Québec federation has a chance of saving Canada if we can bring them to understand that it's in their interests, as much as in ours, in the interests of a Québec that affirms itself, to continue the federal experience on a completely different basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. If you wish, Mr. Garant, we'll now move on to the interventions, and the first will be from Mr. Jacques Léonard.

Mr. Léonard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Professor Garant. I read your brief, I've just heard you, and I think, in a way, that it's pretty clear how you would like to reshape federalism. In reality, if I understand correctly, this is the 14th chance, but let's say that, given your opinion, I'm certainly willing to discuss it now. I think it's fairly well summarized in the second paragraph of page 2, you virtually read it. That's what we propose. What you're proposing today is sovereignty-association, but under a renewed federal structure which, however, borrows certain features from confederalism.

I have the impression of recognizing quite a few elements and, I suppose, as Professor Patenaude who preceded you this morning said, that must be one of the 35 versions of renewed federalism. I also have the impression, given the Constitution we've had since 1867, which we've had practically no success changing in our favour and which was changed in 1982 in spite of us, in fact, we've come to the point, finally, each of us, of proposing our blueprint because the reality is the powerlessness to change the Constitution and amend it to promote our interests.

So, we've lived through Meech where we tried to introduce a few what everyone called minimum conditions, even the government in power. I think everyone agrees on that, that they really were minimum conditions. We didn't succeed. I understand that you try to take the best of all worlds and use that to make an ideal blueprint but, in fact, what makes you think that now, after rejecting Meech, English Canada will accept a superstructure like the one you propose which, in fact, implies that they will have to organize themselves or their state, their government depending on, up to a point and an important one, the interests of Québec? I've a problem with that because if less has been rejected, how will more be accepted? Basically, that's where we are.

Will a declaration of sovereignty alone, practically, if I understand, since you assume federalism, designed to impress them, really impress them? In terms of a negotiation, I don't think that will go very far because, basically, our declaration would involve only a will to impress them, but wouldn't fundamentally represent a will to achieve our own government, our own country that would face the other. I'd like to hear your comments on what I've just said.

Mr. Garant: Yes.

Mr. Léonard: So, what will bring English Canada to yield and, really, reshuffle its cards in the federal deck?

Mr. Garant: The process is a bit similar to that of a pure and simple declaration of independence with an attempt at an economic union, you see. The only difference is that the blueprint that follows the declaration of independence is really federal in nature, in the sense that it tries to recover the earlier gains. If you see the gains of 123 years of federalism in a very negative light, if you consider that the current state of the Canadian experience has really brought us nothing, that we've gained absolutely nothing, then, certainly, I understand you. But, based on my analysis of the Canadian situation, I maintain, as a citizen, that there are extremely significant gains that could be preserved. After 123 years, and I mention this in my brief, we've succeeded, in spite of enormous setbacks, in spite of frustrations, as Québec. And, obviously, this seems clearer to us when we leave Québec and go abroad. This fall, I was in Europe, at conventions of constitutional experts and most people want to open our eyes on this prospect in spite of everything. Clearly, in Québec, here, among ourselves, everything seems black and our experience really seems to be a life of "Aurora, the child martyr".

I think the situation in Québec can be analyzed in a different way. There are gains, and it's in this renewed federalism, on a completely different basis, that we want to save. That's what I want to save. So, is my optimism unrealistic? Maybe, but after all, this planet needs optimists, otherwise things would be terrible. I think it's a little less than a leap of faith. Yesterday, they talked... I think the president of the CEO said: Well! I like making a leap of faith. But the challenge of a new federal experience is certainly less grand, less disturbing than a pure and simple declaration of independence with, possibly, hypothetically, an economic union. But then, you can throw the ball back to me and say: Your hope of succeeding is perhaps of the same order as that other blueprint, a declaration of independence, also with an economic union which is much less ambitious than what I'm proposing.

Mr. Léonard: I don't think we agree because I don't see myself as "Aurora, the child martyr", absolutely not.

(12:00 noon)

However, I put the question. I think all the debates that have taken place from Confederation in 1867 to 1982 and since, now, are, after all, serious for Québec society. There are, after all, governments that, up till now, will not sign unless there are changes to the Constitution of 1982. So, I take it for granted that these are important points that must be settled before anything is signed. I for one, it seems to me that we can't sign the Constitution of 1982 without major amendments. So, we're saying that the issue is important regardless of

what outsiders say when they refer strictly to economic concerns or the Canadian reality they see from the outside and not from within. As I see it, our first concern is really to see to the common good of Quebecers, in a way.

I come back to your process because I think it's important and, to a certain point, that's what caused the Meech Lake Accord to flop.

You say: A declaration of sovereignty is necessary. And even, I think, at one point, near the end, you talk about a unilateral declaration of secession as a way to get things moving. On page 3, the fourth paragraph, you say "the best way to approach solutions is, first, to avoid brinkmanship, avoid scare tactics, avoid shouting slogans and putting up posters." But, in reality, when you propose a unilateral declaration of secession, it seems to me that contradicts what you say, even on page 3, because, basically, it's really a bludgeoning technique, you call it a shock that you want to administer to English Canada. How do you reconcile all that, finally?

Mr. Garant: What I meant on page 3, the scare tactics and such, has to do with what concerns Quebecers, that is, a witch hunt, fear, etc. That's all it is because, after all, the shock treatment, I wasn't referring to that at that time. Clearly, a declaration of sovereignty is something... That's not what I was alluding to. I was alluding to what's called a witch hunt, fear, a flight of capital, etc. Those are the scare tactics.

Mr. Léonard: Yes, but, from English Canada's point of view, it might be perceived the same way. It's a bludgeon technique. You want to administer a shock. So, you're proposing to point a gun, to kick start the negotiations. That's a technique, I agree, but I think that, in terms of process, you could still end up in a dead end with that. In reality, what will it give us? Either they take us seriously and that means that if we are serious, eventually we'll have to make good on the threat of secession. But if we're not, if we're really not serious and we really want to remain in federalism and we do that, then we look as if we're scare-mongering. So, I don't see where that could lead us. In reality, we really have to demonstrate a basic will to achieve sovereignty, I think that's enough to get things moving, but not make a statement like that just for negotiating purposes because I think you lose your credibility.

Having said that, there are a lot of other things to discuss in your brief and you perhaps could comment on this first. On another point, you say Québec would no longer be submitted, in terms of language policy, to the Canadian Charter of Rights and would even have its own charter of rights with a Québec supreme court over it all. There again, I wonder how English

Canada can accept that because, precisely, in the Meech Lake Accord, that was one of the fundamental points that was rejected.

Mr. Garant: Well, English Canada, as a federated State, would have its own structure, would have its own charter. At that point, the associated States hypothesis begins to predominate in my system. A new federal structure involves, for each associated State, an extremely complete set of authorities. To satisfy the Québec blueprint, I think it's absolutely essential that we have our own charter. And in fact we already have one.

Mr. Léonard: Professor, we'll find ourselves in a situation where there are two types of citizens in Canada: one subject to the Québec charter and the other to the Canadian charter. You have a country where there are two. It seems to me that's inviting confusion.

Mr. Garant: I see nothing incompatible, legally, in having two Canadian charters. There would be a single citizenship but, inside, the legal systems can differ according to the distribution of jurisdiction. That's why I want the issue of the charter, administration of justice, civil law and even criminal law, because it's intimately tied to a blueprint for society. I subscribe to the idea, depending on the questionnaire, that Québec wants to carry out a blueprint for society. It can achieve that through independence pure and simple with a variable economic union and everything, but I think it's also possible to...

Mr. Léonard: I can't...

Mr. Garant: ...achieve it in a new federal form.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): If you don't mind, Mr. Garant, we'll move on to another group of questions. In order, then: first, Mrs. Pagé, then Mr. Gabriel Desjardins, Mr. Ouellet, Mr. Poissant and Mr. Sébastien Allard, if everybody keeps to their five minutes. Mrs. Pagé.

Mrs. Pagé: Good afternoon, Mr. Garant. You began your presentation by saying that the federalist model seems to have fallen into disfavour but you still have confidence in it because, you say, it's a flexible formula. And you referred on a number of occasions to Mr. Brassard's book. I want to say that, since the Commission began its work, we haven't been hearing criticism of federalism as a philosophy so much as criticism of the federalism we've experienced since 1867.

And I'll read some passages from Mr. Brassard where he says that the distinguishing features of the Canadian variety are its

classicism, its orthodoxy, its legalism, its relative statism, its authoritarianism and its conservatism. He even says the trend of recent years, supported by the Supreme Court of Canada, has brought it back more or less to its centralizing origins, has once again paralysed it and, currently, the strength of Canadian federalism lies mainly in its purse, and I would say its major weakness is its colossal deficit. So, you appreciate that the people who have come before us, that's what they've observed, roughly, the inability to adapt the Canadian variety of the philosophical concept of federalism to the needs and aspirations of Québec society. I think that, as a commission, we have to try to bring solutions to real situations and not limit ourselves to providing intellectual or theoretical support to a model that, as developed in books, may be very attractive but suffers from a number of weaknesses.

I'd like to ask two questions that relate, precisely, to comments we've heard on the faults of the Canadian variety. The first fault, we've talked about centralization. Now, you're proposing a superstructure, a super-State with institutions. We've heard many times that once you set up an institution, it tends to justify its existence, and so to grow over the years. So, isn't there a certain risk that the superstructure you propose might naturally evolve, through its intrinsic strength, into a new centralization that could harm the interests of Québec?

Second question. You suggest that the tax fields be left open to the two levels of government. Now, we've heard a lot about the problems caused by overlapping. In fact, you recommend that social policy be left to Québec. But you realize that social policy and taxation are very closely linked. So, I'd like you to expand a bit on the second aspect of my question.

Mr. Garant: You're absolutely right. The common observation of all federal systems is the tendency to decentralization. And, finally, that's why I propose checks. You can imagine them, particularly when, for instance, you have the principle of "subsidiarity", the principle, in other words, of residual authorities to federated States, when the indefinitely extensible authorities are eliminated. They exist in American federalism. The federal spending power has played a significant role in centralization... also, when you ensure that control of the constitutionality of laws is such that it does not favour centralization.

Obviously, you'll tell me it's almost inevitable that constitutional jurisprudence... and even the currently quasi-constitutional jurisprudence of the Court of Luxembourg tends to favour decentralization. And in fact you're absolutely right and all constitutional experts will tell you that it's dangerous, when you set

up a federation, there is a tendency. But, at least, even so, if you start again from a completely different basis and give the federated States – in this case Québec and Canada... As federated States they'll have, through a certain number of institutions, a much more equal say than in the current federalism of 11 or 10, if you will. That's why, finally, by including a certain number of checks and safeguards, it seems to me that it's possible, if we want to relive or continue to live the federalist experience, to protect ourselves against hyper-centralization. But, you're right, it's a constant danger in federal systems.

On the other hand, concerning taxation, finally, it's because its outmoded, I think... in the current state of public finances, the distinction between direct and indirect taxation, and you have to give both levels of government access to all forms of taxation. However, I propose arbitration mechanisms – and the confederal council, through its commissions, could be one of these mechanisms – to ensure that taxation powers are constantly adapted to the needs of each level of government. So, there would be constant consultation, I think, as currently happens even though there is sharing, as we know, and recently saw with the GST.

If the levels of government are the least bit intelligent, they have to agree and cooperate because, after all, it's always the same taxpayer at the end of the line, regardless of the tax formula. Clearly, that's one of the dangers of the formula I propose, but I think that by proposing arbitration mechanisms, and there I would also like to give a certain role, not only to the confederal council, but also to the arbitration tribunal concerning... so that the needs of governments are constantly being matched to available resources. There.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): If you don't mind, Mr. Garant, we'll now move on to Mr. Gabriel Desjardins.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Garant, your brief has the signal virtue of sparking vigorous exchanges. On the first page of your brief, when you say you think the constitutional amendment process is an illusion, and you propose to reshape the world with a blueprint that has two entities: Canada-Québec, almost sovereign, with a lot of power, crowned by a superstructure, allow me to send the ball back to your court and say that I think it's less illusory to work with an instrument we already have. You could tell me that Meech is concrete proof that the Constitution can't be changed, but a committee was formed nonetheless and perhaps I'm one of the few who believe it is still possible to include the recognition of the concept of a distinct society in the Constitution and give Québec the powers that belong to it.

That can be accomplished with the Constitution we have.

But your blueprint, since you're discussing it with us, we'll dream about it together. My first question, and this gets back to Mr. Léonard's question, is, given the current political situation, what leads you to think that English Canada would be ready to accept the new political structure you're proposing? And my second question is, in the event of a referendum, because the chances are very good that there'll be one, since you're telling us that heavily decentralized federalism and sovereignty with a strong association are very close as concepts, I think that conveys your idea, what would – the question, finally – the people of Québec have to resolve in terms of its future, its political future?

Mr. Garant: As for your first question, in the first version, in October, I would have tended, in my brief, to favour the 7-50 formula. But I've rethought it fundamentally and I don't see how, currently and within a reasonable period of time, you could convince seven partners, seven provinces, currently 50% of the population, to accept such a radical proposal... (12:15 p.m.)

Mr. Desjardins: But you have to convince nine in your proposal.

Mr. Garant: Exactly. That's why, finally, I think we have to get out of the rut of the 1982 constitutional amendment mechanism to which, by the way, Québec never agreed, and proceed differently, try to invent, imagine something different. As for the chances of success, would we succeed with this shock treatment? But, it's a gamble. After all, why would you have more confidence, not you specifically but a certain number of commissioners around the table, in a somewhat indefinite economic union? You're confident of that. That's a gamble we're willing to take, which English Canadians, out of a kind of economic necessity, could accept, while a blueprint that, after all, tends to save federalism, save a certain number of essential components of the Canadian union would be less appealing to English Canada. I completely exclude the constitutional status quo. And for me, the constitutional status quo is federalism by 10 or 11. So, you have to invent something else and issue a new challenge. It's a gamble and, compared to the other, I prefer the gamble of a political union to a simple ill-defined economic union.

Mr. Desjardins: And concerning the possible question to put to the people of Québec in a referendum?

Mr. Garant: As for the question I would put to the population, for me, it would be that

Québec declare its independence, let's not be scared by terms. In 1982, had the question been phrased that way, we perhaps wouldn't have received 40%. Finally, the master stroke was the use of the term "sovereignty-association", to a degree neither fish nor fowl. But put the question: Québec secedes from Canada and at the same time proposes a new economic and political union. Now, there would be a transition period. It's obvious that because of... So, to answer...

Mr. Desjardins: But you realize that by doing that, and you say so in your brief, the path is uncertain.

Mr. Garant: Excuse me?

Mr. Desjardins: In your brief, on page 9, you say that unilaterally declaring independence is also uncertain.

Mr. Garant: It would be uncertain if at the same time we don't propose something else concrete that could catch the interest of Canada, finally, more firmly, I think, than a vague economic union whose components aren't really understood.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's it, Mr. Desjardins? Thank you. It's now Mr. Ouellet's turn.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To begin, Mr. Garant, I have to tell you that your proposal is original and plausible. To a degree, it agrees with what Mr. Courchene, another expert from English Canada, told us. That allows me to say that in 1950, Jean Monnet started to talk about a new Europe. It took 40 years for the new Europe to become a reality. With the new Canada, we first of all had to repatriate the Constitution, which we did. We now have a Canadian Constitution. We had to give it an amending formula, perhaps not perfect, but it exists and has some flexibility. The 7-50 rule, as you say, provides some flexibility, at any rate it's better than unanimity. Now, it's time for changes, for arrangements, that can be done in many ways. My question is: Don't you think, precisely, that a profoundly renewed federalism, as Mr. Patenaude talked about some years ago at La Trappe d'Oka, has a good chance of succeeding by the end of the decade, the turn of the century? Is that possible? Don't you think that could be brought about and that could be the new formula?

Mr. Garant: I think so, yes. There will clearly be confrontations at some point, hard positions will have to be taken, particularly by Québec. But, yes, I'm optimistic on that score. But I'm extremely pessimistic if we want to

thoroughly renew federalism with the 7-50 formula, it seems to me, I don't know how, by what miracle, it would be possible to convince a sufficient number of provinces and even a certain number of federal authorities of that. But by provoking something, I think those who believe in federalism, in this form of union between two great founding peoples in spite of everything, even if New Canadians are included, nonetheless, what remains fundamental and characterizes Canada internationally, is not a melting pot, Canada, it's a State, a nation, a vast nation made up of two great national entities, two great cultures. I'm optimistic that we can, within a reasonable time, achieve something different, something profoundly different.

Mr. Ouellet: There's a point on page 9 of your brief that I'd like to quote because it seems absolutely fundamental to me and implacably logical. You say: The formula I propose avoids turning inward and maintains a certain historical continuity. Why would the people of Québec absolutely reject the Canadian structure and leap into the unknown when a less risky solution is available? I totally agree with you. I think that agrees with what Mr. Lemieux said earlier, that change is possible, but not abrupt and radical change. Do you agree with Mr. Lemieux, that the chances for success through a progressive evolution are better than through a complete rupture, towards what you yourself call independence being an uncertain path?

Mr. Garant: Yes indeed. I agree with that and it seems to me that a complete break, a leap into the unknown could be more damaging than to search for the path of continuity. In terms of constitutional organization, political arrangement, anything is possible. All you have to do is convince your partners, but... I support... and you've pointed... I think the mainspring of my political thought, since constitutional thought is also political thought, is the avoidance of turning inward. After all, there are 123 years of federal experience and much more constitutional experience. Québec started from just about zero at the time of the Conquest and now is considered throughout the world like a major federated State with an international presence within the Francophonie. We continue, we continue to affirm ourselves and I think the federal formula cannot harm the affirmation of Québec. On the contrary, it can enable it to grow. I don't know.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. We will now continue with Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you. Mr. Garant, I like your comments, particularly when you say, at a certain point, that everything depends on how

we are placed in the current context, on Québec's position vis-à-vis Canada. That's so true. There are people who feel Québec is in such a bad position that there has to be a divorce at all costs. If you look at things that way, they're right. Yet, when we're told, not more than two days ago, by Mr. Rodrigue Tremblay, that according to the OECD, Québec has the third-highest standard of living in the world, well then, things can't be as bad as all that. And that comes close to your observation. Things aren't that bad! Still, clearly, people can say that it's not going well either. No doubt, there are grey areas. I, for one, am certain that there has been federal usurpation of certain powers, and I say: Why have they meddled in these problems... these provincial situations? What we have to settle and recommend to Quebecers is that there is a position. It's that, on the one hand, we want to repatriate.

The ideal would be a decentralized federalism and that Ottawa tell us: This is what you'll have. We hand it over to you absolutely, no more problem, the Commission closes down and everyone is happy. It won't happen like that. The problem is that, on the one hand, some will say that there will never be an agreement. On the other, what is the most effective way to influence the partner? If we separate and provoke, that may be good or bad! Now, what I want to know and what Quebecers will have to know before deciding on a final solution, is what is the best way to achieve what we want, taking for granted that we can't have everything and that it's better to choose the lesser of two evils?

Mr. Garant: I'm proposing a short circuit, in fact, the most appropriate constitutionally legal way, that is, to try, as we did from 1982 to 1987, using constitutional mechanisms, to reach... It didn't work and Québec - and I don't want to repeat what you've heard for two months - was asking for a lot less than what it could ask for to carry out its blueprint for society. The way, clearly, it may seem brutal, but it's to hold a referendum to ask the people to support this new proposal and, legally, to achieve a resolution, sovereignty is necessary, I think, what's called secession, that is, technically and legally leaving the field of the Constitution Act, 1982. And for that, a referendum is needed in which we ask for sovereignty and, at the same time, a new plan for political union. I said political union, and not just economic union, a kind of common market and others that might satisfy. Clearly, if this political union is not successful, we could fall back on an economic union or something else even. I mentioned there could be a second phase. If that doesn't work, what we propose, we'll have take back our marbles. In other words, listen, we're going to do something else. We'll go

it alone or with the Americans, with...

Mr. Poissant: But before that there would be... assuming we decide to secede as you mention, there's a lot to be decided in that: the distribution of the debt, distribution of assets, contingencies, renegotiating treaties with our partner. We don't know if it will be the federal government, or the provinces, both the federal government and the provinces. So, you see that it's extremely complex and people have to be told that. We're ready to split up within two years. There won't be a judge, that's what's important, like in a divorce case, saying the assets will be split A and B. How will that matter be handled?

Mr. Garant: There's a transition period. After the declaration of secession, the legal and constitutional status quo applies during the transition period and, then, negotiations will have to get under way. We may even be surprised then, the shock may work and the 7-50 may say to us: Listen, don't go, not so fast. We might be, those of us who really care for Canada, we might be surprised. Still, I'm perhaps being too optimistic again. If not, then, we'd really have to realize that there's nothing for it and independence pure and simple is the way to go.

Secondly, it would be necessary, under the mechanism and process I'm proposing, to perhaps even consider two referenda, and that's not abnormal. It happens in some... For instance, think of France in 1946, where there were two referenda one after the other. It's possible to go that way. But a transition period will be necessary during which negotiations would get under way.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. If you've no objection, we'll now move on to Mr. Allard.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Garant, like you, I think it would be preferable to renew federalism and that Québec obtain or recover many of the powers you described in your presentation. Where I have problems is with how you achieve that. And maybe I don't understand your proposal or, if I do understand correctly, I'm not sure it's the best way to obtain what we want, because you say we'd have to proclaim sovereignty and, at the same time, present a proposal we'd have prepared, I assume, here in Québec without having discussed it beforehand with the others. Do I understand what you're proposing? So, we proclaim sovereignty. We say this is our proposal and what do you think? And if we don't get the reaction we want, that means we're sovereign, I think. All the more since, later in your brief, you say we must above all avoid brinkmanship

with the idea of sovereignty. So, it seems to me there's something incompatible there.

Another question tied to that is, to whom do we submit this plan? At the beginning of your presentation, a moment ago, I thought I understood that there would be Québec and Canada, but it wouldn't necessarily be that way because the other provinces might think they have some say and that neither Canada nor the federal government can represent them in the negotiations we want to initiate. I don't know who the parties would be. Would there perhaps only be one as you would wish? Would there be two? Would there be three? And I think these are all things that we have to try to settle before saying: Now we're sovereign and that's what we want. Take it or leave it. I think we might have difficulty because we'd encounter the snag you say we have to avoid, brinksmanship on the idea of sovereignty.

(12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Garant: Yes, there are a number of things to be clear about. First, the blueprint. It's clear that during the transition period, discussions may take place. It's perhaps out of the question that they approve it 100%. There might be discussions. For instance, let's take what might be allocated to the super-State. It might very well be that it would be preferable, in some cases, for instance, to place them in the constitution or leave them for inter-State negotiations, in the form of reciprocal agreements. So, there's some give and take and discussion to, if you will, adapt the blueprint to our partner as well. But, finally, the blueprint, you design it, you suggest it. It's like a draft collective agreement, if the union said: Listen, we don't have a draft collective agreement but we want to strike or we want to negotiate. So, I think you need a blueprint.

As for brinksmanship, brinksmanship on sovereignty, what I mean is that, finally, we think, some think, that full sovereignty is needed in some areas to carry out plans. But we know for sure that it's possible, in the case of federalism, for instance, for federated States to carry out plans without having complete sovereignty in a certain number of areas. It's like, for example, concerning shared jurisdiction, I use the word "sovereignty", there, in the sense, let's say, of full and total authority over a particular area. Now, brinksmanship is like saying: Listen, no, that's not possible. You can see, in the development of European communities, that they have adopted a European social charter. They were economic communities originally and, now, they're in the process of entering the social field. You can see that things are evolving, etc.

As for the parties involved, it's clear that Québec adopts the blueprint and proposes it to its partners who aren't yet, who'll have to get together. It's clear that it's the Government of

Canada, but the Government of Canada legitimately, perhaps not legally, will turn to the others because, there, it's a matter of rebuilding Canada and the federated States, that is, the other provinces, are fully involved. Clearly, there's no legal framework, I can't give a legal answer, but I think that de facto, politically, the parties are going to have to come together. They'll receive that and say, listen, either we react or we do nothing at all and then, too bad, Québec will leave, or it's important to save Canada and we're going to get together to do something. That's what I envisage.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's it. I'm sorry, even though it's not five minutes, the period is over. I'll fit you in this afternoon.

Mr. Allard: Well! Is that a new rule?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): No, it's been there from the beginning. Over to you, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: I'll allow Mrs. Pelchat to ask the first question, with your permission, and I'll ask the second.

Mrs. Pelchat: If there's any time left. Thank you.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Pelchat: That's a joke, Mr. Minister.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Pelchat: Mr. Garant, I want to thank you for accepting our invitation, as an expert witness, this morning. You've put forward a system that you yourself described, in your speech, as neo-federal, a renewed federalism like Mr. Lemieux told us a little while ago and Thomas Courchene told us this week. I think your model is interesting, particularly concerning the greater powers for Québec that are really exclusive. Québec would also have full control over the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, and I think that's also important for the federal council. There are some more technical questions in terms of concurrent jurisdictions, the arbitration mechanism, but I won't get into that. I'm sure Mr. Rémillard, a lawyer and technician, will be able to discuss that issue in greater detail with you.

I find the model interesting, I'd say even seductive, but I'd like to return to your strategy for achieving that model. I think many people have already dealt with the issue, but I'd like to quote you, on page 9, where you say: "Moreover, independence or full sovereignty, potentially with a global or partial economic agreement, is an uncertain path. Ill will, tensions, roadblocks

that could arise in the short term can only cloud the economic climate, dampen the enthusiasm of investors and even create a form of panic inherent in this type of upheaval, whether we wish it or not. To believe the contrary would be naive."

I'm not particularly naive, and I agree completely with that paragraph. I don't completely agree with you on page 16 when you say we should declare independence unilaterally and, afterward, negotiate this neo-federalism. Don't you think that a declaration of sovereignty followed by negotiations is more dangerous than doing it beforehand, that is, seeking to negotiate a new federalism, perhaps with a mandate in hand, as some have said, for independence pure and simple? For my part, Mr. Garant, when I'm told that Meech failed, we negotiated five demands, they weren't accepted, how are we going to seek greater powers after that? That's the argument of our opponents, that the people in the Opposition use. They'll never agree. Come on! They rejected five conditions, they'll never agree to give us greater powers.

I'd add to that: How, after declaring independence unilaterally, will we negotiate with people who will say to us: Well, listen, we didn't give you Meech, we don't want to give you greater powers. Listen, we won't just give you bread and butter. You don't want black bread, you want to leave. I think it's an illusion to think that after a unilateral declaration of independence, we'll be able to obtain an attractive union, like the one you propose.

Mr. Garant: Indeed, strategically, before submitting the referendum question, there could be a final attempt in a relatively short period of time. Obviously, the plan would be formulated. Our intention is to submit it, but in a spirit of fair play, and I think fair play still exists in constitutional politics, we could try to make our partners aware of this eventuality. So, perhaps there could be... I'm not saying that...

Mrs. Pelchat: What do you think, Mr. Garant, because you're suggesting that your model be submitted to the National Assembly and then that a referendum be held, what do you think, if we added to the referendum question, in addition to the model that's suggested, the possibility of granting us a mandate for independence pure and simple, sovereignty, no more no less, in the event the negotiations on this model, that I find very interesting, do not succeed?

Mr. Garant: True, it could be an acceptable formulation, to have the referendum on a mandate rather than the declaration. Clearly, you'd have to think about that perhaps. You see, the basic element in my thinking is the shock. If, without risking further damage, we can

proceed as you propose, I'd go along with it, but the basic idea, you see, is...

Mrs. Pelchat: As far as shock treatment goes, I'm, in any event, you mustn't knock the patient out.

Mr. Garant: No, you're absolutely right, after all.

Mrs. Pelchat: To come back to the partners, I've a very quick question, a question Mr. Allard raised a moment ago. If, for instance, we issued a declaration of sovereignty and then tried to negotiate, not necessarily the model you suggest, but the model of our colleagues opposite, that is, a monetary association, perhaps a common currency, common economic institution, should this association be submitted to the other partners of Canada, not just the federal government, but six others? Do we need a 6-50, for instance, to have a future economic union approved?

Mr. Garant: But from the moment...

Mrs. Pelchat: I'm thinking that we'd be changing the institutions, so the provinces...

Mr. Garant: I think, at that point, you're no longer talking about a federal union. Former federal States, as such, at that point, no longer have a say. The reason why, finally, I see the English Canadian parties necessarily including the provinces is that I'm still talking about federalism. A different federalism, but... Yes, perhaps I don't have a clear answer to that.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Garant. Mr. Rémillard.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Over to you, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. OK, very good. So, Mr. Garant, I'm pleased to welcome you to the Commission. You're a recognized authority in Québec and in Canada, known for your work in public law, administrative law and, in particular, the aspect of constitutional law as well. I'm happy to welcome you. Your brief is a fine contribution to this Commission. In particular, from the outset, you tell us that we must not lock ourselves inside a rigid cartesianism and that the word "federalism" is a very flexible concept that changes quite a bit and involves an association with other States. You mention Europe, the Europe of the Twelve, that has evolved enormously and no longer corresponds to the classic concepts we may have had, between federalism and confederalism, for instance, based on the fact that States are sovereign and are

associated with other sovereign States, which is confederalism, or with a federation. You have internal law and you have various provinces, like Québec, that participate in a common project from the inside and so a constitution of internal law.

Right from the start, you say very appositely: Federalism, and I quote you, is a formula that is concretely incarnated in many varieties. On page 2, you say, and I quote: What we are proposing today is sovereignty-association, but within a renewed federal structure, with elements of confederalism. So, if I understand you, for you, sovereignty-association, depending on the association links, can be seen very readily in a neo-federalism system of federalism. You share the thinking of one of our chairmen, Mr. Bélanger, who also told us that. Do I understand you correctly when you say that?

Mr. Bélanger (Michel): Mr. Rémillard, it's enough that Mr. Campeau is putting thoughts in my head, I wouldn't want everyone to do that.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Garant: Mr. Minister, clearly, I've done a bit of recycling with the term "sovereignty-association" which, as you know, is not a legal concept and can lend itself to various... Clearly, as in the neo-federalism I'm proposing, the idea of sovereignty for the federated States, sovereignty in the constitutional sense, because the word "sovereignty" has been used hundreds of times in constitutional jurisprudence in reference to federated States... We've spoken about the sovereignty of States, of provinces, etc. So, the term should not be particularly shocking. Sovereignty, but association as well, meaning limitation of sovereignty and transfer to the super-State in a kind of association that is consistent with the federal principle, but with new elements, elements of confederalism, of parity, and elements providing the possibility of negotiation, of completing the constitution with reciprocal agreements.

Mr. Rémillard: If I understand your report, you're telling us that we have to avoid brinksmanship. We have to avoid scare tactics. We have to avoid any situation that may place us in a situation of useless confrontation because you insist, rightly, that the economic climate has to be protected, and that the gains we've made must also be protected. So, in that context, I'm coming back a bit to the question my colleague, Mrs. Pelchat, asked a moment ago. You're also proposing a referendum for a declaration of independence, followed by negotiations. Is it not also possible to believe that we could say: Here's what we want, and if it's not achieved within a definite period of time, there'll be a referendum

and Quebecers will decide, somewhat like Mr. Dion proposed, like Mrs. Duplé proposed, like many experts proposed. Instead of having this referendum at first, that declares independence and then, after, leads to negotiations... And there, I say that the gains you want to protect, the economic security that's so important, that you mention, will be difficult to negotiate in that kind of context, of brinksmanship which you want to avoid. Wouldn't it be better to have this referendum afterward, so that the negotiations don't last another 30 years, but have a deadline?

Mr. Garant: Obviously, it would be possible. As I answered a minute ago to Mrs. Pelchat, what I was anticipating in technical legal terms, let's call it a declaration of independence with resolutive conditions, if you want, in the sense that there's a transition period after which it becomes effective if the plan isn't accepted. I don't know if... Clearly, I don't have a historical example to give you. We're breaking new ground. But I thought it was possible. We declare our sovereignty, there's a transition period, but the effect of the declaration is suspended until the new federal pact is accepted.

Mr. Rémillard: But don't you think, Mr. Garant, that we could also make a distinction between your suggestion of a direct referendum on independence, at the outset of negotiations, and one that would take place after a final negotiation to sanction the will of the people of Québec? If the negotiations succeed, the difference might allow us, it might take place within an internal constitution while, under the other process, we'd have to make allowance for sovereignties and that's much more complicated both in terms of international law and internal law. Don't you think that could also be an advantage?

Mr. Garant: That would be possible, but I'd be afraid of losing the first referendum. If, in the first referendum, you don't... You'll see, as a Commission, what you have to propose, but the climate is such that unless the word "sovereignty" is in the first referendum, it could be lost. And what would we do then? We'd be in the same situation as before. While if the people of Québec expect sovereignty to be the issue, with resolutive conditions, with a transition period during which the new federalism could be proposed, I think the chances of winning are better. However, it's not an easy one to decide.

Mr. Rémillard: But when Professor Lemieux said, a little while ago, not so long ago, this morning, that things shouldn't be precipitated. Be careful, if there's a referendum, we can't let the referendum show the rest of Canada that there are divisions, but rather that there's a consensus. In that context, I think he's

absolutely right. I think, yes, that a referendum's a very valid possibility in the context, but be careful, we cannot allow ourselves to lose a second referendum. Québec would be irremediably weakened. So, in that context, based on the scenario you propose, do you not think that would be beneficial?

Mr. Garant: Clearly, I'm not the strategist you are, Mr. Minister, I'm not experienced in negotiations, etc. You may be right. At a strictly strategic level, it would have to be thought out, but the crux of my thinking is the same, that what's really needed is a shock. English Canada really has to feel that we're ready to go all the way as a Québec society, unless there's a thorough reform.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): With that, Mr. Garant, thank you for having accepted to discuss with members of the Commission and in so doing, helping our work. We will resume at 2:00 p.m., please note that, 2:00 p.m.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:49 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:11 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We are now in session. We begin in 30 seconds. Our work continues and we now receive Mr. Simon Langlois who is an expert... Excuse me, I'm a little ahead of myself, it's Mr. Guy Laforest, a guest expert. Excuse me, Mr. Laforest. You have 10 minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Guy Laforest

Mr. Laforest (Guy): Thank you, Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission. At this late stage in the Commission's proceedings and in view of the events you are well aware of, I think it would be pointless to read you lengthy excerpts from briefs and to give you further information or details when, after three months of proceedings, you're no doubt a bit like students at the end of a long term or academic year: you feel you've studied the question from every angle and know everything there is to know. Therefore, the thing to do instead, I think, is to try and give you a short interpretation, a broad overview, in order to point out what I consider to be the nature, the very root, of the problem facing your Commission and Québec society as a whole.

To illustrate the root of the problem, I'd like to take you back to a rather sad day, a difficult day, mainly for Québec public servants, and also for our entire society, namely the evening of June 9, 1990 when, in Ottawa, for a few hours, we felt that there was going to be a third unanimous agreement in three years and that finally the Meech Lake Accord might be

ratified. That evening, something symbolic happened which, to my mind, goes to the very heart of the matter.

That evening, the Premier of Newfoundland, Clyde Wells, took the floor, looked at the Prime Minister of Québec, Robert Bourassa, and said something like: You Quebecers have got to understand that you too must be "d'abord et avant tout des Canadiens". Quebecers too must be, first and foremost, Canadians. The primary, the highest allegiance of Quebecers, like that of the residents of the other provinces, must be to the institutions of the central government, which Mr. Wells calls the national government. Well, personally, I'm convinced that to ask that of Québec, to ask that of Quebecers, considering their position in North America, is asking them the impossible, something they cannot give, not yesterday, not today, not ever in the future. The day Quebecers give their allegiance directly to the central government, to Canada, is the day they will have agreed to become part of a homogeneous entity, which, in my view, is totally unacceptable given our situation.

We would be wrong to think that it's just a matter of symbols, that it's just Mr. Wells addressing the Prime Minister of Québec. Mr. Wells was expressing a vision of Canada which has prevailed in the reforms to the country's institutions since the Quiet Revolution, a vision which is embodied in the institutions of 1982 and particularly in the Charter of Rights. This overriding vision imposes a logic on these institutions, imposes a new political culture on English Canada and is no doubt one of the main sources of the problem which confronts us. (2:15 p.m.)

Québec's problem, the problem your Commission is facing, is a problem which is intensified and worsened by the fact that this isn't only one individual's vision but a vision which has penetrated institutions to the core and come to dominate them. Basically, if you read my brief, you inevitably realize that the main public for whom my brief is intended - I'm an expert in symbols, I'm someone who's interested in the intellectual history of Québec and of English Canada - my principal public is, of course, a group of intellectuals who have believed in renewed federalism. I'm going to give you a short list: senators Beaudoin and Chaput-Roland, Mr. Dion, Mr. Rémillard, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Bourassa. Those people, and people who share their views, are my principal public. Those are the people for whom I wrote my brief. What I'd like to say to them is that, however valiant, however noble their vision of renewed federalism may have been, a vision which carried on the legacy of André Laurendeau, namely the vision of a Canada which would be dualistic, which would be asymmetric, which would open its doors to Québec and make significant room for Québec's distinctiveness, however noble and however

valiant that vision may have been, it is now obsolete, it is now impossible, we can no longer achieve it within the spirit of the institutions of 1982. That is the gist of my brief.

Picking up, then, from the point where Mr. Wells tells Mr. Bourassa: You Quebecers must be "d'abord et avant tout des Canadiens". From that point on, my brief unfolds in five stages. I'd like to come back to some of these ideas, if not in the presentation, at any rate in the answers to the questions. I'll outline them briefly to give you an overall picture and we'll no doubt have the opportunity to discuss them over the next hour.

The first idea, this 1982 Constitution which asks Quebecers to give the country direct allegiance is, in Québec, illegitimate through and through. Some of the foremost liberal philosophers consider that to be involved with legislative power with what you members of the Commission represent – there are several people here who sit in various parliaments, there are others who don't have that experience – to be a part of the legislative power... you are an expanded Parliamentary Commission... is to be situated, to be placed, at the very heart of a society's existence, to touch the very soul of that society, and you, Ladies and Gentlemen, who have that honour, that good fortune, are all the greater for it.

In 1982, the very heart of Québec society was affected, via the Charter, by operation repatriation. That's the true root of the problem. In tampering with the responsibilities and powers of the National Assembly of Québec in the fields of education and language, without the consent of the Government, or the National Assembly, or the Québec people, the federal government attacked the very essence of Québec society. According to various liberal philosophers, when a government does that, it's the final breach in the bond of trust between the government and the governed.

In a way, from Québec's point of view, as of April 17, 1982, when the Constitution Act, 1982, came into effect, there was no longer a federal government on Québec territory, because what happened was too serious. That's the first idea in the brief.

The second idea: not only is the Constitution illegitimate, but it has become almost impossible, as good as impossible, to reform it so as to satisfy Québec's needs and aspirations. In the brief, I evoke what I refer to as the image of a medieval fortress. Picture the 1982 Constitution – and this should be of particular interest to you, Mr. Libman, among others – as a sort of medieval fortress with successive lines of defence. The first line of defence is the amending formula.

With the amending formula that was introduced in 1982, it is extremely difficult to achieve meaningful, major reforms. If they are

achieved, there is the second line of defence, the political ratification process. Our first-year political science students see that very, very clearly. A compromise such as the one reached at the end of April 1987 at Meech Lake is something incredibly fortunate; to obtain such a compromise is extraordinarily lucky. The moment we obtain it, we should run off, go and hide, hole up, in order to settle the matter once and for all. Considering that it takes three years, that governments are going to change, that the mood which prevailed when the compromise was reached could easily change, it is excessively difficult to make such a compromise last for three years. We managed to do that twice. We very nearly succeeded in doing it a third time. That was achieved in political circumstances that were entirely favourable. It's not realistic, I'm not saying that it's impossible, that it's absolutely impossible, I'm saying that it's not realistic to think that we're going to be able to obtain reforms of this kind in the future, mainly because of the third line of defence, the strongest one, no doubt: the new Canadian nationalism.

Think of the Charter – and this is what English-Canadian Charter experts are saying – as the sea, the sea which slowly, gradually, day after day, eats into the cliffs. That's what the 1982 Constitution, via the Charter, is doing to the political identity of Canadians, particularly that of English Canada. The more time passes, the more the 1982 Constitution and Charter are transforming the identity, the political culture, of our fellow English-speaking citizens and the more difficult it will become to obtain reforms which would accommodate Québec's interests, which would respect the principles of duality and asymmetry, so dear to André Laurendeau and to his political heirs in present-day Québec.

And that is what leads me to state, in the last analysis, that the federal system of 1867 and of 1982 is dead and buried in Québec. I feel it is very important to point out that experts Charles Taylor and Léon Dion, who are not advocates of independence, have told you, each in his own way, exactly the same thing. Charles Taylor: "The only chance of saving federalism in Québec is to go back to Charlottetown in 1864". Léon Dion: "I challenge the entire 1982 Constitution, including the Charter of Rights". The federalists, the intellectuals with flawless credibility on the side of renewed federalism, have already gone beyond 1867 and 1982.

The third basic idea in my brief is what I would call the necessities of practical considerations. I'll just take 30 seconds to deal with this before I go on to the next two ideas. You members of the Commission, you have to think every day about North America and Montréal, about Québec's status in North America and the importance of Montréal to Québec society. If you do that, the answers will

come automatically. You have to identify the powers which are necessary to protect and promote a distinct society in Québec, taking into account the fact that we are in North America and taking into account Montréal's special status. That is what your focus must be, in my opinion.

The fourth idea is what I would call the unique opportunity that we have at the present time in Québec to draw up a new social contract between the majority and the minorities. With regard to the Native people, the Anglophone minority, the cultural communities, the time has come to hold out our hands and make generous, all-encompassing offers. Where the Native people, for example, are concerned, in the matter of James Bay II, offering \$150 million or \$200 million and saying: Here, take it or leave it, is the type of hardline negotiation that will not work. However, we have the opportunity of making them see that there is a possibility for a true partnership between Québec's institutions and themselves concerning James Bay, which will allow their youth to find a way to arrive at a synthesis of their traditions and modernism. I think that Québec also has an opportunity to offer something comparable to the Anglophone minority in Montréal.

The last idea in my brief, if you'll give me one more minute, Mr. Co-chairman...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): At the very most.

Mr. Laforest: Thank you. A strategic consideration, the necessity for an alliance between the parties. The two major parties in Québec, the Liberal Party and the Parti québécois, must set partisanship aside and find a formula, something like what Vincent Lemieux mentioned this morning, which will achieve a broad consensus in Québec, at least 60%, 65% of the population, and that's the type of formula that would send a crystal clear message to the rest of the country. As an expert, and as a citizen, I can only hope that you will find the strength to succeed. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Laforest, thank you, but it's not over yet. Now you have to respond to our questions and comments. Mr. Libman, you begin.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to start off by saying that I agree almost entirely with Mr. Laforest's analysis on page 11 of his brief, but I don't agree with his analysis on page 12 and I've had the opportunity, prior to his appearance here today, to tell him that I don't share his opinions on the question of homeland.

On page 12, you refer to my opening

speech when I said that Quebec is my home, but my homeland, my country, is Canada. Maybe it was a CBC clip that you heard because, in the rest of my speech, I tried to convey the message that the terms "Quebecer" and "Canadian" can be compatible and that is the question I want to discuss with you. You say, on page 12: "In order for Québec to develop fully as a distinct society in North America, it must first be considered a homeland by the vast majority of its inhabitants". (translation) My question is very simple: Why is there a need to choose? Why must Québec take priority over Canada or vice versa? Because, in your view, it seems that the ultimate criterion of allegiance is the question of homeland. I ask you: Are men like Beaudry, Dufour, Ouellet, Chrétien or Mulroney less loyal to Québec than others? Is their loyalty more restricted than that of others? That's the question I want to know: Why can't Quebecers and Canadians be compatible?

Mr. Laforest: Your question, in fact, touches on the essentials of the matter. To my mind, there are no first, second or third-class Quebecers. On that point, things must be very clear. On the possibility of reaching a compromise, of finding some way to be, in a meaningful way, both Quebecers and Canadians at the same time, for over a century, Mr. Libman, what could be referred to as complex federalism, generous federalism, in Canada fostered all kinds of hopes that that was really going to be possible. The Canadian federal system, from 1867 to 1982, had enough grey areas for a certain number of visions to cohabit, for us to be, at the same time, Canadians and Quebecers.

What has happened and what changes the nature of the problem is what occurred in the early 1980s, when the Constitution was unilaterally repatriated and imposed along with a Charter of Rights without Québec's consent. Part and parcel of that operation, Mr. Libman, was quite simply an attempt to subsume the Québec identity into the Canadian identity, to subsume Québec allegiance into Canadian allegiance. And you'll find, in a way, the answer to your question on page 7 or 8 of my brief, where I cite an excerpt from Mr. Trudeau's statements before the joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons in the fall of 1987. At the bottom of page 6 of the brief, the fundamental idea behind the 1982 Charter and Constitution was, and it's Mr. Trudeau's last sentence: "All of that is important in the sense that it makes Canadians understand that they share with all Canadians - and the emphasis is Mr. Trudeau's - throughout the country, the same set of basic values". In other words, with the 1982 constitutional package, complex federalism, the federalism with grey areas disappeared. The federalism which carried the day after 1982 is what Ottawa historian Michael Behiels calls the

federalism of visions which are "limpides comme le cristal". It must be crystal clear, and even Francophone Quebecers must give their first allegiance to Canada as a country, as a nation. That is the reason for which, in view of the impossibility or near-impossibility of reforming this system in order to go back to a complex, generous federalism, I'm obliged to tell you that, in the higher interests of Québec in North America, we have no choice but to go beyond this system. Consequently, in my opinion, and this is what I'd like the Commission to do, we're going to have to make a symbolic and political break. My most fervent wish is that we can do it while offering people such as yourself and those you represent guarantees that are going to be strong enough to obtain this allegiance which, for the moment, you are not as yet able to give Québec as a homeland. (2:30 p.m.)

Mr. Libman: But I'd still like you to clarify what you mean exactly by the word "allegiance".

Mr. Laforest: Can you be more specific? I'm not entirely sure I understand the meaning of your question.

Mr. Libman: When you say to give priority to allegiance to Québec, your concept of what allegiance means. Why allegiance? Just the question of allegiance.

Mr. Laforest: When you think of the way you define yourself as an individual, as a member of a society, or as a member of a country, there are certain things which take precedence over others. You've said so yourself many a time on various platforms, you're what people such as Peter Russell and Alan Cairns in English Canada call a "patriote de la Charte". The 1982 institutions, and I can very easily see why, give the Anglophone minority in Montréal a certain number of guarantees with regard to schools and language, for example. On account of these rights, on account of these guarantees, your allegiance, your sense of belonging, as an individual, when you consider your community, is associated with the institutions of the government which provides you with these guarantees, these rights. So, by "allegiance", I mean a sense of belonging. Your primary sense of identity, when you define yourself as a political person, is associated with an allegiance to Canada and to the institutions of the central government, of what people outside Québec call the national government.

What I'm trying to say is that these institutions ask something of Quebecers which, in my view, the great majority of the population simply cannot give owing to our minority position in North America. I know full well that if communications are broken off, if there is a political and symbolic break, if a new Canada-

Québec community is created, I know full well that people such as yourself and those you represent are going to be faced with some agonizing choices. I am perfectly aware of that. I say to you that it's in Québec's interest to reach out to you with accommodating offers so that you will feel drawn toward the proposal that is going to result from the work of the Commission.

Mr. Libman: But when you say the people I...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Libman, I know that it's very, very...

Mr. Libman: One little thing, when you say the people I represent, you mean the Anglophones of Montréal? Is that what you mean? Because you say that the people I represent, your words, maybe the Montréal Anglophones, are attached to a type of legal structure, but, as I said, do Beaudry, Ouellet, Dufour, and company, who don't share your priorities, have any lesser allegiance to Québec because of that?

Mr. Laforest: Absolutely not. Choices - individuals make political choices - allow for a certain number of formulas. I, for instance, could very well have as a priority, say, that it would be in Québec's best interests to become the 51st American State, or something of that nature. As an individual, I'm fully entitled to hold any political belief whatever and, once again, priorities and political beliefs don't turn individuals into first or second-class citizens. What I'd like to convince the Beaudrys, Ouellets and Dufours of, is the immeasurable wrong, the terrible wrong, which is gradually being perpetrated on Québec by the 1982 institutions. I think that even the 74 Liberal MPs who supported the repatriation operation in 1981-1982, I have the impression that a large number of those people scarcely realize just how much harm that operation has caused Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We'll now move on to Mr. Sébastien Allard.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Laforest, I notice - and it's probably quite easy to understand why - you don't deal very much with the economic effects which would result from the separation you propose. There are others, of course, who have done so and I suppose you considered that it was not up to you to go back over that. They've told us, and again this morning someone said, that separation would entail considerable costs during a transition period which could be fairly long. OK. So then, you don't touch on that, you say: We'd have to make a legal and political break and,

afterward, we're going to negotiate. My first question is: Do you believe that by proceeding this way it'll be easy to negotiate with the others? Tomorrow, we're going to tell the rest of Canada: It's over, we don't want to have anything more to do with you, we're independent; now then, we'd like to come to an agreement. Is that going to be easy? Who are we going to negotiate with? How long is that going to take? And even though you haven't addressed the economic aspects, during this transition period, how is business in Québec going to fare? What's going to happen to the living standard of Quebecers?

Mr. Laforest: Mr. Allard, yesterday I was in Toronto at a meeting of the Business Council on National Issues, where...

Mr. Allard: So was I.

Mr. Laforest: ...we met indirectly and, you're right, I didn't answer the economic questions. On a lighter note, I would say to you that, during my life, I did somewhat the same thing Joe Clark did; at one point, I had to choose between foreign languages and the economy and I made the same choice as Mr. Clark. But seriously, I would say to you that, in my opinion, the turning point in the Commission's proceedings up to now was the brief submitted by the Association des économistes du Québec. Generally speaking, yours is a Commission where, at the outset, economic arguments dominated. A Prime Minister and a Leader of the Opposition who have the educational background you are all aware of, the two co-chairmen who have been involved - that's putting it mildly - in things economic, members of the Commission who are from the business community. Well, the economists came here to tell you that the supremacy of economic arguments was over. The economists told you: Our science, our field of knowledge, does not enable us to make predictions concerning the validity, concerning the greater or lesser advantages, of one formula or another for the medium and long term.

I'll grant you that the economists also said that everything was in the transition; during the transition, there was the possibility of a certain number of problems. Let's think about that for a second. Mr. Saucier, who was also at the meeting in Toronto yesterday, told us: Year after year, since the early 1980s, despite economic growth, despite a favourable situation, the federal government has rung up annual deficits of some \$30 billion. We're going to hit the \$400-billion mark this year if nothing is done, and we realize that we are currently in an institutional paralysis, at an institutional impasse. Therefore, chances are that, barring a political change, the same pattern is going to continue and, 10 years

from now, we'll have a deficit of close to \$800 billion in Canada.

So, there are economic costs as well to maintaining the deadlock, to maintaining the status quo as we now know it. What is to be done in order to avoid very considerable economic costs during the transition? I'd like to add here that I'm not a lawyer or a supporter of what could be called separation or pure, hardline independence. I'll summarize for you in one sentence the formula I propose: What should come out of the Commission in the way of a referendum plan, as I'm in favour of a referendum, and which would, in my view, mitigate the risks you mention, is more or less the following: The Québec government - it's the Liberal Party that's in power - is going to have a formula along the lines of a confederal arrangement, a Canada-Québec economic union; it will be something of that nature, in my opinion. That is what should be submitted to the rest of Canada, but tied to something much stronger than what Mr. Dion has proposed. Mr. Dion told you: Let's negotiate a confederal arrangement and then let's couple that with a threat of a second referendum on independence. That threat, in my view, is insufficient. What we must do is propose a confederal arrangement and say: If things don't work out, if the negotiations don't succeed within a timeframe which should show generosity on our part, then the Government should have a mandate to proclaim sovereignty, independence. Now that's a serious threat and my colleagues in the political science community in English Canada think that it's a clear message of that kind which is going to enable the rest of the country to shake off the institutional paralysis it is currently experiencing.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Allard, may I...

Mr. Allard: So you're not proposing that there be a break and, then, negotiations?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Allard, may I turn the floor over to Mr. Maciocia?

Mr. Allard: I suppose you must.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'm asking your permission.

Mr. Allard: I don't really have a choice.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Maciocia, the floor is yours.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Laforest, you'll probably have the opportunity in a moment to answer Mr. Allard's question. In my view, Québec's uniqueness in North America...

and you propose two things, two breaks, if we can call them that, one, its symbolic subordinate position in the Canadian federal system, and two, to go beyond the bounds of the logic behind the Constitution Act of 1982. And then you explain the reasons for which the Constitution Act of 1982, in fact, practically prevents Québec from being able to remain within the Canadian federation. But, at the end, you talk about the idea of an association between Québec and Canada. It's not clear to me what sort of association you mean. Are you talking about an economic association, an economic and political association? In this type of association, would Québec still elect federal MPs or, let's say, what are the elements of this association between Québec and Canada?

Mr. Laforest: You have, in fact, given me the opportunity to also answer Mr. Allard's question more directly. The scenarios that, in the last analysis, you'll manage to devise and that will be approved by the Government will have to be complex: flexible scenarios, scenarios containing elements from different sources. And you'll find that as well in the brief. The idea of a unilateral declaration, for example, which would become legally valid 18 or 24 months after its adoption by the National Assembly could very easily be one of the elements of the referendum formula. The idea of a confederal arrangement where Québec would not send any MPs to the House of Commons, as Mr. Dion, for example, suggests in his text published last week in *La Presse*, that too, in my opinion, should be included in the referendum formula. The real threat, the threat that would make people stop and think and that you, as a Liberal MNA, should, in my opinion, agree to as a credible threat to get the partner to sit down at the negotiating table, to obtain your first preference, namely a confederal arrangement or something of the kind, is not the threat of a second referendum but, rather, quite simply, the threat of a proclamation of independence by the Québec government. If you want to have what your heart is set on, such as the preservation of some type of link with Canada, if that's what you want, you can't achieve it, in my opinion, from my understanding of the logic behind the present institutions, within the framework of the system as it exists today. Therefore, your threat must be perfectly clear in order for there to be any chance of achieving the renewal you long for.

Mr. Maciocia: Do you not think, Mr. Laforest, that the Canadian political context has changed radically since the failure of Meech Lake? Let me explain. At the present time, even the other Canadian provinces are aware of the possibility and of the very serious circumstances we in Québec are currently experiencing in the

constitutional area, with the possibility of Québec's separating from the rest of Canada. Do you not think that, in view of this political context, we'll probably stand some chance of negotiating one last time, beforehand, the exclusive powers that Québec would like to have, and if by chance, later, Québec's demands were not satisfied, go ahead with a referendum on independence?

Mr. Laforest: You've given me a chance to define once again, as far as possible, the true nature of the deadlock. If I'm right about the difficulty Québec would have obtaining something within the framework of the logic behind the 1867 and 1982 institutions, if I'm right about that, and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord which had been reached in very favourable political circumstances, those which prevailed between 1985 and 1987, would appear to prove me right, if I'm right, then it's the other dimension, which should make you turn pale, and that is the following: In the opinion of political scientists in English Canada, Professor Cairns of the University of British Columbia, for example, the federal government and the federal bureaucracy cannot, at the present time, negotiate; they can only play the federal game. They are only capable of playing the game of the 1867-1982 institutions.
(2:45 p.m.)

Mr. Cairns writes in a paper he submitted yesterday to the Business Council on National Issues: At the present time, the federal government and the federal bureaucracy are incapable of evaluating objectively, impartially, the advantages and disadvantages of the various formulas, of the different alternatives open to us in this post-Meech era. In other words, they have an understandable, natural bias toward the logic underlying the 1867-1982 institutions.

What Québec must do is allow a new leadership to emerge in the rest of the country, a leadership that will be capable of adjusting to a new framework, different from that of 1867-1982. In other words, basically, I'm asking you to be both daring and patient. Daring in order to make the necessary breaks as soon as possible to send the messages and shatter the institutional paralysis, but, after having been daring, after having made it clear that the regular game within the 1867-1982 institutional system is over, at that point, we must be generous and give English Canada time - I'd just like to take maybe 30 seconds to finish - to get reorganized.

Peter Russell, president of the Canadian Political Science Association, said yesterday in Toronto: You Quebecers can't impose an antidemocratic mechanism for reforming the Constitution. In other words, Québec can't negotiate exclusively with the federal Prime Minister or exclusively with the federal political

party leaders because those people have no mandate, at the present time, to negotiate beyond the bounds of the normal institutional dynamic. Consequently, we must, in my view, hold a referendum as soon as possible and, once that's done, we'll be able to give them a period of time, which may be 15, 18, 20 months, to get reorganized, to do something, such as form a constituent assembly which would allow the people, who are sovereign, to voice their opinion in the rest of the country too, just as they will be expressing their opinion in Québec in the coming months.

Mr. Maciocia: But do you think that's very easy? Who is Québec going to negotiate with afterward? Is that...

Mr. Laforest: Mr. Maciocia, you're perfectly right. It's not easy. But I'd like to convince you that living for nearly a decade with a Constitution which is illegitimate, to which we did not give our consent, which is like a straitjacket, without any hope of modifying it to better suit our needs and aspirations, that's not easy either.

Mr. Maciocia: Mr. Chairman, I have another question I'd like to ask pertaining to another matter. In your brief, you say, on page 11, that Québec must have exclusive control over its language policy and that it must send clear signals to immigrants. But, at the same time, in another chapter, you say that you're in favour of bilingual signs. I suppose that, when you talk about sending clear signals to immigrants, the message is that, in Québec, French and only French is the rule and that French is the language of self-fulfilment in Québec. I find it a bit, let's say, a bit illogical that, at the same time, you come out in favour of bilingual signs.

Mr. Laforest: In my mind, it's entirely logical and this is how I see things. In my view, Québec society is not an exclusively unilingual Francophone society. We must go beyond the dream of a pure, clear, French-language society in Québec. We must be able to get beyond that. I'm entirely willing to repeat it on any platform you like. Montréal society is a society where Anglophone institutions, such as McGill where I studied and others, are representative of Québec; they enrich Québec by remaining what they are. McGill University, the Anglophone hospital network, the institutions which are the pride of the Montréal English-speaking community, these institutions serve Québec by being Anglophone institutions. In the Québec of tomorrow, in the Québec I dream of and for which I hope to see a new social contract, it seems perfectly natural to me that, if these people give their allegiance to Québec as a homeland, at the same time, we,

the Francophone majority, are capable, we're secure enough to be able to offer them what we're not prepared to offer them under the present system.

In this post-1867-1982 period, I am not at all ashamed to say that, yes, it seems normal to me that we should offer something like bilingual signs, with preponderance for French, in Montréal.

Mr. Maciocia: If I understand you correctly - one last one, Mr. Laforest - with the separation of Québec, or with a new constitutional status for Québec, the fear that the French language is going to vanish overnight would disappear and that's the reason for which you're in favour of bilingual signs.

Mr. Laforest: Exactly, and I have one last brief comment on that subject. In November and December, I took part in a debate in the pages of *The Gazette* where I expressed these ideas, offered the idea of a new social contract. A businessman, Victor Lévis, responded and there was an extraordinary sentence in his article: "My personal belief is that in a sovereign Québec loosely associated with the rest of Canada, the English-speaking minority will have a better future than the one possible if Quebecers are intimidated into remaining unhappy participants in an artificially maintained Canada". And that I find extraordinary. The opportunity for a new social contract in Montréal is there, and it seems to me that we should not let it go by.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you.

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

Mr. Maciocia: I thank you and I hope that the Parti québécois got the message.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): It's your turn, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Laforest, I'd like to begin first by paying tribute to you because your brief, in this respect at any rate, is an extremely articulate, clear and brilliant demonstration of the fact that the quest for a special status for Québec within the framework of the federal system is an impossible, impracticable venture, not because English Canadians are nasty people who aren't nice to us. Not because of that. Quite simply because the 1982 Constitution, with its Charter, represents the incarnation, as it were, of English Canadian nationalism and because the Charter has already become - it's been apparent since it was first introduced - a tool, a means to create a homogeneous community where all share a common set of values, and that's what we

Quebecers find unacceptable.

There are some quite exemplary quotations in your brief: for example, when you say that "the deep-seated aspiration for homogeneity conveyed by the Charter appears to augur ill for any plan to promote a distinct identity for Québec". (translation) Farther on you say: "The Charter is incompatible with a concept such as that of a distinct society, with any idea of special status for Québec". (translation) Personally, I think that the commission is going to have to take due note of this central, indisputable fact.

But there's an aspect of your brief which I find extremely interesting as well, coming as I do from a relatively remote area. I was born in Alma and I've lived there for 50 years. There aren't many English in Alma. And when the Commission was in the area, Mr. Dole, a linguist of American origin who works at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, came to tell us that when he went to Montréal, he didn't feel that he was in a French city. That's been my experience as well. We spent another two days in Montréal this week. I walked along the streets of Montréal, I went into Montréal establishments, I didn't have the impression at all that I was in a French city.

And what you say about Montréal seems to me of vital importance. Furthermore, that's why you consider it absolutely essential for Québec to have exclusive powers in the area of citizenship, whatever constitutional arrangement may result from our current activities. I'd first like you to comment on that and to spell out for us the importance of Montréal with regard to the very future of Québec as a distinct, French society.

Mr. Laforest: Thank you, Mr. Brassard. I'd like to perhaps propose an image taken from the old regime, the regime of New France. This is maybe not the best day to give you examples related to war events, but forget about the war dimension of the matter and concentrate on the symbols. Think of what Louisbourg meant to New France. For New France, the loss of Louisbourg, the loss of control of Louisbourg, regardless of the situation in the rest of New France, elsewhere and afterwards, was the determining strategic event. When Louisbourg was lost, all was lost.

Montréal's role vis-à-vis Québec is a similar one in these last years of the 20th century. To protect and promote a distinct society in North America, we need to have control of Montréal and I think your Commission provides us with the opportunity to achieve that. But because we need control of Montréal, we must have the wisdom to understand how we're going to be able to do that. In my opinion, we're going to be able to achieve control of Montréal by managing to convince the people who live there that the Québec of the post-break era, the

Québec of the post-1867-1982 system, is going to be what Mr. Rémillard calls a distinct, open and tolerant society. We must convince them of that now, before the break. That is the reason for which I think that your party in particular and Québec nationalists in general, their intellectual and political leaders, should cross the Rubicon and acknowledge that, already, we've made tremendous progress in Montréal.

In 1850, Montréal was a city where Anglophones were in the majority. In one and a half centuries, we've come a very long way. We've established our control over a vast number of institutions in Montréal, but we must not yield to the temptation to carry things too far. To want Montréal to be a unilingual Francophone city would be carrying things too far. I'm convinced that, in North America, Montréal will never be a unilingual Francophone city, and frankly, just between you and me, that would probably not serve our interests. A balance in the current situation... At the present time, Francophones represent 83% of the Québec population. In my opinion, we should... The compromise formula, the intelligent formula, the formula of the future, is to say: A Québec where 83%, 85% of the population is Francophone, where the Anglophone minority is concentrated in the Montréal area, where it has guarantees not only regarding its present institutions, but also concerning a sufficient percentage of immigrants to enable it to maintain itself demographically, to offer them that and offer them as well a symbolic recognition of their language.

In the Meech Lake story, the symbolic dimension, the refusal of symbolic recognition... We asked to be recognized as a distinct society and we were refused that. The symbolic dimension of the issue is extremely important. We want recognition of something that is very important to us. In the case of the Anglophones who account for about 30% of the population of the Island of Montréal, of the Montréal area, to ask them to give up certain symbolic dimensions of their identity, such as the place of their language in the city where they live, that too, in a way, is asking them the impossible or the unthinkable.

Therefore, let's have the intelligence to offer them something that is moderate in the North American context. Yes, there should, in fact, be English on commercial signs in downtown Montréal. Suppose the Anglophones living in Beaconsfield or Pointe-Claire were to see their language visibly reflected in their every-day surroundings, it wouldn't be so terrible, provided we have control over immigration policy, cultural policy, education policy, and all the rest. That is where, in my view, the compromise must be made. We need their support. We won't be able to carry out our project without them. We need a very broad

consensus and, in order to get it, we must be generous.

Mr. Brassard: But these concessions, Mr. Laforest, let's make quite sure we understand each other, are possible and imaginable only in a sovereign Québec, only in a native land called Québec, let there be absolutely no doubt, only in a society where there is a single citizenship, a single allegiance, as you were saying to Mr. Libman a while ago, and not a dual citizenship and a dual allegiance, as is now the case. When you go to Montréal, it's obvious that there's a sizable proportion of the population whose allegiance is primarily Canadian and therefore, consequently, there is a tendency to go toward English with all the risks you mention. So, things must be very clear. These concessions can only be made within this framework. That is your view, am I right?

Mr. Laforest: You're entirely right. It is indeed within the context of political sovereignty. And to hear you say, without running the risk of being taken for a heretic, that these concessions are imaginable, that you feel it's possible, to hear you say that makes me fully satisfied I came here today.

Mr. Brassard: Provided that Québec is sovereign. If Mr. Libman and Mr. Holden agree that Québec should become a sovereign State, I, for my part, agree to regard the conditions you mentioned just now as altogether imaginable.

Mrs. Blackburn: Give their allegiance to Québec!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. There you have it! It's too good to be true!

A voice: Mr. Campeau moves that the proceedings be adjourned.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: I'd like to ask one last question, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Make it very brief, very brief, please.

Mr. Brassard: Very brief. It concerns the course or procedure you propose. You don't say very much about it in your brief, but my understanding is that, what you proposed in your discussion with Mr. Maciocia, as I understood you to say, you propose, when it comes down to it, that there be a referendum on a project for what we in our party call sovereignty-association, that maybe the Liberal Party is going to prefer to call a true confederation, but that, when the population expresses its views on

a project of that nature, it will, at the same time, give the Government a mandate to proclaim sovereignty at the end of a specified time period, if this proposed goal cannot be achieved through discussions or negotiations with our partners. Is that right?

Mr. Laforest: That's exactly right. I have the impression – and I'll conclude in just one minute – that the time of patience has gone by, and I'd like to clarify and qualify what I mean by that. Gérard Bergeron published, in 1967, *Le Canada français après deux siècles de patience*. Two centuries of patience. Around that same time, Mr. Ryan wrote: We need cultural duality and special status. That's what we want, we're prepared to wait in order to get it but that's what we want. We waited another 22 years before we got the Meech Lake Accord. After we got Meech Lake, when the National Assembly of Québec voted on it in the summer of 1987, we waited three more years for ratification in the rest of Canada. Québec has shown patience. Patience is a virtue but, as a teacher of philosophy, I also know that virtues must be placed in context; it's always a concrete question of particular circumstances. I have the impression that, in Québec's case, what's currently taking place is that patience, from the virtue it once was, is turning into a vice and is becoming synonymous with irresolution.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Laforest, thank you for this clear and precise presentation, for being so straightforward and frank in answering all the questions and not glossing over them. You've certainly contributed to the work of the Commission which is to study the political and constitutional future of Québec. We thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 3:00 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 3:05 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now welcome Mr. Simon Langlois who is another of the experts we've invited to appear before us. Mr. Langlois, the floor is yours for the presentation of your brief. You have 10 minutes.

Mr. Simon Langlois

Mr. Langlois (Simon): Thank you. Messrs. Co-Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, right now there is a wide gulf between the Constitution and society. The powers that are currently shared between the federal government and Québec and the provinces no longer correspond to the new needs which are the result of observable alterations and changes in our society.

I'll give you an example to illustrate this

point. Growing numbers of married women work outside the home, and the mothers of young children are increasingly present in the labour market. This situation has several major consequences: How can we finance and organize day-care? How can we maintain the income of pregnant women? How can we regulate labour standards? How can we ensure the upgrading of women who are under-qualified? How can we combat the systematic discrimination which is our legacy from the past, the legacy of labour organization established in another era? Ottawa and Québec City are competing with each other to take action in this matter, it's common knowledge. We have integrated a paid maternity leave program into the unemployment insurance plan administered by the federal government. Québec City provides low-income parents with financial assistance for day-care. Québec City subsidizes day-care centres, but Ottawa is examining the possibility of establishing a national day-care policy. Actions have been many, varied, and unconnected. Each level of government acts in keeping with its own priorities. The same holds true for family assistance, housing, occupational training, communications, and so on.

What's at issue here isn't just duplication or inefficiency. What's at issue is a society's capability, possibility of taking action within a new context, within a changing context, in keeping with its own objectives. It's the capability of developing the new policies required by these changes. It seems that the objectives and needs of Québec and Canada have evolved in diverging directions. If we remain at the surface of things, we could think that all we have to do is bring jurisdictions into line, clarify power sharing in order to provide essential solutions, on which is based, from Québec's point of view, the shopping list which continues to grow longer as the witnesses and the groups parade by this table.

This is a dead end because reality is more complex. Because we are faced with two increasingly distinct societies whose objectives, needs and aims are increasingly different, sometimes convergent, but also sometimes different. Canada was based on two nations. We must now recognize the increasingly apparent existence of two societies within Canada. I will give you the example of population policies to illustrate this.

Faced with a declining birth rate, Canada has opened its doors to immigration and has adopted a multicultural model. But we know that, ultimately, the new arrivals will be integrated into the Anglophone majority. After two generations, the grandchildren will, in fact, be acculturated Canadians and English speakers. In Québec, it has been decided to both boost and maintain the birth rate, immigration too, but Quebecers especially have had to pass legislation

to ensure the integration of these immigrants into the Francophone majority.

Until now, Québec's distinct character has been strictly limited to questions of language and ethnicity. Québec has also slowly become a global society - to use a sociological concept - with a set of specific institutions, its own social organization, its own culture, different national and political objectives which have made it a country rather than a province, which have made it a society of citizens rather than an ethnic group.

A large majority of Quebecers agree that major, if not radical, changes should be made to the current Constitution. Discussions on the matter quickly turn to an examination of the advantages and disadvantages of the various constitutional options, but less is said about basic aims which should also be examined. What type of society do we want to build? For what type of society do we want a new constitution? These are the preliminary questions which will require answers in the Commission's report before recommendations for constitutional changes can be made.

I will briefly identify four guidelines which are explained in more detail in the brief. Many observers have criticized the economy or business-oriented nature of the debate on Québec's future. The 1980 Referendum was marked by financial discussions on the trade balance, the profitability of federalism and the cost of independence. We must bring this outlook down to its proper dimensions and not narrow the debate on Québec's future to this single approach. It is certainly important, but it isn't the only one. When we discuss the future of a country, we must know how to take the financial aspect into account, that's true. But we must also be able to hope. We must know how to open new paths and undertake their consolidation and construction, if needed. We must also know how to count on the ability to adjust, on the ability to face the unknown and the new.

Second guideline: more nationality, less nationalism. There are two dimensions in nationalism: the thirst for power, which can often be observed in large nations, but also the will to exist, which is observed more often in small nations. Québec nationalism has often been caricatured by its adversaries, who have associated it with this thirst for power, when in reality, it is rather the expression of a will to exist. Perhaps it would be better, like Raymond Aron, to define "nationality" as this feeling of belonging to a cultural community, so as to distinguish it from nationalism, a word that is still overly charged with pejorative connotations.

Third point, more culture, less multiculturalism. In its official policy, Canada has not only respected but also promoted differences, because it was itself unable to offer an original

culture that could be used as an integrating model. Canadians themselves are beginning to wonder if they haven't overly stressed the differences between and the respect for different cultures in Canada to the detriment of building a common Canadian identity. Québec has opted for a slightly different path to assert its relationship with its immigrants, a path which has more in common with what is done in other countries. It must continue in this direction by recommending that new arrivals integrate into the host society. This society will be open to them, and in return, the new arrivals will enrich it with their support.

Fourth guideline, powers must be redistributed, not only to ensure better manpower training, better programs for union workers by means of integrated policies, not only to ensure development policies and tools for our companies, not only to promote the emergence and the consolidation of industrial and cultural enterprises, but to ensure a fairer redistribution of income, greater social and economic justice. This blueprint must be a blueprint for everyone.

What will the consequences be? I said that the current sharing of powers was no longer sufficient to face the new challenges of the sweeping social changes observed in recent decades. Nor does it correspond to the aspirations which have developed everywhere, especially the aspirations of Quebecers. Québec and Canada have evolved in different directions, which now require more than ad hoc constitutional patching and mending. On the contrary, Québec must obtain the powers to make its own political decisions to face the new challenges it must meet and to attain the objectives it has collectively set for itself as a society. Sovereignty seems to us to be the most appropriate constitutional framework to make these political choices which are necessitated by the social changes that I just mentioned. Only sovereignty makes it possible to make choices, to propose alliances. It is different from the quest for greater autonomy in that the latter does not provide control over decision-making.

Sovereignty is not an end in itself. Nor is it important only symbolically, to enable Québec's diplomats and politicians to travel abroad with the Québec flag on the hoods of their cars, to use a common expression that you already heard during the Referendum. Rather, it is a preferred framework within which these political choices that I referred to can be made. In passing, let's avoid the reference to the vague concept of "choice of society". A society doesn't choose to be, it exists, marked by conflicts, opposition, with a history and an environment which imposes constraints. It exists as the result of the free and restricted actions of its citizens. We can make political choices, certainly, but we really can't choose what a society will be. Many Canadians perceive the association with Canada

proposed by Québec sovereignists as an easy way of minimizing the risks of sovereignty while receiving its benefits. Many Quebecers think likewise. Dreaming of sovereignty while fearing the risks it involves, they have given themselves the insurance policy of association with the rest of Canada. This perception must be revised everywhere. Québec cannot attempt to obtain both the advantages of belonging to the Canadian federation and those of sovereignty. (3:15 p.m.)

The new tie with Canada must be an alliance with a neighbour that will benefit everyone and not just be an insurance policy. The word "association" is very pejorative in English Canada right now. This term is charged with connotations which make it seem like an insurance policy, because the perception that Québec will benefit from Canada is very widespread.

In my opinion, the word "association" must be dropped in describing the new tie between Québec and Canada. Let's call a spade a spade, and sovereignty, sovereignty.

With this accomplished, Québec's position will have the advantage of clarity, which will facilitate discussions with the rest of Canada. Rather than proposing an association, Québec should propose a new alliance between sovereign partners, something which is different. Partners who will do business together, who will share policies, who will jointly seek to attain objectives. There will be a lot of work to do to change social perceptions, both here and elsewhere.

In conclusion, sovereignty is not a negotiating tool. Sovereignty is a framework for development with which a society equips itself. It's a framework which enables it to develop its citizens' will to live together, which also enables it to negotiate accords and agreements with others in order to improve the situation of all, in order to seek the common good. I ask the Commission to continue its work along these lines. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Langlois. First speaker, Mr. Claude Dauphin.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, on behalf of the Government members, of the parliamentarians, I would like to welcome you to our commission and thank you for accepting our invitation to testify as an expert. First, I would like to discuss the part concerning the political lag, more specifically on page 10 of your final version, when you state that this political lag, both in perceptions and in actions, augurs badly for future negotiations with Canada within the current framework.

If I understand you correctly, in your opinion, in the event of a break or a new

constitutional framework, will negotiations be easier in order to arrive at agreements? You described these agreements. You didn't talk about association but rather an equal alliance of states. In your opinion, will negotiations be easier after a new constitutional framework, compared with what we would have to negotiate today in the current framework?

Mr. Langlois: Negotiations are never easy. I think that they will be easier for the following reason. If I'm right, it will be easier to negotiate between two societies than to try to promote the idea of a special status for Québec within the Canadian society. The rest of Canada sees itself as a united country, that is, Canada is seen as a country from sea to sea. Jeffrey Simpson recently pointed that out very clearly in *Le Devoir*.

Of course the existence of regional differences is admitted, but there is always this view of a great country, one of the greatest in the world, physically speaking. So, with this logic, it becomes difficult to grant one of its components this special status or this recognition of distinctness. You know, all these expressions have been used for 30 years within the very heart of the federation itself. But probably if, in fact, it's true, if, in fact, these two societies have evolved, Canada is no longer a British Canada, it's a multicultural Canada. I indicated this in several areas. I even prepared a chart which shows this very well.

For its part, Québec is also increasingly French. Québec chose to integrate minorities, the new arrivals, into the Francophone majority. Therefore, I said in my presentation that we are faced with two societies and not two nations. So, it will perhaps be easier, in my opinion, to negotiate within this framework rather than to try to patch up the existing framework one more time, or for the eighth time, or the twelfth time. We can no longer change things piecemeal in my opinion. We must use a different basis.

I spoke about a political lag to briefly explain this idea that, in Canada, we are always an hour late somewhere, an hour later somewhere. I pointed out that trying to more effectively establish and assert the Francophone presence throughout Canada had been recommended early in the century. That was Bourassa's dream, you know. When, in fact, a serious effort was made to build Canada on that basis, well, it's common knowledge, Québec had gone on to other things. French Canadians were the first to demand national symbols: a flag, the Canadian national anthem, etc. When Canada got a flag, Quebecers had already gotten their own and had identified with it for 20 years. So, it's sort of this hypothesis that I've tried to develop in the brief, namely that there was this lag, a lag which has now become more marked in my opinion because these two societies are asserting

themselves increasingly differently.

Mr. Dauphin: About this lag, several speakers have told us that there would obviously be a transition phase which could be difficult for Quebecers. Have you considered the transition period, while taking into account, obviously, the lag or the perceptions which are somewhat different between English Canada and Québec?

Mr. Langlois: Yes. I think that we are now better prepared to face the transition. Other countries are setting very good examples for us right now, before our very eyes. Germany is now reuniting two systems, two diametrically opposed, completely different societies. Poland has taken a dramatic turn in the opposite direction from the system it had only a few months, a few years ago. I think that societies, when they are well prepared, are able to face these changes. I'm confident that if we know how to clearly express what we want, we will also be able to negotiate new developments, likely quite quickly, which will satisfy the overall goals and aspirations of each.

Mr. Dauphin: Another question, if I may, Mr. Chairman. At the beginning of your brief, you assert that Quebecers have an overly global view of Canadians, as you mentioned earlier. It's that English Canada is not necessarily homogenous and that Canadians are of very diversified ethnic origins. You also stressed that several analysts of English Canada fear this plethora of ethnic groups and are concerned about the possible balkanization of Canada. I would like to hear your comments on that. What should we conclude in that respect?

Mr. Langlois: We must conclude that it's perhaps the main argument right now that's undermining the thesis which founded Canada as it exists now. Earlier, my colleague Laforest alluded to this concept of two nations. He referred to an old article by Mr. Ryan. In fact, this idea of two nations, of a contract between two founding peoples, it's this myth, to some extent, which founded Canada in 1867. Canadian society has evolved from greater openness to a diversified population, to the point where people of British origin are now a minority in Canada. Therefore, we can no longer speak of one or two founding peoples. Rather, we should now talk about a multiethnic society in Canada's case and, in Québec's case, a society which is still mostly old-stock Francophone, that's true, but also a society which has turned towards the multicultural model, as can be observed in other societies: France, the United States and many others.

Therefore, in the next few years, with this increase in immigration, especially a more visible immigration, Québec will also become this

multicultural society. Right now we more or less have what I call two melting-pots: one Canadian, which is increasingly developing in English, and the other, Québec, which will increasingly develop in French.

Mr. Dauphin: Another point, if I may, Mr. Chairman. I would like to tell you that I found your brief very interesting, very clear, easy to read, very well written. One point on which you were mute is how to implement the sovereignty blueprint. Have you anticipated some mechanisms? Most of the speakers, obviously, we have had the opportunity to talk with them... How do you see the method of applying or implementing the sovereignty blueprint?

Mr. Langlois: Quebecers should first be asked the question clearly, that is, a blueprint and a clear question will have to be developed based on that option. If it is democratically accepted, well, I think that we will have to discuss, within the framework of conferences with the other part of Canada, the mechanisms of distributing the assets and everything that this declaration of sovereignty will entail. And subsequently negotiate what I called alliances or agreements or accords of all types.

You know, in Québec and in Canada, we have long-standing experience with these negotiations. Very long-standing experience. I think that there have been no fewer than 35 constitutional conferences since 1827. So, we are in a position to change systems, a position that, in my opinion, is much more enviable than that of the Germans or the Poles. We are already accustomed of negotiating. We know our partners. We have the same political culture, a democratic culture, a parliamentary system which is very similar. In short, we have in hand all the tools and the entire framework to enter into these discussions, while other countries have succeeded in radically changing their situation without having this minimum of preliminary institutions, or custom, if you will. So, personally, I'm confident that, if there is a clear position on Québec's side, well, Canada will have to deal with this clear position. And maybe they will even be more likely to negotiate this new type of agreement, or these new agreements, than to try to imagine, for a third or fourth time, a type of special status or, let's say, preferential arrangement for Québec.

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, Mr. Dauphin. So, Mrs. Harel, it's your turn.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This fall, you published, or it was published under your direction, I believe, a major work entitled *Évolution et tendance au Québec*. And I believe

that your brief takes a penetrating look at the status of the situation both in the Québec and in the Canadian society. I'm grateful to you for leaving us this brief which, in my view, is one of the most important briefs that we have received at the Commission. But I'm especially grateful to you because all the members of this Commission will be able to change the family model that we are using, regardless of our allegiance, to explain the status of the situation, which is often the model of a divorce between a couple.

You are giving us another, on page 19. You are giving us the model of brother and sister. And I would just like to bring it up because it seems to me, perhaps, to be more in keeping with the state of affairs. You said: "Québec and Canada have evolved in different directions... We are now faced with societies which are close to each other, but very different, somewhat like brothers and sisters who, at age 50, are linked by a shared childhood, but have become strangers as the result of decisions that they have made throughout their lives. We are faced with societies in which the differences are dissolving the common ties, ties which, however, are still remembered with a certain nostalgia." (translation) So, that's a sort of vision which is not at all antagonistic. And for this new family model which, I hope, will be taken up by all Commission members, I thank you.

Having said this, you brought it up again in conversation with my colleague. You told us: The vision of a dualist Canada, that of two founding peoples, on which is based the philosophy of federal renewal that no one wants to update again in spite of everything. You told us: This vision is outmoded, not because it has been rejected by the players, but because it no longer exists. You told us: English Canada is no longer British, you prove it to us with charts, and then you spoke to us about its multiculturalism. And you have another view of French Canada because you told us: There has been a shift from a French-Canadian identity to an identity which is not only a Québec identity, but there has been a shattering of the French-Canadian identity. Yes, we experienced that before this commission.

You told us in your brief that this identity has been replaced by regional Francophone identities, Acadian, Franco-Saskatchewan, Franco-Ontarian, Franco-Manitoban, and that's what we have noticed, rather than that French Canada has fallen back into Québec. Not at all. It's that Québec, in fact, has opened up to the multiethnic dimension and there is now an ethnic Francophone presence which, you told us, is recognized as such. That's a dimension which is probably extremely important and I would like to hear you comment on the fact which, during the Meech negotiating agreement, was often placed in opposition: multiculturalism and the distinct society.

Mr. Langlois: In fact, what was – how should I say it – basically involved and what has never been very clearly expressed is that: What is the basic vision that we must have to more or less found a new constitution or a new collective will to live together? The problem that I see is that we have two visions of things right now. We have a Canadian vision, which presents society as being – this is an exaggerated model – a society that is very open, very welcoming to people who come from the world over, a society which also offers its members excellent social protection, etc., and an Anglophone society too, basically, but which respects the rights of its Francophone minorities. The problem is that in Québec, we have a different vision of things. We have a vision of a society which is also open and which also has its own institutions, but which is conducted in French and which, at the same time, also has different options for some issues.

(3:30 p.m.)

For example, a society which chooses to develop its vocational training in a different way, to try to link training and schools more effectively, to ensure, for example, the continuing education of manpower by integrating it as much as possible into the school system, whereas elsewhere in Canada, other choices are made. In other words, what I'm trying to explain is that we are ultimately faced with two societies which are seeking to develop their collective will to live together in slightly different ways. These differences seem to me to have become increasingly great to the point where they will have to end or they will end with the necessity of a new constitutional and legal framework. That's more or less the basics of what I was trying to show.

Mrs. Harel: Moving on to something else, you have also greatly developed the topic of parallel institutions, that is, you discussed the fact that, as a minority, we haven't "competed" in the institutions of the Canadian majority, but instead have established a network of parallel institutions in which we were in the majority in all sectors. We have the example of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, to name just one. You said: By creating these parallel institutions in which we were in the majority, we have reinforced the global society, and by reinforcing it, in fact, we were shaping the country. Have you come to the conclusion that there is an actual country which currently exists? That it's enough to give it a name because it does exist. Is that your feeling?

Mr. Langlois: Yes, I think that a country or a society... The main thrust of this movement has in fact showed that it was more or less the genesis of these changes and how, over the years, as things developed and decisions were

made, we come to have this type of different society within Canada, which is called Québec. And we could have had another model, which I'll discuss here, which is the American model, in which the minorities take their place within the institutions. The Blacks don't have their own financial institutions or their own school system, etc. They want to be present in the country's institutions. So, here we have in fact created new institutions that are often parallel with those which exist in Canada; we see it in the banking system, we see it in the health system, we see it in the education system, we see it, in fact, in all the institutions. So, it's what I called the development of parallel institutions. And, in fact, we must see that a society exists because it has a given social organization, because it has a given social structure, because it has established institutions and also because it has a given collective will to live together. And all these aspects seem to me, right now, to be increasingly differentiated, when we examine the situation in Québec and what exists in Canada as a whole.

Mrs. Harel: You also spoke in this brief about the departure of part of the Anglophone elite which resulted in a replacement by a new Francophone guard. While reading your brief, I told myself: what may seem to be a gap ultimately turns into something else, what may seem to be something which will produce negative results can result, on the contrary, in advantages. I wanted to ask you: Do you think that we need a break? We often talk about a break. It's often discussed as a sort of concern, but, in your opinion, do we need a break to subsequently be able to build on another reality?

Mr. Langlois: I think that we do not need so much a break as an assertion, that is... Maybe I'll use the parent-child model here to answer this. It's that we are asserting ourselves without necessarily totally breaking away. We are keeping strong ties, but we can at the same time be independent, sovereign and then do business if we want to. So...

Mrs. Harel: And if the assertion that we want, that you seem to want, requires a break, do you think that Québec society, as you know it, you who have studied it in depth, will be able to react to it adequately?

Mr. Langlois: I think that what we can observe right now, perhaps from a sociological point of view, is the appearance of a very great difference and a very great differentiation. Do we have to call that a break right now? Maybe not, but what's required right now is to determine what the constitutional framework and the political framework will be which will allow for the constant development and the future

development of these two societies which assert themselves differently. That's what's basically at issue right now.

In this brief, I wanted to promote the idea that the country's actual situation had changed greatly and that we now needed to overhaul the constitutional framework to enable those groups which have changed to organize their mutual future.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mrs. Harel, may I interrupt you and turn the floor over to Mr. Jacques Proulx, and say that the next group, which has many speakers and which wants to speak... Mr. Proulx hasn't spoken since this morning, so I'll give him his five minutes.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by telling you that you have prepared a paper that I find extraordinary, especially as regards your outlook of the distinct society concept. When you assert that Québec is a distinct global society, I find this approach oddly interesting, because I think that it's really by those means, in a general way, that we will at least arrive at the point of proposing a certain number of solutions which may be adequate for the future because, unfortunately, as you also said, far too many people have limited the debate or have limited Québec's unique character to language and ethnicity. I can easily endorse that. That's even easy for me and I think that, in this paper, you have truly addressed the issue as a whole, and it reminds us especially that so long as Québec remains unrecognized as a country, it will be very difficult to be able to see the entire situation in its true light.

You then recommended a certain number of guidelines for making the political and constitutional choice. I won't list all the ones that you give. I will name only one. When you said a blueprint for everyone, making room for the poor and low-income people, could you explain that a bit more? Do you have more explicit ideas about that? What would be a society that makes more room for these people?

Mr. Langlois: So, a word on the major changes that we have experienced in recent years. You know, personal income increased a lot during the 1950s and 1960s, the "golden sixties". Since mid-1970, personal work income has risen very little. What has ensured the rise in the standard of living of Quebecers and Canadians is basically the addition of a second income in the home, and when households haven't been able to count on this second income, they have come down in the world, that is, their situation has deteriorated.

What has made it possible to maintain the standard of living during the 1980s has been collective and private indebtedness, that is,

therefore, anticipation of future income. So, within this context and as lifestyles have changed, the number of single-parent families increased, etc., unemployment which has also increased and so on, well, we have developed a large number of programs in Canada. I identified about twenty in the brief. The Macdonald Commission identified, I think, 80 income maintenance programs, around 80, and some authors even went so far as to say that there were more than 100 or 150. Fine. Obviously, everything depends on how they are defined.

So, we can see that some sort of haphazard or piecemeal action has been taken in each area. However, I think that this new constitutional framework will have to provide Québec with some tools to enable it to face these social changes and also to make certain political choices, such as income redistribution. You know, Québec has implemented several complementary policies or federal policies or even, in certain cases, policies which are new and not merely complementary. Québec has therefore taken action in accordance with its means.

Now, what I wanted to express by means of this paragraph is that we will have to imagine this sovereign Québec as a Québec which is also built for everyone and, therefore, not only to support the efforts of our entrepreneurs, something which is, nevertheless, praiseworthy. We must create wealth in our society, create jobs, not only for artists, Mr. Turgeon, not only for the farmers that you represent, but also, I think, for everyone. You know, Hubert Guindon, who is a fairly well-known sociologist, showed that the middle classes benefitted greatly from government intervention. I think that we'll have to take advantage of this new overhaul to make choices which will benefit the greatest number, the greatest range of people possible.

Mr. Proulx: But, if I understand you correctly, that is rather a question of policies which are much more adequate, in fact, for these people. That doesn't necessarily mean a blueprint for society in which these people have more say, if you will, more say in the matter, more say in decisions. That isn't what you're telling me. Rather, it's having policies that are better structured, which meet their needs more effectively.

Mr. Langlois: Yes, but that...

Mr. Proulx: ...to continue to maintain them in a cocoon-like state, if you will.

Mr. Langlois: Yes, you're right. Let's move on now to the separation between the social aid policies and the income maintenance policies and the occupational training policies, and those of unemployment insurance. We could include others. There are therefore so many actions which would

perhaps require redefinition or redeployment to meet needs more effectively, especially for example, the training need. But as soon as that takes place in different jurisdictions, coordinating actions becomes more difficult and this can be seen right now in several areas.

Mr. Proulx: Another short question. You spoke, at the end...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I must interrupt you. Really, I have exceeded...

Mr. Proulx: Just France, I would like him to say whether it's unrealistic to think that France must step in before a decision is made.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK. Answer yes, no or maybe.

A voice: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Langlois: OK. I'll give you a short answer. Listen, this is a minor point in my brief which deserves clarification, Mr. Chairman, if I may. I wouldn't want to use up the time.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): It will be charged to him during another presentation.

Mr. Langlois: Yes. To Mr. Proulx. Let's be accurate. In the brief, I didn't want to ask or suggest that France should step in on our behalf, choose on our behalf. I don't want that and I don't think that anyone wants a new colonialism or a new paternalism. What I meant, basically, is that France has a privileged historical tie with Québec. It's a major economic and cultural partner. It is also, for us, the portal to Europe. Therefore, within this context, France will basically have to be one of the first countries to support Québec's choice, regardless of what it will be, this choice, of course, being ours to make.

The necessity of making this comment occurred to me shortly after the declarations of certain individuals who doubted, for example, that a sovereign Québec or a more independent Québec could demand international respect for the agreements signed by Canada. I think that if we reach that point, France will have a major role to play, being among the first foreign countries to say: We recognize the choice made by Quebecers, we support it and we continue to support it. So, it's with this in mind that I wanted to make this remark at the end of my report, but which, in fact, is minor in relation to the whole, I think.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine. We will now turn to Mr. Desjardins, followed by Mr. d'Anjou, followed by Mr. Larose.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Langlois, your brief has great merit, and it's to your credit that you are clear about the option that you are promoting. You told us that sovereignty can't be begged for, it must first be declared and then we can build our associations and our treaties with neighbouring countries. That's how it's done and we must be responsible enough to accept the risks that this might entail. I think that I understand your idea very well and there is an honesty in it that I find very appealing.
(3:45 p.m.)

There's a comment I would like you to make because I think that it's important. You refer to it throughout your brief, and earlier, someone spoke about it. You said that the concept of two nations becomes blurred and we understand what you mean, both peoples, both nations. But you will agree with me that the main document which governs the life of a country is a constitution - you agree with me - and that never, in the Constitution of 1867 and that of 1982, have we dared to talk about two founding peoples, French and English, or two nations, an English nation and a French nation. Therefore, we can understand all the resistance with respect to law or the Constitution, and Meech is also the result of English Canada's resistance to recognizing the distinctness of Québec society.

So, I'll say it like this and this is my opinion: Canada's renewal or failure will hinge on English Canada's ability to adjust its glasses and tell itself: Is it possible that in this country there isn't just one distinct society, but two? And if English Canada truly accepts this concept of two nations and two peoples, all constitutional renegotiation, all political structures, whether confederal or within a federated system of two States, will then become possible. Ultimately, this is the way I see the solution to the problem that we have and this was inspired by this remark you made, that the concept of two nations has failed. We understand what you mean and Meech is the proof, but legally, constitutionally, never has the document which governs our country recognized this concept of two nations. It has never been attempted as such.

Mr. Langlois: It isn't recognized in the Constitution, but it's recognized in treaties. You know, you perhaps read Grant's book, which also discusses this general idea of a Canada resulting from the contract between the two founding peoples... Of course, we don't talk about it today anymore for a reason that I've tried to explain, namely that Canada has sociologically changed into something else. But it remains that if we go back in the past, this idea of a contract between two founding peoples or between two nations...

Mr. Desjardins: There were royal commissions on that.

Mr. Langlois: ...was very widespread all the same.

Mr. Desjardins: But entrenching it in a constitution has never been agreed to, this is oddly significant, and if it were agreed to, everything would once again become possible and open to discussion.

Mr. Langlois: I think that we can no longer do so because it no longer exists.

Mr. Desjardins: That's your opinion, and I respect that.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's fine. We will now turn to Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. d'Anjou: Mr. Langlois, you said in your brief: More culture, less multiculturalism. We have received an enormous number of multicultural groups. I wonder if there isn't within our country, within Québec itself, a certain ambiguity between the way people of different cultures are received and the way these people perceive their rights with regard to their integration into our society. Until Québec is recognized as a largely French-speaking society and everyone agrees to function in French, that it's the language of the workplace, the main language of communication and that, from Quebecers' point of view, we are willing to recognize the differences, that is, that each can develop his own culture, maintain it, there are still some requirements, and that perhaps explains some readings on Québec society which have been done in other provinces.

Earlier we spoke about the distinct society, but it remains that, in the Confederation of 1867, there were very special clauses for Québec. I'm thinking about civil law, for example. That's really a basic distinction that we don't have the same civil law as other Canadians. But it's this perception with the federal multiculturalism policy where the concept of two founding peoples has been set aside, while recognizing that there were Native nations before us, which means that the Francophones outside Québec are perceived as a minority like any other. This is maybe the great ambiguity in our country and prevents this society, in the other provinces, from recognizing a distinct society in Québec, and consequently, a different status in Québec. What do you think?

Mr. Langlois: Yes, I meant by that that we will have to build a society and a culture together, that is, that old-stock Quebecers will perhaps have to reject what I called in the report the idealization of the antiquarian past, if

I may use Nietzsche's expression. Let's look at Québec society as it is today. Well! it's opening up more and more to new populations arriving here, the immigrants, the new arrivals who are also old-stock and are of various origins and who are also more visible. What I meant here is that we must build this Québec society together, therefore, ourselves, as old-stock Quebecers - I say "we" because I will speak for myself here - maybe abandoning this reference or even this concept of old-stock. It's becoming a little awkward to speak about old-stock Quebecers, etc. I think that people who agree to live in Québec and who want to live here - what I earlier called the collective will to live together - are called and will be called Quebecers, and then they will share a certain number of things together. That is, immigrants will enrich the Québec culture. But what I meant here by "more culture and less multiculturalism" is that we still need to keep in mind the necessity of a society which stands alone and which is integrated at the same time to avoid the perils that are now being encountered in other countries where cultures coexist. And I really don't think that this is the most harmonious model of society.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you. What was called constitutional mayonnaise yesterday, I think, something to unite everyone.

Mr. Langlois: Yes, but which will change us too. We must be aware of that.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. d'Anjou. Mr. Larose.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like MNA Dauphin, I found this text first of all to be very clear and it's certainly one of those that I would keep on my short list because it is primarily extremely realistic in its analysis. It lays out our constraints while also breathing life into the blueprint. On page 11, you said: "We must be able to hope." (translation)

There are two pages which I would point out in particular. It's your description of the political lag. We have the impression that, systematically, Canada is a step backwards, with Québec setting the pace.

I would like to touch on nationalism, nationalities, the "nationalitarian" movement. What I found very enlightening was when you said that what is the thirst for power in large nations, nationalism, for small nations, is the will to exist. I think that in the debate that we've had, especially in the last two days, I am always a bit surprised myself to be trapped by some guilt. When, as Quebecers - and Quebecers to me means all people on this territory - we want to assert our rights, we always have the impression that we are stealing them from

others. I find that, in the category that you borrow from Raymond Aron, there is an explanation there, a very significant enlightenment that I would like you to explain in greater detail.

Mr. Langlois: This nation to which I referred increasingly defines itself as a community of citizens. So, I would like to explain this a bit. Basically, in the concept of a nation, we most often find the idea of kinship, that is, sharing the same ethnic origin, the same stock, affiliation through blood ties, often with religion, etc., added to that. That results in a somewhat explosive mixture, in the sense that others are excluded because, if we didn't have this affiliation, this blood tie or this belonging to the same religion, etc., we wouldn't be part of the nation.

This idea, this concept of a nation, which was prevalent in the 19th century, is now being dropped by almost everyone in favour of a new view of the nation as a community of citizens. That is, from the time when citizens agree to share a society's collective will to live together, these citizens become part of the nation.

In the meantime, let's look at what's happening in France. France is a country which was built on a high level of immigration. It is estimated that there are over 1 million Poles in France. There are how many Italians, do you think, in this country, people of Italian origin, etc.? And this holds true for the Arab community, which is now very large in France. All these people define themselves as French citizens and, therefore, as members of the French nation. It's in this sense that we are now talking more and more about the nation as a community of citizens. And I think that this is sort of the way of the future. In other words, talking about a nation or nationalism today isn't pejorative if we talk about it in this sense. However, it would be if we talked about it in the more classical or traditional sense, which is an exclusive meaning, in the sense where others who don't have the characteristics of nationals are excluded.

Mr. Larose: That's what leads you to say that culture has no borders. It may be nourished, but it has roots.

Mr. Langlois: That's right. It has no borders, it has roots. However, the roots are important. That is, universal culture, I think... Does that exist? I don't really know. But what certainly exists are the local customs, deeply ingrained, if you will, of living and eating, etc. We even see it with these great international trends. We often speak of globalization, standardization, etc. But behind this standardization we always find a national or cultural colouring which will make itself apparent. In other words,

there is a bit of both, if you will. We borrow a lot, but, at the same time, we digest, we reformulate and we come to terms with all these differences to the point where this amalgam produces slightly different results.

In other words, there is a greater European identity, but it doesn't glue the national identities together. There is an American identity, in which we participate as Quebecers. We are Americans, we are not French. But, at the same time, we have our own peculiar characteristics in relation to others. And we can also observe in countries such as the United States this dual process, that is, this "Americanism" which defines being American, but at the same time these regional differences, which are also important.

Mr. Larose: Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that OK? So, Mr. Libman, there are four minutes left, do you want them?

Mr. Libman: OK, yes. I will try to be brief. Mr. Chairman, I agree with those who found this brief to be very interesting. It's one of those rare briefs which examines nationalism.

In your brief, you spoke about the two forms of nationalism. On page 12, you said: "During a nationalist demonstration in Montréal, faced with a placard carried by a demonstrator which said 'I'd rather die than speak English...' (translation) You called that a narrow nationalism which must clearly be rejected. And you compare this form of nationalism to a more positive nationalism, assertiveness, that you mentioned on page 12. So, my question is very short and perhaps a bit hypothetical, but I would very much like to have your opinion on this: How can we be sure that you will win and not the narrow nationalists, not narrow nationalism? How can we be sure that you, or your concept of nationalism which is assertiveness, will win?

Mr. Langlois: Because... for a very simple reason, we have democratic institutions... The existence of this Commission, the plurality of the points of view which are given, the great freedom of speech that we have, I think that that's there to stay. I'm a bit frightened to hear, to have heard this speech several times, I'm not talking about what you just said, but the speech which presents Quebecers as always sort of having the potential to oppress others. You know, I think that that's a rather contemptuous vision of Québec which has a certain basis in history but, at the same time, a basis which should be reinterpreted because, you know, Quebecers have never oppressed minorities like other countries have, such as...

Look at what's happened in European countries, look even at what's happened in the

United States. We have never had that type of oppression in Québec. When we question whether Québec, whether a Québec which has more control over its future, with sovereign institutions, would be a threatening Québec for its Anglophone, Jewish or all other minorities, I think that the situation hasn't been read correctly and, especially, we have made unfounded assumptions. Québec is a democratic society. We have institutions which have been established over the years. We adopted the parliamentary system a very long time ago.

Therefore, I think that we have here the tools to ensure that the rights of all people are respected, and I think that many briefs reveal both this will to assert oneself as such, and a will to respect others. Which means that this respect is guaranteed by the institutions that we have and by the democratic debate which is underway. I don't fear for the future, unlike what others have expressed here, in my place, on several occasions, before the Commission.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Libman. So, Mr. Langlois, thank you for the time that you have granted us. I think that my colleagues and I certainly noticed the great ease with which you answered the questions, but especially the great tactfulness of your answers. So, I thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:03 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 4:05 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Arpin, if you are ready, we will begin. So, Mr. Arpin, the sixth expert invited today, you, like the others, have 10 minutes to present your brief and then, given that you have agreed to answer our questions, our people on the Commission will be pleased to explore your knowledge.

Mr. Roland Arpin

Mr. Arpin (Roland): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I would first like to thank you for having invited me to present a brief before the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. I have chosen to limit myself to the field of culture in which I worked for several years, in both the areas of education and cultural affairs, where I participated in formulating policies and administering government programs, and from where I have recently returned after a three-year stint in the wonderful world of the Conseil du trésor. During these mandates, I had the opportunity to observe that "cultural" is a many-faceted concept, that it cannot be tied down to

administrative rules or be abused by those who, based on the paramountcy of their choices and personal or professional preferences, want to reduce it to the sole realm of the arts, important though this realm may be.

The considerable development of the cultural industry, for example, records, books, films and, more recently, videos, provides significant tools for cultural dissemination. The more recent development of microprocessors has expanded production to new proportions. These new avenues bring more participants into play, which means that culture is no longer solely the domain of artists as creators or of governments as supporters and patrons. Thus, culture has several definitions. It may represent an ethnological concept linked to lifestyles; a sociological concept linked to the use of time; an educational concept linked to the dissemination of knowledge; or even a strictly esthetic concept, linked to a certain artistic theology. I would add, on a more down-to-earth level, that culture has entered the mass production-consumption cycle, which constitutes, in turn, the new road to democratization. As a result, culture is now much more than just cultivated; it is also accessible, popular, multi-faceted and often highly fragmented. But there is a danger that culture will be attributed such a vast scope that, in the end, it will be both everything and nothing. Although it doesn't go this far, the brief I've tabled does hold that culture is the unifying theme, society's most important common denominator and that consequently, the responsibility to be exercised in this area by the State cannot be entrusted to partners who are pursuing different objectives, which means that this very Commission is a "cultural affair", and that all it should do is study ways to make us wealthier and more prosperous, because its immediate origin and distant sources bring us back to the very essence of things.

How can we preserve and develop our cultural identity and our identity as Quebecers, that is, our culture? This culture is increasingly apparent in everyday life, first thanks to a language which is our own, the French language, but also thanks to the unique way we dress and shelter ourselves, dispose of our leisure time, and to the importance we grant to the quality of life, work, the environment, to a particular concept of social justice, wealth-sharing, to specific expectations from public services, namely education, but also to a certain predilection for celebration, huge popular demonstrations, major festivals, and our openness to the world that is expressed through travel, which is enjoyed by young and old alike.

When an establishment such as the Musée de la civilisation has record attendance levels of over 2000 visitors daily and close to 800 000 annually, one is forced to conclude that Quebecers, their visitors, are very much at ease

in a culture that is open to the world, generous and highly creative.

When Quebecers consider themselves a nation, they are obviously considering such elements, as the co-chairmen pointed out November 6. Allow me to emphasize that any discussion on culture and any proposal of political choices based thereon cannot be set out like a theorem or expressed with the logic of a scientific approach, which was also true for the Commission pour l'économie, as we saw, but that this does not prevent a number of convictions from emerging naturally. One of these is that the importance of culture is such that its supervision cannot be entrusted to participants who do not share its values and means of expression. Another conviction is that certain fields of public responsibility affect culture more closely than others, and that these fields strongly influence the development of cultural identity and the preservation of values that are dear to most Quebecers. Besides the elements already mentioned, culture is composed of a number of areas of public intervention which, each in their own way, entrench it in the everyday life of society and of its members. Culture is therefore not an abstraction; it is based on a certain location, a population with a unique demographic background, a history that draws on several sources, a religious tradition. In brief, culture is the product of a slow sedimentation reflecting the human adventure which, through time and space, gradually defines a people's identity.

The traces left by this long process, when studied individually, are never particularly significant. It is the evolution of a people as a whole, the choices they make and those imposed on them, that make up what is commonly called cultural identity. This identity is defined through a specific territory and language, through unique traditions. In a practical, concrete manner, this specific cultural identity – because this is what's at stake – cannot be protected or developed unless Québec is given full authority over these components. These components define our cultural priorities and develop an environment suitable for our history and aspirations. They fashion the very soul of a Québec in which everyone recognizes specific characteristics distinct from those of other regions of Canada. These cultural components are mentioned in the brief I tabled, and are expressed mainly through the administration of cultural programs, communication, immigration, and international action. Of course, education could have been included in this list. The importance and scope of this mission, already exclusively entrusted to Québec – although at times infringed upon by the federal government – deserves a presentation that others have surely already made.

My brief thus presents, once again, Québec as a nation that has attained a level of maturity

and cohesiveness that requires that its responsibilities and the control of its choices be consistent with its aspirations. The history of Québec shows that it has the courage to make its choices.

Although this brief focuses on culture and its areas of influence, it is impossible to exclude broader considerations when assuming the responsibilities for culture mentioned here. Responsibilities that, for Québec, must include the definition of a new model of political organization, through the preservation of the French language which is not only a heritage but also an excellent communication tool for our culture, history and sensitivity; the end of draining discussions with the Canadian provinces who themselves appear weary, and who would undoubtedly benefit greatly from being together in this Canadian mosaic which seems to suit them; full control and authority over our cultural programs and institutions, and decisions on the development of our identity and culture; the active presence of the State in culture where it has the responsibility to provide access to cultural life and to assume, where necessary, an auxiliary role and contribute financial support.

It appears that Québec has gone beyond the "why" to ask itself how these changes will be made. Surely in a democratic, reasonable manner, as we have long been used to; through a referendum, thus avoiding confusion between a regular election and a unique democratic exercise; and lastly, using calmly, free of any anxiety which might undermine a gesture expressing a people's maturity and ability to shape its history in the manner it judges the most likely to preserve its collective well-being and prosperity.

In concluding, Messrs. Co-chairmen, allow me to emphasize that the Commission you are chairing clearly illustrates Quebecers' ability to assume responsibility for their establishments and their culture. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Arpin. First speaker, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good day, Mr. Arpin. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you and to thank you for having agreed to come and contribute to our discussion. I should say, perhaps, before beginning my remarks and questions... You will allow me, Mr. Chairman, to point out the remarkable success of the Musée de la civilisation du Québec; I am glad the Québec government had the admirable idea of creating the Musée de la civilisation, and that the Liberal government was certainly just as inspired in following up on the idea and in appointing you as director.

Mr. Arpin: Thank you, Madam.

Mrs. Blackburn: And the results speak for themselves. Mr. Arpin, this is one of the briefs that... I'd say that all the briefs have taught me something, and I think this is true for all the members of this Commission. But your brief is the one that most impressed me. I feel like, right away... Because, immediately, I think that you ask the question as it should be asked, that is, based on the identity of the Québec people. And the title of your brief is interesting; you say: Culture, an indivisible territory. And the way you define culture, quite rightly, goes far beyond "cultivated culture", and this I find marvellous. You say: Man... Because you know, here, people have come before us to say: What are you complaining about? Québec is relatively prosperous, economically speaking. As if man or human beings, a people, can be summed up by their economy.

And you remind us that man is not strictly an economic entity. He is also, above all, cultural. And that culture is one of the most unifying themes, society's most important common denominators. You even say, referring to the Commission: It is itself a "cultural affair", first and foremost, because any decision handed down by it will aim to preserve our culture, not just to make us more wealthy and prosperous. I must say that I appreciated it because I feel that this is the true issue.

In your brief, you deal with a number of things. You're especially critical of the infringement of the federal government on areas of provincial jurisdiction. And you go as far as to say: To do what we have to do, we need a referendum and full authority, complete authority.

When speaking of culture, one often gets the impression that Québec - and it's even been said here - Quebecers are a little timid... They are afraid, and wrongly so, of being assimilated... They fear... They feel threatened. But you, what is your vision of today's average Quebecers? Are they timid, closed in on themselves, or enterprising, imaginative and creative?

Mr. Arpin: Listen, Madam MNA, to the same extent that we can observe a certain number of simple phenomena... Take the example of travel, for instance. We envy young people who, more and more, spend their summer travelling. We can see gray-haired people travelling to many destinations other than just Florida. When we meet retired people returning from a trip to Thailand or China, or even people... I'm thinking... The other day, I met a lady who is an operator-receptionist at Bell Canada, and thus, I would imagine, not among the wealthiest in our society, she probably makes a very average salary, who told me: I save up my money and every three years, I travel to an exotic location. I asked her: What do you consider an exotic location? She went to Poland last summer. Under

current circumstances, Poland is an exotic location for someone from a rather closed environment. And I could give numerous other examples.

I could give the example of our young university students, or of artistic production in Québec. Currently, we can see the impatience of people in the film industry over the fact that they are still being treated like Québec film producers, in the narrow sense of the word. I think that now, the word "Quebecer" is no longer associated with the word "timid" but rather with "sure of themselves", with the ability to say: We have gradually defined, throughout history, the perimeter in which we want to live, and we demand to live there proudly. But this perimeter is open.
(4:15 p.m.)

I referred to the Musée de la civilisation, not to vulgarly "plug" the establishment - this is something I would never do before this Commission - but to say that it is a museum that is first and foremost open to the world, the root, the source of which is Québec. There were people who were worried the museum would be rigorously nationalist. Have you ever heard of a Japanese museum that wasn't nationalist? Or a Russian museum? Or a museum in Taiwan? These are countries that, for a long time now, have learned to breathe freely. And being nationalist doesn't mean focusing inward and closing oneself off. This is the point Québec has reached.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Patenaude, who we heard this morning, using the example of Belgium, said that the more a people is confident in its identity and its culture, the more efficient and competitive it becomes economically. Do you share this viewpoint?

Mr. Arpin: I'm a former teacher, Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: A former...

Mr. Arpin: And there's one thing I learned in life: What applies to children in a family also applies to children in a classroom. That what applies to children in a classroom applies to employees in a business. And that what applies to employees in a business applies to all citizens. And that everyone, whether they be students, children, citizens or employees, needs a lot of personal reassurance. And currently, I think we're seeing... I don't think it's hasty to say that the barometer of our collective self-confidence shows that the mercury is gradually rising, rising. But it's the product, mind you, of external influence. Immigration, for example, which has become a concern in many aspects, is very important in this sense, very important. Looking on immigrants as a resource is something new.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes.

Mr. Arpin: We'll be receiving large numbers of immigrants from the East. They're hard workers who arrive here with a good education and who are extremely determined. It'll be a culture shock. They don't have 180 school days a year, they have 215, and during these 215 days, they don't play volleyball, they don't go cycling. So this will be a shock. The shock for Québec in coming years will be that of the harmonization of our intellectual abilities, of our development, with that of others who will be arriving. This is what globalization is, is it not? We have to wonder if a Cegep diploma isn't worth a diploma from Taiwan, not in number of years but in the number of things learned.

Mrs. Blackburn: Many participants also cite, on the contrary, the desire to create a country with, they say, an international movement, not a movement of standardization, but of establishing ties between countries, and they mention the EEC in particular, the European Economic Community. Then there's the fragmentation of all the countries, of which we are all aware. There's a current, I'd say, a sort of breeze of freedom that's blowing on all these people. The impression given by this sense of urgency to recreate these spaces for these people, is that of the opposite of globalization.

Mr. Arpin: First we have to find ourselves, right? I think there's a considerable difference between being absolutely sure of our identity and wanting to isolate ourselves. Today, it's impossible to isolate oneself. It's impossible to isolate oneself, we're definitely seeing this these days, aren't we? We're seeing this these days, it's more spectacular than ever, but we saw it in T'ien an Men, we're seeing it everywhere. So we can't isolate ourselves.

However, it's true that we must allow for both that which commands maturity and for the discussion on maturity. Perhaps you recall the interview between Mr. Rocard and Mrs. Bissonnette in *Le Devoir* in which, to this question, Mr. Rocard replied: Listen, the countries in the European community are first and foremost countries with a long history, a detailed past, which are very familiar with their cultural environment, which assume it, which control their language, their economy, their history. Amalgamating to become stronger isn't denying anything, it's not the negation of anything.

I think that Québec will have to prove, in order to establish certain alliances, that it has reached a certain level of maturity. Maturity can no longer be expressed solely by saying that we are people of our word. We must also show that we are people of action.

I refer, in my brief, to the idea that

Quebecers are called to carry out an act of courage. It's an act of courage because the unknown factor in it is very strong. But I think that the economy is teaching us, these days, that the unknown factor is considerable in any context.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I'll have to stop you here, Madam, unless you have a remark of no more than five seconds.

Mrs. Blackburn: Okay. I would have liked to discuss the problem of overlapping programs and federal intervention. Those who read the brief will perhaps be able to identify with what I'm saying, except that what's too bad is that the briefs, when they're presented to us, only touch on the essential, and so many interesting things aren't mentioned. I can understand that those who haven't read the briefs would really like to do so. Unfortunately, this isn't possible for all the listeners.

You say: We must quickly... The population will move from...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's six seconds.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, a very brief question because I was impressed, because I'm an MNA like my colleagues, and you say that public opinion has not only caught up with, but overtaken the rate, the slant of political decisions, and that the focus on the "how" must give way to convictions that are more broadly shared concerning the "why". So, you say: The "why" is solved, let's turn our attention to the "how" and to a referendum as soon as possible. Yes?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. On to your last answer, Mr. Arpin.

Mrs. Blackburn: I'm not sure that it'll be satisfied.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now go to Mr. Béland, who will be followed by Mr. Turgeon and Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Arpin, I realize now that after reading your brief, I had written beside it "a breath of fresh air". Today, you've spoken of breathing freely. I think we understand each other. I think I wrote that because what I found essential, very refreshing in your brief is that you get right down to the nitty-gritty. You know, often, we've been conducting these discussions as if they were business transactions. Is it good, is it bad, is it too expensive, is it not expensive enough? Our discussions have come to this, whereas you, you've reminded us that, in the end, all these

discussions... we're here, I think... we're seeking above all to protect our identity as Quebecers, our culture. And you conclude very accurately, and I must say I buy it, no problem, when you say: The important thing is to know where we're coming from and where we want to go.

Once we know this, it seems to me that the next thing is to find the means, especially since our Charter says: "Whereas the economy of Québec is mature and vigorous and Quebecers clearly wish to see its development and growth assured." The legislator took for granted that we had the means. And I think that, too often, we forget about the "how". And you, too, you tell us forget the "why". Could we discuss the "how"?

Here, however, I'm going to give you a slight reprimand. You don't help us out much in this area. You say: We must have independence, we must have a referendum. But the mechanics of it, we often speak of this here. How do you see it?

Mr. Arpin: Well! Listen, I think you've fallen into the very trap you just warned us about, Mr. Béland. You want to talk accounting and methods as well. I think that any major negotiation, any sweeping change begins with the decision to take action. We've set a historical course and we're not making a break. Québec is not making a break, currently, from the history of Canada. Right? Québec is part of it. And there has to be a preliminary decision made, we have to say: OK, to what extent do we give ourselves a new constitution or a new political model? OK. Is it sovereignty? Is it something else?

And after the decision is made, several people will come forward to say: Let's make the decision. Let's reopen certain discussions, put them back together and carry on. And it seems to me that this will occur bit by bit. I'm not an expert in all these bits. The reason I took the example of culture is that it's glaringly obvious to me that if we go lower than this, we're heading nowhere. Right? At any rate, my answer to your question is simply that if we start by asserting that culture, for us, is non-negotiable, some people will see this as an enormous step. It seems to me that anyone who's thought about Québec and its soul, even the slightest bit, it's a minimum that we just keep on repeating after all the parties now, mind you.

So I think that it can be done. We put things in order and do them systematically, and we take them bit by bit. There are bits, but we start by declaring that this is our home.

Mr. Béland: Declaring what?

Mr. Arpin: I think we must declare Québec's sovereignty. In my brief, probably due to my technocratic prudence, I wrote... I spoke of authority. But I don't want to go on and on.

In my opinion, there's no difference between full authority over something and sovereignty in the dictionary. Which means that... But I used the term "authority" because I was referring mostly to programs in that part. But I think that Québec has now reached this point anyway. Sovereignty-association, sovereignty, OK. This is the point we've reached. There's no use beating around the bush.

Mr. Béland: So, that means a referendum.

Mr. Arpin: That means a referendum, I think. I think it means a referendum.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

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

Mr. Turgeon: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Arpin, I find your brief superb. It's simple, but very clear, and I think it's very timely now that these public hearings are drawing to a close because, when all's said and done, you've summed up the entire cultural aspect of these discussions. And no matter what people may have thought, what the concerns may have been at the start of these discussions, on the part of some writers and other people, in the end, we'll have discussed culture quite a bit during these hearings. To such an extent that it has thrown some of my fellow Commission members and businessmen for a loop. And it makes sense that we've spoken of culture so much, because, as you say it so well, if it wasn't for culture, there wouldn't even be a discussion today on Québec's future.

You say it well. Culture is the soul of a people. And you also say that the arts are part of culture, but that culture is not solely the arts. Language is also a basic, essential component, but culture is not solely language. And international action is something you emphasize strongly. Because indeed, if Québec is seeking broader independence, this means that it must be prepared to face new challenges also, namely that of opening itself up, which in turn implies international action.

So, to effectively meet this challenge, and we understand exactly what you're saying, we must assume a distinct international personality. I would like you to tell us first why, at this time, it's so important that we find the means of establishing a form of partnership with other States, within organizations such as UNESCO or the GATT, for example, with respect to cultural or other types of industries. Why?
(4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Arpin: Mr. Turgeon, I think that, in international affairs, there is first of all a basic principle that applies to all other fields. What Quebecers are beginning to realize is that, in a

certain way, historically, insidiously, there's always been someone else speaking on our behalf. There are all sorts of reasons, people can argue: That's not what it says in the Constitution; but that's how Quebecers feel. When Quebecers finally say: Let's speak for ourselves, this will apply to international affairs as well as to all other areas.

I was a member of the OECD education committee for five years and I was also the vice-president. I was a member of the Canadian delegation - these are the same rules we still follow today - and I saw what it was like to be forced, basically, to say everything in two languages, given that the problems and sensitive areas weren't the same. What I think is that, at a certain point, the situation begins to resemble a falsehood, and our international spokespersons realize that the Québec representative is not comfortable within the federal delegation, but that his presence is necessary. That's why I say, at a certain point: Let's speak directly concerning our own affairs; let's act on our own behalf; let's go to the GATT...

At any rate, people like Mr. Proulx go to the GATT already, and express themselves with a great deal of authority. I don't see why they would have any less authority if they spoke solely on behalf of Québec. So, at a certain point, it's just a question of maturity. What strikes me about the whole debate, right now, is that it's like fall fruit: It's obvious when it's ripe. There are a great many practical exercises to be carried out subsequently - Mr. Béland said this earlier - but we Quebecers are used to doing practical exercises in other things.

Mr. Turgeon: Mr. Arpin, in our current situation, where we're on the brink of this empire whose culture, given the support it receives, is "all-penetrating", what should the role of the State be in cultural affairs?

Mr. Arpin: Listen, the State, in cultural affairs, here as elsewhere - and I explain this clearly in my brief - I think it plays an auxiliary role. That is, it provides financial support, develops programs and takes action that we could call, if you will permit me, "positive". The State must be present. We speak of, we always refer to, France. Good God! If there's a country where the State is present in culture and yet culture enjoys a great deal of freedom, France is definitely it. Therefore, the State must invest money in culture, in influence - governments are credible, influential - must be present, must carry out its auxiliary duties, with the result that, when artists, creators and publishers have the chance to grow and develop alone and by themselves, they do so. This is the ideal.

The State must also develop international relations in the field of culture, and oversee

them itself. This is a State duty, international relations, France-Québec relations, or relations with the United States or England; they can't be maintained any which way. They have to be maintained by governments who know what they're doing. So, the State must be present in culture. But we've been breathing freely for a while now, in this area, saying: Despite all this, it's not the State that makes culture, it's not the State that creates. I was Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs and I can tell you that it's not the State that creates. This is probably fortunate, but creation doesn't even occur to the State. But the State supports creation and the result thereof.

Mr. Turgeon: Briefly, what is your answer, Mr. Arpin, to those who say that a culture like that of Québec, which needs to be sustained and therefore supported to this extent, doesn't deserve to survive?

Mr. Arpin: Listen, that's... First, it's judging Québec culture very harshly. Mind you, we can speak of Québec culture - it would be abusive to speak of Québec civilization - and we can speak of Québec expression; but these would have to be defined in detail. There is so much native Québec talent. We have publishers who put out books, we have theatre people who perform theatre, we have artists who write poetry that is rooted in Québec; it is often very close to our roots, our immediate roots. We experienced the era of the folksingers. They sang to us, sometimes in a rather straightforward manner, at a time when that's exactly what we needed. Now they've matured a little bit. As far as film goes, it's obvious; it's very clear. So, so-called Québec culture develops along with the Québec economy, Québec businessmen, Québec companies. People from the Beauce are very regionally oriented, right? They're perfectly capable of looking after their business outside of the Beauce, outside of Canada. So, they're 100% Quebecers in all aspects, but they're also capable of being very aggressive when they're in New York, Paris or London.

So, as far as I'm concerned, the history of Québec culture is necessarily the history of our roots. We come from somewhere, we are something and we have an impact.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now continue with Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Arpin, over the past few days, we've heard a great deal about cultural minorities. They came to meet with us, and spoke with us at length about their apprehension about their life here in Québec. And as a society, we try to respond to these apprehensions with what I could call a slogan: interculturalism. But interculturalism is at

best a type of transitional cure for a generation or two, until the parents' original culture is transformed into the new culture of the majority. How do you see... And this transformation, to be carried out harmoniously, occurs as much in the minority as in the majority, which must open itself to them and welcome them. But by welcoming them, it itself changes. How do you suggest Québec culture open itself more to this type of influence without losing its own roots, of which you so eloquently spoke earlier, in reply to Mr. Turgeon? How do you perceive the development of this Québec culture within the framework of a population of immigrants that is becoming increasingly present and which has expectations and demands which we must fulfil if we want to form a veritable Québec society?

Mr. Arpin: Mr. Nicolet, I have a few remarks. The first concerns the insecurity of new Quebecers. I think that this is a reality that must be considered. The generosity and openness of Quebecers are part of our culture. When we talk about new Quebecers arriving, I think that we're drawing a parallel with new Quebecers who ask us not to tell them about our culture, but to make them feel at home.

Take the example of African women who arrive from countries where the average number of children is five per family, for example, and after two generations their reproduction rate is that of the average of the country to which they have immigrated - this is particularly true for Africans - here we see the acculturation that occurs over two generations, in such an aspect, family size. So the same could well be true in other areas.

And when we talk about ethnic communities or new Quebecers, I think that, if we're referring to those who arrived three, four, five years ago, which means they're the first generation, there's a type of relationship to be established with them. And the security we give them, economic security, a place to live, reception services, school integration, is considerable. And the farther we go in the generations... I myself have children from ethnic communities. And my grandchildren don't have at all the same relationships with the community in question as do my children, my own children. So, they adapt and they adjust.

Perhaps Québec is not yet fully convinced that the ethnic communities are a resource, a valuable contribution. Remember the debate that raged over the words of Father Harvey, although he said some things that made sense, and the controversy this stirred up. This is proof that we still have a long way to go. But I'd say that, here too, if Quebecers want to talk independence, they have to consider others' independence as well. We have to integrate them, integrate their culture and resources into ours.

And, good heavens, currently, with young people in the Cegeps, for example, it's being carried out with a lot more success than in previous generations. When you look at a Cegep like Vieux-Montréal, which is highly ethnic, there are no particular problems. There are more at the secondary level, because of the students' age and racial problems.

So I think that, in this area, we've proved our ability to receive successive influxes of immigrants here in Québec. And, with the exception of maybe one or two communities, it's gone very well.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right, Mr. Nicolet, yes, go ahead.

Mr. Nicolet: We have a little time left?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes.

Mr. Nicolet: I'd like to continue on another topic with you. We've heard a great deal about the cultural problem of Canada outside Québec. You referred to this earlier when you said: Maybe they'd be happier without us. Do you truly believe, and here I'm indirectly comparing your words with something said by Louis Bernard to the effect that he doubted the ability of Canada outside Québec to maintain itself as a people, I think, implicitly, quite simply, due to the absence of a Canadian culture outside Québec. Have you thought about this any further?

Mr. Arpin: Listen, I think, at any rate, that history has shown us that this is an impossible relationship, culturally speaking, and that we don't share the same priorities, the same areas of sensitivity, the same desires, the same organizational methods, and so forth. Which means that, regardless of our current Constitution, it appears that there is a certain weariness on the part of Quebecers, and a feeling of weariness in the other provinces over this eternal, perpetual conflict, which will never end. What can you do? It's impossible. The Constitution being what it is, you can't fool around with it. You can't be Catholic and Protestant in the same church, you have to make a choice. You have to choose your religion. So I find that currently, this debate, from this viewpoint, is a little skewed, insofar as...

The Canadian Constitution shouldn't be looked down on because it can't accept that we're in a different system. All we can do is respect it. Now, there are nine provinces who seem to be getting along just fine in this situation and who seem to be developing fully. And I say to myself: Divorces like this have happened elsewhere in the world. And if that's the solution, then I think... I share Mr. Bernard's opinion on this point, that we would be foolish

not to do everything possible to maintain a Canadian community in good health and a relationship of mutual respect and harmony. We need them now and we'll need them later. And I have good reason to believe that they need us.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Nicolet. Mrs. Hovington, you have the floor.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my turn, Mr. Arpin, to thank you for your excellent brief, on behalf of the Government party, a brief which I took great pleasure in reading, because I appreciated the way you defined culture, because your definition of culture includes the sociological aspect as well as the artistic aspect as such. And you also emphasize the importance of a culture that's open to the world. And I think that this, too, is fundamental.

You state in your brief, Mr. Arpin, that there are a number of convictions, stronger than others, that give rise to important elements of reflection. For example, you maintain that authority over culture cannot be shared with partners who do not espouse our values and forms of expression. Neither can there be a question of sharing authority in other sectors that are closely linked to culture. So you add, logically, following this, that communication, immigration, and international action should be entrusted to Québec. I know that this isn't the immediate objective of your brief, but can you tell us whether other jurisdictions should also be entrusted exclusively to Québec? And which they should be?

Mr. Arpin: Yes. Well, obviously, as soon as I was asked to come here as an expert, I asked myself: Expert in what? Because former senior civil servants are rarely experts. They're servants, period, except for a few who end up escaping this destiny. So I don't want to start saying: In environment, in transport, in health, OK, there are bits... First, I think we always have to return to the basic idea, the idea we're pursuing. If, one day, Québec decides to become sovereign in all areas, since my brief deals exclusively with culture, if there are discussions to be had, it must be on this basis, in all areas. Here I'm restricting myself to an area that I know well, saying: If we're not sovereign in cultural affairs, then there's no use going any further. Maybe it's the advantage... It's a bit simple, this brief, but maybe it has an advantage in that it says: Let's put it to the test! Let's put it to the test! If this Commission can't even agree to recommend that culture be entrusted exclusively to Québec's supervision and authority, well, good God, it'll go down in history. Imagine when we go on to transport, environment, health, we'll get into other things. So, that's

that. I don't want to get into the entire list, and say: In the environment, I know very well that transboundary pollution exists. But it crosses Canadian boundaries as well.

Mrs. Hovington: In conclusion, Mr. Arpin, on page...

Mr. Arpin: In any case, governments can talk to each other.

Mrs. Hovington: Pardon?

Mr. Arpin: Governments can talk to each other. They're still talking to each other.

Mrs. Hovington: I hope so. The communication is there. On page 23, in conclusion, Mr. Arpin, you write: "Let us first conclude this process, let us begin the inevitable discussions with partners who have taken note of our determination to assume authority for our collective future." (translation) When you speak of inevitable discussions, are you thinking of discussions on State succession or on a new economic association with Canada? (4:45 p.m.)

Mr. Arpin: Listen...

Mrs. Hovington: You didn't define your thought very clearly.

Mr. Arpin: I think that the breeding of Quebecers must be reflected in things both great and small. Right? We won't ever see a Québec premier writing to his federal counterpart, saying: OK, that's it, we're not talking anymore. So I think that at a certain point, a declaration is a way to set out very clearly the choice we make and the discussions we have. If a simple divorce calls for so much talking between two individuals, a separation like this one, where our destinies part after several hundred years of often harmonious cohabitation - let's be very clear about this, Quebecers don't wake up in the morning crying because they're in the Canadian federation, you know...

Mrs. Hovington: Mmm-hmm.

Mr. Arpin: ...so the day this political model is changed, for reasons of maturity and development, I say: Let us first conclude this process, let us begin the inevitable discussions with partners who have taken note of our determination to assume authority for our collective future, and then let's continue with the next steps. And there will be other steps. OK, there were experts to speak of a referendum, two referendums, one question, two questions; I'd rather not get into it. I think that it's an eminently political choice that will be made when the time comes, and a strategic

choice.

Mrs. Hovington: It's because you don't take a stand on one political status or another in your brief. And when you talk, for example, about inevitable discussions, this means that in your opinion, we're already sovereign?

Mr. Arpin: Yes, the question...

Mrs. Hovington: And then we talk about State succession?

Mr. Arpin: Mr. Béland's question earlier on led me to say that...

Mrs. Hovington: Ah! I misunderstood.

Mr. Arpin: ...when I spoke of authority, I meant sovereignty.

Mrs. Hovington: OK.

Mr. Arpin: Is this association or isn't it? We can look at it, but...

Mrs. Hovington: Mr. Arpin, as concerns the regionalization of cultural rights you mention as an expert in your field, I'd like you to discuss the dilemma we're faced with here, at the Commission. For example, on one hand the city of Montréal tells us they're under-equipped and need a high-priority commitment from the Government, and on the other hand, when we travelled to the regions - and I myself am a regionalist; some of what the other Commission members learned was not new to me because I come from a region - these travels showed, in particular, the extent of the rural and cultural exodus. The artists told us that they actually have to leave the regions if they want to be discovered. Your opinion on this situation?

Mr. Arpin: Yes, regionalization, it's always a complicated problem. Let me say this. I would say first of all that currently, we have three types of regions. Canada considers the provinces as regions, and each province divides itself into subregions. We saw this with the CBC recently. The Québec region gets two or three stations. Fine. So, in another model of organization, there would be two levels. That wouldn't change the fact that life in the Gaspésie or in Eastern Québec has unique characteristics, but I think it would prove that the Québec government is attuned to its regions' needs. Secondly, I think that inevitably, and I would say fortunately, the balance is beginning to shift. We see this in the municipalities, but we can also see it in the regions at this time. There's a certain pole, a certain redistribution which is becoming apparent in the regions. We're seeing it right now, this... We see it in a negative light, but

eventually we'll accept as a positive fact that the regions must be stronger, better equipped and have more resources. What can you do? If Montréal, which is not even a region but a major city, says it is under-equipped, always under-equipped; it's a vicious circle, wouldn't you say?

Mrs. Hovington: Mmm-hmm.

Mr. Arpin: It's a vicious circle. But the dynamics between Québec's traditional regions and its centre, it seems to me, should develop gradually in the area of culture, into a new relationship where we assume responsibility for cultural activities as a whole throughout our territory. We mustn't forget that currently, the federal government has its own cultural programs, is implementing equipment in certain regions and will be leaving Québec, subsequently, to finance the operations. OK, we got the spiel from the Centennial we had to finance, but there are others which are being implemented. So, we're two players on the same rink for the same purpose. The brief, I believe, of the Union des artistes, said there are \$2.5 billion worth of culture in Canada, which means that \$800 million of this should be in our coffers. Well, this is one type of reasoning, but it aims to illustrate something. It aims to illustrate that there are two decision-making sources. Currently, the federal government decides, I don't know, that it's not going to finance the Grands Ballets Canadiens school in Montréal, but rather the school in Toronto. We Quebecers absolutely need the Grands Ballets Canadiens school. Or it could decide to finance something else. There are two of us in the same field. So, I don't think we can have a system, at least not for culture in any case, where there are two levels of government, three if the municipalities decide to take action in the same area.

Mrs. Hovington: I think that several briefs have referred to this provincial-federal program overlapping, not only in the field of culture, education, vocational training... I think there's an output of energy that many regionalists stressed to us during the presentation.

Mr. Arpin: Unfortunately, magic is no more prevalent on this Commission than it is anywhere else. And the conclusions drawn by this Commission won't magically satisfy the demands of the regions. Regional distribution is more complex than that. The fact that artists, for example, all head to Montréal, Québec City, Toronto, New York, this is not a new trend. All roads lead to Rome.

Mrs. Hovington: It's a natural attraction.

Mr. Arpin: All roads lead to Rome, right?

Mrs. Hovington: Right.

Mr. Arpin: But the important thing is to have resources so that these people return to the regions from time to time, at least.

Mrs. Hovington: It's like immigration to the regions.

Mr. Arpin: It's already something when we can get them to tour the regions.

Mrs. Hovington: You also mentioned immigration to the regions, sending immigrants to the regions, but I think we have to go further than this, it's also a matter of keeping them there.

Mr. Arpin: People from the regions have to stay there.

Mrs. Hovington: Right. So we have to find a way to... not just incentives...

Mr. Arpin: If you look at the report by the Conseil des Affaires sociales entitled "Deux Québec dans un", the main problem is that the regions are losing their inhabitants.

Mrs. Hovington: So we'll have to have incentives to keep people in the regions as well.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): All right, Mrs. Hovington?

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you very much, Mr. Arpin. It was a pleasure to speak with you.

Mr. Arpin: Thank you, Madam.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Arpin, thank you for your calm, serene and positive presentation. There's no doubt in my mind that this discussion will contribute to our reflection.

Mr. Arpin: Thank you, Messrs. Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission.

(Proceedings adjourned at 4:52 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 5:01 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now welcome Mr. Gérard Bergeron, the last expert we will be hearing today. Mr. Bergeron, welcome. You have 10 minutes to present your brief.

Mr. Gérard Bergeron

Mr. Bergeron (Gérard): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to my occupation, may I make a brief comment? I heard all of you,

yesterday and this morning especially, as well as the young lady who reads the program, call me a Université Laval professor, which is only three-quarters true. It is true that I have spent the greater part of my life there, 35 years and 31 years as a prof, but for the past 10 years, I have been at the École nationale d'administration publique at the Université du Québec, this is, for some strange reason, less well-known. I've been there a shorter time. Therefore, instead of running the risk of being an old Laval professor, I'm a young one at ENAP.

I won't take the full 10 minutes for reasons I'd like to tell you in one page; I'll take 2 or 3, which will belie my reputation for sometimes being long-winded.

Therefore, I would like to greet all the members of this Commission and congratulate them for their earnest participation. Rather than a summary in the traditional sense, I will use these few introductory minutes to tell you how I finally settled on the four subtitles in my table of contents after two radical and successive reductions in order to stay under the 12-page limit I had set for myself. I finally allowed myself 13 pages.

First comes a short, one-and-a-half page preamble in which I describe the three rules I followed when completing my work on this issue and always follow. After all these years and all I've written, these rules remain the same, even more so given that the current situation we've been experiencing for the past six months or so is becoming more serious and very likely more decisive still than the war.

What I noted first of all or later was that the list of constitutional alternatives is larger than the two or three options that this Commission and public debate have focussed on. I was led to do this, first of all, to find out where I stood, grouping the seven main alternatives together in a continuum which must be superimposed on the intention. I have to point out that this continuum has no scientific basis and that I haven't, for that reason, called it a typology.

Independent status, with its essential and necessary attribute of sovereignty, is the dividing line, "the Great Divide", and can be found somewhere between option number 4 and option number 5. This second section, made up of five short pages, cannot really be cut down any further. I wouldn't know how to summarize it in a few words since it is a summary already. For this reason alone, this nonreducible summary seems very open to discussion. I would even go so far as to say it was designed to be discussed.

In the third part, it seemed to me that this Commission, the only one of its kind and perhaps a new departure in the constitutional history of modern countries, that this Commission, charged with the fearsome task of bringing about some

semblance of coherence and unity to the very diverse points of view and reasoning that you represent or that you've heard over the past months, was within its right to expect something on the *modus operandi* or on how to proceed, no matter the convergent or divergent recommendations of this Commission's report or reports.

These questions of strategy, of negotiation, beyond the options themselves, took up so much of your time and threaten to put you at odds with one another in the end. In no more than 5 pages, I quickly picked out what I called some errors to be avoided. This part, critical rather than analytical, like the previous one, might even appear to spark more discussion than that one. This is better yet since we are meeting specifically for discussion, now, at the end of this very busy time of briefs and hearings.

Finally, to kick off our discussion, I'll remind you briefly about an issue that's much more important than our collective destiny when plotted on the geographical horizontal and the historical vertical, while avoiding the harrowing issues the media has been assailing us with over the past 48 hours, though far away, these concerns are ours: the Persian Gulf and the Baltic Sea. Using that as my springboard, I'll finish my presentation here.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Bergeron. On to the first speaker, Mr. Rémillard.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bergeron, we welcome you with great pleasure to the Commission. I thank you for having accepted our invitation to testify.

Your report, the 13-page brief that you submitted isn't very long, but it is very substantial. There are many things in the report, extremely interesting things which put the discussions in many very important areas into perspective. Your presentation wasn't very long either. Therefore, my first question will be very brief as well.

On page 8, you write: "Certain people's haste in calling for a quick referendum seems somewhat suspect and extremely untimely." (translation) What do you mean by that?

Mr. Bergeron: Exactly what I said.

Mr. Rémillard: That's already quite a bit, you know. That's a good start.

Mr. Bergeron: Look. I understand perfectly well that you're going to take issues out of context and slant them to the right or the left. I won't repeat this every time, but two lines in one paragraph, and one paragraph in 13 pages, must be taken within the context. Everyone knows that it's...

I wanted to say this, in addition to what is said, and that's that the phenomenon we're dealing with is larger than each of our personal preferences, than our most deeply felt and, in our opinion, best-justified options and it is a lasting one, no matter what the consequences.

It so happens that by profession, out of interest, each of you follows these issues. The phenomenon that I'm talking about is a recent, continuous and persistent intensification of a shift in opinion. We are faced with an issue that's been in the wings, nationally, for centuries; of our current generation, the one that is beginning and the one that is ending, for 30 years anyway, it has been a major news item...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I have to interrupt you, Mr. Bergeron. Mr. Bergeron...

Mr. Bergeron: ...and I have no intention of giving a history lesson.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is there some way you could move closer to the mike? It seems... I don't know. Perhaps you could move your chair in?

Mr. Bergeron: You want me to go to the microphone or the microphone to come to me?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I don't think you can change it's position.

Mr. Bergeron: No, it's not very adaptable. Like the Constitution, I'm afraid.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bergeron: Is that better?

A voice: That's better, that's better.

Mr. Bergeron: OK, good! Thank you. Fine, I hope that I won't have to repeat what I said then? No? That's OK? Fine. OK, good, what's new is that since the issue became hot, in the past 15 years or so, there's been a certain levelling out in a range of preferences which show a fairly steady trend toward independence, right? Good. I'm not going to prove how good my memory is. But as of 1963, *Maclean's* magazine already had a certain strong slant, even before independence was a major news item, before there was a strong party and a R.I.N. party that was a forerunner.

There was a continuous progression from party to party, from election to election, to an officially recorded peak, which was the result of the 1980 Referendum. Around 40%. Since then, there have been minor fluctuations, but never a

downturn, or upswing. Very strong ones. And the phenomenon that I'm talking about is the one following Meech where, clearly, there was a perceptible crystallization in the multiple, combined, inter-critical, etc. polls, which is the phenomenon I'm talking about. The question is whether it's a passing phenomenon, as a certain prime minister called it. It is not.

It is not an aberration. It is a consistent phenomenon. But, is it, for all that, a line of force able to take shape on its own? And if this proportion translates to a plane which really comes down to institutions and our respective choices, I mean in an election or referendum, will it persist? I understand very well that it was the level of popular support that drove this 20 to 35 and then to 40, and then stabilized it, and then increased it, now, to 50 and 60, but is it going to last?

As a result, there are those of the opinion, in the parties, and among you, even here, who say to themselves: Strike while the iron is hot. As for me, I say yes. I am not at all the kind of person who says: The later, the better. But we have to put ourselves to the test a little, three lines beyond what the minister said. That being said, I do not hold that we must necessarily put off the grand public consultation. We will soon see things clearly. And, by soon, I mean in a few weeks.

Therefore, for the time being, it isn't testing the strength of those swelling the numbers of the shift in opinion toward not one option but a family of very related options, a sign of strength to put untimely insistence on the need to hold a referendum quickly. Does that answer your question.

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

Mr. Bergeron: Once this is initiated, the consequences will not necessarily be irreversible or changeable. A fighter on the night before the fight, in the "preparation" stage, has to give an illusion of calm, self-confident strength, not nervousness or haste. So that it is only that the phenomenon is not fleeting, but it could be passing one, but the passing being of a shorter or longer duration. Since there will be other questions, in other contexts, calling for more commitment. And there, I... This morning you had an expert pollster here. I have no intention of giving you my little lesson in polling. That would be a mere hors d'oeuvre. That's all I wanted to say, Mr. Minister.
(5:15 p.m.)

Mr. Rémillard: On page 13, in your conclusion, you tell us that we have to recapture the spirit, as I understand it, of the Charlottetown conference of 1864, where we held that first meeting with the Fathers of Confederation who then came here, to Québec,

some months later, at the beginning of October 1864, and who...

Mr. Bergeron: At the old Saint-Louis Hotel.

Mr. Rémillard: At the old Saint-Louis Hotel.

Mr. Bergeron: Ah, yes!

Mr. Rémillard: Yes. Where people danced, and celebrated and successfully completed an extraordinary tour de force, in a place where young men and young women were married, we built a country with a highly original Constitution which has lasted, and lasts even now. That then is the tour de force. I'm saying these things because I'm referring to some of the things you've written. You've written a lot on this subject. You tell us that we have to recapture this spirit with these negotiations which could lead us to "start from scratch". (translation) That's the expression you use. And you tell us: "It is important that English Canada join us and not wait too long to do so." (translation) On the other hand, earlier, you told us that you find the language of threats, ultimatums, time limits, or demands, and I quote: "This military language is to be avoided at all cost because it is excessively exaggerated, bearing no relation to real intentions and, above all, it is a language for the weak to get the upper hand." (translation)

If we link these two important considerations in your brief, what does it mean? Does it mean that we're going to negotiate a new federalism or something close to sovereignty-association, no matter what you call it, and that we don't have anything to negotiate with, any negotiating power? What do you mean by all this?

Mr. Bergeron: Aren't you, yourself, framing the answer you want me to give you?

Mr. Rémillard: I wouldn't dare. You know that.

Mr. Bergeron: Fine. OK, the text that you're talking about, you forgot to mention that it's a quote from my colleague Charles Taylor and that it appears in quotes on page 13. That's natural, you must go through so many reports and briefs.

Mr. Rémillard: I'm sorry, but what I quoted was not quoted from Mr. Taylor, but from you.

Mr. Bergeron: We have to find a way to alert English Canada to the seriousness of the issue, in quotes, from Charles Taylor.

Mr. Rémillard: Yes, What I quoted - if you'll allow me, just so that we understand one

another – especially on page 13, in your paragraph in the middle, immediately after your Taylor quote, you said this: "Briefly, we have to start from scratch. It is important that English Canada join us and not wait too long to do so." (translation)

Mr. Bergeron: Yes. Well there, that's a parody... Excuse me! Parody... Excuse me, Taylor! That's a paraphrase so that I didn't have to put the whole text in... It's still in the... You are referring to Taylor's text. It's still a paraphrase, summarized by myself, of the paragraph from Taylor. I'll give you my answer anyway.

Yes. What do I mean? There too, I agree that the issue is so serious that it goes back to the beginnings of what is occurring now. I say somewhere, farther on: "The current crisis is not simply a question of Québec in Canada, but a question of Canada, plain and simple." (translation)

And in my presentation, when I alluded to seeing ourselves on the vertical, I was talking about throughout history, of which we are currently experiencing only one moment. Do you understand what I mean there? I agree with Taylor's judgement.

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

Mr. Bergeron: Pardon me?

Mr. Rémillard: I don't know. My question was this, Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron: Wait, I'm not through answering. OK, fine, I agree with Taylor when he says: We have to recapture the spirit of 1864, I mean to redo something from scratch. And when I say: Briefly, we have to start from scratch, the "briefly" is Taylor's 20 lines: Briefly, we will have to start from scratch, he tells us. Good! And I agree with that, I won't set it aside. Now, there was – that was question a – question b, on the language used. Since I am in agreement with this view, or vision, of Taylor's, I wouldn't argue if it were only authorship of the text you were giving me credit for, right. And Taylor says clearly, in quotation marks, the text quoted earlier.

Question b is on the language used; this military-type language. That's in the part where I look at strategies and negotiations. For this and other answers to come, you won't be surprised – there are even some university people in the room – to hear me answer you like a university professor, I mean that for me the idea of concept must have its equivalent concept. I have spent my whole life teaching the history of international relations, made up of conflicts, and, cold war historian that I am, it is relatively natural, when I change my field of

experimentation of political observation, that I know the exact point at which the change from figurative language to formal language occurs.

We are in a situation filled with conflict, but it is not a conflict of strength, of violence, or of the military. Hence, the language of the ultimatum, which is a technical language of diplomacy and international relations, is strikingly inappropriate while we are not in an acute conflict situation since it entails, in itself, at the end of an ultimatum, an automatic and irreversible decision. Therefore, the ultimatum we experienced on the 15th – that's not long ago, it's not ancient history, it's, let's see, that's yesterday, no the day before yesterday, yes, the day before yesterday, it's the 17th – the American and coalition forces' ultimatum ended the 15th, at midnight, and that has led to the automatic consequences of which you are aware. Fine!

We're all doing the same thing. We have strategy games for children and competitive sports where we use metaphoric military language. I am not urging you, any of you, journalists, statesmen, not to use it, anywhere, because I guarantee that it's a very bad sign when it serves as headlines in newspapers and the media. The cause everyone is defending here is far too eminently sacred for us to give ammunition to the enemy. My records, including those I use for my histories, which is recent history, since it's the history of the Cold War since 1945, my records are complete and can be found in the media, newspapers, public documents and I know the tricks of major headlines. In order to follow the Canadian crisis, from the time I started examining it, I have devoured many papers and such language sounds bad when used in titles or "headlines" that media people come up with. Therefore, moderation in language and precise technical meanings, as much as possible.

I am not the only professor to say this. My colleague, Jacques-Yvan Morin, himself an expert on constitutional and international matters, completed a work of what I would call terminological healthiness, making it a short lesson, in his brief, which I don't want to reproduce. And it's the same for technical terms like "federation", "confederation", "autonomy", "sovereignty". They are technical and isolated terms, I assure you. Whether they are in a short quotation or in a headline, they produce the worst effect. I, myself, am frightened when I read the first pages. I mean, afraid... I don't feel very secure when I read the headlines in the papers of my fellow citizens, and I am reading the best press our fellow citizens have to offer, prestigious newspapers: **Globe and Mail**, responsible people, **Financial Post**, **Maclean's**...

Mr. Rémillard: Perhaps you'll allow me to ask one more question since time is pressing...

Mr. Bergeron: Yes, of course, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Rémillard: A last question, very briefly. Your colleague, Léon Dion, came to tell us that we had to give them a last chance, hold a final negotiation with the rest of Canada. Do you share this opinion?

Mr. Bergeron: It's odd that you should choose the notion of a "last chance". I know someone very well, am very close to someone who introduced that expression to this country. I will leave you to guess who, speaking of Germany's problems in the 1950s, used the word. I am going to tell you the origins of the term. Georges Bidault, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 1950s, during the last conference — the 15th I believe, during the post-war cold war era — to reach an agreement on Germany, used this expression which made its way around the world. I was one of the first to use it here. I used it in 1956 to refer to the last chance for the Liberal Party, faced with interminable Duplessism. Since that time, it has become common. That concludes this brief commentary, if you will, on the term. Today, it has become common and is abused constantly. In human terms, there is always a last chance for something beyond death. It's simple. It's a metaphor which has to be used as such. It is a means... Yes, I am very serious. It is a means, is it not, to teach, relative to the language of threats or offensive intent that one is going to employ. There is no last chance. It is always a next-to-last chance of something. That's my opinion, in general, including the conflict in which we are now engaged. In any case, there is perhaps no great subtlety in sending it to the head of the eventual negotiator who, in general, does not feel he is on the offensive. And we must not talk to him as though he were the attacker, especially when he is unquestionably the largest and the strongest, if only through the incredible force of inertia. That's what we have to consider. A minimum degree of subtlety in our interpersonal relations; I would like to see it applied to the relations between one group of people and another.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that OK, Mr. Minister? We'll move on to Mr. Jacques Léonard.

Mr. Léonard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bergeron, I read your text and it's true that you put us on our guard against certain mistakes we must not make. I would perhaps like to follow up, a little more in depth, what the minister said, what he just said about the last possible chance. You don't close the door on this last chance, even though, on page 11, you say: "I would hope that the members of the Commission, in writing their report, pushed their reflection

on a constitutional formula to just this side and to right beyond the crossing of the Rubicon of independence." (translation)

Mr. Bergeron: Yes.

(5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Léonard: I almost get the impression that you are sitting in the Rubicon. I don't know if you are crossing it or not. Basically do you have an opinion on this? Do we have to cross it, the Rubicon? In terms of the sovereignty question.

Mr. Bergeron: Good, you're going to stick to that point, eh?

A voice: Yes, ha, ha, ha!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Léonard: Fine, I want to know, given that...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Léonard: Of course I'm going to stick to it. Perhaps, that's the question that everyone is asking. You know, if I understand you correctly, you are staying in the Rubicon. I would like to know which side you're going to take your next step on.

Mr. Rémillard: Maybe the water is cold.

Mr. Bergeron: By definition, the Rubicon is something that one crosses in one direction or the other...

Mr. Léonard: Yes, that's what I thought.

Mr. Bergeron: ...either you cross, or you return to the shore you left from.

Mr. Léonard: Exactly.

Mr. Bergeron: And you know, Julius Caesar's latin axiom. *Alia jacta est.*

Mr. Léonard: Exactly.

Mr. Bergeron: Fine. That being said, we are once more in a metaphoric domain. As regards my intentions, my preferences, I revealed them throughout the long history in so many texts and interventions that people have guessed or realized what they are. And, being invited here, politely and with much friendliness, insistent friendliness I dare say, coming as an expert... It's not a question that you ask an expert, you ask a citizen. Given the Commission's limited time, having relation to my personality or... I can't see where you'd have any great interest in hearing my life story and how I have come to

reach my personal philosophy. But I will be glad to accompany you to the Grand-Allée where we can get together over a pint and talk.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bergeron: You understand? Or I can write down...

A voice: I agree.

Mr. Bergeron: ...how I arrived at it in a dozen volumes. I even wrote, even spoke more precisely, a 230-page volume on these issues, which is actually called *De l'autre côté de l'action*. While you're all involved in the action, I am on the other side of the action. And I state long and loud how, in my opinion, the aspiring man of science or theorist, or analyst, or journalist or citizens live side-by-side. It would take a little too long to tell you... In other words, I'm not just any citizen. I am an individual who is completely alone. I represent nothing. Certainly not the institutions I come from, but someone stuck the label specialist or expert on me. It is a result of being an individual. Otherwise, the opinions have changed with time. They evolve and they are very much alive. And I put them through my own self-critical wringers, you can take my word for that.

Mr. Léonard: Good.

Mr. Bergeron: Notice, I'm not scandalized that you ask such a question. But if I were to define my life, I would be on the other side. On one or the other, I think of battalions fighting for their own reasons. You understand? Since I am not, either by instinct, personality or profession, inclined to be a soldier among many others, but rather someone who has made it their life's work to look at the battlefields, I would prefer you to ask me about the battlefields...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bergeron: ...than about the hypothetical soldier-recruit I could have been had my life been otherwise. Are you disappointed?

Mr. Léonard: You might think so.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK?

Mr. Bergeron: That's my answer.

Mr. Léonard: Yes, but suppose that you wanted to improve the status of Québec in the current post-Meech Confederation. Suppose for example that you wanted, like Mr. Garant, to

give English Canada an electrical shock to get it to start talking. Do you...

Mr. Bergeron: Excuse me, Mr. Garant who appeared this afternoon?

Mr. Léonard: Uh, huh.

Mr. Bergeron: Ah, I listened to the hearings this morning but not that one, I was... I don't know what he said.

Mr. Léonard: Yes. Let's say that it is necessary, nonetheless, that English Canada be confronted with a reality in which it would realize that Québec wants to do something, that it wants out. Therefore...

Mr. Bergeron: What the devil! That's all I'm doing.

Mr. Léonard: Good Lord!

Mr. Bergeron: That's all I'm doing in my analytical texts. Hurry up! Hurry and wake up, that's all I'm doing. I have several texts destined for English Canada, certain of which have appeared, in which everything was developed. Moreover, currently, one of my texts, part of a collective work submitted in September 1988, in other words, eight months before Meech, that came to the conclusion that the affair would end in defeat. It's a university text, with 25 authors that hasn't yet come out, unfortunately, and at the time of the referendum as well.

Mr. Léonard: OK.

Mr. Bergeron: Therefore, from a tactical point of view, I said somewhere... It was around 1980, I said it here somewhere in my text, from the battlefield point of view - you see, even I use metaphoric comparisons - therefore, in 1980 we were, those of us who were calling the established constitutional order into question, by asking very politely for all sorts of legitimate claims to call for - that was the Referendum - into question the established constitutional order which hadn't satisfied us for some time. This meant that they, the rest of Canada, those who were satisfied with it, well, they had the impression of being on the defensive. Now, it's us who are on the defensive. I say this somewhere in my text, remember? That changes the dialectic of the combat a little. We have to speak even more loudly, not in the language of the ultimatum or of reprisals, which is to be spurned because it is always taken in a non-literal way... It is taken not in a metaphoric sense, but in a literal sense. It upsets the situation and hardens the eventual opposition. I didn't say "enemies". I said "opposition", as you do in your respective parliaments.

It isn't good that these opponents, who have a lot of trouble understanding... and let's put ourselves in their shoes, we would understand better if we were this contested majority in an established order that was serving us quite well. They had a lot of trouble catching on. But I have to tell you that it has begun. Charles Taylor, who knows them well and who is partly one of them and lives with this dichotomy in remarkable harmony, hasn't disguised the difficulties. My colleague, Léon Dion and many other people who have come here have said it in terms that are very... They are difficult to understand, right, for all sorts of reasons because we have been revisionists.

If I had the time, I would show how very difficult our history as two so-called founding peoples has been. What are we, ultimately? The brilliant leftovers of two failed colonial ventures. Great. Canada, is not nothing, it's that. And these failed colonial ventures are of the two greatest civilizations of the last three centuries: Britain and France. What can compare? Germany, Italy, Spain. We are that. We are not the last. Given that, and having been forced to live together, it's only natural that here, things don't go any differently here. I don't know if it's Churchill who said at one point: "It goes back to Joan of Arc", at the time there was trouble with de Gaulle. Therefore, it shouldn't come as any surprise that there was a major misunderstanding between these two groups, French-speaking and English-speaking in Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, if you...

Mr. Bergeron: Therefore, we are experiencing the tail end of the comet right now, where we have a lot of trouble holding a functional dialogue without an ulterior motive. And the best among them – and I could tell you stories about English Canada's intellectual strong points and its desire to understand the situation – but there's a point at which it's no longer enough. That point at which it no longer works, I am going to tell you what it is. It's the fact that they're the majority and have a completely clear conscience with regard to the fact that they have not acted badly in the past. It's horrible to experience that! They are the biggest, the strongest, the richest and the most numerous, with the cushion of a false clear conscience. It's difficult to say to them, no, that's not precisely true. And we could put up with that up until the point they had, because of this damned Constitution, the weakness to make a hash of our communal history, which has been quite beautiful and very presentable in terms of the destiny of Western colonial empires for the past three centuries – we are their greatest success, despite everything – until they had the gall to have Meech. They'll remember this

blunder for a generation or two. I said it somewhere, and getting them to understand is difficult. But they have begun perhaps to realize that that was something they shouldn't have done. Just imagine!

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, we'll move on to...

Mr. Bergeron: And that goes very far in explaining it. I had to sort of allude to things which isn't usual for me but concisely. You can return to it if my answers aren't...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): It's because there are many other questions and time is passing. We'll move on to Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bergeron, taking into account Canada's current situation from the point of view of Constitutional evolution following the 1982 amendment, the extreme difficulty of holding a dialogue which could lead to major changes within the Canadian federation, you show on pages 10 and 11, a possible way to escape the impasse; as a possibility you suggest writing a Québec constitution affirming not only the principal of self-determination but also that as of such and such a date, the Constitution will begin to really be applied.

Mr. Bergeron: Excuse me, that's 10 or 11?

Mr. d'Anjou: On page 10, the last paragraph.

Mr. Bergeron: Oh, yes!

Mr. d'Anjou: And as a second possibility, on page 11, you talk about a recommendation or something you noticed, a suggestion made by five Ottawa professors, who proposed an act decreeing the paramountcy of Québec laws to provoke a thaw or opening. From among these two recommendations, is there one which you prefer over the other? And faced with the difficulty of engaging in constitutional debate with the rest of Canada if there is really no desire on their part to engage in such debate, do you see any other formulas in addition to those two?

Mr. Bergeron: Hmmm, you're going to make me do your homework for you, eh?

Mr. d'Anjou: To help us. I would assume that's why we invited you.

Mr. Bergeron: I see. In your place, I would undoubtedly ask the same question, eh? You will have noticed that I don't make any recommendations. They won't be long in coming

since it's you, each of you, who is going to make them. You didn't ask me to write a constitution, nor a strategic plan, but you did ask me to come and talk to you about what you were in the process of doing. I don't want to overstep my bounds, but realize that I have other ways of intervening or taking action if ever I decide to do so when things that we do not know right now, that we are going to see in a while – in a short while, a few weeks. (5:45 p.m.)

As for the special plan the five University of Ottawa professors spoke about, it's certainly one of the larger briefs presented to you. I have collected everything, day by day. Everything written in the papers. Everything. I have lived intimately with this for a very long time, since 1987. I must tell you that this is one of the more important pieces. And there are about a dozen – if that was the point, I would mention it to you – that are very pertinent, very serious, that, in terms of an amending procedure, would have to be seen seriously by everyone. And I am sure that those... I even mentioned that I am sure that this is the document the Privy Council in Ottawa is placing the most importance on. I believe that the text in question mentions somewhere: In an impasse situation, in the constitutional impasse we've reached, such a thing is a possibility to do what, by analogy, I don't have the time to go into it in depth but what Raymond Aron had said on the subject of impasse on Algeria when De Gaulle was swept back into power, to the extreme limits of the legitimacy which he felt he possessed.

Great. Fine, let's take this and apply it elsewhere. The National Assembly might, in a pinch, establish an authority for legitimizing certain powers, the representatives being French or Quebecers – no, not French but Quebecers in Ottawa – who can work in that area.

Mr. d'Anjou: Could a referendum legitimize such a move?

Mr. Bergeron: Oh! Well, there...

A voice: Yes.

Mr. Bergeron: Come, come now, you're talking about scenarios, because I wasn't able to go beyond... You do know the difference between a hypothesis and a scenario, don't you? If such and such a thing happens, you cancel out all the other circumstances. If A occurs and B is added to it, are you going to have the result? That's merely a hypothesis. But that's not what you're giving me. You're giving me a whole hypothetical scenario. It would require a whole set of premises in which that would be a solution to clear up what would otherwise be an impasse in the system.

Mr. d'Anjou: Thank you very much.

Mr. Bergeron: It would be necessary, therefore, to come up with a scenario in which that would be the thinkable, possible, desirable and sole solution. But this is in scenarios for which I do not hold the elements.

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

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Bergeron, like everyone else, I read the brief you presented very attentively and I am certain that there are those who will feel a little picked on when you talk about undue haste, nervous haste, etc. I felt a bit picked on myself because I consider it a good idea not to be nervous, to show quiet strength, and all that. This being said, Québec, and it's government in particular, has a decision to make in the coming months.

And after the events we've experienced, which are themselves a part of the historical continuum with which you are more familiar than I, this government, faced with a recommendation from the Commission, will have to adopt a new constitutional position.

Mr. Bergeron: This coming March.

Mr. Bouchard: Yes, soon. You are saying that Québec has a natural bent toward sovereignty and, supposing that Québec wants to make a decision of this nature, it is going to mean that it must first set itself a deadline for making this decision, and come up with mechanisms to see that it can be implemented, right. We are in politics and politics is not necessarily a field for angels. And politics is not a field where, for example, sovereignty is given to those who want it. You aren't going to negotiate sovereignty in the same way you're going to ask for it. In exchange for what?

What can we barter for sovereignty? Nothing, because sovereignty is everything. There's nothing more to give anyone when you ask for sovereignty. Therefore, we have to have a strategy on the table which, in the end, we hope, would allow us to succeed in achieving sovereignty for Québec. There is, in that, the idea of a power relationship, since it deals with fundamental interests, which are political interests and, of course, the idea of affirming Québec's political strength in a democratic manner, a calm manner, not a nervous or suspect manner. Therefore, you don't think – and I believe you do think it, you will confirm it if I'm wrong – that somewhere in all of this, the idea of basing the government's constitutional position on a referendary democratic mandate is a good idea.

Mr. Bergeron: Indispensable.

Mr. Bouchard: OK. That being said, I would say that, personally, I feel that next June would be too soon. I would think that July would be unduly hasty. I would think that August would be unacceptable. That September would be a bit early. But when...

Mr. Bergeron: You're much too severe.

Mr. Bouchard: But when would it have to be held, in your opinion? When? It will have to be a good day. When?

Mr. Bergeron: For this, you're throwing my own words back at me, and I will tell you when...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Bergeron: ...when...

Mr. Bouchard: Save us the trip. Save us the trip. Tell us right now.

Mr. Bergeron: When your question isn't couched in terms of scenario a, b or c. In other words, in a few weeks.

Mr. Bouchard: In a few weeks?

Mr. Bergeron: I can answer your question in a few weeks, but not right now.

Mr. Bouchard: Listen, Mr. Bourassa is Prime Minister of Québec right now.

Mr. Bergeron: Yes.

Mr. Bouchard: And he is going to get your report.

Mr. Bergeron: That's right.

Mr. Bouchard: The leader of a government is going to receive a report...

Mr. Bergeron: Yes.

Mr. Bouchard: ...from a Commission in which you say something which has never been said before, which is without precedent and which is, therefore, very important. He's not going to reconvene one in three weeks so it can say when. He wants a recommendation and hopes we can agree on the recommendation which is going to help him reach a good decision. He's not going to recall us and I don't think he'll make you come back here. To his office perhaps, but not here, in public.

Mr. Bergeron: No, but...

Mr. Bouchard: Well then, since we're here and we want to give Mr. Bourassa a report why not tell him right away when you think he should hold a referendum, if you think one is necessary?

Mr. Bergeron: Of course. You are a commission of opinions, therefore, you must give your convergent or divergent opinions, that's your job. OK?

Mr. Bouchard: Yes.

Mr. Bergeron: But now, you're asking me to place a bet - I am going to say my guess - on the ideal moment, following a process which is unceasing, the unfolding of which, once again, I do not know. Do you understand?

Mr. Bouchard: But I'm not asking just anyone, I am asking the expert. It's experts who can say that.

Mr. Bergeron: No, no. Please. I would even like to go back a bit. I wasn't picking on you in particular, I was...

Mr. Bouchard: No, I know that. I was making a joke. You weren't referring to anyone in particular, I'm sure.

Mr. Bergeron: You know that editorial writers by the dozens and all the parties have at least one wing that says: Let's get out of it. I've had my fill of the Constitution; we need a referendum. Good. Now that it's a referendum, I would like it to go well. We paid dearly for a referendum which was launched a little late and at a time when we weren't sure of winning it, therefore...

Mr. Bouchard: Therefore, this time, don't put it off.

Mr. Bergeron: Excuse me!

Mr. Bouchard: It's true.

Mr. Bergeron: We weren't even sure of winning it.

Mr. Bouchard: Let's not make the same mistakes we've already made.

Mr. Bergeron: This time, it will be necessary perhaps to be sure of victory, and long-term victory. Of all...

Mr. Bouchard: Then what would be best... Listen, my question is simple: What would be the best time? Expert that you are, here before us, can you tell us what would be the best time to ensure victory?

Mr. Bergeron: It's more difficult for me to answer that than it is for you because you're in the action and you can talk to journalists. I can't speak to them. You understand? Then...

Mr. Bouchard: Personally, I think we have to talk to the public especially, now, Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron: No. Please. As for the time, it's soon. When I know when, I'll probably say it as soon as you in the...

Mr. Bouchard: You'll call us.

Mr. Bergeron: I'll probably say it as quickly as you do in the papers because in 24 hours, I can take... Notice that no one is hounding me like that, they aren't running after me, the journalists, but with 24 hours notice, I could send an article to anyone, to the public, if I feel the right moment has arrived. OK? I can do that. I have done it in the past. For those who've been reading the papers for the past 35 years, I've burdened them often enough, and I sometimes had a jump on the journalists, among others, at the time of the Referendum when I said, how the question should be written before they wrote it. They wrote it differently though. But that's another story. Therefore, I will do it, fear not. Right now: no.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Bergeron, the time...

Mr. Bergeron: No, because we don't know the result. You have, how shall I say, your own insecurity, you members of this Commission. You don't know the power you have. You've underestimated yourselves. It's up to you to ask these questions among yourselves and to resolve, with regard to your tendencies and the mixture of contradictory or contrary or opposing or divergent and convergent opinions. It's up to you to find a way to reach unanimity because that's what you're here for.

Mr. Bouchard: I will finish on that point, Mr. Chairman, if you allow me. I don't want to seem too insistent or abusive, or as if I'm pushing you. You're far too highly regarded for me to even attempt to do that. But you know quite well as you've pointed out, that in our internal discussions, we are going to ask ourselves, certain among us, perhaps many: If we hold a referendum, when should we recommend that Mr. Bourassa do it? Perhaps not in terms of an exact date, but in terms of a deadline.

Mr. Bergeron: Yes.

Mr. Bouchard: And, at that time, it would be acceptable for us to say: What did Mr.

Bergeron, who came here to advise us, think? It would be helpful to know what you, personally, think.

Mr. Bergeron: Yes. You invited a political analyst who has spent his life writing. Allow him to answer in the way he sees fit.

Mr. Bouchard: Or not to answer.

Mr. Bergeron: Hey, I'm not telling you to wait for my next release, in 18 months. I'm just asking you to wait until I feel it's sufficiently clear for me to communicate with someone as quickly as you, party leaders or group leaders, are going to do it, in your respective fashions. For now, there are many things. I said that it would soon be known. We are going to set it soon. I just told you that it's a matter of weeks. To which I add, in my question, that we have also experienced, in terms of institutions, a personal drama, in our current system of government. That is, that there was a leadership vacuum during a certain time. And you know very well that, in our British parliamentary system, it is up to the prime minister to do it himself, after consultation with his members who give him the majority, who give him the right, from the viewpoint of his relation to the Chambers, to take these decisions. You understand? Therefore, we know...

Mr. Bouchard: I understand that the prince has his privilege, Mr. Bergeron...

Mr. Bergeron: We now know that this vacuum...

Mr. Bouchard: ...but that doesn't prevent those accountable and the citizens to have opinions and make them known publicly.

Mr. Bergeron: Excuse me, there was some noise, I didn't hear you.

Mr. Bouchard: I understand that it is up to the prime minister to decide these things. It's a fundamental privilege. But he doesn't mind if citizens, of which you are one, or experts, specifically, who are called to a parliamentary session, if you say what you think.

Mr. Bergeron: In my opinion, the most possible, if you're able to have... In other words, if you are able to reach, arrive at sufficiently coherent, practical recommendations that the Government in power, supported, with its Official Opposition, will be able to give to the people, as soon as possible. It bothers me a little to say that, because that risks being interpreted as a type of accord based on the lowest common denominator. It should actually be based on the highest common denominator, the direction the

question leads in being clear, final and involve everyone, no matter what government is in power and will have to live with the consequences. It will be necessary to go as far as that. Good, once again it is a matter of a few months, of timing, it's no more than that. And since you are opening the door on the referendum, it's not the timing that worries me. What worries me in terms of global strategies and in terms of the very awkward way that they were stated in this illustrious group, is how the referendum was spoken of like it was a military operation or combat weapon, or to threaten the other collective party, who, as we know, is the nine other provinces plus the central government, to speak of the referendum as a threat. We should take that back as quickly as possible; it will produce exactly the opposite inflammatory effect. The referendum, is not a threatening operation like a political speech or campaign you've run. It is the most profound, most sacred means, and the most difficult for the adversary to refute, available to gain the authority to recognize certain powers other than by means of the status quo, of the constitutional legalities that they are going to throw in our faces when the referendum arrives. And I beg you to take my final words literally, to entrench a deep-rooted authority for legitimization which it will be difficult for the other party, holding the opposite view, to attack; in addition, we will have to make it a main priority to create a defence, a defence that cannot be breached or the one most highly thought of internationally. And that is a threat to us, speaking constantly of the referendum, a threat that, if you say no, we are going to hold a referendum, I was going to say on that... No, no, no...

Mr. Bouchard: It was Mr. Dion who said that. Your colleague from the university who said that.

Mr. Bergeron: Yes of course, but Mr. Dion is a free spirit, like myself. He's even almost, he's more than a colleague...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Well then Professor Bergeron, on these words, time having run out...

Mr. Bergeron: Mr. Bouchard's time or my own?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Pardon?

Mr. Bergeron: The time...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Everyone's time.

Mr. Bergeron: Oh, OK! Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine, on behalf of my colleagues, I would sincerely like to thank you for your brief, and your presentation. You have helped us to better understand the problems which Québec is confronting. Once again, thank you for appearing before us.

Mr. Bergeron: That wasn't one hour? Was it?

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes, sir.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:01 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 7:43 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): To begin the evening, we will receive the people from the Société des musées québécois. Mrs. France Gascon, you have five minutes to present your report, but, first of all, if you could present the people accompanying you?

Société des musées du Québec

Mrs. Gascon (France): Yes, I'd be happy to. Starting on my left, Michel Perron, director of the Musée d'art de Joliette; next to him, Michèle Paradis, director of the Musée des religions in Nicolet; to my right, Michel Cheff, head curator of the Musée du Québec, and Guy Bouchard, director of the Musée Louis-Hémon in Péribonka.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Welcome all of you. You have the floor, Madam.

Mrs. Gascon: Again this evening, part of our attention is claimed by dramatic events. We don't know what may happen from one hour to the next, and this surely isn't the best context for discussing the future. However, we have to hope that these events, as upsetting as they may be, won't totally overshadow the importance of more local concerns such as, for instance, those before this Commission, the people who have come to express themselves here and the many Quebecers who have followed this process with a great deal of interest. I think we all realize that the Commission has brought about one of the most impressive efforts of self-examination Québec has ever undertaken, and we hope very sincerely that the process will continue in spite of everything in a fairly normal way and lead to results that will allow Québec to move ahead collectively.

For our part, we must say we're very happy to have been invited to present our brief and we hope that an exchange with you will help make our position better understood.

First, a brief word on the Société des musées québécois. Our association has more than

700 members, including institutions and individuals working in the field of museology in Québec. The Société des musées québécois represents every region of Québec and the various aspects of museum activity found here. And I think you have a pretty good sample before you.

The brief you have before you was prepared by the board of directors. In it, the Société acts as spokesperson for the concerns that affect all our community. We've answered the Commission's questions with an analysis starting from our own sector of expertise and in particular, from the perception that we construct a reality that is very immediate to us.

So let's first of all say, to give the essential points of our analysis, that we felt is was useful, at a time when Québec is looking at the political models it may adopt, to recall that culture holds a predominant position in a community's process of self-affirmation. Culture is the most complete expression of identity. It's the catalyst for the most deeply-rooted dynamics. Culture is also very close to a community's creativity, its capacity to adapt to change and to devise for itself a future that corresponds to its aspirations. The quality of a people's collective consciousness is also directly proportional to the quality, the wealth and the variety of cultural experiences the people lives through as a community.

These days, culture is where we find the most effective reference points or symbols that contribute to maintaining a group's social cohesion. And, by the way, that's why cultural development is increasingly called upon to transform the face of communities and restore the pride and sense of belonging some thought gone for ever.

If it is accepted that culture, which is given the means to fully develop, is necessary for the welfare of a community, then we feel it's clear that government also has to be concerned with cultural development. The State has a vital role to play. We feel that's even more valid for a community like Québec, which has understood, in many other sectors, that its chances for development were slim if it denied itself access to the various means available to the State to make things happen.

And here we must sound a warning against the temptation for the State, particularly in North America, to link the fate of the cultural sector to the market economy alone because then the cultural sector survives only by radically changing its reason for existence which, obviously, from our point of view, is not desirable.

Now if we consider how Québec has dealt with cultural development, we have to note that the Government of Québec, although culture lies within its jurisdiction, has taken its time in outlining any kind of cultural policy and allocating the necessary resources.

The lack of interest shown by Québec has been exacerbated by the fact that the federal government has not remained on the sidelines and little by little, has begun to occupy positions left vacant by Québec. This situation has led to duplication and confusion that substantially hamper the development of our sector. For instance, museum institutions are frequently caught in a crossfire, between the federal and provincial governments, and are sent back and forth from one to the other without really having anything to gain.

Museum institutions are also forced to adjust to two different lines of thought and action, with the danger that the contortions thus forced on them will cause them to lose sight of their own objectives. It's a situation everyone deplores and would like to see corrected.

So we feel it's essential that the Québec government develop its own policy for cultural protection and development. Québec has to generate a coherent line of thought, indicate a direction and supply the means for action. Regardless of the associative solution that may be adopted, Québec must reiterate that culture lies within its jurisdiction. And it must demand that in this area, federal intervention be subordinated to its own imperatives. Québec's cultural policy must also be extended to sectoral policies such as the ministère des Affaires culturelles promised for the museum sector and which, we hope, will soon be unveiled.

So, from our point of view, to sum up in a few lines: Québec has a card that it should have played already. Without the expression of a clearly stated political will firmly supported by a package of means to be decided together with groups interested in cultural development, Québec is depriving itself of a resource that lies within its grasp and offers, we think, every chance of having a major impact on the full development of Québec society.

That is the essence of our proposal. We await your questions.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Mrs. Louise Bégin will begin.

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Gascon, I want to begin by thanking you and your team for presenting your brief. On reading it, I noted that you have not stated your position on the political and constitutional status of Québec for the reasons you give in your brief and, at this point, especially for reasons of neutrality. And, at this point, I think we have to respect your opinion.

However, you want to give us your point of view on how the development of a political and constitutional model for Québec could best serve the interests of Québec by, among others, taking certain items into consideration. And, at this point, you mention culture.

On page 5, you say that culture, if left solely to the market economy, cannot survive and that it must be a matter for governments. Now, you know as well as I do that the government is in fact only a transmission belt. It can only act when it has the means. And these means exist only if the economy is working. We have the means if the economy is working.

At this stage, I'd like to hear what you have to say on an aspect that's been discussed here, that is how important do you feel is the relation between the economy and culture?

Mrs. Gascon: I'd like to begin, perhaps, by saying that we see two roles for the State. I think the State does in fact provide the cultural sector with substantial financial support and I'd say that's not the main need. It's a very important need in this sector at the moment, but there's another one, there's a lack of policy in the cultural sector so that interventions currently follow a logic that we have difficulty detecting at times. So, one of the powers of the State is the spending power, but there's also the power to establish guidelines and a logical and coherent framework for action and I'd say that's perhaps what we lack at the moment. We lack a framework and that's perhaps what's causing the most harm to the development of our sector, at present. So, that's just a nuance I want to make.

As for the relation between the economy and culture, I think the first thing is that we wanted to act on something we know in a sector where we feel comfortable, based on our personal experience. Our expertise is certainly based first of all on the cultural sector and I think that Québec's situation, at the moment, can be seen from various points of view. You can look at the economic aspect, the demographic aspect and several others. So, that's the main reason why...

There was also the issue of the neutrality museums must keep because museums are more the witnesses of history, but I think that beyond that there's also the fact that we wanted to speak of what we knew well. We don't deny that the economy is very, very important. I don't think the State should intervene in that sector only to provide financial support, but for other reasons. There's a lot that could be said on the relations between the economy and culture, in particular, we think that the development of the cultural sector could have an impact on the economy. Perhaps not major, and that's not that sector's main impact, but an impact that nonetheless has proven to be positive, based on studies of economic spin-offs. So, from that point of view, I think that maybe... development of the cultural sector could contribute somehow. I'd say it's a question that we didn't want to examine in detail because we wanted to concentrate more on our own experience, the

experience of the cultural sector.

Mrs. Bégin: If I understand you, Mrs. Gascon, you're saying that the economic point of view is important, but that's not the main thing. There are policies that... first of all, we need a real cultural policy, but could you talk about the real cultural policy you would want the government to implement?

Mrs. Gascon: Good. First, I think everyone would want the government to say what it thinks its role is in terms of culture, what type of intervention it will emphasize. What are its objectives and why does it act in culture, because that's what it's doing at the moment? We know it's intervening. But I think you have to group its interventions to try to analyze them, to try to see what its objectives are. I don't think a situation like that is normal. And we should be able to... I simply think that in terms of effectiveness in our sector, policies would make it much easier to understand the objectives.

We could talk about the impact of... for instance, a cultural policy in the museum sector would make it possible to set up a network of museums where it would be much easier to understand why an institution is opened in one region rather than another, why this sector is covered rather than that one. At the moment, decisions are... It's very difficult to find any logic behind the decisions. And a policy would give us the missing thread linking everything together. I'm not sure if you...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's it? Good, Mrs. Bégin. Are we moving on right away to Mrs. Marois, or do you want...

Mrs. Marois: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes? OK.

Mrs. Marois: I'm sorry I had to leave for a moment. I want to welcome you to our work. I read your brief closely and you talk about the duplication of action by the two levels of government. And among other things, you say, on page 7 of your brief, that "the current situation forces museums in Québec to adjust to two orders of thinking and two lines of action having unequal means at their disposal" (translation). And in fact, this afternoon, we received Mr. Arpin, whom you obviously know well, who told us he wished there were only one order of government intervening.

In your brief, you suggest that the action of one government be subordinated to that of the other. You say that the federal government should intervene only when there is a structure defined by Québec. At least, that's what I

understand from your brief, and maybe I'm wrong. So, I've two questions. One, explain how you experience this duplication, concretely. How does it crop up in your daily experience, the duplication between decisions of the two levels of government? And two, explain how it's possible that a government would agree - and this is my interpretation of what you're saying - that the federal government would agree that it could invest in Québec museums under the responsibility, and solely under the responsibility, under objectives and principles defined by the Government of Québec?

Mrs. Gascon: I'd like to start by saying that the model we describe is, perhaps, simply a minimum condition. If the entire cultural field is really under provincial jurisdiction, and we think it should be, the federal government's spending power should go to the provincial government or all expenditures related, for instance, to the museum sector should be made with the agreement of the provincial government. Currently, that's far from being the situation. Perhaps to describe the worst situation we have to endure at present, and I think that's also been the case in sectors other than culture, the federal government, we see, for instance, retains its spending power. Even though it has no jurisdiction over culture, it retains a spending power which has meant, among other things, and continues to mean the establishment of museum institutions build in Québec with federal funds but which, then, once the doors of the museum are open, must turn to the provincial government for operating funds.
(8:00 p.m.)

So, you can imagine the frustration of the provincial government at having a network virtually made up by another level of government or thanks to funds invested by another level of government but for which it must provide the long-term funding. You can also imagine directors of institutions who have to approach the provincial government, often pointing to faits accomplis, and say: Well, here we are. We're also in a somewhat difficult position because we also have to... The lack of will we've seen on the provincial side... On the other hand, facing that is a fairly definite dynamism on the federal side, for all sorts of reasons we won't get into this evening. But there's in fact a rain of grants that, at times, falls on Québec.

Obviously, the cultural sector is attracted by that dynamism and is always in a very, very uncomfortable position because its request are often received much more attentively at one level of government. And the level of government one would expect to be, let's say, more closely interested in our requests, either isn't or considers them against its better judgment. So, I think that perhaps describes the state of mind of the players and, maybe, gives

some idea of the confusion we face.

Mrs. Marois: OK. But in that sense, you've said it in your answer. But in your brief, it's not quite so obvious or so clear. In that sense, the ideal solution would be for a single government to have the spending power and actually exercise that power, so that there would be a form of unity of direction and orientation, but also a unity of management, from a strictly operational and organizational point of view. It could be viewed at another level, but there... Because you don't put it so clearly in your brief.

Mrs. Gascon: I mean, what we described in our brief, and that's what I insisted on at the beginning of the presentation, I think that, based on an almost daily experience of frustrations such as I've described, it's relatively easy for us to describe objectives. And I think we've identified the clarification of mandates, the clarification of roles of different levels of government as an objective that would improve our effectiveness, make our sector more effective. Now, how far should that clarification go, how will it take place? Does it mean full repatriation of all powers? I have to say that goes a bit beyond, well... we'd like to be experts in other fields to be able to answer all the aspects of this question, but it's certain that for us, some steps have to be taken: institute a policy, make it clear that the ministère des Affaires culturelles will have full and complete jurisdiction over the cultural sector. We feel those are objectives we have to work towards. How will that be put into effect practically? How will the management of all that, to use your expression, be put into effect? It's difficult for us to give a detailed description of that model.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): That's it, Mrs. Marois?

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Turgeon: Yes, well, I'd just like to know if, in what you say and in what you leave unsaid, you're criticizing the governments of the day or a system? Because the public hearings are drawing to a close and we're going to have to get together to draw some conclusions from all this, and that's what's important to understand. For instance, on the practical side, the current Minister of Communications, and this is a bit like Mr. Arpin told us this afternoon, that he considers that Québec does not do enough, injects and then gives a lot of funds, and that's good for Québec's museums. For instance, he announced the creation of a museum of New

France, and then maybe a museum of stage arts in the near future, etc.

So, basically, do you fear that a, let's say, sovereign Québec... do you fear that the cultural policy of that Québec would not go far enough, given its current practice? Do you feel it would model itself somewhat on what it's doing now and does that make you a little fearful for the future, and that's why you're fairly restrained? You say, we don't want to be flagpoles, but it's more than that.

Mrs. Gascon: I think that the caution we've shown up to now reflects, first, a certain difficulty in understanding all the consequences and describing the model as such toward which we should be moving. But I also think an enormous amount of frustration has been created in the cultural sector because of, I'd almost say the paralysis in attitudes...

Mr. Turgeon: Competition between departments?

Mrs. Gascon: Competition between departments, but also the failure of the provincial government to take a stand. It's sad to say, we'd like to be able to say something different. We approach the provincial government, we bring all kinds of pressure to bear so that actions that are essential, if you're talking about a process of self-affirmation... I think it begins with a policy, and we're still waiting for one.

Mr. Turgeon: Good.

Mrs. Gascon: So, do we fear this policy...

Mr. Turgeon: Do you feel that policy could really exist under the current system, with competition, duplication of programs, or do you really have to say: We appropriate full powers? At least, that issue to do it.

Mrs. Gascon: Listen, since you're forcing us to go further, we can only speak of the museum sector. I think that in the museum sector, when you consider the provincial government's spending and the federal government's spending in Québec, you see that, for instance, for 1988-1989, Québec spent almost \$37.9 million on museum institutions in Québec while the federal government spent almost \$2.6 million in Québec during the same year. Now, doesn't spending \$37.9 million, which after all is a lot more than \$2.6 million, doesn't that justify having a policy to structure decisions?

We say it does. That already provides ample reason for repatriating those powers. You'll say that we're meddling in politics, we're not looking to the future, but to the past. But today we have to... There's a lot of ground to be made

up.

Mr. Turgeon: So, there's really a lack of political will, at present, at the cultural level...

Mrs. Gascon: Yes, unfortunately, it's regrettable.

Mr. Turgeon: ...in Québec. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Good. Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Cheff, Mr. Perron, Mrs. Paradis and Mrs. Gascon, thank you for coming and discussing the importance of the Société des musées québécois and helping us develop a better understanding of it and its needs. Thank you.

A voice: Thank you.

Mrs. Gascon: Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:08 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:11 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now welcome Sports-Québec, represented by Mr. Bertrand Rousseau, general manager, who is the group's spokesperson. Mr. Rousseau, would you introduce the people who are with you.

Corporation Sports-Québec

Mr. Rousseau (Bertrand): Yes, Sir. First of all, I'd like to thank the members of the Commission for giving us this opportunity to express our views here today. I'd like to introduce Jacques Hamel, on my far left. Mr. Hamel is the treasurer of our corporation and a C.A. with the firm Samson Bélaïr. Also with me are Pierre Thibault, the general manager of the Fédération du cyclisme du Québec; Michèle Gendron, communications advisor for the Corporation; Mr. Moffat, program director for the Fédération du sport étudiant; Jacques Sauvageau, vice-president of the Corporation; and Michel Dessureault, who is an expert with our commission, with a degree in physical education and administration.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): I understand that a number of you will be participating in this presentation.

Mr. Rousseau: That's right.

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

Mr. Rousseau: Thank you very much. If you don't mind, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to begin by presenting our main position with respect to constitutional reform for Québec.

Essentially and fundamentally, political and constitutional options are blueprints for society. Our brief rationally establishes the impact of the various options involved on amateur sports specifically. Under international sports regulations, the political sovereignty of a country is an essential condition for its participation in competitions as a recognized entity. In this sense, our analysis must not and cannot take two constitutional options into account exclusively. On the one hand, there's the option of a constitutional status that recognizes the political sovereignty of Canada or any form of association or renewed federalism with Québec (which) would not alter this federalist sovereign status for us and, on the other hand, there's a constitutional option that recognizes the political sovereignty of Québec.

Maintaining the constitutional status quo would not be in the best interests of Québec sports because it presents major disadvantages. It does to a certain extent however allow the practice of sports in Québec. This is why we say that an independent sports system for Québec would be feasible, despite certain restrictions, if it were accompanied by a real mobilization of private and public sectors and a greater financial contribution by these sectors based on the current provincial investment figure of \$20.7 million and federal benefits of \$15 million. The anticipated investment to be made by an independent Québec government would therefore be \$35 million. The sports autonomy inherent in Québec's obtaining constitutional status would be both a significant challenge and a wonderful opportunity to establish and develop a sports system that truly corresponds to the needs of our distinct society.

While it's obvious that autonomy in the field of sports would facilitate the development of identification with and pride in Québec for the participants concerned, one might also assume that if we were to become a country political authorities would make better use of sports in the affirmation of our nation.

For the field of sports, there are the following advantages to Québec's achieving sovereignty: the opportunity for Québec of being represented at the highest decision-making levels in sports by the establishment of direct contact between Québec and international sports authorities, without the intervention of a federal intermediary; an increase in opportunities for Québec to send athletes who practise individual sports to major events and to send athletes who practise individual and team sports to international competitions; decision-making autonomy for Québec's political and associative governments with regard to sports supervision and orientations; a guarantee of the constant inclusion of sports in Québec's political agenda and sustained awareness of sports matters on the part of political authorities; leadership and

control by Québec with respect to the training of managers, coaches, and officials as well as greater motivation for managers, coaches, officials and athletes to learn and train better because of the establishment of new prospects or openings and the importance of their role in the sports continuum; development of Québec expertise, new jobs and new professions, inherent in the creation of new service structures; territorial concentration of the preparatory activities of our national teams; increased motivation on the part of those involved in sports, based on the development of identification with Québec and the expression of greater sports solidarity; sports programs that are better adapted to the social and educational objectives of Québec and, finally; creation of a real sports system in Québec that permits the expression of Québec's national identity, at the international level in particular.

To conclude, Messrs. Co-chairmen, the autonomous, harmonious development of sports in Québec cannot come about without a determination on the part of political authorities to guarantee access to it, with respect for all of the components of the practice of sports, from initiation to excellence. By the same token, those involved in sports will have to take on greater responsibility, be more active, and play a political role by openly promoting the credibility of the new system in a context where, both in the short and medium term, sports performance will be less impressive and therefore represent a more uncertain source of motivation and stimulation. In the long run, however, sports and Québec's athletes will prevail. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Rousseau. I believe Mr. Brassard is to be the first speaker. Am I right?

Mr. Brassard: Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine.

Mr. Brassard: I'm replacing Mr. Chevette, who was unable to make it today. He asked me, however, to greet you and I'm doing so because he got to know you over a period of several years, when he was Minister of Recreation, Fish and Game; I became acquainted with you as well for a short time.

I found your brief interesting and I find your presentation even more interesting. In your brief, you refer to a number of advantages for sports of maintaining Canadian federalism. But you chose in your presentation to stress the advantages of Québec sovereignty for the field of sports. I therefore conclude that you've made your choice and decided after all that it would be better for Québec sports, for Québec athletes, especially as far as performance is concerned, to

work and engage in their sports in a sovereign Québec. I won't go back over all the advantages that you pointed out.

You mentioned, however, that there are major disadvantages to the present system. Anyone who has been the least bit involved in sports in Québec, in sports events, has witnessed all kinds of incidents or difficulties where Québec athletes were often discriminated against, so to speak; and sometimes there were articles in the newspapers about this.

I'd like to hear what you, with your expertise, have to say about these major disadvantages under the present system. To what extent do Québec's athletes experience problems, with this system, getting noticed by Canadian federations in each of the disciplines and Canadian associations, whether it be the Olympic Games or the Commonwealth Games. I'd like you to give us some concrete examples of these problems encountered by Québec's athletes.

Mr. Rousseau: First of all, I'd like to thank you for giving us the chance to answer this question. We attempted in our brief to the Commission to attack this issue on the basis of our own experience, without necessarily turning it into a language issue, considering our culture and considering the fact that most of our Quebecers are Francophones, although some of them are capable of performing well in a second language on the international scene once they reach a certain level and after a number of years. One must bear in mind, though, that they are in a better position to deal with this problem.

As things are, however, French-speaking athletes have to overcome an additional obstacle when Canadian athletes are selected: they cannot communicate fully in their language, either with their coaches or those in charge of selecting athletes for elite teams. What is more, unilingual French-speaking athletes don't have as much chance of being supported in their development towards high performance within the Canadian system, because most of the professionals and volunteers in charge of selection and supervision of these athletes on the Canadian and international scene are not as a rule French-speaking.

So, the same also applies when we look at training. The supervision of our young athletes - both as far as coaches and major officials are concerned - presently comes under a national certification program which, curiously enough, is also under federal jurisdiction, even though powers in the field of education were transferred to Québec a long time ago. The fact remains that training, in the context of sports supervision, comes under the Canadian system. And, in many cases, we receive this documentation, this training, this instruction very late - 7, 8 or 10 months later - in a French version that more-

over doesn't reflect our reality, our culture as we experience it here in Québec.

Therefore, it's not just a question of technical procedure, or theoretical procedure for that matter, because in the field of instruction and training, the lion's share of Canadian sports supervision is of a unilingual English nature. And many of these people aren't exactly all that concerned about learning a second language to promote or facilitate the training of our participants.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: One last thing quickly. Just something I'd like some more details on. On page 13 of your brief, you assume, since Sports Canada is unable to provide a provincial breakdown of federal investments in sports, you assume, by applying demographic ratios, or 25% for Québec in other words, that we'd benefit from a federal spinoffs of approximately \$15 million. You make this assumption, but are you quite sure of this figure?

Mr. Rousseau: My answer to that, Mr. Brassard, is that we made an estimate initially because we were unable to find out how much Québec would normally be expected to receive from the federal government. We therefore settled the matter by doing our calculations in terms of population. I think that this assumption was justified. Like all Quebecers, we now pay taxes, provincial income taxes. I assume that, given the contribution by the Québec sports community, this is about the sixth or seventh most important activity in Canada in terms of economic spinoffs. I therefore feel that we have potential spinoffs on the one hand, that would be or would in fact allow an autonomous government to guarantee us at least the equivalent tomorrow morning, or at the very least guarantee the equivalent of the amount paid to the federal government and reinvest it in Québec sports.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Rousseau. Now, the next three speakers will be Mr. Sébastien Allard, first, and then Mr. Holden, followed by Mr. Gérald Larose. Mr. Allard.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question might be seen as an extension of Mr. Brassard's. You devote a whole chapter to the advantages and disadvantages of the two options that you touch on in your brief. I see that you have an impressive list of advantages for sports of Québec sovereignty, but that on the other hand you have three sections: one that deals with the advantages of maintaining federalism, another that deals with the disadvantages of

Québec sovereignty, and then you have another section where you talk about the reservations you'd have if Québec were to become sovereign. I get the impression from this that you're fairly worried or that you'd be fairly worried if Québec were to become sovereign in the near future. Am I right? Have I misinterpreted your brief or do I read you correctly?

Mr. Rousseau: I think that your interpretation is unrealistic, Mr. Allard. Since we were aware that we would be addressing — I won't say novices — but people for whom the reality of sports in Québec and Canada isn't actually part of their everyday routine necessarily: the Commission; it therefore seemed to us that in all intellectual honesty we should present the key advantages of a federalist system, the key advantages of a sovereign Québec and the disadvantages.

We said to ourselves: What if people... We didn't come here with this disadvantage in fact, because we would have come across as philosophers, and rightly so I think. What we really wanted to do was to explain things and make sure that Quebecers who are faced with a choice in the near future, people in the sports sector as well, those who in fact have a problem dealing with sports, our Québec athletes, are aware of the implications of their position.

It's obvious that Canada, tomorrow, and that Québec, tomorrow, with a smaller population at the international level, will need to alter their positions first, make sure they have more leadership, and also make sure, considering our performance... because we also go to many countries as part of a national team, where team sports are concerned for example... we'll have a period of time in fact for creating our own policy and developing certain orientations in keeping with our orientations and the fields we see as priorities. So, we wanted to make the advantages and disadvantages very clear.

Mr. Allard: But you haven't gone so far as to endorse either of these options.

Mr. Rousseau: I think we have. Although we didn't come right out with it in our brief — and I have to admit in this connection that many of our federations criticized us because we stated that we could always continue in a system where the status quo or renewed federalism was maintained even though we were more in favour of autonomy — we did say very clearly that the status quo or renewed federalism would not alter the fact that... Because as things are, in the international sports circuit, it's only sovereign countries that are entitled to choose members for the major teams and the mechanisms that govern them. And virtually all of our federations criticized us for this, because we didn't think we'd be able to carry out a

consultation first, given the limited time and resources at our disposal. They said that we should have come right out with it and state that we in the sports community in Québec would prefer working in an independent system.

Mr. Allard: But you didn't make this clear in your brief.

Mr. Rousseau: When we wrote it, we nevertheless had reservations.

Mr. Allard: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK, Mr. Allard? Now we'll hear from Mr. Holden.

Mr. Holden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm a bit like Mr. Allard and Mr. Brassard. When I read your brief, I found you'd been very honest intellectually in presenting both the pros and cons, the advantages of both systems. But I'm not like Mr. Brassard in that I was disappointed in your presentation because, if you were going to be intellectually honest, you should have presented the views of your organization in your brief instead of surprising us with conclusions that were not in the text. But anyway, you talk about your federations. I'll admit that I've heard a lot about Sports Canada but that I'm less familiar with Sports-Québec. Could you explain your federations to us a bit? There must be federations, in communities other than French-speaking communities, whose views might be a bit different from those you've presented here today. Could you tell me a bit about where these federations are and what they are?
(8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Rousseau: Yes. First of all, let me give you a bit of an idea why you're less familiar with the name Sports-Québec. Two years ago, in a step similar to others taken in economic and social spheres of activity in Québec, we undertook, or actually we were called upon to amalgamate provincial organizations. In sports, there was the Société des sports du Québec and the Société des jeux du Québec. One of these organizations was in charge of the Québec games program, with which I'm sure you're familiar, and the other, the Société des sports du Québec, is an umbrella organization where sports federations are represented. Since these two organizations haven't been together for very long, it's understandable that you're aware of the fruits of its labours but possibly less familiar with the corporation itself. A meeting such as this one today is bound to help us become better known in Québec.

You're asking me for more details on what the role of a federation is and, first of all, whether federations are bound at the international level by the federation of a sovereign country? There's an international federation,

there's a Canadian federation and there are its counterparts, the provincial federations. At present, the federations are responsible for governing sports. It's the federation that, in terms of regulations – let's take hockey as an example, or baseball – it's the federation, where the rules of the game are concerned, which in fact determines the operating procedure for these rules or regulations. Also, where prevention and safety are concerned, it's up to the federation to establish rules of procedure that are then sanctioned and disseminated among its associations and clubs, and ultimately among those who practise the sport in question.

Federations are therefore a bit like the counterparts, so to speak, of a party that needs to agree on certain rules of procedure, both in terms of regulations and in terms of the procedure for practising a sport and of amalgamating individuals associated with this sport. The federations are also responsible for training their officials, training their coaches and ensuring better service quality in terms of those who practise sports.

Mr. Holden: Are they...

Mrs. Gendron (Michèle): And there are 58 Québec sports federations under Sports-Québec.

Mr. Holden: How many?

Mrs. Gendron: 58. For 58 different sports. And Sports-Québec is responsible for representing them in the usual areas.

Mr. Holden: Are these federations "pan-Canadian" and...

Mrs. Gendron: They're Québec federations.

Mr. Holden: Your federations are Québec federations...

Mrs. Gendron: They're Québec federations.

Mr. Holden: ...but do they have any ties with federations elsewhere in Canada?

Mr. Rousseau: Yes. There's a Canadian equivalent for the grand majority of these federations and, once again, they express themselves according to a democratic system on the international scene, via an additional actor however: the Canadian federation.

Mr. Holden: When you were preparing your brief, did you consult your federations?

Mr. Rousseau: Our Québec federations?

Mr. Holden: Yes.

Mr. Rousseau: No. Because of the limited time we had to write this brief, we got together and selected participants, who represented all of Québec however. You might have noticed that in our presentation we...

Mr. Holden: I read the names, yes.

Mr. Rousseau: The names are given and we also say where they're from. You'll find that there are people there – athletes and officials, people involved in sports supervision of coaches, sports for the disabled, student sports, federated sports... We even included representatives of the media too, because of the role they play here. We purposefully excluded ourselves because someone, a representative from the department, wanted as much latitude for action, reflection and decision-making as possible, so we wouldn't get involved in any conflicts... someone from the government.

Mr. Holden: One final question. You say that you put your share of the \$60 million at 25%, or \$15 million. It might turn out to be more than \$15 million, though. Isn't that true?

Mr. Rousseau: It likely will... It might...

Mr. Holden: Likely?

Mr. Rousseau: It's unlikely. It might, but I think that this equation should express... If we had the figures, we'd have been pleased to present them to you. Unfortunately, we don't. There too, for the sake of intellectual honesty, we calculated proportionately, but it's an estimate, not a guarantee.

Mr. Holden: Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to take you to page 7 of your brief, where you talk about the political role played by sports. Perhaps, unlike those who have preceded me... it seems to me that your *modus operandi* is found in this chapter and that your conclusion, which you were more explicit about in your presentation, is based on what you say on this page. When you say that sports activities promote solidarity, that sports are a way to express collective pride, that they're a kind of confrontation that acts as a substitute for war – maybe that explains why we have the Blue Jays and the Expos, the Canadiens and the Maple Leafs, I don't know – that they're a means of promotion and an important instrument for social integration, are you aware of or have you noticed in the course of your duties that the fact that Québec's athletes wear the red maple

leaf in international competitions makes a difference in terms of recruitment and mobilization, so to speak? In other words, if this is sports or the political role of sports, the fact that Quebecers are called upon to assume their political role by being in the international circuit, is this a significant additional stimulant?

Now, I just want to add something I learned from my own limited experience, once when I was on Leclerc St., which is right next to the Olympic Stadium, at the opening of the 1976 games. There were a lot of traffic problems, and so on, but it seems to me that there were a few of us who discovered a few countries, or were introduced to them rather. Personally, I'd never heard of the Cap-Vert Islands. I was familiar with the expressions "joualvert" and "calvaire", but "Cap-Vert" was a new one on me. In short, sports do in fact play a role. So, in practice, do you feel that Quebecers would be more motivated if there was this assumption of a political role?

Mr. Thibault (Pierre): Our extensive experience with our athletes and the sports managers that support them on the international scene has shown us that, even when they wear the maple leaf, as you just mentioned, I get the impression, I think, and I'm convinced that my colleagues will agree with me, that they feel like Quebecers first and foremost. I think that they respect the shirt or clothing, the colours that they wear in the international circuit. It's important. We're Canadians now. We operate in a context where these athletes have made their way through a selection process. They're supported by Canadian federal grants. They represent Canada, and this is legitimate. But in their hearts, many of them, and I'd say the majority of Quebecers who are selected and who represent Canada in major international events, in world championships, in the Olympic Games, Pan-American Games, Commonwealth Games, and so forth, that the majority of these athletes see themselves as Quebecers first and foremost.

So, to get back to the question of the political role played by sports, we obviously realize that sports activities don't constitute a system that's completely closed or shut off from the society that surrounds it. In fact sports play an extremely important political role and they act as - we make this clear when we say that - in effect, they act as a substitute for war. They make it possible for us to establish relations, they permit peaceful competitions or events between nations, between countries and between teams. Sports definitely serve an important purpose when cities, regions, provinces and countries compete.

But more important still, when it comes down to it, is the fact that sports, taken in their broadest sense, are a component of culture. This means that if a point is reached, as Sports-

Québec indicates in its position that we're presenting here this evening, where we desire, where we prefer to achieve the objective of a full-fledged sports system within a sovereign Québec, an independent Québec, with the prerogatives that this implies, then this also means that we're proud. It might be easier for us to attain these objectives for an independent sports system within a sovereign Québec and, this being the case, eventually - it would take time, we have to be realistic - we might claim two or three Sylvie Fréchettes, two or three Gaétan Bouchers, Pierre Harvey, and so on. Because we must admit that when athletes have to leave their province, leave the region with which they are familiar, the places where they went to school and worked, and go into "exile" in a national training centre in Vancouver or Calgary, it doesn't work in their favour. They have to get used to their new, and usually unfamiliar, surroundings. This causes a number of problems. So, all of these conditions could be controlled much better and much more support could be provided for, really, by those who design the Québec sports system and by people who want to ensure better performance.

Obviously, though, we're not just speaking in terms of high performance. We also mustn't forget that the grand majority of Quebecers are people who are basically only interested in practising sports for their own enjoyment, for the physical exercise. We have to take this into consideration too.

Mr. Larose: Fine. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): OK? Mrs. Hovington, it's your turn now.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to see you here tonight, Sports-Québec, especially since I got to know the general manager, Mr. Rousseau, quite well during the Québec Games in Matane back in 1989. We hadn't seen each other for almost two years. So I'm very pleased to see you here at the Bélanger-Campeau Commission proceedings tonight. I'd also like to welcome you on behalf of my political party.

I find all this very interesting, because you present an aspect - or more than an aspect, a sector or slice - of Québec life that we're hearing about for the first time in these proceedings: sports. It's important because you say in your brief, among other things, that there are 2 million Quebecers who aren't federation members but who practise a sport - 2 million out of 6 million is pretty impressive - that 780 000 people practise a federated sport and belong to a federation, that 500 000 young people practise a sport in their educational environment, that over 60 000 people are sports trainers and coaches, and that 400 000 work in this area on a

volunteer basis. Sports are in fact very important in Québec. This is why your testimony here tonight is extremely important. Even if you were to say that there's a big war in the Middle East and "Les Filles de Caleb", I think that despite this certain people are going to be interested tonight in our...

You've listed some advantages in your brief, which is interesting. Mr. Brassard only talked about the disadvantages of federalism, but on page 14, you also talk about the advantages of the present system. I think that we have to talk about both, and that's what you've done and I approve, because you list the advantages of both systems. And this list is such a good one that it almost makes us want to take the best from both lists and make up a new system. I think that it'd be... In effect, you compare the present federal system with sovereignty. The consensus that is now emerging, after two and a half months of hearings and dialogue, favours a new system that we might refer to as "minimal federalism", the expression used by Nicole Duplé who we invited here as an expert. In other words, with this kind of system, Québec would be independent, but certain powers would be shared. So, would Sports-Québec benefit from a system such as this, minimal federalism, and how would Sports-Québec see this new system, this best of two worlds, as I was just saying, that would include the advantages of both systems?

Mr. Rousseau: Mrs. Hovington, I believe that we talked about the advantages of a Québec system in our brief, and it very clearly and eloquently explains the advantages we see in an independent system. I find it difficult to answer your question, and I admit that my initial reaction would tend to be, to give you an example, a bit like that of a person who has to choose between two women. It seems to him that there would in fact be major advantages to each one of them. But at some point he's faced with having to make a choice and deciding on the best match for him. I think that this is what the Commission has done, quite consciously. And what you're asking me to do... obviously, I might be able to, if I looked really hard, I might actually find an advantage that we wouldn't have in an independent system. But I think that we've made all this clear with our table. We looked at the pros and cons of both situations, and I can say that we now recognize that sovereignty, despite the few disadvantages that it implies, would be much more advantageous to us. And this was what our lists showed. But I want to repeat that maintaining a system, both systems, renewed or statutory federalism, wouldn't change anything as far as we're concerned. We'd still have to go through an additional intermediary at the Canadian level, and with respect to the different options, considering our value, considering our heritage, considering our

culture, the fact remains that, as you've done in the field of education, you'll have to deal with actualities that unfortunately aren't really shared by everyone in Canada, especially since the majority of Canadians are outside Québec and they unfortunately speak a language that is not that spoken by the majority of Quebecers.

Mrs. Hovington: Is this why you only have one woman with you tonight? When you compare...

Mr. Rousseau: No, let me tell you that as far as that's concerned, we probably had...

Mrs. Hovington: ...living with two women...

Mrs. Gendron: It's because he's made his choice.

Mrs. Hovington: He's made his choice. You maintain...

Mr. Hamel (Jacques): I might... if you don't mind...

Mrs. Hovington: Yes?

Mr. Hamel: ...I might add to this answer that, unlike other activity sectors where all sorts of compromises are possible between the present system, the federal system, and another kind of system sort of at the other extreme, Québec sovereignty or independence, to call it like it is, the sports sector, if we set aside recreational sports which will go on as before regardless of the political system, regardless of the political system in place in Québec and in Canada, if we set this aspect aside for the moment and concentrate on the representation and structure implications at the provincial and Canadian national levels, then we're left with no choice. It's one or the other. Arrangements could be made, of course. Changes could be made to the Canadian federation, but if these amendments meant that the country recognized by the United Nations and by other nations, other countries, was Canada, then there'd still be a Canadian team.

We can't exactly go and see our friends in English Canada, in Canadian associations or in parallel with Canadian associations, and say: We demand that our athletes represent one-third, or 26%, of those selected to participate in this world championship, in these Olympic Games. We can't... There isn't any equity in terms of sports value strictly speaking. To be selected, you have to earn it. And it's not with political arguments that athletes become renowned for their performance and are chosen to participate or represent the country. So, this is the kind of problem we have. We can't tell you: Yes, fine,

maybe this possibility or that one. Either the athlete wears Canada's colours or Québec's. Therefore, we can't tell you: O.K., I think we'd like this arrangement. We're not even uncomfortable about this. For us, it's clear. We have the advantage of finding ourselves in a situation that, for us, is crystal clear.

Mrs. Hovington: But I got the impression that...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Just a few more words, Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Please, go ahead. I got the impression that...

A voice: Please, go ahead.

Mrs. Hovington: ...you'd prefer the status quo if you didn't get the conditions... In your conclusion, however, you say that if there were... that an independent Québec would be feasible if there were a political determination to guarantee access, responsibility on the part of people in the sports sector and a financial contribution of \$35 million. If these conditions aren't met, am I right in thinking that you'd prefer to remain with the status quo? These conditions are your sine qua non?

Mr. Thibault: The thing is that we're aware of the conditions under which we now operate, at the structural level, the political level and the financial level. We can't... I don't think that in all honesty we should state as an a priori that if you don't guarantee us such and such an amount very clearly, then in an eventual referendum or general election in Québec we'll vote in such and such a way. This is borne out by the fact that Sports-Québec is advanced enough to say that, considering this slight difference which is really quite important, this element which is important as a political priority in terms of Québec culture or representation on the international scene, what I mean is... Well, considering this, this is what we need to ensure this representation. And we're not saying as an absolute a priori that if we don't get \$35 million we'll recommend that all our members vote against Québec sovereignty. The problem shouldn't really be stated in these terms.

Mr. Rousseau: I'd like to add that...

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Yes?

Mr. Rousseau: Setting aside... If you don't mind... Yes.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Provided you keep it very short.

Mr. Rousseau: 30 seconds.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Alright then.

Mr. Rousseau: Setting aside the question of money, the marked advantages of an independent system would enable us to take on more leadership. Assuming responsibility for our situation in this way would mean the challenge of heightening awareness, convincing politicians, our governments in place, to play a dominant role, and we're convinced that we can do this.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Dussureault, Mr. Sauvageau, Mr. Moffat, Mrs. Gendron, Mr. Rousseau, Mr. Thibault and Mr. Hamel, thank you for taking part in these proceedings before the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec and thank you for helping us understand your organization Sports-Québec better.

Mr. Rousseau: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and all the members also.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:50 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 8:51 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We now welcome the Union québécoise pour la conservation de la nature, represented by Mr. Pierre Gosselin and Mr. Christian Simard. I understand that you're both going to speak and that Mr. Gosselin will begin.

Union québécoise pour la conservation de la nature

Mr. Gosselin (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Co-chairman. Thank you Messrs. Co-chairmen and members of the Commission for allowing us to state our views on the important subject of the political and constitutional future of Québec.

The UQCQ encompasses 100 diverse organizations working in the fields of conservation and the environment throughout Québec, representing approximately 60 000 members. We also have 6000 individual members and we publish one of the few environmental magazines in Québec: *Franc-Nord*. In addition, we're affiliated with the World Alliance for Nature Conservation and the World Nature Fund.

Our conservation and environmental protection activities are founded on the three world conservation strategy principles defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development, also referred to as the Brundtland Commission report. These principles are, first, maintenance of the ecological processes essential to life. There's one example of this kind of devastation in Québec over the past few years

right here in Québec City: the construction of expressways along the banks of the St. Lawrence River. The Boulevard Champlain and the Autoroute Dufferin-Montmorency have both done away with marshland which played an extremely important role in purifying the St. Lawrence. If this hadn't been done, we might only need one sewage treatment plant in Québec City now instead of two. Marshland provides purification processes essential to life and a habitat for countless animal species.

The second principle is the preservation of genetic diversity and I think that many Quebecers understand this now, what with their desire to preserve their genetic identity as a people in the world. The third principle is sustainable use of resources, whether they be species or ecosystems, and this applies to such vital resources as water, forests and farmland. Our work is also founded on the operating principles of sustainable development set forth in the Brundtland Commission report as a result of the generalized deterioration of the environment throughout the world. Our priorities are therefore the protection of the rights of future generations with respect to the environment, our habitat, vigilance in face of such macroecological phenomena as the greenhouse effect – and it was just mentioned recently in the news how much the planet has warmed up in the past 10 years – the responsibility of everyone for protecting the environment, globalization of the environmental protection phenomenon, and consequently, the Third World.

As far as the constitutional issue is concerned, our position is based on a consultation of our members via an extensive survey; we also presented it at the annual general assembly. The points that strike us the most in this connection are the duplication of powers and dual legislation often dealing with the same subjects which, in our opinion, has promoted the disagreements over respective responsibilities and in many cases prevented us from dealing effectively with fundamental issues. Also, the latest public consultations on the federal government's Green Plan revealed that, generally speaking, citizens don't really know who to appeal to, or who is responsible for what, when they have a problem; they don't know how to solve it effectively.

Since there is a need for better management that is as close to the people as possible, we think that having only one level of government would be a good way of improving intervention effectiveness. However, since certain issues don't only depend on us, we want to place this position in a context that's a bit more international. Our consumerism in the West has become a habit... we represent such a small proportion of the world's population but we use something like 40% to 50% of its resources. These wasteful habits, this consumerism, can

only change if "the polluter pays" principle is enforced strictly. This can have an impact on the price of products and alter the habits of individual consumers, but it is often difficult to enforce where large companies are concerned, so what we need is controls, within a context of international competition, vis-à-vis these multinationals and governments, whether they be of a supranational or an international nature.

We therefore think, like the World Commission on Environment and Development, that these international controls have to be strongly reinforced – which is the rationale behind our giving our brief the title "Sovereignty Association with the Planet", and not only with Canada eventually – for such problems as the greenhouse effect, protection of the ozone layer, and transportation and elimination of hazardous waste.

Mr. Simard (Christian): O.K. We've expressed certain reservations concerning the effectiveness or efficiency of environmental management within the current Canadian constitutional framework. In fact, the constant duplication of interventions... In this connection, to give you an example, at the end of our brief you'll find a list of the 15 main environmental statutes, 8 of which are Québec statutes and 7 of which are federal, I believe; there's a lot of duplication.

So, we feel that this duplication is dangerously ineffective when we consider the extent of the problems involved and the need to act very quickly. For more coherence, there's certainly nothing wrong in theory with government-controlled interventions coming under the chief responsibility of the federal government, but this would be ignoring Québec's cultural identity.

Analysis of certain characteristics of Québec society leads us to believe that a sovereign Québec would be capable of proposing innovative solutions with a view to protecting the environment. Let me mention a few possibilities. Universities and research and educational institutions in Québec, because of their special position at the meeting point between North American and European cultures, contribute in an original way to looking for solutions to environmental problems. The financing of Québec's political parties by its people favours greater independence on the part of political institutions vis-à-vis major producers. This characteristic of our society is almost unique. Our protection of agricultural land, although it's applied unevenly, is unique in North America, and enables protection and sustainable use of resources. Certain Québec institutions, such as the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, more often referred to as the BAPE, are innovative in the field of environmental assessment and public examination of

environmental impact. The Québec government tax on gasoline, while it may be unpopular, acts as a deterrent and is a more effective way to fight automobile pollution.

Another thing that's very important, especially when we consider current events, is that Québec has an anti-military tradition that goes back a long way and leaves room for hope that the resources usually devoted to arms production might be devoted instead to fighting the deterioration of the environment and poverty. According to the World Commission on Environment and Development, and I'm quoting here: "One of the most serious dangers facing the environment is indisputably the risk of a nuclear war or of a military war on a smaller scale that uses arms designed for massive destruction." (translation). We therefore think that it's important that all sharing in military expenses and responsibilities be excluded from any form of sovereignty-association that might develop from the work of this Commission.

(9:00 p.m.)

For these reasons, and needless to say for many other less concrete ones, such as Quebecers' attachment to their cultural and natural heritage, the UQCN feels that if Québec had a greater degree of sovereignty and was in charge of its policies, it could play a positive role, and a key role, in protecting the environment, not only in Québec but on the international scene.

If we are to do this, however, the principle of sustainable development must be enshrined in a future Québec constitution. There's no guarantee, in effect, that a sovereign Québec which pursues the kind of development we've seen for the past 30 years would represent a significant improvement where our immediate environment and that of the planet is concerned.

Why shouldn't our society resolutely change its ways, adopt an ecological philosophy and act as a model for Western societies? The small country of Sweden has set an example for Western countries for a long time now. We must write our commitment to the principle of sustainable development into a future constitution. In its report, the World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as seeing that we meet our present needs without compromising our capacity to meet those of future generations.

For development to be sustainable, the nature of growth must change so that it is less subject to matter and energy and more sensitive towards environmental impact. The operating principles of sustainable development given in our brief are well worth looking at because this concept is often taken to mean all sorts of different things. In more concrete terms, we say, among other things: that sustainable development necessarily entails limiting the

extent of production; that technological advances must not be used merely to increase total production, but especially to increase production efficiency; that renewable resources must be exploited on a truly renewable basis; and, fourth, that non-renewable resources must only be exploited to the extent and at a price that make it possible for them to be replaced by renewable resources.

This is the kind of thing that should be included in a blueprint for society or written into a constitution to make it clear just how important an asset the environment is in the eyes of Quebecers.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Now, Mr. Robert Benoit will be the first to take the floor.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Gosselin and Mr. Simard, thank you for coming here tonight. It's very fortunate that you've come to meet us, as people who are concerned about the environment, and to remind us of our responsibilities as citizens of the world. And, of course, you're also reminding us that we should leave a legacy for our children; and the cleaner it is, the better off everyone will be. But we'd better start thinking about it right away.

I have two short questions in connection with your brief. My first question is this. While you want a transfer of all powers dealing with the environment to Québec, you say on page 7 that it's not easy to make a company pay for its pollution if its competitors are exempt from paying. Let's take an example where the competitor is in another province or another State. In the United States, this could get pretty complicated. The problem you're telling us about would be all that much more evident if Québec had regulations, and Ontario and New Brunswick both had their own environmental regulations too. Wouldn't this work against what you're proposing, a transfer of all these powers to Québec?

Mr. Gosselin: It's because we don't calculate what we call profits in the same way. Already, in Canada, there's a lot of policy coordination between Québec and Ontario with regard to industrial regulations and environmental regulations in general. What we're saying really is that cooperation at the international level has to be strengthened radically. And sometimes a country has to take the initiative and lead the way. We've seen this kind of thing happen in the past. Right now, countries like Holland are impressive innovators in terms of initiatives. Sweden is another good example.

In the United States, we see this happening at the State level, in California, for instance, and, somewhat closer to home, the State of Vermont. So, what we're saying is that there's a

need to step up coordination that's already there anyway, and that, what is more, Québec has certain advantages in terms of its society, such as the financing of political parties by the people and certain traditions, that would enable it, in some instances, to take the initiative and act as a model. Basically, this is what we were getting at.

Mr. Simard: Because that's where the competition is; there's more competition at the international level than there is between provinces with similar regulations. So, if Québec were a sovereign actor on the international stage, it could participate in the negotiation of international treaties. It would also, like all nations, have to agree to the sharing of powers with major international institutions. But the competition... Let me give you an example. The general manager or president of the Alcan aluminium company said: "If they complain too much, we'll just move to Venezuela." (translation). In fact, what's really at issue is the transportation of toxic substances over borders into the Third World, the possibility, for example, of going to Mexico to produce certain things if environmental standards are less strict there and, for businesses, of being equal to the situation in advanced Western societies and totally inconsistent and irresponsible in other societies.

Mr. Benoit: Fine. Now for my second and last question. You talk about a charter of the environment in your brief. Several people have talked to us about this on different occasions in the past two months. Many young people's groups have come here to talk about it. You don't refer to a charter specifically, but I think that this is more or less what you have in mind. One. What would prevent us from having a charter right now? We adopted a Charter of the French Language, for example, and we still belong to the Canadian federation. What would prevent us, in the present federal system, from adopting a charter of the environment in Québec? And, two, could you elaborate on what this charter would say? Do any other countries have them? And I'd even go so far as to ask you if you could file a sample charter of the environment with the Commission so that we could take a look at it at some point.

Mr. Gosselin: First of all, we looked into the advantages of having a charter. When we considered what various Québec and Canadian charters had been through in the past few years, though, the charter option seemed a little bit less appealing to us I think. We wouldn't want judges to be empowered to implement the charter instead of officials elected by the people, which is what's happening now with Québec and Canadian charters. What we're saying instead is

that, as a symbol of the change in direction in Québec society, certain key orientations that we consider extremely important could be included in the preamble of a constitution. In other words, these orientations would be actualized by laws passed by the National Assembly of Québec rather than via a charter. This is what we're suggesting, basically. Regarding examples of charters around the world, there are bound to be some that...

Mr. Simard: The Brundtland Commission report devotes an entire chapter to suggested charters.

Mr. Gosselin: Yes, and there are also the 28 member countries of the World Health Organization in the European zone which, at their second to last meeting eight or ten months ago or so, adopted a common environmental and health charter in terms of ministers of the environment and health. We can send you a copy of this charter which obviously doesn't bind the member countries in the same way as an insertion in the preamble of the constitution would, but which is a very interesting approach all the same. It's a declaration of principle.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Gosselin and Mr. Simard.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): It's now Mrs. Harel's turn.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, we're to understand that, on behalf of the Union québécoise pour la conservation de la nature, you endorse sovereignty. You said so in a general assembly debate, as you say in your brief, which followed a survey, and your brief gives us a bit of information about this survey. It says that 90% of the 21 organizations that responded considered the present sharing of powers with respect to environmental matters either not very efficient or totally inefficient; 66% felt that Québec should be chiefly responsible for environmental matters, while 24% were in favour of transferring some powers from the federal government to Québec. And you tell us that in answer to the question "Do you believe that an independent and sovereign Québec would be desirable if we are to become an ecologically-oriented society based on the principles of sustainable development?" (translation) 89% of your respondents said either that it would be very desirable or desirable, and 9% disagreed. So, we're to understand that you prepared your brief armed with the results of this survey.

Mr. Simard: Actually, there were a priori involved, discussions with the representatives of our members, and we wanted to verify this with our members, which we in fact did in two ways:

with the survey and during a lunch-hour debate at the time of our annual general assembly, and also by conducting a survey of our organizations and individual members. Both surveys yielded surprisingly similar results. So, given the information obtained from these three verification measures, we all seemed to have fairly similar views on the situation at that time. But, generally speaking, our environmental position basically covers three levels of intervention. At the individual level, there's the choice that consumers have to make in order to safeguard the environment, and there's the fact that their choice must be encouraged by the national government, a sovereign Québec possibly, by its applying some kind of tax to products that are harmful to the environment, by incentives, and by city and regional planning that is geared towards the environment. Finally, there are an international pollution problem and international issues, such as the greenhouse effect, which must be considered at the international level and acted on in collaboration with other institutions. This being so, Québec, like all other nations, will have to do its part and demonstrate its selflessness by entrusting those international organizations that can fight these problems with the powers it has itself.

Mrs. Harel: You really say a lot of very intelligent things in your brief. I learned a lot from reading it, especially with regard to the concept you develop of a form of sovereignty-association with the planet... which you've just emphasized in fact by talking about the need to entrust supranational organizations with the responsibility for control, because of the greenhouse effect particularly and, in effect, because of the globalization of environmental issues. We have to think not only in terms of globalization of the economy but, obviously, also in terms of globalization of ecology first. So, you've been very articulate in this regard.

Up to now, you know, initially the talk during these Commission hearings was about which powers Québec wanted. Later on, we determined that there were powers that we had, dealing with housing and cultural affairs, for example, but that had been virtually diverted away from us because of federal spending powers. You tell us that no one thought to provide for the environment, not even the Fathers of Confederation, so these powers were never attributed. It's not a shared jurisdiction or an exclusive jurisdiction, but rather an area where both governments keep bumping into each other trying to do the same things. You tell us that sometimes this is a question of one-upmanship or winning a political edge. In concrete terms, you say that of the 15 main environmental statutes, 8 were adopted by the Canadian government and 7 by the National Assembly. You demonstrate that in certain

sectors everyone makes legislation, and that in other sectors no one makes legislation. So, we're talking about significant encroachment here. I'd like you to tell me what consequences you think that this might have on environmental matters. You might take the Great Whale project as an example.

Mr. Simard: Yes. In fact, we talk about this example in our brief. It's true that it's essential that we grasp the consequences. Often, too many laws, too many regulations in the same area of activity, frequently even as far as judges are concerned, there's not all that much environmental jurisprudence... so we can understand how an individual who has acted to the detriment of the environment could almost be accused of legislative or regulatory aggressiveness. When this happens, magistrates are inclined to be tolerant, because of the grey area, the areas of encroachment that are so great that there's more debate over whose jurisdiction is involved, over how to explain the regulation, than there is over the fundamental issue, i.e. protection of the environment.

We see this in many cases dealing with the protection of the basins of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River; we see it in connection with the Great Whale project, where federal involvement, on the face of it, appears to favour protection of the environment but, in the end, is perhaps a greater source of confusion which might almost justify a bid for power that goes against the interests of the environment because then there'd be two ways of assessing the situation. There are too many assessments. Really, there aren't any assessments that are cool-headed, impartial and understood perfectly by the population. Instead, we have all sorts of assessments based on all sorts of different motivations. And, in the final analysis, a misdirected form of nationalism would come out against the federal government and be against any assessment of a project that would have an enormous impact on the environment. In this connection, I was very impressed by the comments of one of the members of this Commission, Mr. Lucien Bouchard, to the effect that if the federal government intervened, it might be because the present government had managed the Great Whale problem poorly, but that basically this wasn't the point, that it was because Québec per se or a sovereign Québec wouldn't do a good job of it, but that the point was to leave the door open. I found these remarks honest, coming as they do from a devoted nationalist.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): So, thank you, Mr. Simard and Mr. Gosselin, for reminding us of the importance of the environment and of nature conservation. Thank you for contributing in this way to the work of this Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 9:15 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 9:17 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will now hear the Association québécoise des professeurs et professeurs de français. Mr. Michel Thérien is their spokesperson. Could you please introduce the people with you, Mr. Thérien?

**Association québécoise des professeurs
et professeurs de français**

Mr. Thérien (Michel): Vice-president, Huguette Lachapelle, chairman of the language policy committee, Claudette Chalifour, who is also the AQPF representative in the Mouvement Québec français, André Sauvageau, Association treasurer, and Louis-Marie Ouellette, committees director.

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

Mr. Thérien: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank the Commission for giving the French teachers this opportunity to be heard by the Commission on the Constitutional and Political Future of Québec, whose meetings and recommendations might greatly influence the history of our people. As we write in our short brief, one of the AQPF's objectives is a pedagogical, social and political commitment to defend and promote the French language in Québec and to promote Québec culture and ties between French-speaking communities. We are primarily concerned with the connection between language policy and our constitutional future.

Bill 101, which inspired pride and enthusiasm among teachers, was quickly attacked from all sides by the federal courts. Moreover, a rival law, Bill C-72, includes two contradictory powers and shows that Québec does not possess the powers allowing it to accord and to draft a distinct society policy in linguistic matters. But language is also tied to other aspects of society. If Québec really controlled its immigration it could determine the number of immigrants it wants to receive and coordinate its immigration to its vocational and manpower policies. Also, it could more readily implement French in the work place, even in firms employing 50 persons or

less. With regards to cultural and communications policies, Québec should work towards developing a Québec identity, at the heart of which is found its official language.

Finally, Québec has an international role to play, particularly in the Francophone context. Our firms need new markets. Our universities need scientific exchanges and our international aid organizations need the government's support. Only a true policy which ensures Québec's distinct character will allow it to play this role internationally. In other words, language is at the heart of our identity and our future as a society.

Also, we recommend full powers as concerns language policy, immigration, vocational training, manpower policy, communications policy, industrial policy and international relations. These six recommendations received unanimous approval in a vote held during the general assembly and a seventh recommendation, endorsing full political sovereignty was also unanimously supported in a November 2nd vote. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): We will begin the question period with Mrs. Christiane Pelchat.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to welcome the Association des professeurs de français. Because you begin your brief by stressing the importance of language for a people's survival, I'd like to... You forgot or didn't want to pronounce yourselves in favour of any political status as such. At least, I didn't see it. I'd like to hear your opinion on the political status you'd like to see in Québec to protect our language.

Mr. Thérien: As I told you, these recommendations had not yet been voted upon when we wrote this brief. And, at the general assembly on November 2, 1990, in Sherbrooke, the AQPF voted unanimously for political sovereignty, that is, for a self-governed, independent State.

Mrs. Pelchat: Do you think it advisable that sovereignty be accompanied by some form of association with the rest of Canada?

Mr. Thérien: We'd have to wait and see. What's important is first to ensure full sovereignty first and then choose our associates. I would say that as concerns language policy, one or more associations would, to a certain degree, be secondary.

Mrs. Pelchat: In a potentially sovereign Québec... This morning we heard Mr. Laforest say that if we existed in a sovereign Québec, he would be willing to grant minorities such as the

Anglophone minority the right to post signs in their language, particularly, in Montréal. My colleague, Jacques Brassard, confirmed as well that he would agree to giving Anglophones the right to display signs in English in Montréal, and in the other regions of Québec. Would the Association des professeurs endorse this...

Mr. Thérien: You know that the Association, the AQPF, has always been associated - it is also a founding member of the Mouvement Québec français - and that we vigorously defended French-language signs. You'll recall the formulation coined by Michel Tremblay to parody Bill 178, saying that Québec was two-faced. The AQPF is for one face, that is unilingual French signs.

Mrs. Pelchat: With respect to...

Mr. Thérien: Because the signs make the window, and that is of the utmost importance, especially in Montréal.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Let's go to Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you. Well, I already have one answer because I was going to mention, as a member of the Mouvement Québec français, that it had come to speak in favour of a sovereign Québec. You mention that your general assembly unanimously voted for it. Your members also endorsed the orientation chosen by the Mouvement Québec français, of which you are members...

Mr. Thérien: In a way, we are signatories to this manifesto. When Mr. Bouthillier came here to present it - Mrs. Chalifour represented the AQPF - he knew and he was able to confirm to you that all the participating members of the Mouvement Québec français had voted for sovereignty.

Mr. Brassard: I would like to make one comment, in passing, to my colleague from Vachon. Yes, hypothetically, in a sovereign Québec, we could perhaps examine or consider concessions on sign laws but on the condition that a preponderance of French always be clearly recognized and affirmed.

Having said that, I don't know, I think Father Untel, in the early 1960s, said that teaching French in Québec was almost missionary's work. Since then we've had Bill 101, but you quite rightly point out that Bill 101 was severely attacked, especially by the courts, and that many of its sections were either repealed or invalidated. You also mention the existence of Bill C-72, a federal law whose vision is rather

incompatible with that of Bill 101. Based thereon, the steps backward or, in any event, the stagnation that we've seen in terms of language in the workplace, I think things have regressed somewhat. In any case we haven't seen any progress at that level in a long time. Taking all this into consideration, has the work of a French teacher in our schools become, once again, missionaries' work?

Mr. Thérien: Let's say that it's a wonderful mission, but I'd say that French teachers, like society as a whole, or at least many members of society, are convinced that school is not the only agent of francisation and that if it remains the preferred tool for francisation and educating today's youth and the people, the whole we'll call the legislative environment and linguistic environment is also extremely important. In our brief, we talk a bit about Bill C-72. In his book, Michel Plourde says that to understand how Bills C-72 and 101 are conflictual, we should try to imagine the Commissioner of Official Languages and the president of the Office de la Langue Française, both knocking on a firm's door and struggling to reach their respective goals first, that is, to render the business either bilingual or French. Small firms not targeted by the law represent another environment whose climate is not favourable to francisation. Clearly, such conditions do not facilitate teaching French in school and in that respect, the French teacher's job becomes more complex, somewhat of a "mission" as you so aptly put it.

Mr. Brassard: Would you go so far as to say that school undoubtedly remains an element of francisation but that elsewhere in the community, French is losing its footing and doing so seriously enough that if the State does not take great measures to remedy the situation, in areas other than in the school system or in schools, then within a certain time, we may no longer be capable of remedying it? Some even fear that we are undergoing a relatively long term process of "Louisianization" and that the process is already irreversible. Do you share that opinion?
(9:30 p.m.)

Mr. Thérien: One thing is certain, we must be vigilant in this area and one of the most striking examples is that of schools with a high percentage of students whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. It is incredible to think that in some schools as much as 85% of the students mother tongue is a language other than French. It is difficult to ask a school to francize these youths when 85% of them don't speak French as a first language. Why is it that the common language is not French? French is not the common language because there is another common language, I don't think I have to name. Why is it that their common language

is English? In large part, it is because the language they will speak in the small businesses that will employ them will be either their mother tongue or English. The message, let's call it the school's message, is not at all the same as the real life message, where to earn a living it is sometimes easier to speak English. How often do we read in the newspaper job offers that a good command of the French language is an important criterion for a job? Take a look on the weekend just for curiosity's sake. The opposite is actually true: A good command and knowledge of both official languages are sought.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Is that everything, Mr. Brassard? We'll move on then to Mr. Libman.

Mr. Libman: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Let me point out that today, January 17, is a historic day. Today, the Parti Québécois announced that in a sovereign Québec, it would recognize the right to post multilingual signs. Mr. Jacques Brassard said it. Therefore, I would like to announce my intention to support his motion if he proposes it for adoption at his party's annual conference in mid-March.

Mr. Brassard: Does that mean that the Equality Party will become a sovereignist party?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

A voice: No.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Might I add: Will Mr Libman move into your riding and vote for you?

A voice: No problem.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): In the meantime, you may ask your question.

Mr. Libman: That's a commitment, right?

A voice: It's a two way deal.

Mr. Libman: OK. Second, my first question, you say that your group voted unanimously for sovereignty. Out of curiosity, how many members attended this general assembly?

Mr. Thérien: There must have been at least 10% of the members.

Mr. Libman: And you have how many members?

Mr. Thérien: 1500.

Mr. Libman: 1500? So approximately 150 people unanimously. OK.

My second question is on the question of integration and adaptation of persons whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. You discuss this in your brief. How do you see the integration of these people? Is it simply a question of their learning French, of their constant use of French? What does successful integration of the various cultural communities into Québec society mean to you?

Mr. Thérien: Well, I would say it's quite simple. It means a good command of the common language in order to participate in the development of Québec society. If those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English are isolated in their community ghetto, they will not participate in Québec's development or in building Québec. There is a tendency to create ghettos and it isn't certain that... Well, I don't want to speak for the cultural communities, that's their responsibility. But it's not clear that it's to their advantage to stay in their ghetto. A good command of the common language to fully participate in Québec's development, especially at the cultural level, is to us a minimum requirement sine qua non for the integration of these communities. And the common language is stipulated in the law, right? The common language is French.

Mr. Libman: OK. So there's no question of assimilation. Rather, it is a question of a good command of the common language and, as you say, an opening up to the traditions, to the character of Québec society. I presume that is your answer?

Mr. Thérien: Well, I would say participation in Québec's future and collective blueprint. To become a citizen who participates fully in society and doesn't just stay in his ghetto.

Mr. Libman: OK. Second, you make a rather strong statement. You say that the federal government, through the courts, progressively reduced an important part of Bill 101's prerogative. You must certainly realize that the Québec courts also overturned, challenged, certain sections and it was appeals to these Québec court decisions that eventually saw these cases end up in Supreme Court.

Mr. Thérien: Yes. Whether it was by appeal or not, that fact remains.

Mr. Libman: So you do recognize that fact. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): A quick comment by Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like a clarification on something in the

last paragraph of your brief, just before your recommendations. You say: Our firms need new outlets. Your brief is focused almost exclusively, actually, it is focused exclusively on language. You say: Our firms need new markets. You say: Only a vigorous policy which ensures Québec's distinct character will allow it to play this role on the world scene.

We all know that the language of business is English. You advocate the French language and disagree with Bill C-72 which advocates bilingualism. Therefore, what is your reasoning when you say that we need new markets and that a vigorous policy will help us on the international market if we eliminate the English language. I would like you to explain that to me.

Mr. Thérien: We were thinking more in terms of language industries and what I might call teaching businesses. The role of the president of an association such as ours is to travel around the world and to introduce various people to Québec culture. Might I add that Québec has quite some expertise in the field of language teaching, if you don't mind my saying, in the field of teaching the French language and in Africa, in South America, you know, there are many universities in South America...

Mr. Beaudry: I'm not talking to you about universities. I'm talking about firms. Perhaps I...

Mr. Thérien: It's a market of textbooks, teaching aids...

Mr. Beaudry: Oh! You're not talking about commercial firms.

Mr. Thérien: You should see companies like Hatier, Hachette, and so on sell themselves at international conferences.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, but that's still a small share of the pie. Those who do business with the United States, as you know, those who do business with the rest of Canada, those provinces that we consistently describe as Anglophone. Most of Québec's market is found in the rest of Canada and the United States where you'll find the English language. I understand that Hachette, in France, speaks French. But the lion's share of Québec's market is in the English provinces or the United States. Therefore, how is your policy going to facilitate new outlets in new markets if you eliminate that language.

Mr. Thérien: No, I wouldn't eliminate it. At any rate, as an aside, countries such as Japan, have invested all over the world with their products and yet they have not demanded that the world speak Japanese.

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, I'm not saying that.

Mr. Thérien: We can expand our...

Mr. Beaudry: I'm not saying that, however, they do have to deal in the English language when they go to the United States.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Fine. Do you have a comment Mrs. Pagé?

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

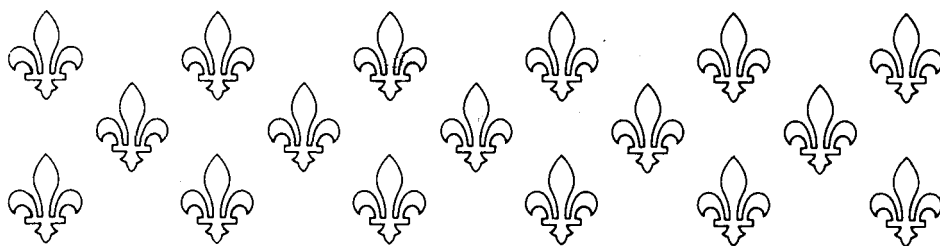
Mrs. Pagé: I would like to point out to Mr. Beaudry that it is possible to do a good deal of business in French and that selling textbooks creates commercial firms. And it is true that we conduct business with the rest of English Canada and that the United States is one of our markets but Franco-Americans have told us that we could conduct business in French with them and Francophones outside Québec would be delighted to have Québec expertise to count on in terms of school texts, practical teaching guides, much like the French-speaking African countries would.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Thérien, do you have anything to add? Fine. Thank you Mrs. Lachapelle, Mr. Thérien, Mrs. Chalfour, Mr. Sauvageau and Mr. Ouellette. Thank you for your brief, thank you for having come tonight and for speaking with us with such conviction, and thank you for your report to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

A voice: Tomorrow morning, 9:30 a.m.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Tomorrow morning, we'll begin again at 9:30 a.m.

(End of sitting, 9:40 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, Friday, January 18, 1991

No 28

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Mrs. Christiane Pelchat

Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant

Mr. Serge Turgeon

Mr. André Ouellet

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Québec City, Friday, January 18, 1991

Hearing of Organizations

(9:35 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We are about to begin. I declare this sitting of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec open. I remind you that the Commission's mandate is to study and analyze the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make the appropriate recommendations.

Today we will hear the following organizations and individuals: the Fédération des étudiants et étudiantes du Québec, the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, the Apparel Manufacturers Institute of Québec, the Chambre des notaires du Québec, the Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec, and the Union des écrivains et écrivains québécois. Each of these organizations submitted a brief within the time limits prescribed by the Commission.

I remind you that this morning's presentations will last for a maximum of a half an hour, which includes five minutes for the group's presentation, followed by a maximum of 10 minutes for questions from the Government party, 10 minutes for the Official Opposition party...

No, I'm reading the wrong rules. I'm skipping a paragraph and I'll start over; please excuse me. Five minutes to present the brief, five minutes for the Government party, five minutes for the Official Opposition party, 10 minutes for the members registered with the Chair, each member having five minutes. I believe Mr. Plourde will be the spokesperson for the group. If you would please introduce your colleagues to us now and then make your five-minute presentation. The floor is yours.

**Fédération des étudiants
et étudiantes du Québec**

Mr. Plourde (Nicolas): Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we thank you for agreeing to hear us today. First of all, allow me to introduce the people with me. On my left, Robert Fabes and Martin Beaulieu, on my right, Mrs. Hélène Gagnon, vice-president of FEUQ, and Stéphane Côté, president of FEUQ, the Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec.

The Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, formerly known as the Fédération des étudiants et étudiantes du Québec, was founded on February 11, 1989. Today, FEUQ includes about ten student associations from almost as many universities, giving it a membership of nearly 100 000, which makes it the largest student association ever in Québec. The brief you hold was adopted at the 18th regular meeting of

FEUQ's board of directors on December 1, 1990. I will present the first chapter of the brief, and my colleague will deal with chapters two and three.

FEUQ decided as an organization not to take a position on the political and constitutional status it would have preferred for Québec. Instead, FEUQ decided to let the students that it represents have their say, and only record their opinions. For this purpose, FEUQ asked its member student associations to hold consultations on a number of questions.

Generally, we can say that the majority of the students consulted, as well as most of the student associations that took a stand, are unequivocally in favour of sovereignty. Similarly, most appeared to recognize that it is important for Québec, regardless of its political constitutional status, to provide itself with a constitution as quickly as possible.

In addition, FEUQ members were unanimous about the need to hold a referendum as soon as possible. We feel that the national question has too long been monopolized by politicians. The time has come for the people to settle the matter and to do so before the next general election, to avoid turning it into a referendum.

We believe it is vital that the Commission adopt this recommendation as one of its own. If it does not, we will be perplexed about everything the Commission was set up to do. FEUQ therefore urges you, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, to request in your final report that the Québec government call an early referendum.

Mrs. Gagnon (Hélène): In chapter two of our brief, FEUQ talks about education. Not only because that's FEUQ's first vocation, but because it believes that a changing Québec must place more and more importance on higher education and on the education of its people, since education is the driving force of society.

FEUQ is therefore making three recommendations. First, in the very short term, that the federal government's spending power in the area of higher education be abolished. Québec has exclusive jurisdiction in education and it is time that it fully exercised it. Abolition of federal spending power would be something for the really short term. Québec could subsequently take the road to sovereignty. As its second recommendation, FEUQ wants to ensure more schooling for Quebecers through an amendment to the Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms which would explicitly recognize the right to free elementary, high school and Cegep public education as well as access to university education. As regards the issue of access to higher education, for over a year FEUQ has been

advocating what we now call the new partnership between government, universities, business and students, where the contribution of each partner is conditional on the other's. FEUQ is of the opinion that this is the only real solution to the problem of university financing. As a corollary to this second proposal, we believe that the public character of our universities must be preserved so as to guarantee access to higher education.

Briefly, in our third chapter, FEUQ deals with the place of young people and students within Québec society. As you have noted, here we deplore the absence of a young person or a student on this Commission. But we have to admit that we're very happy to know that the Commission has agreed to hold a youth forum next week right here in the Red Room of the National Assembly.

Even so, we are retaining our eighth recommendation. We hope that the participation of young people in the building of society will now be automatically assured in any future decision-making process. So we hope that young people will be able to participate fully in all that follows from the Commission's report. We don't have to remind you that students, young people, our generation will have to deal with, to live with the conclusions of this report.

In closing, I will refer you to the title of our brief and tell you that we feel it is essential that, speaking as the young generation, we can take our place in the debate on the political and constitutional future of our province. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. I don't know whether this is a compliment for students, but I have to say that you have shown an absolutely remarkable discipline in respecting the time limit compared with most of those who've preceded you on other days.

The question period begins with Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You decided to use a highly consultative procedure and yet I understand that you let a board of directors decide on the referendum issue. Why didn't you submit it to the students?

Mr. Plourde: The decision was made by the board of directors, but that was obviously preceded by intense consultation among our various member student associations. So most of the student associations represented on our board of directors clearly had a mandate to support the holding of an early referendum on the political and constitutional question.

Mrs. Harel: Fine. Well then, what we are to understand from your brief is that you are taking a position in favour of sovereignty. You hope to see educational rights entrenched in a

Québec constitution. You also talk about a new electoral system. You touched upon this question briefly. This is the question that my father, who is 72 and a reasonable man, asked me during the Christmas holidays. He said to me: "What do you think sovereignty may develop in the way of creative energy in the new generation? Is it going to change things?" What do you think is a possible answer to such a question?

Mr. Plourde: I didn't quite understand your question. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Harel: Does sovereignty allow for something other than changes of jurisdiction, other than the redistribution of power that it will make possible in society? Do you hope for something else?

Mr. Plourde: A great majority of the students we consulted were in favour of sovereignty for one very simple reason. On the one hand because we feel it is time to settle a problem that has been dragging on for several years, with much beating around the bush. We believe the question must be settled quickly. Our federation and the students see sovereignty as a means for Québec to acquire, if you will, its full powers, and with its full powers to be able to develop fully by controlling all the tools available to it, which is obviously not the case today. So for most of the students, sovereignty doesn't frighten us. We're ready to take the risk; we're ready to go forward. Obviously, there are uncertainties; that has been emphasized by all the participants you've heard from. But uncertainty is normal for us, we're used to it. But it's clear that for the students we consulted, sovereignty is the path for Québec to take if it really wants to be able to develop fully.

Mrs. Harel: On page 22 of your brief you quote Thomas Mann: "Dare that which others lacked the courage to undertake." With that you've just answered my question; but that's the answer I would expect from older people. You present it as a solution to something that has not yet been settled, a little as if it were a question from the past that had to be settled today. But what kind of a future does it open up for you?

Mr. Plourde: As I said, becoming independent means we have a nation, we have a country to build. So it's a very big challenge for us, the younger generation. In the sense that sovereignty is something exciting for us, it's something, yes, new in a way, but it's also a problem which must be solved and which we've been arguing about for a long time. That's the only reason I'm making a link between a long-standing problem, or an issue that has been dormant for a long time and the new challenge

which we want to take up.
(9:45 a.m.)

Mrs. Harel: But does this make you want to achieve excellence? I was looking at the absolutely shameful figures on Québec's Francophone university enrolment. According to the most recent data - I don't know if you have other figures, mine are taken from the 1981 census - the general rate of university enrolment is on average about 13.5%, only 11.5% among Francophones, 24.5% among Anglophones and 19% among the other cultural community language groups. We're unbelievably far behind. Do you think we've got some objectives to set for ourselves once we're sovereign?

Mrs. Gagnon: Well, I think that, as we explain in chapter two of our brief, students see sovereignty, and in fact the entire debate under way now, as an opportunity finally to settle the financing problems of the universities. That's clear to us. And this problem must be solved whether Québec finally takes the road to sovereignty or not. But we see an opportunity in all this turmoil to solve the problem, and we feel that if we become - or even if we don't, but still manage to solve the problem - we could raise the education level of our people and make university education more accessible. We think that this is a real priority. And if I may go back to the question you put to my colleague, namely, what does sovereignty mean to the generation of young people? I think that when you read our third chapter, you'll realize just how much we want to become involved, committed and consulted. We want to participate in this process, we want... As a generation... It's often said that our generation is somewhat apolitical. We don't believe this is true, or at least it should no longer be true, and if mechanisms were put in place to enable our generation to truly actively participate, I think we would take part and we would be eager to do so.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We turn now to Mr. Larose who will be followed by Mr. Allard.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your first recommendation is that a referendum be held as soon as possible. A referendum on sovereignty, and that in preparing for this referendum, all the people be involved, and therefore, that it not be the product of the party in power only. It appears there are some people who have doubts about the willingness of the ruling party to call such a referendum. This morning, the newspapers tell us that there are probably people getting together to form a huge coalition outside the political parties, to bring

the political will into line with the popular will and bring about a referendum. Does the Fédération des étudiants think that this is the case? That is, will we have to fight to have a referendum even before we can begin to define its content? If such a coalition is set up, is the Fédération going to be part of it?

Mr. Plourde: First of all, if Quebecers really want a referendum, if we want to put enough pressure on the Québec government in order to get one, I think that it's mainly up to you, as members of this Commission, to take on the job. If this Commission could, in concert with the unanimous voice of the people, or at least, with a great majority, recommend to the Québec government that a referendum on sovereignty be held as soon as possible, I don't see how a responsible government could say no to such a recommendation. So the ball is in your court and, in this sense, as I said in our brief, we implore you to make this recommendation to the Québec government.

Obviously, if there has to be a coalition which transcends political party lines to demand a referendum, FEEQ would consider participating in it. We already have Forum Québec - you know something about it, I believe - which is in the process of getting itself established. We're thinking of perhaps joining with them. In fact, this item is on the agenda of our meeting on the weekend. So, obviously, FEEQ will follow the matter very closely and will try, with the coalitions which will form or even with other student associations in Québec, to urge the Québec government to hold an early referendum.

Mr. Larose: When you say that the phrasing of the question or the objective of the referendum should be left to the estates general or another type of body, are you talking specifically about the question itself or are you in the larger sense referring to the series of steps we must follow in order to finalize the question to be placed before the people of Québec?

Mr. Plourde: We're talking about the whole process. If we decide, for example, to hold a referendum and to propose a constitution in that referendum, that constitution could very well be drafted by the estates general or a constituent before it is submitted in a referendum. So that's the process we're proposing, whether it's for the referendum question or the drafting of a possible constitution which would undergo consultation, or even to just determine the process. All we're asking is that the people be involved, that young people be involved in the preparation of this possible referendum, in order to avoid having it monopolized or exclusively in the hands of the elected representatives.

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

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Plourde, I'd like to hear you talk some more about two points in your brief, both of which have long been of concern to students. The first is about university financing and accessibility to higher education.

To be more precise, as far as financing is concerned, I'd like to discuss your recommendation, which is not a new one, that business must contribute more to university financing. You're not unaware that business already contributes a great deal. First, businesses pay income taxes, pay taxes, etc. You're aware that businesses have contributed a great deal for a long time to university fund-raising campaigns and will continue to do so on a regular basis. Businesses contribute and participate financially, actively and, I think, very generously in university research, etc.

For my part, I think that business is already making quite a contribution. While it's true that business is going to benefit, and is benefiting from the fact that there is a well-trained work force in Québec, it's not true that business is the first to profit from university education. We can say that the whole of society benefits. So why single out businesses as a group from among the others in society? You objected strenuously to the fee increases, and I personally think that students are, in fact, the first to benefit now or later from the education they're receiving. I don't think there's a single university student who at registration time says to himself: "I'm here so I can help Québec businesses later on". That's not it. All those coming out of the universities aren't going to necessarily work in business. A large number are going to become professionals and work for themselves.

So I'd like to hear you talk a little more about the reasoning behind your request for more financial aid from business.

Secondly, and this is somewhat related to the first...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I think we'll have to leave time for an answer to the first question, otherwise they won't be able to answer either the first or the second one.

Mr. Allard: All right, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Gagnon: Well, if I may, I'll answer this question. In our brief, if you noticed, we didn't attempt to jump only on business, saying: "Business doesn't contribute enough to university financing. Therefore, business alone should offset our current problems".

What FEUQ is advocating is a truly new partnership and we think it's the only way to

solve the under-funding problem. Businesses are doing their share, students are doing their share, the universities are doing their share, the government. Yes, the students do their share within their limited means. We must realize that a student doesn't have the big resources of a business or a government.

But you will have noticed that FEEQ is not asking for free education. It's not that we're against it. It would be marvellous to have free university education, but considering not only the current economic crisis but the whole economic outlook, FEEQ doesn't think it's reasonable. We think that each must do his share, not just businesses, which, admittedly, already contribute to university financing, but they contribute less in Québec than they do in Ontario. So the contribution could be raised.

The students who've suffered a first increase in their fees are going to suffer a second one this fall and we have to say that we're very afraid that will have a terrible effect on access to higher education. We think a way will be found for everyone to increase his share, for the government to stop decreasing its involvement, and for the universities to become better managers. For business to do a little more. For students to do a little more too, but in ways that won't restrict access, through, for example a post-university income tax or deferred payments at the end of their studies. Moreover, the new partnership is something we'd like to discuss with those from the world of business who are sitting at this table, if we could ever get together. Because this is something that is very close to our hearts.

We want to solve this problem. We want to find a solution. We aren't asking for free education. We want the problem solved and we think that businesses, which have the means, should also contribute a little more just like the students and the government, and we want each partner's share to be conditional on the share of the others. This is how we see it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Allard, if the second question is on the short side and the answer can be too, go ahead.

Mr. Allard: Fine, let's proceed quickly. On the subject of access, I would like to say that, not long ago, I saw in the newspaper that of all the students who register for the first time in certain faculties at the Université de Montréal, up to 35% or 40% drop out in the first months of the university year. So when I think that with financing, I think: "Isn't there a good number of people enrolling in university who shouldn't be there and who are costing society a lot of money?" The fact that up to 40% of them drop out of certain faculties at the beginning of the year is probably an indication that they shouldn't be there. So there's something

cockeyed here.

Mr. Plourde: Well, I think your reasoning is faulty insofar as we believe that everyone who wants to should have the right to go to university. We believe this is essential and fundamental and it's for this very reason that we are demanding a fully effective article entrenched in the Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms in order to ensure that everyone, that every person has the right to a university education. To say that some people should not have access is unacceptable to us.

There are problems adjusting. Some of those who arrive at university cannot adjust after a month or two and must withdraw, but that's normal. It's the same everywhere. When someone starts a job, sometimes he or she quits a week or two later because of problems adjusting or because the job is not suitable. So this is a normal thing found in education and in business as well. We believe there is a place for everyone. And everyone should have the right and the chance to go to university.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You don't object to prerequisites such as having to be able to read and write before going to university. That kind of condition is OK.

Mr. Plourde: There are stages to go through first.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Of course. Mrs. Pelchat, go ahead.

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome the Fédération des étudiants. I remember, it wasn't that long ago for me, maybe a little less long ago than most of the members here, how much...

Voices: Oooh...!
(10:00 a.m.)

Mrs. Pelchat: Just a little joke this morning to wake you all up, and I think it's had its effect. Mr. Chevrete is wide awake. But I think it's important to emphasize that for students, their college student association, their university student representatives are really their leaders, and students truly depend on them both to participate in public debates and to take a stand in society. In this regard, to me, your demand about the place of student associations in our society is very justified. I would like to hear more about your idea, particularly about your recommendation on page 18, and I'm going to quote you when you say that the government grants Québec's student associations a status similar to that accorded to the trade unions so that they have to be consulted about decisions affecting students. What form could this proposal take?

Mr. Plourde: At the moment, unfortunately, all the decisions that concern us are made without consulting us, whether it's the increase in fees, loans and bursaries, curriculums or programs. The students are never consulted directly or in a serious way. The famous 130% increase in fees was announced without even warning us first and without consulting us, obviously. We feel this is unacceptable. They don't do that to the unions; they consult them, at the start anyway. Unfortunately, sometimes there are special laws; but at least they are obliged to consult the unions first. This is what we want too. We want them to be obliged to consult us first on issues that concern us.

Mrs. Pelchat: But what concrete form could this take?

Mr. Plourde: It could be done through a kind of labour code, or study code or whatever it would be called, by a bill of the National Assembly which would provide a procedure for consultation with Québec's provincial and local student associations on issues which affect us. I don't see why it wasn't possible to consult us before the fees were raised. Or when they play around with the loans and bursaries and lower the amounts, why weren't we consulted first? These are just normal things that would have to be done, especially if Québec becomes sovereign. With Bill 32 on the recognition and financing of student associations, Québec has shown itself as a forerunner in the field. If Québec becomes independent, I think it will have to make its student associations more independent and set up strict and serious-minded systems for consultation.

Mrs. Pelchat: I think it would be interesting perhaps, on Tuesday and Wednesday during the youth forum – the only forum, moreover, that the Bélanger-Campeau Commission will hold – to discuss this in more depth. As for the fees, I agree with you on the need for wider consultation with students... except there was a parliamentary commission... I think I even saw you at that parliamentary commission...

Mr. Plourde: ...fees, on the loans and bursaries.

Mrs. Pelchat: On the financing of universities, but just the same, I think that a large proportion of the universities' financing was the fees.

Mr. Plourde: Except that the Minister... us...

Mrs. Pelchat: I'd like you... If Mrs. Gagnon could answer about consultation, your recommendation on the referendum, unless I read it wrong, isn't about sovereignty as such but

rather about the political and constitutional status of Québec. You say that the Québec government should hold an early referendum to let the people take a stand on the political and constitutional future of Québec. If this recommendation is the result of your own consultation — I'm taking your recommendation as it stands — why as soon as possible? Because there were several people, some experts, who came here yesterday and said to us: "Please, if you hold a referendum in Québec, don't do again what you did in 1980, that is, don't risk losing the referendum, don't risk tearing Québec society apart". Let's show the rest of Canada and the rest of the world... Let's be strong, let's be united and at this time it would perhaps be better not to hold a referendum on June 24, 1991 as my colleague on the Commission, Mr. Larose was suggesting, or in May as some have proposed. Don't you think it would be in Québec's interest, independently of the political parties, to better prepare for it and therefore, to take a little more time to once again bring the people to make a decision in a referendum on the political and constitutional status of Québec?

Mrs. Gagnon: Regarding the referendum, the reason we're recommending that it be called as soon as possible is basically that our generation has had enough. We believe there are other problems to be solved once this has been decided. Let's make up our minds once and for all. The polls are showing a clear trend. We have to confirm this trend officially in a referendum. If it's no, it's no; we'll go on to other things. If it's yes, it's yes; we'll go on to other things. We want to solve the problem of university financing; we're worried about the environment, we want full employment. There are other challenges that inspire us. There are other challenges to be met and this unresolved question is taking all our energy. And we want it settled as soon as possible. But I personally wasn't there in the sixties and seventies and all that; I was there in the eighties, and young as I was, I carefully followed the discussions on the Meech Lake Accord for three years. And at the end of three years I'd had it. And it's like that for the rest of my generation. We have other things to solve and we want to solve them. That's why we would like the question to be asked quickly, and then we can go on to other things.

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

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This ends the presentation. I must thank your federation and remind all five of you of

something. If we go by what history has shown, in 15 or 20 years you will be seated somewhere at this table. So don't forget that in making demands, you are the ones who will have to deliver on them later on. Thank you for your presentation and your contribution to our work.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:05 a.m.)

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

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now have a presentation from the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta. Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet will introduce the group. Kindly start by introducing your colleagues, after which you'll have five minutes to present the highlights of your brief.

Welcome, Madam. You are one of the groups to have travelled the greatest distance to appear before this Commission. My colleagues may not know it, but my father died in Edmonton while he was publisher of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta newspaper, *La Survivance*. He was only with them for two months; he had tuberculosis and was convinced that the dry climate would make him better. This wasn't the case. So I lived two years in Edmonton and the first school I ever went to was Monseigneur-Grandin. I've never bawled like that since, but in any event, this has nothing to do with what we're going to hear this morning.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You now have the floor.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet (France): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I recall, you said I could introduce the members with me before my five minutes, and I'd like to thank you for being so kind. So, first, on my right is Georges Arès, outgoing president of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and currently executive director; beside him, Daniel Dallaire, outgoing president of the Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français d'origine franco-albertaine. He is a member of the Commission of the Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français, vision d'avenir. And on my left is Léo Piquette, vice-president of the Association and a former MLA, who was forbidden to speak French in the Legislative Assembly. I'm sure you remember the Piquette affair.

So I'd like to thank you for having invited us to appear before the Commission and I'm

trying to imagine, this morning, how you perceive us. Alberta is far away. We're often asked whether there are still people there who speak French. Well, yes, there are. We're a community of 65 000 Francophones. 65 000 is the population of the city of Hull, scattered throughout Alberta. And, yes, we have a very high rate of assimilation. We have no economic agencies or unions and not very many institutions. So are we still worth the trouble?

I'd like to tell you this morning how we feel and what we believe, although I find it difficult. To you our message may seem quite contradictory, like our situation, for that matter, because we're Francophones, without really being Francophone in the eyes of many of our Québec cousins, who don't even know we exist. We're Albertans without really being Albertans, because the Alberta government doesn't recognize us and sees we get as little as possible.

We're Canadians, but Canadians who speak French, living in the West, not the East. So what's our message? First, there's us. We've been in Alberta since the very beginning. French was the first European language spoken in Alberta, and we're still there, tired and sometimes worried, but faithful to our cause. We have a survival instinct that we've had since birth. We're stubborn. But even without the most basic tools, our community refuses to disappear. We make miracles out of nothing. So what could we do with the right tools?

We're in a recovery period for a number of reasons, the main one being that we've finally got our own schools after 100 years. And we're proud of these schools because we had to win them, something we wouldn't have been able to do without section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We're proud of what we are and what we have. And then there's you. So how do we see ourselves in terms of you? I want to tell you that the future of Québec is Québec's business. I feel I should tell you that. I feel I should also tell you we believe that Québec has special needs, that Québec is also threatened - and we're in a good position to understand it - but I can't forget our Franco-Albertan community. When I think of it, I realize I don't have the heart to tell you: Go ahead, don't worry about us; it'll be hard but we'll live with the consequences; we'll find a way.

I can't because we're members of the same family. And this sense of belonging, we've earned it; we deserve a place at the table every day. And then because experience leads us to believe that your presence in Canada has enabled us to obtain certain rights. For example, in 1988 the Alberta government, a signatory of the Meech Lake agreement - a great friend of Québec, it professed to be - passed Bill 60, which in one fell swoop abolished the historical rights of Franco-Albertans and made Alberta a unilingual English province. We're a distinct society, said

the then Attorney-General of Alberta.

Since 1982 we've had to win each of our six Franco-Albertan schools in the courts and in the offices of government and school authorities. Eleven months after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the Mahé case, we're still waiting for the province to decide on a task force to study school administration for Franco-Albertans. So I'm not counting on the generosity of the Alberta government. I'm not convinced that, without Québec, Canada would want to remain bilingual. I'm not convinced that if Québec left, it would be able to negotiate constitutional rights for us. Did France do it for you?

So we need to have you in Canada. On our own we don't have the political power to defend the rights we do have, to hold on to what we've got. But we'd also like to see more than that between us. In our brief we talk about a partnership, and this partnership in our opinion has to go beyond scholarships and exchange trips, boxes of books and the fees of guest speakers from Québec who are amazed that we're in Alberta. For us a partnership means this: for our part, we guarantee the presence of the French fact in the West, in Alberta; we uphold the values that are important to you; we act as an extension of you and as your outposts. We've been doing it for a long time and we'll keep on doing it. For your part, you accept us as members of the family, with a place in your media, your lives, your textbooks, your decisions and your future.

So, to conclude, as we see it, the Francophone presence in Canada doesn't stop at the Québec border. We're few in number, we're far away, but we're relevant. We're an important partner in the survival of the French language, the French culture and the French fact on this continent, and we deserve to be members of the family. Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet. I have nine members who've asked to take part in the discussion, but technically I have room for only two. So we'll try to include at least three or four and for the next 15 minutes I'll expose myself to the wrath of the ones who don't have a chance to speak. So the order will be as follows: first Mr. Poissant, followed by Mr. Turgeon, followed by Mr. Nicolet, followed by Mr. Ouellet, if he's here; otherwise we'll go to Mr. Desjardins. So, Mr. Poissant.

Mr. Poissant: Thank you. Welcome to the Commission. I've told the other groups of Francophones from outside Québec who've come here: "It wasn't your brief I liked, it was you." And I'd like to say the same thing to you. I think you've always had my personal sympathy. I think you're doing a great job and I'd like to

congratulate you on having introduced us to this famous man who made headlines in Québec. So I'm very pleased to meet you.

Having said that, I'll ask a question. It's that we obviously have a dilemma, as you know, and that's why the Commission exists. It's that some people seem to have enormous problems, and others have less serious problems, with the existing federal system. And obviously there are supporters of independence, of separation, and in my opinion, and I think you agree, if we... And for us, Francophones who nevertheless like... I don't think anybody here objects to that. We like what you're doing, that you reflect us well outside Québec and occasionally you can even help us. And I think you have the complete sympathy of Quebecers on that. But I think that if Québec separates, wouldn't that automatically abolish bilingualism in Canada?

So, having said that, it's that we seem to be doing what you might call sounding the knell. And, as if in a state of danger, I for one think we have to try to find a formula whereby, if we could agree with Ottawa about patriating certain powers, to still keep people like you, who have all the sympathy of Quebecers, so we can stay in Canada. Obviously with amended formulas but, again, I think if Québec separates, don't worry, funds may be contributed for... But that wouldn't be very much. There's no point in being bilingual in Canada, especially in the federal government, right now, which is nevertheless making some fairly interesting progress. So, do you have any additional comments to add to what you said in your brief?

(10:15 a.m.)

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: Well I think I've tried to be fairly clear this morning. I think if Québec leaves, then, and my colleagues... Mr. Arès might want to add something. But Québec's presence is absolutely essential to us. Québec's support is absolutely essential to us. There've been many times in the past when we've been in desperate need of this support. I'm thinking, for example, of the Mahé case; I'm thinking of Bill 60. I think it's very important for us that you be there. We know you have special needs. We know that for the time being the status quo isn't acceptable, that we have to find something else. But I think the gist of our message is that we need you.

Mr. Arès (Georges): What I might add is that, yes, you need something special for Québec. But we too need something special for us, as Francophones, especially as Franco-Albertans, who are very seriously threatened. And when you go and negotiate something with English Canada, or a new status within Canada, we're asking you not to forget also to negotiate something for us too. That was one of the main problems we had with the Meech Lake Accord. It was that, in the Meech Lake Accord, there was nothing for us,

so over the long term it posed a threat to us. So that's what we're asking for. We recognize that... Québec needs to negotiate something more than the status quo. It's not enough. But we too need something more than the status quo we now have in Alberta.

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

Mr. Turgeon: Well you say there was nothing for you in the Meech Lake Accord. There's a lot of Quebecers who think there was nothing in it for them either. It depends on how you look at it. 65 000 Francophones in Alberta. What's that as a percentage of the population?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: About 2.5% of the population.

Mr. Turgeon: 2.5%. About 50 years ago, about 30 years ago, what was the percentage?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: About 6%.

Mr. Turgeon: About 6%. 6% 50 years ago, 2.5% today; that's the problem. And you say: If Québec leaves, if Québec leaves the Federation, Québec would otherwise be more present. But don't you have the impression that that's exactly what will ensure your survival? Having Québec there, a strong Québec, the way it should be, a Québec that has assumed and guaranteed its cultural security. If Québec can do it for itself, maybe it can do it for you too. 6% 30 years ago, 2.5% today. What will it be in 10 years, or in 20 years? 0.02%?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: I'd like to respond by saying that I think there's a fundamental injustice in all that. People desert us, they pay no attention to us, they forgot we existed. I don't know how many years ago and, ultimately, they come to us and say: You're in the process of disappearing; are you really worth the trouble? I find there's a fundamental injustice at the basis of all that. It gets to me a bit. When you talk about a strong Québec, the question I ask is this: Will Québec pay any attention to us? We haven't had a whole lot of proof in the past. Excuse me for being a bit blunt. Right now that's the fundamental question I'm asking myself. Yes, we need a strong Québec, but we think this strong Québec should be inside Canada, accepted by Canada, and that Québec, for its part, should accept Canada.

Mr. Turgeon: Which government is responsible for minorities right now? It's the Canadian government.

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: Right now we have a friend in the federal government but we still

have to keep in mind that we have our own means of ensuring our survival, as we always have. The tools the federal government gave us don't go back very far. They've given us a small boost. That's why we're in a recovery period, and I think if we'd had this type of help, if we have this type of help and if we have this support... The federal government helped us, Mr. Turgeon, because you're here, because Francophones have a significant presence in Canada. I don't think we should delude ourselves and think that, if Québec leaves Canada, they'll want to sustain the French fact outside Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): With your permission I'd like to go to someone else. You still have some time, but this way we can include more people. Is that all right with you?

Mr. Turgeon: Go ahead.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. Mr. Ouellet, and, you too, if you don't mind, I may have to limit you to three minutes.

Mr. Ouellet: Fine, Mr. Chairman. First I'd like to congratulate and thank our guests for a very important brief. It's a viewpoint that has to be conveyed, that has to be heard and that is essential, in my opinion, to our discussion about the political and constitutional future of Québec. The dimension you've presented to us is absolutely essential, and we have to take it into account.

I'd like you to comment briefly on another aspect of Mr. Turgeon's question, which is the French presence, the French culture in Alberta, but which can't be translated into percentages, because I'm thinking of Anglophones who are studying French or who speak French. Are there any? Are there a lot of them? If, on the one hand, in terms of a percentage, the number of Francophones has decreased, isn't it true that there's still a significant percentage of Anglophones who, because of your presence, because of your dynamism, because of the policies of the Canadian government, are interested in French and are taking advantage of the French culture? Maybe they're buying books or contributing to the economic development of the people Mr. Turgeon represents.

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: I'm very pleased to hear you speak like that. If we look, for example, at the number of students in immersion schools, in Alberta we have about 28 000 young Anglophones who are studying the other language. Proportionally, it's the largest number of young Anglophones who've ever studied French. I think that means something. You know as well as I that it takes a long time for attitudes to change. We believe there's really been a change of attitude in Alberta. During the

Piquette affair, for example, and the Mercure affair, which took place afterwards, the **Calgary Herald** conducted a survey and asked Albertans, who are often thought of as rednecks, asked the question: Were they in favour of a certain degree of bilingualism? 74% of Calgarians and 53% of Edmontonians said yes. 46% of Albertans in general said yes; only 33% of Albertans said no. I think if there had been significant leadership at that time on the part of the Alberta government, we could have changed a lot of things.

Yes, attitudes are changing in Alberta. There's a silent majority that supports our efforts. Unfortunately it's all too often silent. But that will change over time. We have excellent relations with aboriginal peoples, excellent relations with ethnocultural groups that are increasingly understanding the reason for our presence in Canada and the French fact and the French language and culture in Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): With your permission, Mr. Ouellet, I'd like to go to Mr. Nicolet.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet, I'd like to congratulate you on your brief, which has the merit of being so frank that we could almost qualify it as brutal, but I think it's most welcome.

But I must ask you to comment on certain assessments that have been submitted to the Commission regarding the real future of the French fact in the West. The first comment, of course, is in the surveys, the Reform Party, the rapid gains this public-opinion group is making right now. We've also been told that ultimately Meech was only the last nail in the coffin of the concept of Canada as a country based on two founding nations, and that we were moving toward a type of multicultural, multiethnic vision of the country in which the vision of French at the heart of this duality was disappearing.

In this context, I'd like to hear your comments on the premises I've stated, but what do you think our chances are of really negotiating, of bringing back, into a pan-Canadian vision, this first concept that Mr. Trudeau defended, among others?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: You're right when you say the whole Reform Party phenomenon is an important element. I think it will also wake a lot of people up to a number of realities, because the basis of the Reform Party is definitely emotional, is it not?

As for this presence, this need to reposition ethnocultural groups, and so on, this dream of a Canada based on two nations, I think we're noticing about our ethnocultural communities - and Mr. Arès may want to add something - it's that people are saying to us

now: It's very important that the official-language minority in Canada have a place, because then there is a basic acceptance of the principle or the ability to be different. If we can't be different in Canada, there won't be a place for us. So it's very important that our minority have a place, and we're hearing this type of talk more and more, which is very reassuring. Perhaps Mr. Arès has something to add.

Mr. Arès: Just a few words about the Reform Party. I think we have to be aware that the Reform Party in Alberta represents only a certain percentage of the population. It's the one-third of the population which is already anti-Francophone, which doesn't have much sympathy for French, but the Reform Party is having a lot of trouble getting more than a third of the population, getting people who are sympathetic, the silent majority that was sympathetic to us in 1988 and others who support us openly. So we have to remember that the Reform Party has reached only a certain level.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We've been able to go a little more quickly than usual. So we'll have Mr. Proulx and Mr. Desjardins before we go to the two Parliamentary groups. Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact a portion of my question has already been asked. The past 10 years, among other things, have taught us a great deal. First I'd like to congratulate you on your extraordinary optimism. You'll live to a ripe old age with that kind of optimism. It'll certainly keep you young.

I was wondering, anyway, when you say that Québec has to accept Canada, how can you say that? How can you say we haven't accepted Canada? Don't you have the impression that it's precisely because we've accepted too much that today we have to fight to be recognized as a country?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: In response, Mr. Proulx, I'd like to say that, even if you choose separation, you won't be moving geographically. You'll still be here. So I think that, when we're talking about acceptance, relations will have to be established, regardless of your decisions. So I think it's very important that the relations established be as harmonious as possible. I personally think it may be possible to establish harmonious relations within Canada, even though the status quo has to change. I think there's a way to find another formula.
(10:30 a.m.)

I don't see the death of the Meech Lake Accord as a statement against Québec. There are many things. In our community there are all

sorts of things that came into play at that point. I don't see it as a vote whereby people said to Quebecers: We don't want you. It's not... It's not part of the Alberta reality, be it Anglophone or Francophone, as I know it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll go to Mr. Desjardins.

Mr. Desjardins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like Mr. Nicolet, I also find your brief very frank and I think it's very courageous of you to have come here from Alberta to present us with a very severe criticism of the Québec society in which we're all involved in here in terms of this discussion. So we do acknowledge receipt of this criticism.

You say in your brief that still today - I don't know whether it's because you have a guilt complex over Meech, because you go into that at length in your brief, it's hard for us to blame you for the failure of Meech because you've been pretty generous, ultimately, in saying yes to Meech. And again I'd like to congratulate you because if all of Canada were as generous as you were toward Québec, maybe we wouldn't be in the crisis we're in right now.

So my question. The hostility you still feel today, I'd like to know how you feel it's expressed. And my second question, which is more important: if Québec were independent, it's well known that you're very vulnerable in terms of the policies of your leaders. So I'd like to ask you what degree of uncertainty you may feel in terms of existing legislation and the programs and policies that maintain and preserve your rights?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: We'll answer the last part first. We're very worried, we're terribly worried and that's why we've brought this message to you today. As for the guilt we may or may not feel over Meech, I don't think, I don't feel guilty. We did what we felt we had to do.

A voice: I hope so.

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: We're also very proud of the generosity we showed. It was very important for us to have a sense of solidarity. So that's a statement of fact. If we talk about it, it's because it's part of our reality.

The serious criticism we're levelling at you, I think we, well, had a feeling of having been abandoned. We feel that, before being able to re-establish links, maybe we have to polish up the links we have. And that's why we've allowed ourselves to be emotional, to be hard, but to be frank. That's what we wanted. Mr. Arès.

Mr. Arès: If I may just add something. If Québec were independent, things like section 23,

which gives us the right to our schools and which we hope may give us the complete right to administer these schools and the right to decide where we're going to have them in Alberta, that will disappear. Right now we're trying to recover assimilated Francophones, and we're doing it at Ecole Maurice-Lavallée. It's important to note that enrolment at the school has tripled since 1984. We're opening a seventh French school in Alberta in September. We're recovering people. If we lose section 23 and the rights it gives us, that'll all be over. We won't be able to carry on this recovery process.

And that's what's important for us, that we hold onto the rights we've acquired and that we also obtain new rights. Promoting the French fact, at least through the federal government in Alberta, is absolutely essential for us.

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

Mr. Dauphin: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd of course like to welcome the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, thank you for coming here to Québec and also congratulate you on your brief and your frankness.

I too went to Alberta a few months ago, just before the fatal date of the failure of Meech Lake, and I gave an interview to a *Calgary Herald* journalist who asked me questions about Meech. Ultimately I asked him some questions myself at the end and I asked him what he thought about the French fact. He replied that he'd always lived in Canada, he'd always lived in Alberta, and the first time he'd met a French-Canadian, he was 21 years old. So God knows that I understand it can't be easy for you, and I understand that you have to fight constantly.

Mr. Piquette, the same thing. When we passed a law, which wasn't necessarily popular, especially with the Anglophone minority, when people told me that, with Bill 178, we were infringing enormously on certain rights, I often replied: I have a colleague in Alberta who's an MLA, who asked a question in French and was thrown out of the Chamber. Obviously the conversation got pretty tense at that point.

I've prepared three short questions. I'm going to ask all three right away, and the Chairman may give you three minutes to answer them.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We have to keep things short, but you never know.

Mr. Dauphin: In your brief you stress that the Franco-Albertan community can't survive without a federalist Québec. If Québec chooses sovereignty, will your partnership proposal still hold? That's the first one. Second, you said you

didn't appreciate being compared to the Anglophone minority of Québec. I'd like to know why. Third, you say you act as ambassadors and interpreters in answering the "What does Québec want?" question for English Canadians. How have you played this role so far and how do you plan to play it in the future?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: I'm going to answer the second question and, if you don't mind, I'm going to ask my colleagues, Mr. Piquette and Mr. Dallaire, to comment, and also Mr. Arès. I don't think we specifically said we didn't like being compared to the Anglophones of Québec. What we say is that we don't like being regarded as hostages. I think our situations, as minorities, are different. I think we try to say in our brief that it wouldn't be advantageous... We're not hostages of the federal government, we're not hostages of anyone. We're people who've been there since the very beginning, who've created communities with nothing and we're very proud of that. So we don't like being told we're the pawns of someone else. Perhaps Mr. Dallaire or Mr. Arès would like to pick one of your questions and answer it.

Mr. Dallaire (Daniel): I'd like to talk about our role as ambassadors. It's that we feel we're part of the Francophone family. I was born in Alberta, like my colleagues here, and my home is Alberta, but I'm still part of the Francophone family, and every day we find ourselves in situations where Anglophones look at us and say: Oh, you're Quebecers. No, we're Francophones and we don't support Québec in every way. Québec's presence in Canada helps us a great deal, and they often come to us and ask what Québec wants. We have to interpret that as best we can, but it isn't always easy because there are also redneck Anglophones in Québec, and that doesn't help us either, and certain things Québec has done... I mean that in Québec there are anti-Anglophones. We have to live with that, and the positions that Québec takes don't always support us. Again, we're caught between the two communities. We have to live with that, and it's quite difficult, but we do it anyway and we're increasingly identifying ourselves as Francophones, and our pride is becoming stronger and stronger. I can say that in Alberta I spend at least 80% of my day in French. It can be done, I do it and there are a lot of other people who do it.

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

Mr. Piquette (Léo): I'd like to say something about my experience that may help you answer the question. Since 1982, since the Charter of Rights, there's definitely been a new dynamism in Alberta and among Francophones

outside Québec, so that we're starting to do things in our provinces to promote our Francophone minorities. Québec, the population of Québec, has to be taking note of this dynamism. In 1986 I ran in the riding of Arthabasca-Lac La Biche as a proud Francophone and I won the election. In my opinion there was a change in public opinion. Maybe it wouldn't have been possible, let's say, 10 years earlier to run in an election as a Francophone. I dared to speak French in Alberta, in the Legislature of Alberta. I was slapped in the face, but we gained a great deal of pride as a community. We gained a new source in wealth in the form of young people who've decided to enrol in French schools in the past two years. In Alberta, for example, people say that Bill 60 has abolished all the rights. But it's not true. For the first time in the Alberta Legislature we now have a bill that says: Yes, the members may speak French; we're doing it now. Maybe it's one step backward and one step forward, but we have to realize that if Québec separates, it's an experience that...

We're making great strides in Canada; we're creating a new society with our young Anglophones who are enrolling in our immersion programs, our Francophones who are enrolling in our French schools, and if Québec separates, we'll have to abandon all these beautiful dreams that the population of Québec has had since 1867.

So I'm a proud French-Canadian. I'd like to say to Québec that you have to look at your society. You too have made great strides in Québec. I remember coming here in 1967 for Expo 67 and seeing that the economy of the province of Québec was controlled by Anglophones. That's no longer true. A few days ago you won the right to control immigration, for example. It's a positive gain. Is it the right time to talk about separation when you can have a new partner in Canada? So I'm speaking from my heart and I hope... It's a small message that we from Alberta can give Quebecers, when you're making such an important decision about the future of your province in Canada.

Mrs. Blackburn: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say to the representatives of the Association franco-manitobaine that I respect and understand their struggle. I haven't had the opportunity to burst into tears in the schools of Alberta...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): One school.

Mrs. Blackburn: ...like the Co-chairman of this Commission but I understand the situation. My brother raised his two children there. He came back to Québec because his children were entering university, and the university services weren't complete enough in your province. You say to us: Québec must stay in Confederation

because it's the only way of protecting your future and your achievements. Québec has been in the Federation for 125 years and that hasn't provided more protection for your future. I think we have to recognize that if you haven't completely disappeared, you also owe it quite a bit to Québec's support for the Francophone cause outside Québec. We've paid for schools and we've sustained your institutions. Curiously enough, when you felt that you had been abandoned, that federalist Québec had abandoned you to try to stay in the Canadian Confederation, there was an irony of history. In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which with section 23 gives you the rudiments of power, at the same time dramatically and unilaterally reduced the powers of this Assembly in Québec. It's an irony of history, but it's also painful for us.

You say that Québec is partially responsible but that your role is important too. I'd simply like to point out that a portion of your brief conveys the idea that Québec is worried and also that it may be a bit xenophobic. On page 10 you say: "We know that for some Quebecers, the presence of Anglophones is a constant threat to the French fact. This fear of assimilation must not prevent you from attracting ethnocultural groups, which can become your partners. The key to the survival of French doesn't lie in the disappearance of other communities." While you were fighting for your schools, in Québec not only did we have a complete health and social-services network in English but we also subsidized, and I'll name them for you - I won't name them for you but I'll give you the number - 32 private schools subsidized by the government. There are 22 private Jewish schools and 5 of them are also subsidized. There are Armenian and Muslim schools, and we have five Greek ones. So when people talk to us about intolerance in Québec - and I'm thinking about Mr. Piquette who's here today, and his debate and how he was ostracized as an MLA because he dared to ask a question in French in the Legislative Assembly - you know, you have to keep things in perspective.

In addition, your brief differs considerably from the positions we've heard here from the Association des francophones hors Québec, Acadians, Franco-Ontarians, and also Franco-Americans, who don't really feel threatened by the prospect of a sovereign Québec and who think it could be the opportunity to establish solid cooperative links to ensure the survival and development of the various communities. Because, not only could we be useful to you but you could also be of valuable assistance to us in establishing commercial links, for one thing, with communities scattered across Canada.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You'll have to leave some time for the answer, Mrs.

Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Yes, of course, Mr. Chairman. One brief question. You say to us that if Québec leaves the Canadian Confederation, you'll fear for your rights. It was Mr. Piquette or the other gentleman, Mr. Arès, who said: The Charter won't hold up. Section 23 will disappear. Are you saying to us, to Quebecers, that the only reason English Canada accepted the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was to protect Anglo-Quebecers? That's my question.

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: I think there are a number of questions underlying your comments. First, when you say that our position is different from that of the FFHQ and other Francophones from outside Québec who have appeared here, I'd like to remind you that we have other needs and that we're in a different situation. We don't have 300 French schools and we don't have unions, and so on. We're living another reality and we're here today to present that reality to you. And this includes the bitterness we feel about the fact that Québec abandoned us quite a while ago. It's true that in the past Québec has helped us. But there have also been times when we would've appreciated much more than what we got. There are times when we felt you were definitely lining up on the enemy's side, and I would cite the Mahé case as an example.

The way we see things is that section 23 is very essential to us, and perhaps my colleague, Mr. Arès, will want to help me answer. I don't think section 23 is there to protect anyone but us. If you look at the first versions of section 23, it was even said at one point that section 23 was created so that Quebecers who want to move around a bit in Canada can take their place and have their own schools and their own way of educating their children. So, on the contrary, I believe that section 23 was initially designed to help you Quebecers live outside Québec. Mr. Arès.

Mr. Arès: I can give you an example of how quickly section 23 would disappear: all you have to do is look at what the Saskatchewan government did immediately after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. You had a bill that would have been generous to the Francophones in Saskatchewan and given them complete control of their French schools in Saskatchewan. The day after the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, Mr. Devine withdrew the bill. So if you think Alberta will be more generous than Mr. Devine, well you're dreaming in technicolor. I'm sorry, but you're dreaming in technicolor.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We've used up all the time for this presentation.

Mrs. Blackburn: I'd like to ask one short question during the Chairman's time.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): It's because if you have comments, Mrs. Blackburn, in all fairness we'll have to allow an answer, and this will go on and on.

Mrs. Blackburn: It's a very short one. In an advertisement that appeared today in the Québec City newspaper *Le Soleil*, you say: "Unilateral withdrawal of Québec from the Canadian Confederation would be a true stab in the back for our community." You say it's because we have different needs from other communities... But are you saying that we have to stay in federalism exclusively for your community?

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: I don't think that's what I'm saying to you. We're saying this very clearly: Your departure will have a significant impact on us. That's what we're saying to you. You have decisions to make. Keep in mind that if you leave it'll affect us.

Mr. Piquette: And then there's something...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): On that, I think that unfortunately I have to end this presentation. But, before doing so, without trying to answer the various questions that you've been asked, I'd like to point out that you have to distinguish between Québec and its government, its legal status and Quebecers themselves.

The Government of Québec must defend positions that enable it to retain its role, that give it control of education. Quebecers, who of course are citizens of Québec, have no reason not to support Canada's other Francophones in all sorts of ways. But we have to make the distinction, especially with something like the Mahé case.

Before I start giving you legal opinions, an area in which I'm completely incompetent, I'll stop and thank you for coming here this morning.

Mrs. Levasseur-Ouimet: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now we'll hear from the representatives of the Apparel Manufacturers Institute of Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 10:49 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 10:51 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'd like to ask the members of the Commission to please take their seats.

Now we'll hear a presentation by the

Apparel Manufacturers Institute. I didn't individually shake the hands of all the members of your delegation because to get things moving I thought it was more important that I come back and take control of the room here.

Is Mr. Lapierre the spokesman? Well, if you would, Mr. Lapierre, please introduce the members of your group, whom we welcome, and then take five minutes to present the gist of your brief.

Apparel Manufacturers Institute of Québec

Mr. Lapierre (Claude): On my far right, Mr. Paul Lutfy, vice-president of Lutfy Limited; Mr. André Saint-Pierre of Chemises Perfection; Mr. Irwin Steinberg of Dolly Dimple; Yelka Acimovic, a manufacturer of children's clothing; and Mr. Israel Shames, executive director of the Apparel Manufacturers of Québec.

Messrs. Chairmen, may I start by thanking you for your interest in our industry and for providing us with the opportunity to present to you in person the industry's point of view on the political and constitutional future of Québec. Our industry's dominant role as Québec's number one employer merits that particular attention be given to it and to the 60 000 direct jobs it provides, to say nothing of the 100 000 indirect jobs. Moreover, our industry is almost 100% Québec owned.

For several years now, we have been confronted with a number of economic variables that impose changes, investments, and constraints on our industry. Among them are free trade with the United States, which applies only to North American fabrics, high interest rates, the current recession, and another trade agreement with Mexico looming on the horizon, to say nothing of the unfortunate war, with the uncertainties it brings. However, the industry is unique in Québec in the sense that it is the only manufacturing industry with such a high percentage concentrated in Québec. 60% of the Canadian garment industry is located in Québec. It is imperative, Messrs. Chairmen, that you take this particular state of affairs into consideration in your recommendations to the National Assembly. Any constitutional decision that will have a negative influence on trade agreement negotiations, from the multifibre arrangements to free trade, risks causing the loss of a large number of jobs. The question must be asked: what will be the attitude of a Canadian government from which Québec is excluded when that Canadian government negotiates international agreements?

Currently, outside Québec, the Canadian government has little interest in the garment industry. Our industry is asking you to keep these jobs and to make decisions in a way that will increase these jobs, which are really the bread and butter of a large part of the Québec

population. Our industry is emphasizing the economic aspect. Our brief, moreover, demonstrates its salient features. Our industry dissociates itself from political discussions that are based strictly on access to power. We favour a federalism that you could call new-style, in which jobs would have priority. At this point, if you will permit, Messrs. Chairmen, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Irwin Steinberg, who will take a few minutes to elaborate on some important points.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): With pleasure, but it will have to be fairly brief, so that there is time left for the questions. Go ahead, Mr. Steinberg.

Mr. Steinberg (Irwin): OK. Let's look at the garment industry in Québec and its economic imperatives: the welfare and standard of living of 160 000 persons who depend directly and indirectly on our industry, and unhampered access to the market in the rest of Canada. We sell four times as many clothes in the rest of Canada as we buy in return. Without this market, we wouldn't have the necessary production base and economic clout to replace our losses on the international market.

We are the largest employer in the manufacturing sector in Québec. We are the largest employer in the manufacturing sector in Montréal. The industry holds the future prosperity of Québec in its hands. I want to talk about immigrants, whom I prefer to call new Quebecers. In the Montréal region alone, we employ 27 000 of these new Quebecers. Our industry is ready to play the role required to integrate them more rapidly into Québec culture. Our industry is entirely consistent with environmental priorities. It has no negative effect in that regard. International agreements such as the GATT, the multifibre arrangements, and the Free Trade Agreement with the United States play a key role in Québec's garment industry. In a world where current trends indicate a marked movement toward regional development, we should make sure we have considerable strength so that we can have decision-making power.

We've come here to discuss the options that are emerging before the Commission. The debates and discussions we've heard, both inside and outside this Commission, show us that two options are emerging: independence and renewed federalism, new-style and, we hope, colour-fast.

Our perception is that sovereignty-association is only a step leading to independence. We believe that the Québec garment industry needs a federal structure which will ensure the continuity of Québec's economic links with the rest of Canada. It's a necessary condition for preserving, to say nothing of improving, the standard of living of Quebecers in

the garment industry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. We'll go on to the questions. Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Cabinet group, welcome to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. I'd like to thank you for presenting this sort of brief, because you have shed considerable light on the question of sales figures. I am looking at page 7, at the figures for Québec's sales to the English-speaking provinces, for instance Québec to Ontario. Québec's sales to Ontario amount to over \$783 million, in comparison with Ontario's sales to Québec, which are \$221 million. Québec sells almost four times as much in Ontario as Ontario sells in Québec, and the situation is similar for Québec to Manitoba, Québec to British Columbia and the other provinces. It's very interesting to see all these figures. On page 9 of your brief, you say that if unhampered access to the Canadian market is lost, a very large percentage of the industry will disappear before a new market outside Canada can be established. I would like you to explain your expression "unhampered" to me. Does that currently exist right now? Is it the current situation? Unhampered. What do you mean by an unhampered market?

Mr. Shames (Israel): Currently there are no obstacles to the sale of Québec products outside the province of Québec. We'd like to maintain that situation. We've been wondering whether there would be any obstacles in the case of Québec sovereignty or sovereignty-association. It's a serious risk for the garment industry if there are obstacles, serious obstacles to our exporting our products to the rest of Canada. At present, nothing stands in our way.

Mrs. Hovington: Supporters of independence tell us, for instance, that Canada has too much economic interest to cut us off if Québec becomes sovereign. What do you think about that, as clothing manufacturers? How are your partners in English Canada reacting at present in the face of the situation we're experiencing? (11:00 a.m.)

Mr. Lapierre: We're currently enjoying a favoured position with the rest of Canada, because four out of five articles of clothing are exported from Québec. It's obvious that since we're businessmen, it's difficult for us to throw out a challenge to our customers.

There is the human aspect. Besides the economic aspect in our business relations with the other provinces, there is also the human aspect that can be affected as a result of political or constitutional relations. As a businessman, I think that it's our role to try to

protect all these relations that exist with our customers, because if there is a weakening, a loss of customers, a decrease in their number - which in the long term we could anticipate recovering, but should there be such a loss - it can have a great influence on the external trade we are currently trying to develop.

Our strength is already limited; our capital is already limited for tackling free trade. To really tackle the United States on a profitable basis, we should plan for a ten-year period. If during that time, and as a result of other constraints I've mentioned, the recession and all that, there is any weakness affecting our exports within our local market, it can really endanger the jobs of many people. It's really a danger we feel that's necessary to emphasize, and we are asking the Commission to check out the economic aspect in particular for the garment industry, because of its unique position. You know, 60% of the entire manufacturing production - and the document shows the sizeable figures too - that's the bread and butter of jobs. Not only do we want to keep them, but we have to increase them; we have to globalize and all that. No more constraints should be added. That's the industry's opinion.

Mrs. Hovington: And when you talk about a transition period, when you say that we'll have to wait a long time before a new market is established outside of Canada...

Mr. Lapierre: ...is developed.

Mrs. Hovington: ...how long do you think that could take?

Mr. Lapierre: You know, in our eyes, there are so many economic examples of this... If we ask how long it took the Japanese to take over some of the American market... But to answer your question directly, we have to consider that we're currently implementing free trade, that the small gains we've made on customs duties were rapidly nullified by the rise in the dollar from \$0.76 to \$0.87 and \$0.88, and currently to \$0.86. So there really has been no gain made, in particular since there are still negotiations to be conducted with the United States concerning that famous clause regarding apparel. We are, I believe, the only product that, even though it has 50% value added, is not recognized as a Canadian or Québec product. The fabric has to be North American, and not just North American, but strictly Canadian or American.

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

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hello. I'm happy to see you again. We had the

occasion in the past to work together on different issues.

I am going to return somewhat to what Mrs. Hovington was saying, but with a slightly different slant. Let's imagine that a sovereign Québec made jobs its obsession, that this became its top priority - you know that there are currently those who are meeting to discuss employment and who have said that they're ready to move in that direction and put their money behind it - that in effect there are no obstacles, that we keep the economic space in which you currently operate, that there is monetary union and the same currency, that we keep control mechanisms, which I understand you are asking for, and I'll get back to in my second question, does the status of a sovereign Québec seem completely viable to you for your companies and your commercial activities?

Mr. Steinberg: It's not just at that level that there is concern. It's also the reaction of the people with whom we have to work every day, that is, my customers, both those in the province of Québec and those who work in Toronto; their perception of the situation is: What is he going to do? We see now and we firmly believe there is going to be a reaction, and it won't be good for the garment industry. On the level of human relations, all the special relationships we've built up over the years, in my case 30 years, and for other companies here, 50 years, are diminished at present, and this is going to have implications that are not good for the garment industry.

What we'd like to say too, to answer Mrs. Hovington, is that it would take 15 years to establish a new market. We haven't got time to establish a new market, let's say, in another place, because we're going to lose...

Mrs. Marois: Let me stop you on that, Mr. Steinberg.

Mr. Steinberg: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: If it takes 15 years for us to penetrate new markets...

Mr. Steinberg: Yes.

Mrs. Marois: ...it should also take our competitors 15 years to penetrate the markets you occupy.

Mr. Steinberg: Yes, but what will happen with...

Mrs. Marois: So anyway you aren't saying that people in the West or people in Ontario buy our clothes because they like the colour of our eyes. They buy them because you offer a quality

of service, because you offer a guarantee, because you offer competitive prices. They don't buy them basically because they are manufactured in Québec. Are we in agreement?

Mr. Steinberg: Yes, of course we're in agreement on that question, but we also have to say... It's very true that... But if we get into a situation of regulation between English Canada and Québec, and that's what we are looking ahead to in the future in this situation. We're sure, from the experience we have already had with this question, that we're going to be faced with reactions.

Mr. Lapierre: In the scenario you describe, there is one unknown that remains and that you haven't talked about, namely that during negotiations, when the Canada that Québec is not a part of goes to negotiate its trade agreements, since its interest in protection or negotiation with its companies is minimal compared with ours, then if these agreements are changed, at present, you weaken our local market and our market outside Canada, and you weaken us for the export market to the United States.

Mrs. Marois: Still, admit that if this is true, that currently you sell more outside Québec in the clothing sector, in contrast, the rest of Canada provides Québec with more in other sectors. So these aren't negotiations that will be conducted only on one element, if you like. There is another question you didn't answer.

Mr. Lapierre: That element...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Excuse me. Since time is up, perhaps a brief comment, Mr. Lapierre.

Mr. Lapierre: The brief comment. I think the document we submitted...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Just on this question. There are other questions coming. All right? Excuse me.

Mr. Lapierre: Fine. I agree completely that there are other elements, but our expertise, not only our expertise but the importance of the jobs, the 60 000 direct and 100 000 indirect jobs, is not demonstrated in the scenario, in any of the scenarios suggested, the explanation, how this sovereignty-association or whatever it's called, it hasn't been demonstrated how this important sector of industry is protected. And if we could...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Holden, followed by Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mr. Holden: Merci, M. le Président. Je voudrais simplement poursuivre là où vous vous êtes arrêté à propos des chiffres relatifs à l'emploi, c'est-à-dire les 100 000 emplois indirects, et les 60 000 autres. Je me demande si vous pourriez nous fournir un peu plus de détails non seulement au sujet de l'effet, sur l'économie du Québec, d'un accès réduit au reste du Canada, mais, de façon plus particulière, pourriez-vous nous indiquer quelles en seraient les conséquences sur l'économie de Montréal, qui est le moteur économique de la province?

Mr. Steinberg: Eh bien, si vous me le permettez, malgré l'importance que ce facteur peut avoir pour le Québec, il est beaucoup plus important quand il s'agit de la ville de Montréal. Comme je l'ai fait remarquer, c'est de loin le plus important employeur industriel à Montréal: près de 25% de tous les emplois manufacturiers industriels dans la ville de Montréal, sans parler de la main-d'œuvre qui peut être embauchée. Il s'agit en effet du genre de travail bas de gamme accessible aux Néo-Québécois qui viennent s'établir au Québec, c'est une dimension très importante de leur intérêt pour la province de Québec. Pour remplacer cela, si nous n'accordons pas le même accueil aux immigrants, il ne s'agit pas uniquement de réglementation économique ou commerciale. C'est aussi bien une question d'accueil qui nous permet de réaliser des ventes intéressantes à l'extérieur de la province de Québec. Montréal sera certainement la plus touchée.

Il y a autre chose aussi, M. le Président. À part Montréal et, point tout aussi important, l'industrie du vêtement emploie de la main-d'œuvre dans 90 districts de recensement, c'est-à-dire dans presque tous les districts de la province de Québec. Bien que ce soit très important à Montréal, d'autres régions dépendent de ce grand employeur. Des villes comme Windsor Mills dépendent de cette industrie particulière. Que vous parliez de la Côte Nord ou des Cantons de l'Est, il y a des municipalités qui dépendent de cette industrie et de son essor pour donner du travail à leurs citoyens.

Mr. Holden: À l'intérieur de votre industrie, et à l'occasion de vos discussions avec vos clients dans le reste du pays, avez-vous constaté une certaine attitude susceptible de nuire à votre industrie, advenant l'indépendance du Québec?

Mr. Steinberg: J'aimerais que quelqu'un d'autre... Au plus fort des discussions sur l'accord du Lac Meech, au cours de ces mois très décisifs, j'ai pu constater une réaction envers les positions prises par... Il s'agissait d'une réaction de polarisation, tout simplement. Je ne veux pas vous laisser supposer que mon produit n'est pas bon et que je ne réussis pas

à le vendre de toute façon. J'ai dû prendre les 20 premières minutes pour traiter de cette question particulière, et ça me plaît, mais, à part cela, ce n'est pas nécessairement la raison pour laquelle je réussirai ou non. Mais peut-être qu'un autre aimerait répondre à cette question.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Êtes-vous en train de dire que vous aviez de la difficulté à vendre votre produit alors que le Québec s'efforçait de rester avec le reste du pays?

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

A voice: Ce sera pire après.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Et maintenant, nous devons nous inquiéter de...

Mr. Steinberg: Bien... Voilà à quel point ça peut devenir absurde.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Je saisis le point.

Mr. Steinberg: D'accord. C'est à quel point ça peut devenir absurde. La polarisation, c'est la polarisation.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Oui. En d'autres termes, peu importe ce que vous faites.

Mr. Steinberg: Human relations are human relations and special relations are special relations.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So it's not really just what we do but what it looks like.

Mr. Steinberg: Yes, you're right.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There you go. Mr. Holden...

Mr. Steinberg: Could I perhaps have just a minute, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Perhaps... Perhaps he could continue with the next question...

Mr. Steinberg: OK.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Because otherwise we're really going to lose control of the time. Mr. Holden, it's OK.

Mr. Holden: That's fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Beaudry: Because you want to go on along the same lines, on the question of emotionalism. What you are afraid of is that with the debate, if Québec separates, during the negotiations or after the effects of separation, there is certainly going to be a period of uncertainty, of emotionalism, and it will have consequences on the entire economy of Canada as well as on the entire economy of Québec, and that's what you want to say to us. That's what is particularly worrying you, and I would like to hear from your colleague about that.

Mrs. Acimovic (Yelka): I could give you an example that exists at present in Yugoslavia. I'll take a small province, Slovenia, which wanted to separate just as today Québec wants to separate. Slovenia purchased raw materials from Serbia. It processed them, converted them into finished products and sold them in Serbia and throughout Yugoslavia. Now, when it announced that it wanted to separate from Yugoslavia, that it would no longer be a part of it, Serbia decided not to sell any more raw materials to Slovenia and it also decided not to buy any products manufactured there. Slovenia is still a part of Yugoslavia; it hasn't separated yet. So that's a human aspect that must absolutely be included when you talk about separation or when you talk about being isolated.

Mr. Beaudry: Just now, Mrs. Marois was talking about various elements. For example, if people no longer wanted to buy your products, this could perhaps be compensated for in other domains. There are other domains where the provinces of Canada sell more in Québec than they receive, but of course that doesn't solve your specific problem.
(11:15 a.m.)

Mr. Lapierre: It doesn't solve our problem, in the sense that emotionalism may perhaps have more of an influence in the short term. I agree that through our efficiency, through our better products, through the quality, we would be able to regain that market, but the danger would be even more constant afterwards, and it would be impossible to recover the market subsequent to negotiations about which we have no information as to the way they will take place and in what way we'll be protected. So it's established from the start that we have to continue communication with a federal position. This economic communication has to remain to preserve those things; not only should it, but logically, we admit from the outset, it must be maintained. They tell us we'll have other tools for negotiation. So if we wind up not having changed anything, well, why try to change everything?

Mr. Beaudry: From what you know of the clothing industry in the other provinces, in particular Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia, which are the provinces with which you deal most, in a context in which negotiations with the rest of Canada – if Québec were to become sovereign, of course – turned out to be more difficult than anticipated, do you think those people would have the resources to meet their needs easily and quickly, while they dropped Québec, stopped or decreased their purchases? Do they have the resources in their industry to easily meet the needs of their province? Can they get the production capacity quickly, in other words?

Mr. Shames: I think there are good possibilities for production in Winnipeg, in the cities and many small towns in Manitoba. There is now the start of an industry in Alberta. Vancouver is beginning to expand in the garment industry. There is a production base in Ontario. In Québec, we built the industry. We were the first, we started the industry in Québec City, and in Montréal we have a very significant base of suppliers of goods and services; but it's starting. They can have access to such suppliers in other provinces too. They already have a base, and they can easily increase their production. There's a lot of unemployment in the country. So there are a lot of people looking for jobs, and it wouldn't take an enormous effort for these provinces to increase, to double or triple their production and their productivity.

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

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Yes. To continue Mrs. Marois' thoughts, and also those of my colleague Mr. Beaudry, I could say that as for me, I get the impression, but perhaps, if you'd prefer to continue in the same vein, Mr. Lapierre, you have fears about the length and difficulty of the negotiation period. It isn't what comes before or after, it's the negotiation period itself and the problems that can arise during it.

Mr. Lapierre: No, the fears are for the immediate period and the fears are for afterwards. We have no market security. Everyone seems to take for granted that it is easy to capture a market, to capture the American market and all that. It's a very difficult situation. If we lose the Canadian market outside Québec to the slightest extent, it will be very difficult to get it back. From the moment the door has been opened and our competitor allowed to go in and take our place, it becomes very hard to come back and regain it. I'd need the same factor. All the advantages I had before are going to have evaporated, because

at that point I'll be competing with someone else in a place where currently, in actual fact, I'm established.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: If we take it even further, do you think that Québec, alone, can negotiate advantageous trade agreements with buyer countries other than Canada?

Mr. Lapierre: Will Québec have as strong a position, negotiating alone...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: ...as Canada.

Mr. Lapierre: ...than if it negotiates from within a new-style federalism? The industry's position is that we firmly believe we'll be in a much stronger position if we negotiate from within a new-style federalism.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Because, with all the other manufacturers in the textile industry, you are stronger?

Mr. Lapierre: Because by definition, because of the particular status of our industry, which is very important in Québec - I know I'm repeating myself, but that is the state of the situation - our industry plays a major role and there's a lot of reluctance to give our industry a challenge rather than protect it.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Especially with 100 000 jobs.

Mr. Lapierre: Why not protect it? We know that immigrants, our new Québécois, are also a future force and our industry knows how to deal with them. Our industry can play a very important part for those people. We can help them adapt, probably much faster than all the government programs put together can even attempt to do. We'll have better success, in our industry, in acclimating these people and making them absorb French culture better. We have ways of accomplishing it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): All that remains is for me to thank you. Unfortunately we've used up our half hour. You presented some extremely interesting data on a specific sector of Québec's manufacturing industry. These data are extremely useful for studying the question as a whole. We thank all of you for being here this morning.

Now may I ask you, while you are being greeted by the members of the Commission, to please move away from the table so that the next group can take your place as fast as possible. It will be the *Chambre des notaires du Québec*. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 11:21 a.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 11:23 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear from the *Chambre des notaires du Québec*. Maître Taschereau is going to introduce the group. You are aware that you have a time limit of five minutes, which we are desperately trying to hold to in all cases - and are rarely succeeding - to present your brief.

Chambre des notaires du Québec

Mr. Taschereau (Jacques): Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, I will be brief since your time is limited. Let me introduce myself, Jacques Taschereau, president of the *Chambre des notaires du Québec*.

The *Chambre* considers it its duty to present the views of the majority of its members to this Commission, as revealed by a survey. There are notaries everywhere, from the remotest villages to the largest cities. They are attentive to the public. They provide information and legal services. They are active in sociocultural and economic movements in their communities, which they, in many ways, reflect. Maître Guy Bélisle, to my right, who has chaired the *Chambre* committee, is the author of this brief. Maître Bélisle has been a notary in the field for nearly 30 years and specializes in municipal law; a man entrusted with major responsibilities, he has been mayor of Saint-Eustache for 23 years. I will let him introduce the members of his committee.

With your permission, Messrs. Co-chairmen, Maître Bélisle will comment on the brief filed by the *Chambre des notaires du Québec*. Thank you for granting us this hearing.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have the floor, Maître Bélisle.

Mr. Bélisle (Guy): Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to introduce my colleagues who contributed to the preparation of this report, which reflects the position of the majority of the members of the *Chambre des notaires du Québec*, as evidenced by the results of a highly representative questionnaire. First of all, to my right, Mrs. Nathalie Ebnoether, who is an outside member of the *Bureau de l'Ordre des notaires* and represents the *Office des professions*. Maître André Auclair, a notary from Laval and Maître Jean Morin, from Sillery. Unfortunately, Maître Jean-François Dugas and Maître Yves Legault were unable to be here but I'd like to mention their invaluable collaboration.

Following an extensive consultation of its members on the desired division of government powers, the *Chambre des notaires du Québec* proposes that Québec opt either for a confederal system, in the strict sense of the term, or for sovereignty-association. As stated in the

conclusion of our brief, in either case Québec would assume full powers as a sovereign state. This is the position expressed by the majority of the more than 500 notaries who responded to our questionnaire.

Before drawing this conclusion, the Ordre professionnel des notaires devotes a part of its document to outlining the essential values to be protected so that a vibrant, distinct and autonomous Québec can be promoted. These values are language, Québec civil law, rights and freedoms, the judicial system, and immigration. Through the questionnaire, we also wanted to obtain certain answers concerning values that all notaries would like to share and would like to see shared by Québec and the government. Among these shared jurisdictions are international trade, external affairs, currency, defence, criminal law, and customs. This means that, insofar as the answers are representative of the milieu, we would like to see a federal link maintained with Canada, whether it be in a confederal system or in a sovereignty-association system. One thing worth pointing out is that none of the surveyed notaries recognized any jurisdiction as belonging exclusively to the federal government.

I think this is highly revealing and shows to what extent all members of the notarial profession who, as mentioned earlier by the president of the Chambre, work throughout Québec - at present, there isn't a clergyman in every parish, but there are notaries even in the remotest corners of Québec. All these people were given our questionnaire and I think their answers reflect the wishes of the public. Economically, notaries deal with major business transactions. More than \$20 billion go through our trust accounts. This means we are tuned in to the economic world and are in communication with it on a daily basis. This is why the Chambre could not pass up such a fine opportunity to reflect the popular will, by adding our brief to all those you have received to date, and we go along with this popular will as citizens of Québec and not just as a corporation of professionals.

This is why we took pains to reflect as accurately as possible, through a survey, the message that we are delivering to the Commission today, and we want to wish its members good luck because their task is an enormous one right up until the end. It is with great pleasure and great satisfaction that we present our views today, in the respect of our democratic institutions. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Léonard, you have the floor.

Mr. Léonard: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to welcome the Chambre des notaires. In particular, if I may, I'd like to welcome its president,

Maître Jacques Taschereau, who was my professor at university, and Maître Guy Bélisle, who...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'm not taking responsibility for what's going to happen next.

Mr. Léonard: Ha, ha, ha! And Maître Guy Bélisle, whom I met when I was minister of Municipal Affairs and Planning. I'd like to congratulate you on the position you have taken and your involvement in this debate. Not many professional corporations have appeared here to speak out on the issue and I think this is a sign that you want to be involved in the community. Be that as it may, I think that notaries in many ways represent the continuity and durability of Québec, because you are at the heart of all our major transactions, and of all milestones in our lives, like marriage contracts, first mortgage on a house, wills, etc., all our real estate transactions, if you will, and civil law in particular.

(11:30 a.m.)

Mr. President, I'd like to ask a question related to the type of work you do. You're often at the heart of complex transactions that affect important assets for individuals and for societies. Allow me to make a comparison. When we go to negotiate our share of the debt with the federal government, that is, the portion of the accumulated deficit we'll have to assume, I suppose there'll be an agreement that we don't have to repay this debt, but we'll have to treat it as a mortgage, so to speak, like in real estate, and therefore we will have to pay only the interest, which is what we're paying now through taxes to the federal government; we'll have to pay the interest on that debt through the government of Québec which in turn is going to pay the bond holders. Do you find that this is a valid approach or that the analogy is valid?

Mr. Bélisle: Yes. Notaries are quite familiar with the process of taking out a mortgage. It doesn't change the terms, conditions or method of repayment. What is certain is that, if we had to negotiate the share of the debt, we shouldn't be expected to pay it immediately. In any case, the federal government would also have to pay, in cash, the amounts it owes, because a portion of these amounts is attributable to us, as our current debt as Canadian citizens.

Mr. Léonard: So, if I understand correctly, in this hypothesis we wouldn't have to reimburse our share of the federal debt, we would only have to continue paying the interest. In other words, the \$8 billion that we pay through taxes to the federal government, we would simply pay through the taxes collected by the government of Québec.

Mr. Bélisle: That would be logical, yes.

Mr. Léonard: That would be logical.

Mr. Bélisle: Yes.

Mr. Léonard: Mr. Chairman, I'd like...

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

Mr. Léonard: I'll make it brief. You say that defence should be a shared jurisdiction. In my mind, everything that has to do with defence, as I see it, will be negotiated on a three-way basis on this continent. Since the United States is very much involved, I think both Canada and Québec will be involved as well. Therefore, there'll be three of us in this sector. I see it as an agreement more than anything else. Is that the way you see it too?

Mr. Taschereau: That wasn't exactly the way the survey came out. The survey came out in favour of three armies, there might be two armies, one American and one Canadian, which would be joined by Québec. That's how it came out.

Mr. Léonard: In any event, I'd like to point out, in conclusion, that 80% of notaries feel that sovereignty must become a reality.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We now give the floor to Mr. Bouchard, followed by Mr. Libman and Mr. Proulx.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, I, too, would like to congratulate Maître Jacques Taschereau for his admirable teaching to many generations of students, including me. In fact, there may be a connection, insofar as responsibility goes, between my questions and the teaching we received then.

Mr. President, your brief ends on a very clear conclusion that excludes outright independence and federalism. Your solution is either confederation, or sovereignty-association.

The confederal solution has been alluded to on a number of occasions before the Commission, but in a rather limited fashion. I was amazed to see it brought up by so few people. It has been talked about, but not by many people. Except for Mr. Dion, who in his recent presentation did specifically talk about the confederal solution, which is not very well known, mainly because many Quebecers, and even Canadians, think that our system is a confederation, as it has been commonly called for a long time, rather than a federation, which it is. I think it's important to make the distinction between these two concepts in the public's mind because they are two very different worlds. You yourself make a very clear

distinction between federalism and confederation.

There is even a debate on the subject which has started, and which, of course, is still going on. It has to do with a confederal solution where you have sovereign states that get together and adopt a central power to manage common activities. But there is, in any event, something resembling an assembly, a parliament. There are two theories on this. Some see this parliament as made up of people elected by universal suffrage, which is closer to federalism, and remains within the parameters of confederation. Others dismiss the idea of a parliament elected by universal suffrage because they claim that a parliament made up of people elected by universal suffrage will perpetuate this dichotomy between the two parliamentary levels in Québec. And a parliament stripped of powers will always look for some. Inevitably, through a sort of division of political power, it is going to succeed and, according to those who hold with this theory, it stands to reason that we would have to go back to a more conventional, more classical model than confederation, which says that parliament has to be made up of delegates from federated states, from the sovereign states that are part of it.

I'd like to know whether, as part of its brief, the Chambre has looked into this idea of the confederal system it proposes.

Mr. Taschereau: Yes, Mr. Bouchard. The Chambre des notaires, through its research department, consulted distinguished authors in the legal field, among whom I recognized our minister of justice in his work on federalism. We will inform you, and the press, of the findings that came out of our research in public international law, which gives a very accurate definition of confederation. As you indicated, there is often confusion in the public's mind. What we're living in is a federation, and the term "confederative pact" is an inaccurate one. This is why, in our presentation, we insist on the correct meaning of the term.

I think that when the governments decide to negotiate, they will have to study a formula that is either elective, to determine a choice of representatives in a confederal system for the powers delegated to this central government, to look into... Governments might have to look into the experience of the European parliament and use the successive steps taken by the European Community as their inspiration.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr... Go on, I thought you had finished.

Mr. Taschereau: No, I think...

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

Mr. Libman: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask a question on the details of your survey; when I read that 80% of notaries in Québec have declared themselves in favour of independence, there seems to me to be something wrong. In your brief, in the preface, you speak not only as president of the *Chambre des notaires du Québec*, but on behalf of 3500 notaries. On the first page of your brief, you also say that the *Chambre* has involved notaries in its work by inviting them to give their opinions through a recent survey whose results formed the basis for your document.

On page 5, you state that the *Chambre des notaires du Québec* is therefore the official spokesman for the notaries. I'm a little puzzled, and that's why I have to ask this question. I contacted several notaries of my acquaintance, English-speaking and French-speaking notaries, who never received any survey, who didn't even know there was one.

Secondly, they said that no member of the *Chambre des notaires du Québec* was going to file a brief or speak out in favour of Québec's sovereignty. Can you give me some more details? How was your survey carried out? Who was consulted? How many people were consulted? Was a survey sent to all notaries in Québec?

Mr. Bélisle: At the *Chambre des notaires*, surveys are continually being carried out by a firm, and there is also another firm that made a survey, a Québec firm. If you ever want to look at the results of the survey, we can give them to you. If there are notaries who didn't respond, it isn't because they weren't contacted. Particularly last fall, when there were 900 notaries right here in Québec City...

A voice: 1100.

Mr. Bélisle: 1100 notaries. All of them received the questionnaire, and they were urged to respond. You don't have to have a response from 3500 notaries. And I must also correct you when you say that 80% of notaries opted for independence. Only 17% of notaries were in favour of independence.

A voice: Sovereignty.

Mr. Bélisle: As far as sovereignty-association is concerned, it was the confederative aspect of it which was favoured, much more so than sovereignty-association per se. If you look at our brief, and at Mr. Dion's article, you'll see striking similarities, particularly when it comes to the definition of confederation and the division of powers. Mr. Dion was not consulted by the *Chambre des notaires*, and the *Chambre des notaires* knew nothing of this article before Mr. Dion produced it, since our report was filed with the

Commission at the beginning of November.

As stated in our conclusion, we advocate keeping a strong federal link within a confederative framework, but if there is no possibility of negotiating something within a confederative framework, notaries are willing to accept sovereignty-association.

Mr. Libman: So, as far as the survey is concerned, would it be inaccurate to say that these results are based solely... According to the information I received, a professional development course was held here in Québec City, on November 2. The questionnaire was distributed to the 500 participants and your brief is based solely on these 500 or 600 respondents who attended.

Mr. Bélisle: 1100.

Mr. Libman: You tell me that all notaries in Québec were consulted, but you based yourself only on the results of respondents. Is that what you're saying?
(11:45 a.m.)

Mr. Bélisle: We said that our survey was representative. 1100 notaries were consulted. As you are aware, in any survey... In a Québec-wide survey, for instance, 1100 people are asked their opinion and the results are considered to be the opinion of Québec as a whole. So, if, in our case, 1100 people were surveyed... Some decided not to answer for personal reasons, some may have forgotten or didn't want to answer, and some answered. We received 539 responses out of 3500. We felt that this was quite representative.

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

Mr. Proulx: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My questions have been asked, but I'd like to use the remaining time to point out a few things. First, in reference to your joke, there are indeed as many, if not more, notaries than clergymen in rural areas, with the difference that when you go around collecting, it's a little more expensive.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Proulx: That said, my questions were answered, but I'd like to go back to Mr. Libman's last question because it keeps coming up every time we have groups here, particularly groups such as yours, and ourselves as well, which are considered conservative, and among these groups, we're probably the ones that have spoken out most clearly. Certain people, here at any rate, are always questioning the legitimacy of our surveys.

I can tell you that if the popularity polls

on many elected officials at both the federal and provincial levels had been as sound as ours, they would be quite happy; I think it's unfortunate that the working methods of our organizations are so often questioned. What I'd like to ask you... In fact, the question is: Did you go about getting an opinion on the constitutional question differently than you usually do in any other issue that concerns your responsibilities? I think the answer to that question will enlighten us and to some extent provide an answer to people who continually maintain that the emotional factor plays a part in our organizations.

Mr. Bélisle: The invitation was extended to the 3500 notaries who were notified of the professional development course. There were 1100 in attendance, but anybody could... Everybody was informed about the survey, and everybody was free to respond. I said earlier that the Chambre is always doing surveys on many subjects and, to date, the results have never been challenged. One of the two surveys was carried out by the same firm that usually does surveys for the Chambre des notaires. The second, as we explained, was done by another firm, and it confirmed the first one. I think that, in the circumstances, we can safely conclude that this is very representative of the position taken by all notaries and by the profession.

Mr. Proulx: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Ouellet, for two or three minutes.

Mr. Ouellet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your conclusion strikes me as very wise, but it leads to a recommendation which has me puzzled. In your conclusion, you say that any profound change cannot come about without creating a certain destabilization, no matter what people think or say; that harmony among Quebecers should not be disrupted because of ill-advised actions. You go on to say that you obviously reject independence because it would create destabilization and you recommend opting either for a confederal system or for sovereignty-association. But, in my opinion, renewed federalism would create destabilization.

Mr. Bélisle: I can tell you that we have been hearing about renewed federalism for a long time. In 1980, in particular, when many of the Chambre members were in favour of federalism. They truly believed in a renewed federalism. I wonder whether that would have been the case if they had known that, two years later, Québec would, to all intents and purposes, be excluded from the constitutional agreement.

Mr. Ouellet: I agree.

Mr. Bélisle: Since then, even though there have been attempts — we are now in 1991 — there has been no renewed federalism. We're still sitting around the constitutional table, instead of getting on with many other things, as the young people pointed out this morning. We could be doing a great many more productive things and we risk finding ourselves around the same table ten years from now because federalism may not have been renewed in the way Quebecers or Canadians understand renewal.

Mr. Ouellet: But you wouldn't reject the possibility, if the renewal was a profound one.

Mr. Bélisle: It may be a little late in the day to claim that it can be renewed. There's one thing left: now we have to be "proactive" because the other side had a chance to be "proactive" and it failed. So, I think that Québec... As you know, if you stop moving, you start losing ground.

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

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Commission. I speak as a member of this Commission, as a member of the Government and as Minister of Justice. It is a great pleasure to have you here for this presentation and I congratulate you on a solid, very well thought-out brief. Well done. Your organization is not made up of people who readily jump on the latest bandwagon. You have shown the thoughtfulness characteristic of your profession and, socially and economically, you play a role in our society which was very aptly described a moment ago.

Your brief is very interesting and I'm convinced that it provides the Commission with useful indications as regards a consensus at the outcome of our public hearings. I can tell you that I agree with Mr. Ouellet that your conclusion is wise. And I agree with Mr. Bouchard that you have made an interesting distinction between federalism, confederalism, sovereignty-association and independence. In the last paragraph of your brief, you state that the Chambre des notaires du Québec rejects both federalism and independence. I understand that you equate federalism with the status quo, or very nearly. The other end of the spectrum is what has been called unconditional independence. You go on to say that you propose either a confederal system in the strict sense, or sovereignty-association. You state that, in both cases, Québec will assume its full powers as a sovereign State and that it is up to the people of Québec to decide. This is the concluding passage of your brief.

I find this interesting because you place the concept of sovereignty in the context of recent developments in international jurisprudence, that is to say, sovereignty can be understood to mean international sovereignty or internal sovereignty. If I understand your brief correctly, you're in favour of a confederation, a genuine confederation, because, as Mr. Bouchard rightly pointed out earlier, our system was called Canadian confederation, but what we have is not a confederation, it's a federation. But you're in favour of a true confederation, with exclusive, very important powers in Québec - I won't list them here - and you distinguish this from sovereignty-association. I'd like you to elaborate on this distinction between a confederation and sovereignty-association, as described in your report.

Mr. Taschereau: One of our concerns was to establish in our position that there was more than one option. What worries us a little in the concept of sovereignty-association is that it has not been made entirely clear. It is a concept that has changed, but which is not dealt with as such by the authors of international law, according to our research. To put it simply, the parameters and points of reference are not defined. This concept, as you know, has changed among our politicians, and it seemed preferable to us... But leaving the option open, the concept of sovereignty-association can be defined by the public authorities who will determine the options selected. We felt that the confederal system was already well defined and that it was a question of choosing what is suitable to us, but with the help of parameters established by the authors.

Mr. Rémillard: I don't want to interrupt you but time is running out and there is a point I'd like to discuss with you: Do you consider that sovereignty-association is based on an international treaty, which is to say Québec would be recognized as a sovereign State associated with Canada, whereas confederation would mean sovereignty for Québec, but within an internal law constitution, and therefore within a single country. Is that the way you see it?

Mr. Bélisle: Yes, we lean towards the second solution, which would mean the full powers of two political and national entities with a central government on a single territory; ultimately, a central government that would delegate powers and responsibilities. I repeat that the surveys we talked about earlier lean towards this association, this confederation with full powers and an agreement to share with other sovereign States, so that we could keep the same Canada, but with powers assumed by regions or provinces. One thing is certain, Québec would assume its powers. There's no

question that this type of confederation would be different from sovereignty-association. We have been discussing this for a long time... When it comes to sovereignty-association, what we finally realized is that it was an economic association, whereas our members want to go beyond an economic association and share other powers. That's why I said earlier that our brief is along the same lines as Léon Dion's article, which suggests a sharing of other jurisdictions, like currency, the central bank, international trade, etc.

Mr. Rémillard: In addition to Professor Dion, there is also Professor Garant, who came and explained this theory yesterday, as well as Professor Ivan Bernier and Nicole Duplé. We have had several experts, but you are probably the first group to explain this in such a practical way, supported by a survey; I think that the distinction you have made between confederalism and sovereignty-association deserved to be well explained to this Commission.

So, if I understand your brief correctly, what you want is full powers, full independence for Québec, sovereignty for Québec in its powers, but this sovereignty remains internal, which is to say, it is exercised within an internal law constitution to form a true confederation. Is that an accurate summary?

Mr. Bélisle: Yes.

Mr. Taschereau: Sir, if I may add something - when we speak of sovereignty, we mean exclusive powers in areas that we would reserve to ourselves. Then there would be the powers delegated to the central government and, in any event, whatever residual powers there are must be retained by Québec, unlike in our current federalism.

Mr. Rémillard: You have made a major contribution to this Commission, Sir.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you for this final detail, Maître Taschereau. We thank the Chambre des notaires for this very interesting brief and its presentation.

Before we go on to the next hearing, I would like to remind the members of the Commission that we have a working sitting scheduled for this afternoon at 2:00 p.m. Since we have two more groups to hear, you will be expected back here at 2:15 rather than 2:00. This will enable us to begin shortly after 2:15.

We thank the Chambre des notaires. Our next presentation will be made by the Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:00 noon)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:03 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If the members will kindly go back to their seats.

We will now hear the Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels – it's written differently but it's pronounced the same – the Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec. Mr. President, please introduce your group, after which you will have five minutes to make your presentation.

**Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels
du gouvernement du Québec**

Mr. Giroux (Daniel): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me introduce the people with me: Pierre Baillargeon, from central Québec, from the Drummondville region; Marie-Josée Lemay, from the ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration; Jacques Geoffroy, from the ministère des Affaires culturelles; Daniel Demers, from the ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources; and Serge Cloutier, from the beautiful Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region. Mr. Demers is from Québec City.

So you see our union represents people from all over Québec. This is because the services we offer the public are getting closer to the citizens who use them, and we hope they will thereby improve in quality over the years.

Mr. Chairman, the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du Québec would like to thank the members of this commission for having agreed to hear the point of view of the professionals working in the Québec public service. Our union includes some 12 000 people throughout Québec who hold positions requiring a university education. It is without a doubt the highest concentration of consultants in Québec. In carrying out our duties, we are deeply involved in all major projects of the Québec government. The point of view we are expressing today is the point of view expressed in a secret vote of 70% of our members last October. Without endorsing the option of any particular political party, they gave our union a mandate to work for Québec sovereignty.

A majority of our members have chosen sovereignty because they want a country that is the expression of their people. Their decision is a cry from the heart, certainly, but it also represents the deep conviction that a lack of understanding has come between the founding peoples of Canada and can no longer be ignored. They, like many of their fellow citizens, observe that the efforts to reform Canadian institutions, over the years, over many years, have been a failure. Whatever the formula proposed by Québec, whether for a special status for Québec or for a less centralized federation, each time the result has been bitter defeat.

What kind of sovereignty do we support? A sovereignty that, over the entire territory of the Québec people, gives a single Parliament the responsibility of decreeing all the laws to be enforced and of levying all the taxes, with the possibility, but only the possibility, of delegation to other authorities. Québec would take its place at the table of nations and would be able to enter into treaties, agreements and international accords according to its own imperatives.

A people that becomes master of its own fate becomes capable of assuming more responsibility. It is not afraid of entering into agreements with its neighbours, knowing that they cannot make its policies, objectives or aims subject to their own. After Québec becomes sovereign, such agreements will be made on the basis of relations that are on an equal footing and partnerships that are freely entered into and based on mutual respect.

Because of its geopolitical reality, a sovereign Québec will have to seek special links with Canada or with what today we term the nine other provinces, based on well-considered common interests and, I emphasize, without compromising its full sovereignty.

To live and flourish as a French-speaking society on the American continent, we must tend in the direction of optimal use of all our resources, and among these resources, the Government of Québec, the Québec government, the government of the people of Québec, which counts as one of the most important resources, must make its primary concern the effectiveness of its measures and the quality of all its services. Our experience as consultants in the Québec public service has shown us that Canadian federalism constitutes a major obstacle to the proper functioning of the Government of Québec. Moreover, our brief describes several examples, the erosion of Québec's powers in the areas of communications and language, the numerous cases of duplication that prevent implementation of comprehensive policies on employment, the family and, despite the recent agreements, immigration. In most government projects, our members observe problems and difficulties related to our constitutional status. Overall, there exists an unhealthy competition between two levels of government whose purposes are lost sight of in the tensions and disagreements caused by an outmoded constitutional framework.

The Canadian Constitution has bequeathed to us a costly system characterized by a great deal of overlapping. At present we have two legislative assemblies, fortunately only one senate, two governments, two authorities that intervene in the following areas: external affairs, agriculture and fisheries, social affairs, trade and industry, communications and culture, education, energy, immigration, financial institutions, justice, recreation, manpower, taxation, and

science and technology.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Chairman, without meaning to interrupt you, you used up the five minutes a while ago. Can you perhaps move in the direction of some conclusions or recommendations?

Mr. Giroux: Yes, Mr. Chairman, with great pleasure. It seems to us that sovereignty would demand that the Québec government proceed to a fundamental redefinition and revision of its role and mission, and to that end, our document suggests very specific policies. To conclude, we want to affirm to all Québécois, if they choose sovereignty for Québec, that its public service, to which will be added many people currently working in the federal sphere, has all the skills required to fully exercise all the responsibilities that would fall to it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Giroux. Mr. Larose now has the floor.

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the Commission. It seems to me that the portrait wouldn't have been complete if the principal people in the service of the government hadn't been present at our deliberations to give us their point of view. You, who occupy a unique observation post, who have everyday experience with political relations, who have defined a blueprint for our society corresponding to that defined by a number of groups, corresponding in general to a popular will which, over the years, one might say over the decades, has increasingly asserted itself; you who in each of your departments see many projects, I might say, being designed but often coming to no conclusion, projects which correspond to the overall interests of the population or of Québec, but which, in the political dispute, are sometimes subverted by other interests or the interests of the other guys. I would like you to tell us, in your opinion, in order for the blueprint you are submitting to us to come to something, what the conditions in Québec society would have to be for it to succeed? In short, are the workings of the political parties alone going to be sufficient to carry the project you are promoting?

Mr. Giroux: Obviously the political parties will always have, as they have always had, a large part to play, of course. But it seems to us, and we discuss this in our brief, moreover, and Québec has already started to do it, to work, to bring together partners in society who have similar concerns, who come from the same field of activity, to define with them, in their domain, whether it be culture, communications, an industry, or a particular industrial sector, what are the problems and the possible solutions. We will have to — and I think that things are

changing somewhat in that direction... men and women in political life will have to agree to submit to that highly democratic exercise, a real consultation, a partnership among all the participants, whether they are unions, the union movement, companies, the cooperative movement, or artists in some field. All those who, in a given field, have the same concerns and objectives, and thus we will be able to move ahead, to make progress together, by helping each other a little more than we have managed to do in recent years and decades.

Mr. Larose: Do you think there is a certain momentum that needs to be maintained regarding this extremely important question? And how do you think it should be maintained?

Mr. Giroux: I think it's part of the blueprint for society we have to define in the course of this debate and then, especially, pursue in a way that also gives responsibility to all members of society. We see very good examples of this with the Forum pour l'emploi, for instance, in which you are taking part, I believe, along with other union members but also with members from management, and which we support from within by providing studies, as it is our role to do, without making any decisions. That task belongs to others, of course.

On our side, we are trying among our membership and in the government apparatus to develop a concern for getting close to the people, to no longer just stay in our offices, in our... what some have termed our ivory tower, to work concretely with people involved daily in situations that we have to correct or improve.

I firmly believe that at this point, we have to continue the debate, the process, we have to have concrete results to put before the population in this respect to show that it can work, that we can change the way we function in society, and little by little we will change values and behaviour.

(12:15 p.m.)

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

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Giroux, for your brief. As Mr. Larose said, it is very important for the public service to at least have a chance to express itself, or to express its opinion on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

Your position is very clear. You are in favour of Québec sovereignty. You say that once sovereignty is achieved, it would be desirable for Québec to establish new relations with Canada on an equal footing. In your opinion, what would be Canada's reaction to this? Isn't it possible that Canada would see separation as a rejection or a confrontation and would refuse to enter into this new relationship?

Mr. Giroux: I will tell you that we have a certain amount of experience regarding relations with unions representing workers in the public service of other provinces. We manage, in a spirit of mutual respect, to have relations in regard to things that bring us together, that unite us as concerns and as fields of study.

Obviously, and I have had the opportunity to tell them already, they should prepare themselves a little better for what is happening today in Québec. They aren't very well prepared. They are trying as much as possible to avoid looking at reality, but it is approaching in leaps and bounds, and I think we are dealing with practical people who have their own interests at heart, and it seems to us that they will realize the interest they have in finding methods of collaboration, on a common basis, that will be of use to them and to us too.

Mr. Maciocia: Yes, but you haven't completely answered my question. I asked you if, for instance, they reject this new relationship, what in your opinion would be the consequences for the rest of Canada that could result from rejecting this new relationship?

Mr. Giroux: I think at that point Québec will be able, since it will be by its own choice if such is the case, to function very well on its own as a society, to avoid being penalized on the economic level, and to possess all the leverage it needs for its own development. It has tremendous resources, whether we are talking about human resources, energy resources, or others, to be a fully developed society and country, without suffering from such a rejection of trade and partnership, should it take place.

Mr. Maciocia: But you must realize that there will be a period of political uncertainty at some point during the potential or actual separation of Québec. Many organizations, for example the Association des économistes, have spoken of a transition period that could be costly in terms of Quebecers' standard of living; do you agree that there will be a period of uncertainty and consequently a period of instability, even economic instability, at that point?

Mr. Giroux: If it happened to Quebecers, it would probably be the same thing for Canadians. If they start from that assumption and are also aware of it, they as well as we should be looking for ways to avoid it. Obviously, there are perceptions in any case that can sometimes prevent people from seeing the reality of things, but the transition period shouldn't be very long. If it means subsequently having control of our development...

Mr. Maciocia: There are people who have

talked about five or ten years. Do you think Quebecers are ready to accept a period of five or ten years of political instability and the attendant economic consequences?

Mr. Giroux: I don't think that's the case. I think the negative consequences have been greatly exaggerated.

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

Mr. Chevette: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I too am very happy that the government professionals are testifying. I must congratulate them. It would perhaps be interesting if some day, outside of a formal setting, you could tell us about your experiences with all the nonsense you've been subjected to over the years. I'm convinced there would be books to be written and real gems to be shared. It would probably be a best-seller in Québec.

But professionally, as a collectivity, as a group, you're going to be in the right. There's one member of the Commission who won't question the validity of your survey. I'll explain why. I must tell you that I find your brief one of the most interesting, and it has credibility because you live with the problems in each of your departments. You could give Quebecers a thousand and one examples of how impossible it has been over the years to make the aspirations of Québec a reality. And I should give you heartfelt thanks, as heartfelt as those the minister gave the *Chambre des notaires*, since you are his own consultants.

Having said that, instead of your talking about five or ten years of uncertainty, I'd like to hear you talk about the abilities of Quebecers, and this is to some extent what you say in your brief: the ability to do, the ability to act, the ability to carry things to completion, instead of scaring everybody by talking about inability. I even know some businessmen... If they hadn't taken a chance at some point in their lives, they would probably not even be seated at the table here, because they succeeded, they took a chance, they had confidence and they were able to do it. Based on that, I would like to thank you warmly on behalf of the people of Québec.

I would like to ask two small questions. What would be your answer to the people who relentlessly - this has been almost exclusively their question - persist in saying that in Québec we are still capable of remaining within the Canadian confederation, that they dream of seeing federalism renewed, but without ever telling us what they are asking for, without ever telling us how this can be accomplished, without ever even explaining that they are operating in the context of a constitution where the rule is

still the same old 7-50 or unanimity, depending on the issue?

What do you answer someone who is persistent – we should congratulate him for his persistence – and who still believes in renewed federalism? What do you answer, you people who deal with it every day, who are in the middle of the issues, who have lived through the experience, who have had reports made to you daily, after you've prepared the documents for the ministers, that they're going to Ottawa, and then they get back and they've failed? What do you answer the people who still believe in one last chance?

Mr. Giroux: First, I would say that the current situation is very costly for Quebecers. The chronic inability, it's not only in the major constitutional questions but out there in everyday life, in major sectors of the economic and cultural activity of Québec, that we can't manage to come to any concrete understanding, because our objectives diverge from the outset. The politicians on the other side of the river in Ottawa have a Canada-wide vision, and the other parts of this country want a very centralized government in order to standardize things, while on our side, we are a different entity and want to differentiate ourselves from them.

So, whatever sectors are involved – the environment, culture or communications, to mention only a few that are not dealt with in the document – every government has tried to improve the ability of the public service and of the people who have to make decisions to stick closer to the reality of our population, and each time it has been a dismal failure. I'd say that on the immigration question, for instance, where people could brag about the content of the new agreement, it's an improvement, I agree, in comparison with the preceding one, the Cullen-Couture agreement, as we called it, but where do the decision-making powers remain? Basically very few of them have moved from Ottawa to Québec City.

As for the chances of renewing the Canadian federation, I think that the attempts and the people who have been insisting on trying have had every opportunity to propose them to us. We have compromised to an unprecedented extent during the past few years, unfortunately without success. And the last attempt was a blatant demonstration of this, if there ever was one.

Mr. Chevette: Another aspect of your brief that I find very interesting is that you...

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

Mr. Chevette: A comment. If they want to comment on it, it'll be just too bad.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But you won't comment on their comment on your comment?

Mr. Chevette: No.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Then let's go.

Mr. Chevette: I knew I wouldn't have that second level of permission. I think it's interesting that you didn't just stop with the holding of a possible referendum, but you spoke of the Québec of tomorrow, the Québec that is coming into existence – in particular, in regard to the decentralization of powers. If you have a few minutes, with the kind permission of the Chairman, I would like you to explain to me a little how you see this decentralization. Because a centralized Québec doesn't necessarily answer the aspirations of Quebecers as such.

Mr. Giroux: Two words, very simply.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes.

Mr. Giroux: I think that is along the same lines as what I was describing earlier, a greater assumption of responsibility on the part of the people who actually have to go through the experience of the situations or problems. And people in the regions have to take themselves in hand and define their problem. To do this basically means that we will have to decentralize, and we are ready for that. We are ready, even if it were to disturb our lives somewhat, to live it, to support it, and to foster it with all our energy and skills.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well then, many thanks to Mr. Giroux, Mrs. Lemay, and all your other colleagues, for this extremely interesting presentation. May I call to your attention that the top people among your predecessors all wound up as senior civil servants, so if you have very strong convictions, you will have to fight to stay in your jobs as professionals only. But when it comes down to it, I know...

Mr. Giroux: I'll fight.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...you have other concerns.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you for being here this morning. We will now hear from the Union des écrivaines et écrivains québécois.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:17 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 12:28 p.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): May I ask the members of the Commission to please take their seats. We will now hear from the Union des écrivaines et écrivains québécois. Mr. Roy, you are familiar with our rules. You know you have five minutes for the overall presentation. I would ask you to introduce your colleagues, and then take the five minutes to present a summary of your brief.

Union des écrivaines et écrivains québécois

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Thank you for inviting us. I will start by introducing the people on my left: Louis Hamelin, Michèle Lalonde, André Roy, Andrée Ferretti, Simone Monet-Chartrand and, of course, yours truly.

Allow me to begin with a brief comment. For 30 years now, as everyone knows, works of the imagination in Québec have spoken of independence. Today, we writers are the last to speak before you. Therefore, we'd like to thank you for realizing that we, in fact, have been part of this debate from first to last.

Our brief is titled "Recours au pays". During a recent consultation, 89% of the members of the Union des écrivaines et écrivains québécois said yes to an independent Québec. In the wake of the writings that are the foundation of Québec literature, in the wake of such authors as Ferron, Aquin, Gauvreau, Lapointe, Beaulieu, Leclerc, Savard, and Guévremont, we, the writers of Québec, continue to express an undeniable will to achieve independence.

We are writers. We exist. We create, in French, a body of literature which is taught throughout the world. We are no longer a footnote to French or Canadian literature, but an entity. We are Québec literature.

By definition, any people is distinct. In the terms adopted by the United Nations, a people has the inalienable right to self-determination. The Canada of Meech Lake refused to use this beautiful word "people" – people, preferring the more ambiguous "société" – society. This choice is deliberate. It is not societies, even if they are distinct, that create cultures. Cultures are created by peoples, peoples who nurture and perpetuate mother tongues and original literatures.

The identity of our works is an affirmation of its appellation: Québec literature. We writers in this nation of ours went from French-Canadian literature to Québec literature. This reality is reflected in the history we embody. The past three or four generations of writers, through their works, have raised our literature to the rank of national literature throughout the world. It was Gaston Miron who said that any culture, if it wants to be a study of man in the

world and in history, if it wants to live, act and flourish, must hold up a mirror to itself, must be self-sufficient in the midst of interdependence and exchange, which supposes that it is also, as any other culture in the world, a distinct political expression and dimension. A complete culture is always one and many, open and pluralistic, which allows it to portray the human condition in its entire activity and its works, using its own schemas and producing its own discourse on the world, thereby contributing to a universal culture in its illustration of human life at large and as lived by Quebecers. The future of Québec's literature and its love story with language is bound up with the destiny of a people and its culture. That's how Gaston Miron put it.

Québec literature is unique, and therefore universal, and it generates its own discourse and its own forms. Because our way of life and our way of writing is necessarily cultural, this Québec-culture referent affirms our integrity. This is an exhilarating thought because, if anyone needs reminding, our behaviour, our beliefs, our values, our symbols, our relation with the world are given expression in book after book, and it's literature that imprints these things on the individual and the collective mind.

Once and for all, we writers propose unequivocally that Québec opt for independence, to ensure the existence and flourishing of our people and our literature. Against all odds, we affirm the universal values of Québec literature and its place in the world. We write to portray clearly the conditions in which our people exists. We write so that our readers will recognize themselves in us. We write to make our own the consequences of our situation in America. We write to consolidate the conditions surrounding the existence of a national literature.

In closing, let me quote Gaston Miron again, who said: "I have not returned to return, I have arrived at the beginning." Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Roy. Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Mr. Roy, thank you for being with us with your group today. Although you are the last to be heard by this Commission, in the hearts of many among us, after reading your brief – pardon the pun if I say it was very well penned – yours is certainly not the least of our briefs, far from it, it's a brief of the very highest quality.

Upon reading your brief, I was reminded of the time when I was at college, during the sixties; many of the literature professors of those days later became writers that we see frequently today. They used to tell us that a big project was taking shape in Québec. It wasn't independence, but the groundwork for many things in Québec was laid in 1960. Things like

education. Things like health. And things like an up-to-date civil service - some of its members were here just before you. We had savings with the Caisse de dépôt; we had a road network. We had the Maisons du Québec throughout the world. We had Hydro-Québec, and the list goes on. It was an all-encompassing project, a blueprint for society.

I liked your brief, but it says: "Let's become independent". It begins and ends with that. You quote someone from my riding, Alfred Desrochers, who said that ours was a violent race, a race of the strong and the bold. But, in his books, he saw beyond that. He described and talked about the environment. What I mean is, Alfred Desrochers had a blueprint for society. There is no trace of that in your brief. But I'd like you to talk about it a little. Why did you begin and end with independence?

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Because it is the beginning and the end. In our collective mind, as I said earlier, independence was there from the start. I can give you an anecdote to illustrate this point, and perhaps answer your question. I sometimes teach and at the time I was an assistant professor. I was teaching a course on Québécois songs. That was at the time of the Referendum. There were adults in the class, and the person I'm referring to had a master's degree, which means he had a considerable cultural and academic background. We were discussing the content of certain songs. At one point someone said: I agree with the content of Gilles Vigneault's songs. I was surprised, knowing his position, and I replied: But Vigneault urges you to say yes, why do you say no? Oh, he said, it's not the same thing. It's not the same thing.

Seen from that angle, I think it's obvious that there is a need to unite, and Québec literature has always borne witness to that unity. We must now take this unity from the realm of the imagination and make it a reality. This is not to deny the many achievements that have been made over the past 30 years. The fact that there is a real strength in Québec is proof of that.

Mr. Benoit: My last question, Mr. Roy: In what way will literature be able to serve sovereignty, not only here but... A few days ago, there was a writer in the audience - I don't know if he is a member of your association - Mordecai Richler, who is an English-speaking Québec writer whose books are read everywhere in the world, in England, which have been made into movies in the United States... How will this independence serve literature in Québec, first, but also how would it help you export this superb product of yours?

Mr. Roy (Bruno): You may recall the fight

we led on the issue of tax on books. God knows we put plenty of energy into it and we won in Québec. We're trying to do the same thing in Ottawa but it doesn't work. We succeeded in obtaining the status of artist in Québec; we're still trying to negotiate it with Ottawa. We could give you other similar examples. I think that once we have full powers we'll be able to achieve our priorities. When all is said and done, our priorities can never be those of others; they are ours and we must have control over them. We could go on about questions like that but I don't want to confine our arguments strictly to that issue.

Mr. Benoit: Thank you, Mr. Roy.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bédanger): Mr. Brassard.

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Chairman, I too would like to thank Québec writers, not only because they have accompanied the people of Québec in their evolution over the years - as you point out in your brief, first it was Canadians, then French-Canadians, and now Quebecers. Literature followed along the same path because you were able to voice perfectly the aspirations of Québec's soul. And this Québec soul has often been embodied in literary works, particularly among the poets. You have quoted Mrs. Lalonde, who is with you, and Miron, but you could have quoted any number of other poets, such as Préfontaine, Brault, Hénault, and Pilon, because Québec poets have succeeded admirably in expressing the soul of Québec.

As Miron pointed out, Québec literature has become a national literature; you quoted him earlier and I think he's worth quoting again when he says that the future of Québec literature and its love story with language is bound up with the people and its culture. If the Québec people and culture disappear because of "Louisianization", Québec literature will become a dead literature. Gaston Miron will suffer the same fate as Frédéric Mistral, who wrote in Provençal. That's how it will end. There is no literature without a people or without the culture lived by this people.

I have a very specific question to ask you. Only recently, you fought against taxing books, and rightly so. We, for our part, supported you all the way and you won the battle. With the support of a lot of people, you won in Québec. You managed to make the Québec government yield, and made it see reason, but you lost the battle on the federal scene. What lesson have you learned from this?

Mr. Roy (Bruno): The lesson, of course, can be deduced from the affirmation stated in our document. There is nothing left but independence if we want to affirm our priorities and our

views. I have another example that I'd like to mention briefly, which has to do with libraries and public lending rights. Writers are granted financial compensation when their books are loaned out of a library. When the issue of negotiating this with writers from all over Canada, which means the Writers' Union and the Union des écrivains, it took little time to agree on a certain view of things, namely that writers should administer their own money. Finally, the issue was sort of swept away, we don't quite know why.

In Québec, we administer a photographic reproduction program valued at \$1 million, and the interest from this amount goes towards activities designed for the members. We could have pension plans, of course, with a certain way of administering them, but this way of seeing things and administering our affairs is not recognized in Ottawa. A public lending rights commission was created. Whether they're right or wrong is not the question. One thing is certain, they don't see things the way we do. And we could go on... It's the same thing with the Maison des écrivains. We chose to be owners, but Ottawa refuses to give us a little help because we don't fit in with their view of things. There are many more examples like this. Our conclusion, which is the experience not only of... This is not a figment of our imagination, it is the result of our experience in relations with others. The only possible solution is autonomy, which means independence.

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

Mr. Turgeon: Mr. Chairman, you know that writers are quite familiar with punctuation, and I think that, since this is the last hearing of this Commission, their presentation is a fine way of underlining things and dotting the i's. Even in the spelling reform, there is no question of abolishing the dot on the i.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Turgeon: My question is addressed to either of you or... perhaps to Mrs. Lalonde. In this Québec which, regardless of the option selected, this Québec which will no longer be the same, this Québec to be created, what role must artists, creators and writers play?

Mrs. Lalonde (Michèle): In my view, the same role as always. It has to be understood that writers have indeed been a strong presence, perhaps in the same way as heralds, ushering in changes or new mindsets, people who, so to speak, call forth the future; at the start of the sixties, writers played the role of substitute. It must be understood that this role of substitute can be explained by our extremely close ties

with the French language. This is obviously because language is the tool of our trade and our position could be compared to that of visual artists, who would be distressed and quite worried to find people becoming increasingly blind, which would call into question the very essence of their creative activity.

(12:45 p.m.)

I think that artists, creators and writers all over the world have played the role of substitute in the absence of political spokespeople to express important ideas and the overwhelming need for renewal in terms of programs and proposals to the electorate.

In a way, it happened by chance. We took specific steps, and we can do so because we exist as citizens, but what is most characteristic of the writer's action is the attempt to articulate issues in very broad and historical terms. The creator always places himself in the historical long term rather than today's political reality, which is why we are often very disconcerted because our ideas are easily co-opted. They're recyclable. We often find ourselves faced with the recycling of our ideas, which are then used as political banners behind such a party program or party line. This is a reduction phenomenon.

I could tell you that, when it comes to "Speak White", which is quite a well-known text, which was even the subject of a debate in the House... and which we have come to understand better with time, I could tell you that I am always asked, whenever an abridged version of the text is required, to cut out the same three lines: the allusion to French colonialism, the allusion to Soviet repression against Hungary or Poland, and the allusion to the Nazi oppression of Jews. It's very odd. There's always a tendency to bring the ideas to the level of the political arena. I think that all writers experience this. What would happen, I think, after independence, is that our broad historical perspective would be intimately understood by our own publics and we would continue our work, which is basically to try to find the right words.

Mr. Turgeon: What I find astonishing is that throughout these hearings, unless I'm mistaken, we have received no briefs from English-speaking intellectuals. There have been no artists or writers from the Anglophone community in this debate. How do you feel about this and, in your opinion, since you are in contact with them, what would their reaction be to Québec's declaration of sovereignty?

Mrs. Lalonde: I may be able to answer that question. Actually, I'm not that surprised. As you know, I have been involved quite frequently and I'm among those who were often quoted. I never received a single telephone call from people whose sovereignist position was known, or from

any party. Nobody ever thinks of inviting us. Texts are used extensively and quoted as supporting evidence. But writers have a tendency to stay home. As I mentioned, we're not frequent actors in the news. We're not journalists. We are people who reflect on fundamental questions and who, sometimes, feel the need to speak out, but it isn't our job to do that. We're not politicians.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Roy. Mr. Beaudry? I'm sorry. Did you want to add something?

Mr. Roy (Bruno): There's something Andrée would like to point out.

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

Mrs. Feretti (Andrée): In answer to that particular question, I can't say that I have spent a lifetime reflecting on the role played by Québec's Anglophone writers in the products of our imagination, but I think that, like any other minorities in Québec, in an independent Québec State, they would have their place, the place they care to take by integrating into the general culture.

However, there is something that I would like to mention on the subject of culture. I have a feeling that, in this debate held before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, culture was given a meager place. The emphasis was always on the economy. Without denying the fundamental importance of the economy in a society, or a nation, throughout history – and the longer the history, the more this is borne out – there have been many economic systems, and conditions that were more or less conducive to economic development. But why is it that nations have always survived, even with the passing of economic systems? Why is it that they held on to an identity, that we can talk about an English or a French nation? It isn't because of the liberal economic system of the 19th century or because of feudalism. Economic systems come and go. They answer immediate needs, and that answer is part of the development of the world as a whole, scientific and technological. But, out of all this, what remains? What makes a nation a nation? The answer is, its culture. Culture is...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I totally agree with you. I don't want to interrupt you and I'd like you to continue but I must remind you that our time is limited.

Mrs. Feretti: Yes. I would just like to say that the fundamental reason we want independence for Québec is that the Québec nation exists, it has its own way of being in the world, and of finding solutions to its problems.

Not having full political and socioeconomic powers, or the right to self-determination, or of making our own decisions is a denial of our identity and existence. This, in essence, is a cultural phenomenon. And it persists. This is why we must have an independent Québec, to protect, defend, promote and nurture Québec culture. The rest will follow.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): In history, the people who left the most significant cultural achievements are also those who were able to use the various economic systems in which they lived to amass a minimum of wealth, which enabled them to defray the costs...

Mrs. Feretti: Exactly! They had the independence and the powers needed to exploit their economic system.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I wasn't saying that to criticize what you said in the least. I was merely making a comment. Independence is an interesting thing which, throughout history, has gone through many stages. Be that as it may, Mr. Beaudry, who will be the last to ask questions, now has the floor.

Mr. Beaudry: You don't seem convinced, Madam.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Beaudry: That worries me. I am pleased to welcome you. I am particularly happy to see Mr. Bruno Roy here, with whom we had the pleasure of sitting here for a while. It's a pleasure to see him again today.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): The pleasure will be renewed next week.

Mr. Beaudry: Pardon?

Mr. Roy (Bruno): The pleasure will be renewed next week.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, it will be a renewed pleasure. I have no doubt that you will find a way to preserve your culture. But just out of curiosity... Incidentally, I find your brief excellent. I also understand the sovereignist position you have taken. In fact, it's a position that has been put forward by writers for many years – that hasn't changed. But on page 3, you state that Québec's independence will provide better access to Québec literature. I'd like you to explain this to me. Are there any restrictions or limitations imposed on your literature at present?

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Until now, our literature

has put forward a Québec that lives in the imagination of its people. For this to become a reality, presupposes a political expression. But there is no political expression of Québec literature. It is contingent on a Canadian whole. So if we want to talk about Québec literature, in songs for example, since this is my field, there are singers – I was going to say singer-songwriters, but times have changed – there are singers who do not use the Québec idiom because it creates a certain ambiguity outside our borders. So, let's say that, for the past 10 years, Québécois songs have been called French songs from here. But we can't seem to give birth to this Québec reality, even though we had given it a name.

This shows a tendency, in recent years, to go back to the old name for things that no longer correspond to our reality. In essence, that's what it is. Political expression is necessary because it complements the work of the imagination which, I think, will eventually become a reality.

Mr. Beaudry: What was the old label?

Mr. Roy (Bruno): French-Canadian.

Mr. Beaudry: French-Canadian. What you're talking about is access to and from the others, when it comes to your own literature. It goes both ways.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Absolutely. The very fact that we are different here... In their relations with us, this will make the others see their own difference. Because we're not a homogeneous whole. Mrs. Chartrand might want to add something.

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand (Simone): Well, seniority must count for something.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: I am a politicized person. On the day I was born, my father was a member of the National Assembly and my grandfather was an elected official in the federal government. So, politicians are no big deal to me...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: They don't worry me at all.

A voice: They don't impress you.

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: No. But that's what worries me, if I may say so.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: What I wanted to say is that the whole question of literature was very well illustrated in the text and in the words of Bruno, but artists are also actors on the social scene. Whether they're writers, poets or sculptors, they play a social role. We represent a union of writers, but in my view, culture goes beyond literature. Listening to other speakers earlier, I was struck by how we have always doubted our abilities. I raised seven children and all were brought up with this principle: You can do it. At two and a half, you can tie your shoes by yourself, I won't tie them for you. Today, they're all responsible people with interesting careers and trades.

This is why I was wondering: Why, are we always so fearful, so timid? In 1940, I was a student of Abbé Groulx, in history and literature, for three years at Université de Montréal. This is the man who said, Notre État français, nous l'aurons, indicating that we would have our French Nation someday. I mean, he wasn't a simpleton. Even if you're anticlerical, he was a historian and a man of value. And to think we're still wondering whether we can... Whether you call it a "people", a "state" or a "nation", that's what he meant to say. That's what I have been working towards since 1940. And that can take different forms.

I was happy to hear that some civil servants are assuming responsibilities on behalf of the people. If I may be allowed to digress, I would say that, in my view, this has a lot to do with the issue of autonomy. That's an old-fashioned word. I detest Duplessis, but he used it because he was quite a crafty little politician. He used the word "autonomy". And everybody was in favour. That's a story that worked for a long time. And what did he do with it? He was selling gold mines, forests and all the rest. It was all a lie. But when it comes to women, from an economic standpoint, autonomy always seems like a tragedy. It's going to end in divorce, it's going to make a homosexual of her husband, it's terrible...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: We're always afraid... Go ahead, laugh! It'll do you good to laugh, Mr. Bélanger.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: When it comes to a woman's autonomy – I have been a feminist for 45 years and I'm not afraid to say it – each time, people say: Sure, but don't you think you're exaggerating, people are not ready for it, your spouse won't agree to let you go back to school or he'll be upset that you're not asking him to support you. It's nice to have a husband support you! It's nice, we should write a song

about it. Although the government supports us, we are the government; it's our taxes, it's the artists, the carpenters, the craftsmen, the civil servants, the workers, the women who work in factories, it's everybody. You know, being proud of being a Quebecer... We buy a T-shirt that proclaims this and wear it for one summer, but after, we're not proud anymore, we're afraid. Personally, I don't know what fear is. That's because my father, who was a good MNA, although he had to resign because he was too aware of the political doings of his party, taught me never to be afraid of a bishop, or a priest, or a politician, or a president...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Or a husband.

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: ...or a woman president.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

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

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: Personally, I think that independence is normal, just as it's normal for a woman to have an opinion, to have a career, to have a salary. You have had the rest of the Commission to give you the figures, the statistics, the fears and the worries.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. The thought that runs through my head, at this point, is that my wife always tells me: Television is a good thing; I always know where you are. Now she'll be able to hear the reproaches addressed to me.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Monet-Chartrand: Not only to you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We've come to the end of this presentation.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): I have one last thing...

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

Mr. Roy (Bruno): ...which I'll sum up this way: It's not losing that's serious; it's losing all the time.

End of the public hearings

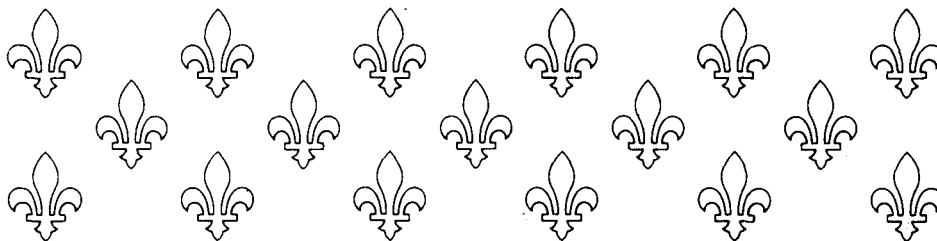
The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Also, you know that it's not losing the battle that's dangerous or upsetting. The important thing is to win the war. There's always a way to find a consoling proverb.

We began our public hearings here - this is the last one today - by receiving the Chambre de commerce. Today, we end our hearings with the Union des écrivains. This has nothing to do with any plan of ours to organize things according to trends, that's just the way it happened. It was said earlier that there was more emphasis on the economy than on culture. I think that we can never overemphasize the importance of culture, but there are still some among us who feel that economic issues were not dealt with sufficiently. But that's another subject, and we won't go back to it.

I'd like to thank you all and at the same time tell you that there's a certain symbolism in the fact that writers were the last to appear before us and that we ourselves will soon be poring over a more or less blank page, as we try to come to a conclusion. Thank you for this presentation.

Let me remind the members that there will be a working sitting this afternoon. Since it is already 1:00 p.m., we will start at 2:30 p.m. Once again, thank you Ladies and Gentlemen. I remind you that the public hearings are now closed.

(End of sitting, 1:01 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, January 22, 1991

No 29

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Mr. André Gobeil, Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval

Mrs. Marie-Josée Leblond, Association des étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique

Mrs. Kathy Mercier, Association étudiante de l'Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Mrs. Annie-Claude Duchesne, Association générale étudiante des secteurs Sciences humaines, Arts et Lettres de l'UQAM

Mr. Pierre Moisan, Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval

Mrs. Marie-Josée Simard, Étudiants autochtones du Québec – Faculté de droit de l'Université d'Ottawa

Mr. Patrick Minotti, Fédération des associations étudiantes du campus de l'Université de Montréal

Mr. Marc-Antoine Adam, McGill-Québec

Mr. Jean-Pierre Paré, Regroupement des associations des cycles supérieurs du Québec

Mr. Pierre Larrivée, Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke

Mr. Pierre Barbeau, Student's Representative Council of Bishop's University

Mr. Louis David Péroquin, Coalition CESAQ – AGECA

Mr. Thomas Poirier, Association étudiante François-Xavier-Garneau inc.

Mr. Alain Fortier, Association générale des étudiants et étudiantes du cégep de Lévis-Lauzon

Mr. Sébastien Audy, Humanities Students Cégep de Matane

Mrs. Nathalie Charbonneau, Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière

Mr. Mario Guertin, Comité national des jeunes de la CSN

Mr. Carl Tremblay, Jeune Barreau de Québec

Mr. François Coallier, Regroupement jeunesse populaire

Mr. Sylvain Gaudreault, Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec (Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean)

Mrs. Emmanuelle Saucier, Commission jeunesse de la Société de recherche en orientation humaine inc.

Mr. Peter Julian, Our Future Together (Québec and Canadian Youth Organization)

Mr. Guy Gagnon, Conseil permanent de la jeunesse

Mrs. Lucie Dufresne, Youth Centre La Soupape

Mr. Martin Viau, Regroupement des maisons de jeunes du Québec

Mr. Robert Vincent, Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal

Mr. François Cholette, Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain

Mr. Richard Smith, Youth Association of the Equality Party

Mr. Benoît Campeau, Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais

Mrs. Nathalie Boulianne, Executive of the Jeune Parti québécois du collège Lafleche de Trois-Rivières

Mr. Joseph Facal, Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois

Mr. Michel Bissonnette, Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party

Mr. Alain Bellefeuille, Jeunes souverainistes de l'Université Laval

Mr. Jean-François Simard, Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec inc.

Mr. Alain Hébert-Croteau, Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie

Québec City, Tuesday, January 22, 1991

Forum: "Youth and the Political Future of Québec"

(2:33 p.m.)

Forum Objectives and Proceedings

Mr. Jean Campeau

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Leader of the Official Opposition, Ladies and Gentlemen, on November 6, the Commission publicly began its work by holding public hearings which, over several weeks, gave many Quebecers the opportunity to voice their opinions and express their expectations regarding the Commission's mandate, namely: to examine and analyse the political and constitutional status of Québec and to make recommendations thereon.

The Commission also invited various experts, who helped its work progress. This vast public consultation continues today with the forum "Youth and the Political Future of Québec", to which all youth organizations, youth groups or individuals under age 30 who had submitted a brief on November 2, 1990 were invited. Therefore, this forum falls directly within the context of the Commission's work.

The decision to involve young people in our reflection is due primarily to the fact that they are the lifeblood of tomorrow's Québec. Today's choices will determine and guide the future, their future. Furthermore, their interest has been manifested by the impressive number of briefs tabled before the Commission, some fifty, and by the relevance of the issues they raised. The great majority of these briefs deal clearly with the issues of concern to us and on which we have been reflecting for more than two months now.

Participating in this forum are 8 individuals and 37 youth groups or youth organizations. They will be the key participants in this public debate based on the individual reflection of each within the group he or she represents. The management team that coordinated the organization of this debate tried, as far as possible, to involve young people in its preparation through working meetings and informal meetings with youth groups and individuals. It also sent each participant documents on an analysis of the briefs and the forum's proceedings. Wherever possible, it took the suggestions and comments made during these preliminary meetings into account.

The forum will proceed in three stages. This afternoon, we'll go around the table for the benefit of all the members who have given up their seats to these young people and let a representative of each group state the key elements of its brief. Tomorrow morning, we'll

hold the forum itself with the debates involving the individuals, youth organizations and youth groups invited. The subjects of debate will be the four major themes that recurred in the various briefs and which are directly related to the Commission's mandate, namely: Québec's distinct character, the obstacles preventing Québec from asserting itself, the redefinition of Québec's political and constitutional status, and the economic aspects closely linked thereto. Tomorrow afternoon, we'll have the discussion period between the members of the Commission and the participants.

Similar to the public hearings and hearings of experts, specific operating rules govern each stage of the forum. I'll simply summarize them very quickly since each member and each participant has already read them.

The representative of each youth group and youth organization will have three minutes to present the key elements of its brief. During the debate, the participants will share the 25 chairs set up in a semicircle. Each participant may speak after having asked the moderator for the floor; the speaking time is limited to three minutes. During the discussion period with the Commission members, the usual rules will apply and any members wishing to speak must register prior to the discussion period with the Chair, indicating which group or individual he or she wishes to address. Each exchange is restricted to five minutes, which may be used by one or more speakers. The speaking times are divided among members as follows: 15 minutes for the Chair, 40 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 40 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group, 85 minutes for the other Commission members.

This forum, which concludes the first phase of the Commission's work, is a unique opportunity for young people to define their priorities regarding the face of tomorrow's Québec. Michel Bélanger and I will chair the discussion period between the young people and the members tomorrow afternoon. Gilles Châtillon will moderate today's period for presenting the briefs as well as tomorrow morning's debate. We'll turn the floor over to him and invite the Commission members to let the representatives of the youth groups and youth organizations have their seats.

(Proceedings adjourned at 2:41 p.m.)

(Proceedings resumed at 2:48 p.m.)

The Moderator (Mr. Gilles Châtillon): Come to order, please!

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, our agenda includes three periods: the presentation of the

briefs of the guest groups today; the debate between participants at 9:00 tomorrow morning; and discussion between the members of the Commission and participants at 2:30 tomorrow afternoon. Thirty-seven groups of young people under age thirty delegated two representatives, representing students, blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, youth shelters, chambers of commerce, political parties and general-interest groups. Eight individuals will also give their testimony tomorrow.

As moderator, my mandate is simple: To allow participants to express their views on Québec's political and constitutional future as well and as fairly as possible within the context of the Commission's mandate. Without further ado, let's start by going around the table to hear each representative give the main thrust and key elements of his or her group's brief. As indicated in the rules, each representative has three minutes to do this.

Key Elements of Groups' Briefs

We'll begin with the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec and Nicolas Plourde. Nicolas, you have the floor.

Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec

Mr. Plourde (Nicolas): Thank you. The Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, FEUQ, formerly the Fédération des étudiants et étudiantes du Québec, FEEQ, was founded on February 11, 1989. Today, FEUQ is composed of ten student associations in nine universities. With more than 100 000 members, then, it is the largest provincial student association ever in Québec. FEUQ decided, as an organization, not to take a stand on the political and constitutional status it preferred for Québec. It decided to let the students it represents speak and to report on their opinions only. To this end, FEUQ asked its member student associations to conduct consultations on a series of questions.

In general, we observed that the majority of students consulted and the majority of student associations took a very clear stand in favour of sovereignty. Similarly, most seemed to acknowledge the importance, regardless of Québec's political and constitutional status, of Québec's adopting a constitution containing the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms enshrining a fully enacted right to education. In effect, section 40 of the current Charter should be amended to reflect the priority that the Québec government must accord to education. FEUQ also feels that this section should be covered by section 52 of the Charter to ensure that any rule of law derogating from it be considered unconstitutional.

In 1976, the Québec government ratified the

international agreement on economic, social and cultural rights which states that higher education should be made accessible to all equally, according to the capacities of each, through all appropriate means and by progressively implementing free schooling. Québec must respect its international commitments, especially if it achieves independence. Further, FEUQ members were unanimous on the need for a referendum to be held as soon as possible. We feel that it is vital for the Commission to include this recommendation in its final report if we want to avoid having the next general election turn into a referendary consultation.

In concluding, we definitely deplore the absence of a young Commission member and the fact that very few youth groups were heard during the public hearings. We also deplore the fact that the operation of this forum was decided without consulting us and that it is subject to so many constraints. Nevertheless, we thank the Commission for its welcome and hope that this forum will allow young people to take their rightful place and send a clear message to our political leaders. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): That was Nicolas Plourde of the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec.

Association des étudiantes et des étudiants des 2e et 3e cycles de l'Université McGill

We now turn the floor over to Rhonda Mawhood of the Association des étudiantes et des étudiants des 2e et 3e cycles de l'Université Laval. Rhonda.

Mrs. Mawhood (Rhonda): ...de l'Université McGill.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): De l'Université McGill, I'm sorry, yes.

Mrs. Mawhood: Thank you, Sir. Given the makeup of our Association - 25% Francophones, 50% Québec and Canadian Anglophones and 25% international students - we have decided not to make a recommendation on the type of constitutional ties, or absence thereof, that Québec could have with the rest of Canada. We do, however, wish to reaffirm the principle of the right to self-determination, that is, that the Québec people must, after a free, democratic discussion, choose its own constitutional blueprint for the future.

We wish to make several recommendations in the area of education which could be adopted regardless of Québec's future constitutional status. We recommend that the current federal research budget be administered in the same way as the FCAR to ensure equal allocation of research funding in all fields of study, and that

the Québec government levy a minimum tax on companies as a source of funding for universities. We recommend that the Québec government follow Alberta's example and transfer responsibility for vocational training from the Ministère du Travail to a new department of permanent manpower training. This new structure could ensure the transformation of the welfare and unemployment insurance system into a system of guaranteed minimum income.

Furthermore, we recommend that, in the area of literacy education, there should be a deeper government commitment to create, within the Ministère de l'Éducation, a branch dealing exclusively with literacy. Greater priority should also be given to prevention and consultation with organizations working in literacy education.

We recommend that the Québec government reaffirm the principle of equal treatment for men and women in all areas, including wage parity, social benefits, and working conditions. Furthermore, the problem of sexual harassment must be given special consideration. We also recommend that day care services and financial aid programs for students be improved to encourage full participation of both sexes, regardless of their family responsibilities or social background, and that colleges and universities adopt positive discrimination policies to rectify the problem of the small number of women occupying academic and senior administrative positions.

We recommend that the Québec government adopt legislation in favour of affirmative action policies governing Native enrollment in Québec universities, and envisage the creation of a university or college under the administration of Native people. Such an institution would be accessible to all Québec residents.

We recommend that a single level of government be responsible for student visas and work permits on the campuses.

Enfin, nous recommandons que des commissions scolaires anglaises soient établies afin que les collectivités anglophones puissent administrer elles-mêmes les programmes d'éducation offerts à leurs membres. La participation des parents au processus éducatif serait un atout important dans le cadre d'une telle réforme.

Nous recommandons aussi que soient maintenus l'accès à des services sociaux et à des soins de santé en anglais ainsi que la gestion des établissements par des directeurs indépendants. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much Rhonda, of the étudiants et étudiantes de deuxième cycle de l'Université McGill.

We will now hear André Gobeil of the Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval. André.

Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval

Mr. Gobeil (André): Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission and youth forum participants, it gives me great pleasure today to present the position of the Association étudiante, which was expressed clearly and precisely by the members.

We law students at Université Laval feel that the time for costly compromises is past. If it was up to us, there would be no last, last chance. We want to assume our destiny in a society, a country built in our own image.

The reasons underlying this sovereignist position are already well known. They are economic, cultural, political and so forth. In our brief, we suggested a procedure to be followed to achieve sovereignty, but this is not the place to discuss details. We will do so later, once the Commission has clearly established its position. Henceforth, as Paul Sauvé said 30 years ago in this very room... we must emphasize this adverb which, I hope, will characterize the action we take over the next 30 years.

Sovereignty in itself won't change things but let's take advantage of the dynamics it creates to change the anachronisms of our society. Doesn't our education system need it? Doesn't our legal system need it? Doesn't our government system need it? And lastly, isn't Québec, this country of regions, crying out for redefinition?

Henceforth, it's up to us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you. That was André Gobeil representing the law students of Université Laval.

Marie-Josée Leblond will now speak on behalf of the Association des étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique. Marie-Josée.

Association des étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique

Mrs. Leblond (Marie-Josée): Thank you. We, as future engineers, feel it is important to participate in the discussion taking place today before this Commission, in a technological, economical and social capacity.

From a technological viewpoint, Québec's expertise in the area of hydroelectricity is unparalleled in the world. Furthermore, Québec is highly competitive internationally in the fields of aeronautics, telematics and civil engineering. If we are to remain at the forefront, research must be the prime element, but of all industrialized countries, Canada invests the least in R&D. Worse still, of the amount invested, Québec receives only 17%, compared to 47% for Ontario.

In general, R&D is neglected in Québec,

representing less than 1% of our GDP. Clearly, Québec is not receiving its fair share. Furthermore, federal grants ensure that institutions focus on certain rather than others, favouring programs deemed high-priority for the country as a whole, which means that regional characteristics are disregarded. This situation is unfavourable to Québec, because we possess an original industrial structure based on small and medium-sized businesses specializing in various fields. Therefore, it is essential that Québec have full powers in the area of research.

Research must become a priority in the area of environment. The development of environmental technologies will enable us to preserve the exceptional diversity of our fauna and flora and recycle significant quantities of material and energy. However, the environment is one of the grey areas in the Constitution, since there is no reference made to it as concerns power sharing. This situation frequently gives rise to diverging policies on the federal and provincial levels: James Bay II is a case in point. This duplication of structures has resulted in a staggering waste of time and money. It would therefore be more advantageous to entrust environment powers to a single government level.

(3:00 p.m.)

It would be wise to maintain the decision-making seats in environmental affairs as close as possible to problem situations to ensure a better reaction time and sufficient knowledge of the situation. Management of dangerous substances and the fire at St-Amable have shown that Québec is very skilled in administering environmental affairs. More and more, we are seeing the extroversion of political and economic entities and an unobstructed exchange of ideas the world over.

Indeed, all countries will have to standardize and develop their methods of management and communication. They must strengthen their economic ties, promote technological transfers, create joint technological megaprojects and combine forces to solve world problems. But to maximize their contribution to the international community, every society must be protected culturally and possess the necessary powers for its development. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Marie-Josée Leblond, on behalf of the Polytechnique students. As a matter of fact, the theme of research and development, tomorrow, will be part of the second area of discussion, the obstacles to Québec's self-assertion, so we'll be able to go into more detail on the topic. Now we go to Kathy Mercier of the Association étudiante de l'Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Kathy, you have the floor.

Association étudiante de l'Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Mrs. Mercier (Kathy): Thank you. In light of the current sociopolitical situation, it's high time to determine and specify the shape Québec will be assuming in the months and years to come. The failure of the Meech Lake Accord put an end to the attempts at reconciliation made by the Québec people who wished to assume their rightful place in the Canadian Constitution. We don't want to blame the rest of Canada. The failure of the last-ditch negotiations proves and confirms the nonviability of a country where two societies differ from each other and are often at loggerheads because of their language, their history, and especially the incompatibility in the ways they perceive Canada, Québec and its contribution to an artificial nation.

Why continue trying to maintain an association where the needs and aspirations of some alienate the legitimate aspirations of others? Allow me to present the three recommendations contained in our brief.

Recommendation 1: Given that Québec is fully capable of governing itself and can thus adequately fulfil the aspirations of its population;

Given that in the area of education, Québec sovereignty will enable it to recover the funds invested by the federal government which, through its spending powers, intervenes in an area which is not its own, without considering Québec's aims in the field of postsecondary education;

Given that with regard to the economy, Québec has all the resources that characterize the world's major economic powers, the AEUQAT proposes that after studying the recommendations of this Commission which, in our opinion, will confirm the will of the vast majority of Québécois to be "maîtres chez eux", the Québec public be asked to make a declaration on the constitutional option of Québec sovereignty.

Recommendation 2: Given that the economic development of a society depends as much on the quality of its human resources as on the investment of capital;

Given that lack of skilled labour contributes to a slowdown in the economy and therefore to unemployment;

Given that the training and presence of experts constitutes a significant economic contribution to society, the AEUQAT recommends that the Québec government recognize the indispensable nature of a collective effort directed toward greater accessibility of postsecondary studies, and especially postgraduate university education.

Recommendation 3: Given that AEUQAT does not fully meet the specific manpower needs of the region, in various fields of activity;

Given that only the development of a university network encouraging self-sufficiency

of the regions based on their need for skilled human resources can bring universities closer to their target clientele, the AEUQAT recommends that the government review the various university programs offered at the UQAT, so as to more adequately answer to the regional reality and the specific employment needs of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Kathy. Two of your concerns, postsecondary education and regional development will be discussed tomorrow in the second and fourth areas of discussion.

We now turn the floor over to Annie-Claude Duchesne of the Association générale étudiante des secteurs Sciences humaines, Arts et Lettres de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Annie-Claude.

**Association générale étudiante des secteurs
Sciences humaines, Arts et Lettres de l'UQAM**

Mrs. Duchesne (Annie-Claude): Thank you. Hello. Since its founding, our Association has been attuned to inequality on a national level as experienced by Québec, an inequality which is at the heart of the current debate, because we are part of the Université du Québec system, established to counter Francophones' lack of schooling.

We believe that the source of this inequality lies in the historical oppression of Québec and other nations within Canada, an oppression revealed in the struggle led by Francophone communities in all provinces for their rights.

The problem of the current federalism is that it recognizes only one nation, one national interest, that of the Canadian nation, thereby lowering the Québec, Acadian and Native nations to the rank of province, minority, or worse still, reserve.

The 1982 Constitution and the failure of Meech are proof of the illusion of equality among nations within the current federalism. To achieve equality and national respect, Québec must declare full sovereignty and political independence as a prerequisite to economic, cultural and military independence.

The process of self-determination must involve the Québec people as a whole. In this respect, we would have preferred a States General formula, followed by a referendum. The shortcomings of the current procedure and our academic limitations have restricted consultation in the student community. Although our recommendations were adopted unanimously at our intermodular decision-making plenary session, our general assembly is not scheduled until next week.

It is also important that Québec's process of self-determination include a similar, parallel

process for the First Nations on Québec territory. Québec must deal with them on an equal basis. This process must also allow for the establishment of a more egalitarian society with a democratic constitution, guaranteeing equal treatment for men and women, and social rights such as free education, the right to work, the right to strike, the right to associate, the right to choose abortion, and the right to a healthy environment. Such a constitution should also entrench national and language rights.

Finally, an independent Québec should maintain mutually beneficial ties of cooperation or association as concerns culture and the economy with other nations, and fight for peace in a world where, contrary to what is currently going on in the Persian Gulf, the resources of the planet and of science would be available to all peoples rather than just a privileged few, and would be used for development, not destruction. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, thank you Annie-Claude, of the Étudiants et étudiantes des secteurs Sciences humaines, Arts et Lettres de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Pierre Moisan will now speak on behalf of the Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval. Pierre.

**Confédération des associations d'étudiants
et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval**

Mr. Moisan (Pierre): The Confédération des associations des étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval, CADEUL, is mandated to represent the Laval student community and to promote its interests through its faculty and department components. We conducted a vast consultation process with the member associations, in addition to taking a poll under the supervision of Vincent Lemieux, an expert on these issues. The results of this poll are clear, in our opinion: 70% of the students polled consider that Québec's chances of reaching a new constitutional agreement with the federal government and the other provinces are poor or very poor. Consequently, 45% of all Laval students declared themselves in favour of sovereignty-association, while 17% prefer independence without association with the rest of Canada. 32% of those polled favour a more independent Québec within a Canadian economic community, while 4.3% would like to see Québec within a renewed federation.

We can thus conclude from these results that at least 94% of all Laval students would like to see Québec obtain increased powers. 62% of those polled believe that to do so, Québec must withdraw from the current federal system. Finally, 71% of those polled want a referendum on their political options. The need to call on the people to determine Québec's political future

is thus glaringly evident. It is also clear that the student population wants an in-depth review of the Québec-Canada relationship, and the majority is prepared to declare sovereignty in order to achieve Quebecers' full development. Furthermore, all the associations that made a declaration on the issue opted for sovereignty as a means of ensuring Québec's development and preserving its assets.

Based on these consultations, we have formulated the following recommendations: That Québec's status as an independent, distinct nation be recognized; that the failure of Canadian federalism, insofar as Québec's vision of its development does not correspond to the objectives of the rest of Canada, be recognized; that the fact that Québec's full growth and development can be ensured only through sovereignty be recognized; that the need to negotiate a form of economic association between Québec and Canada based on the free movement of persons, merchandise and capital, in accordance with the mutual interests of both parties, be recognized; and that the need to consult Quebecers on their political and constitutional future by means of a referendum be recognized.

Our brief is divided into several parts which establish the framework of the current discussion. We must consider the increasing planetary interaction, but also the need for people to reassert themselves, to reestablish contact with each other, to determine how they will be associated with the other citizens of this planet. It is thus in this context that Québec's sovereignty appears imperative, so that we can develop and look forward to a world governed by the priorities of Quebecers. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, that was Pierre Moisan, on behalf of the Associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval. We now go to Marie-Josée Simard, who will speak on behalf of the Étudiants autochtones du Québec and the Faculté de droit de l'Université d'Ottawa. Marie-Josée.

Étudiants autochtones du Québec – Faculté de droit de l'Université d'Ottawa

Mrs. Simard (Marie-Josée): Thank you. Regardless of the results or the decisions reached at this Commission, we believe that they should not affect the sovereignty of the First Nations or their ancestral rights. Québec is entering a decisive era in its history. We understand – we are in the ideal situation to do so – the legitimate stands taken by the Québec people. We feel, furthermore, that Québec has all the necessary tools to ensure its future.

However, if we are to live together, we do not accept, and formally reject, that the First Nations be subject to Québec or federal

trusteeship. We also reject any form of territorial exploitation that runs counter to our interests. It is therefore impossible for us to accept that Québec, or for that matter Canada, use our resources for its development without a prior agreement with the First Nations, or at the very least, a joint development policy between the First Nations and Québec.

Furthermore, we find it regrettable that there are so many communication and comprehension problems between our two peoples, despite the fact that we live on the same territory. Nevertheless, this should not prevent us from undertaking discussions and continuing our attempts at dialogue. These, we believe, are the necessary elements for the determination of our collective future.

We, as law students, want to build the future. We want to find solutions based on new law, justice and equality that will enable everyone to maintain their dignity as human beings and, within our communities, to ensure the pride of the people. Too often in the past, and again recently, the First Nations have been second-class citizens in their own country, and the last to be consulted on the constitutional priorities of your governments.

We feel that we've had enough. Henceforth, action must not be taken – especially as concerns constitutional reforms or Québec sovereignty – without the active participation of the First Nations. For this reason we believe that starting now, and following René Lévesque's initiative, Québec must sit down with the First Nations to discuss, as part of an independent commission and on neutral ground, ties between Québec and the First Nations. This is the one and only recommendation that we submit to the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec.

The sovereignty of the First Nations is not a new concept for us. It is rooted in us; it is an intrinsic right. As a distinct people, we too demand the right of self-determination. The future of the First Nations depends on the First Nations. It's up to us to decide what's best for us. Unfortunately, these concepts of sovereignty for the First Nations and an independent Native government frighten several members of Québec and Canadian society, but even more, they upset the structure and distribution of federal and provincial powers. This should not, however, prevent the issue from being raised and discussed. But until this time, the Commission members must keep in mind during their discussions that, regardless of the decisions they reach, the sovereignist position of the First Nations remains unchanged. Thank you. (3:15 p.m.)

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Marie-Josée. Tomorrow, as part of the third area of discussion, the redefinition of our political status, there is an item on

individual and collective rights, and on the rights of Native peoples and other cultures in particular. This will be an ideal opportunity for you to expand on your position.

We now continue with Patrick Minotti, who will speak on behalf of the Fédération des associations étudiantes du campus de l'Université de Montréal. Patrick.

**Fédération des associations étudiantes
du campus de l'Université de Montréal**

Mr. Minotti (Patrick): Mr. Chairman, the discussion on Québec's identity and Quebecers' place within Canada has been going on for generations. Many of these generations have witnessed important events, thereby constantly maintaining the question of Québec relations and its federal yoke in the limelight. I'm thinking of the two conscriptions to which Québec was strongly opposed, the various discussions on Québec's right to conduct its own negotiations with Francophone States, the War Measures Act, the 1980 Referendum, the repatriation of the 1982 Canadian Constitution, and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord. These events were the source of much frustration and dissension between Québec and Canada, but also within Québec society itself. They left deep scars and sapped considerable energy without offering any solutions to this notorious constitutional question; on the contrary, they led to a dead end.

However, these years of debate had an impact on the Québec nation. Our generation is now seeing the issue in a different light, and is the first to define itself as "first and foremost Quebecers", encouraging proof of the results of the struggles of preceding generations. But young people, fortified by this asset, are now focusing on new issues they consider just as important, if not more so, than the constitutional question. Some examples are the role of young people in our society, the debates on our education system, on the environment, on the integration of our immigrants, on peace and the respect of human rights and the opening of Québec to the world. Today, these issues require all our attention and energy. They are the source of the strong will expressed by today's young people to settle once and for all a debate which has gone on too long. Starting now, we must put an end to the uncertainties and hesitations over our nation's constitutional status.

The students of the Université de Montréal have spoken. There is only one way to settle this question, according to them, and that is to repatriate all powers and thus become a sovereign State. By settling the constitutional question, young people will be able to conduct discussions occurring even now on a global scale and which have become urgent for Québec. We can no longer afford to wait, even another decade. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Patrick, on behalf of the Associations du campus de l'Université Montréal.

Now Marc-Antoine Adam will speak on behalf of the students of McGill-Québec. Marc-Antoine.

McGill-Québec

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): Thank you. McGill-Québec's brief deals with the main factors currently at stake in Québec in the areas of language, culture, immigration and economics. If, as we believe, Québec is a distinct nation – and I use the word "nation" and not "society" – we believe that only sovereignty-association can truly provide the tools necessary to its development. A simple, selective repatriation of certain federal powers to pass even more coercive language and immigration laws is not a long-term solution, in addition to being illusory at present, given the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.

We need to change people's perception of Québec to ensure that what seems artificial to some today becomes natural for all tomorrow. An obscure clause in an inaccessible Constitution will not change anything. We need a clear status that can resound throughout the world; we need sovereignty.

I don't intend to go into the reasons that led us to this conclusion. We've heard them for 30 years now. McGill-Québec did not intend to innovate in its brief but simply to provide its arguments with the credibility justified by our special situation in a principally Anglophone institution in Québec.

In the time that remains, I'd like to point out that in our recommendations, we were careful to avoid any direct allusion to the European Economic Community and explained why – I myself have studied that community's legal constitution.

First, in an ostensibly democratic debate, pseudo-scientific references to the EEC are extremely harmful since too few people – and I'm referring to leaders of public opinion – know enough about rights and the EEC. The community's institutional law is case law, and, as such, rather inaccessible. Simply reading the Treaty of Rome tells us absolutely nothing. Moreover, to understand the legal nature of the EEC, we need to study the rulings handed down by the constitutional courts of the 12 member States as well as studying the numerous rulings handed down by the Court of Justice in Luxembourg. Canadian libraries are particularly deficient in this area, if they have anything at all on the subject.

Second, in a constructive debate designed to settle constitutional bickering and misunderstandings once and for all, referring to Europe is, no doubt, the worst thing we could

do. It's no coincidence that all our politicians, from the most federalist to the most sovereignist, have, one by one, alluded to the community's structure as a target ideal. The Europeans themselves are tearing each other apart over the legal meaning of European communities since their foundation. Some claim to see in them a confederative federation, while others speak of a supranational superstructure *sui generis* and still others argue that it is simply an *avant-garde* international treaty. Importing Europe's confusion to Québec could only benefit those politicians trying to build up political capital.

Finally, since there are enormous differences between the European post-war context that gave rise to the European Economic Community and the current Canadian context, it is not at all certain that a structure based on the EEC could, apart from the numerous problems developed above, suit Québec or Canada. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Marc-Antoine, McGill-Québec. I now give the floor to Jean-Pierre Paré of the Regroupement des associations des cycles supérieurs du Québec. Jean-Pierre.

Regroupement des associations des cycles supérieurs du Québec

Mr. Paré (Jean-Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although the Regroupement des associations des cycles supérieurs du Québec, RACSQ, has been incorporated only since September 1990, it is the result of a cooperative process established since the early 1980s between several Québec graduate student associations.

RACSQ represents more than 15 000 Québec graduate students, making it the only legitimate spokesperson for all Québec graduate students.

To date, Québec's traditional constitutional option has been to redefine the confederal pact. For "Canada fans", federalism will always have one last chance. However, given the difference in the very perceptions of Canadians outside of Québec and Quebecers on the ties uniting us, this process is doomed from the start. In trying not to make waves, those who promote piecemeal repatriation of powers are avoiding the basic problem and ignoring the detrimental long-term effects of the spirit and letter of the British North America Act.

This modest approach, should it succeed, would lead Québec to a dead-end. Thinking that they had settled the Québec problem, Canadians outside Québec would not let themselves be disturbed endlessly by any future constitutional claims from Québec, especially those of a Québec whose population is constantly shrinking. This strategy concentrates considerable energy for

results that are too minimal. The sure failure of negotiations forces us to decide between a form of the status quo and the complete exercise of the Québec people's right to self-determination.

The failure of the Meech Lake accord was just another example of the inability to reform Canadian federalism while respecting Québec's legitimate aspirations. Faced with this impasse, Québec cannot simply beg for power transfers from Ottawa. Consequently, RACSQ feels that Québec's only realistic, possible constitutional option is sovereignty, that is, giving the National Assembly the exclusive power to legislate, levy taxes and sign treaties.

The commercial interdependence between Québec and Canada would require economic agreements. But these agreements would, henceforth, be contracted between sovereign equals based on the advantages for each.

Sovereignty is not an end in itself. It is a means allowing Québec to implement a blueprint for a more equitable society whose laws are based on the principles of freedom and democracy.

RACSQ feels that it is important that a new social contract reaffirm the right of all peoples to self-determination, that it reaffirm Québec as a Francophone State, that it recognize the rights of the First Nations, that it recognize the vested rights of Anglo-Quebecers, and that it reaffirm the rights recognized in the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, especially women's rights.

For the Québec of tomorrow, it is important that the right decision be made today. The rising elite represented by RACSQ doesn't want to spend its lifetime fighting for the constitutional blueprint which is sovereignty. Mr. Chairman, our generation wants to make progress and build a more equitable society on the foundations of the achievements of sovereignty. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): OK, thank you, Jean-Pierre, speaking on behalf of the Regroupement des associations des cycles supérieurs du Québec. Pierre Larrivée will now speak on behalf of the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Pierre, you have the floor.

Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke

Mr. Larrivée (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We also wish to thank the organizing committee of this forum for hearing us today. The brief before you is the result of profound reflection and democratic consultation. Each of the associations representing the different master's and doctoral programs at the Université de Sherbrooke was asked to give its opinion

through its executive. Our forum for discussion is, therefore, multidisciplinary.

The 2300 master's and doctoral students from the humanities, pure sciences, social sciences, applied sciences, and health sciences may have a different thought process, but all agreed on the same objective, the same blueprint: Québec sovereignty.

We have observed Quebecers' dissatisfaction concerning the federal system. We propose positive sovereignty since we believe in Québec socio-economic strength.

Through this brief, we have submitted a blueprint for society respecting fundamental individual and collective rights and freedoms. We believe that Québec's constitutional status must be redefined by asking questions about and re-assessing various sectors of Québec society.

As concerns education, Québec can function effectively within the context of free trade only by developing a solid structure for education and research and development.

Québec sovereignty also includes the repatriation of economic powers. We are, however, aware that international agreements with our closest neighbours could improve Québec's economic performance. The quality of our environment unquestionably represents one of the greatest challenges for the future. In this regard, the Québec government should enhance public awareness by promoting a healthy environment and respect for ecology. The redefinition of a sovereign Québec should also take the presence of Native peoples into account.

In concluding, the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke recommends that the Commission's report proposes, first, Québec sovereignty, notably, the exclusive power of the National Assembly to legislate, levy taxes and sign international treaties.

Second, French as Québec's only official language, the language of the workplace, of the legal system, of economics, and of legislation, while recognizing the rights of Anglo-Quebecers.

Third, holding a referendum 3 to 12 months after the Commission's report is tabled.

Fourth, holding a general election should there be a lack of consensus on the content of the referendum question. In our opinion the referendum question should read: "Are you in favour of Québec sovereignty?"

We hope that the work of this Commission will help Québec pull itself out of this constitutional impasse and find a solution allowing it to work towards its objectives.

We hope that the young people invited here today won't have to start this same process over 20 years from now.
(3:30 p.m.)

I would like to end with a quote from a Québec poet: "In 1980, Quebecers refused to be Quebecers. In 1990, Canadians told us we weren't

Canadians. Can you tell me who we are?"
(translation)

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Pierre Larrivée. I now turn the floor over to Pierre Barbeau, Jr. of the Student's Representative Council of Bishop's University, Pierre.

Student's Representative Council of Bishop's University

Mr. Barbeau (Pierre): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Commission, Forum Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, as the student representative of Bishop's University, I'd like to thank you and congratulate you for having set up this forum designed to hear the comments of young Quebecers on the political and constitutional future of Québec. We are very happy to be participating in it.

To encourage both Francophone and Anglophone students at Bishop's to get actively involved in Québec's future, we wrote a brief for this commission. I am pleased that the student council agreed unanimously to go ahead with this initiative. Time constraints prevented us from consulting all students by referendum so we did not take a stand. However, we chose to examine some of the effects on Anglophone students, more particularly those of Bishop's, of a potential political and constitutional change in the field of education.

The student population of Bishop's comes from Québec, Canada and the world over. We enjoy a cultural diversity that endows us with an open, understanding attitude. This enriching atmosphere could be a model for the Québec to come. The presence of students from outside Québec is of inestimable value for this province. They come to study in Québec of their own accord, creating ties not only for today, but also for tomorrow.

We recommended to the Commission that a climate of openness be preserved in this regard. The accessibility and presence of an Anglophone university in Québec also serves the interests of Québec students who want to study in English in their own province. We have observed that Bishop's University is a meeting place for many students from throughout Canada. Québec benefits from hosting such an establishment.

As suggested during our presentation in Sherbrooke, we would be favourable to reciprocity agreements between Québec universities and those of the rest of Canada. When the Commission renders its decision on Québec's political and constitutional question, we hope it will take into account that Québec should promote a climate of stability. For a university such as ours, this is an important point; the travels of some of our professors and students depend on it. This is why we are recommending

to the Commission and even to this forum that the general public be clearly informed of the options open to Québec as well as their related costs and benefits. We feel that this would help prevent a climate of insecurity from setting in.

To conclude, we decided to present a brief before this Commission to create a certain awareness. We are open to discussing the ideas and different political and constitutional avenues presented during this forum. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you Pierre, who is representing the students of Bishop's University. Louis David Péloquin now has the floor, on behalf of the Coalition CESAQ-AGECA. He is sort of a college-level representative. Louis David, the floor is yours.

**Coalition étudiante sur l'avenir
du Québec et Association générale étudiante
du collège Ahuntsic (CESAQ-AGECA)**

Mr. Péloquin (Louis David): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Coalition was behind a referendum of 33 post-secondary institutions, or some 75 000 students. The response was unmistakable: 80.4% of respondents were in favour of a sovereign Québec State. Our young people are resolutely sovereignist.

Sovereignty is something normal for a nation that wants to take matters in hand. Québec's reality is incontestable. Let's not stick our heads in the sand any longer. It's time to open our eyes and look around. Quebecers are impatiently awaiting a referendum to be able to voice their ambitions and to be able to assert themselves. Québec is an affair of the heart; it's not a question of equalization payments.

So, we are recommending that a referendum be held within four months of the presentation of the Commission members' report. Should this referendum lean towards sovereignty, it should be followed by a solemn declaration of independence by the National Assembly. Then, negotiations should start on two fronts. The first, the deadline for repatriating powers. Sovereignty is enacted; it is not negotiated. The second would be an economic association with Canada or other countries. Anything is possible. We favour forming a constitutional assembly for drafting Québec's Constitution which should hear all of society's groups.

To conclude, I'd like to ask the Commission members, when they table their brief, to remember that all of us around this table will have to live with what they decide today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): OK, thank you, Louis David of the Coalition CESAQ-AGECA. Now, on behalf of the Association étudiante

François-Xavier-Garneau, also at the college level, Thomas Poirier has the floor. Thomas.

**Association étudiante
François-Xavier-Garneau inc.**

Mr. Poirier (Thomas): Mr. Chairman, last October a referendum was held at Garneau college on Québec's future. The question was: "Today, do you want Québec to become a sovereign State?" The response was most convincing with 88.6% answering "yes". Given the enormous participation in this referendum, we felt it was relevant to share what these students wanted for Québec. We found that two points were very important for students: the international political and economic context, and a wish to get going with the long historical process of Québec's political affirmation.

Québec's reflection on its future doesn't date from yesterday. For two centuries, this theme has been recurring constantly in our literature. The history of Québec, from the invasion of new France to the failure of Meech Lake, via the Durham Report and the conscription crisis, proves the illegitimacy of the union of two opposite peoples who are always divided. We are convinced that a country can only be virtuous through its laws if its scale of values is basically the same among the citizens of this country in order to be able to live in a society that allows the most development possible for all citizens.

A sovereign Québec could devote its efforts to its cultural and economic development, which would, moreover, be better assured in an independent Québec. It could then better participate in market globalization. Naturally, it would have to hold all executive and legislative powers to encourage a capitalist Québec economy. This economy will have to pay more attention to sustainable development and university funding.

Therefore, Québec must not find itself at an impasse in negotiating other agreements with Canada. We must begin by declaring our independence as a country. Only after this will we be able to speak country to country to negotiate diplomatic, financial and commercial arrangements that should be advantageous for Québec and the rest of Canada. The Government should declare Québec's sovereignty. To legitimize this declaration of independence, the Government should organize a referendum and, the next day, Québec's legislative assembly should proclaim its own Constitution which would repatriate the powers stipulated in section 91 of the British North America Act of 1867.

We must put an end to the laborious Canadian duality with no hard feelings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): OK, thank

you, Thomas, on behalf of the students of François-Xavier-Garneau college. Now, Alain Fortier will address us on behalf of the Association générale des étudiants et étudiantes du cégep de Lévis-Lauzon. Alain, the floor is yours.

Association générale des étudiants et étudiantes du cégep de Lévis-Lauzon

Mr. Fortier (Alain): Yes, Mr. Chairman. The students' association of Cégep de Lévis-Lauzon is proud to present this brief, which it wrote up after holding a referendum at our school. In this referendum, students came out clearly in favour of Québec sovereignty combined, as far as possible, with a form of economic association with the rest of Canada. We, as Québec's future leaders, wrote this brief with our future in mind.

Young people in our age group are probably in the best position to understand the shortcomings of the present political, social, educational and economic system, because we are confronted with them on a daily basis. Every day, we hear about ecological disasters, dropouts, suicides, government deficits, war and so forth. Too often, we don't do anything about these problems or are powerless to do so, and yet we're unfortunately the ones who will bear the consequences.

With this in mind, and in the hopes of being able to deal with these problems better and of finally being able to control Québec's resources and promote its culture, the students in our Cégep hope that Québec will attain full sovereignty. As part of the ensuing process, the Québec government will have to repatriate all the federal social programs it considers appropriate so it can integrate them into Québec government departments within a relatively short time period.

Within the same period, the government of the future country of Québec will have to draft a Québec charter of rights and freedoms as well as a Constitution. The substance of this Constitution will have to be determined by the people via widespread consultation and then ratified by referendum.

Recovering these powers means that the Québec government will have to make reforms to existing programs. To this end, an education statute should be promoted providing for student participation in university curriculum development and university management. The government must also set up a new university funding system involving government, business and students.

As far as employment is concerned and in order to stimulate the economy, a sovereign Québec will have to adopt a full employment policy based on regional needs so that the economic problems of certain regions can finally be dealt with. The federal government is unable

to provide us with this kind of policy because of the vastness of its territory and the economic diversity of the provinces.

In this same vein of a better quality of life, the Québec government must provide Quebecers with a family policy that guarantees active support for mothers before and after the birth of their children. This policy would obviously be geared towards encouraging more people to have children but would also guarantee that the children who are born will be well cared for.

Finally, so that recommendations such as these can be considered, we suggest that a youth assembly, elected by young people throughout Québec, be created, with a real mandatory power of recommendation in connection with all statutes adopted by the National Assembly. This assembly needs to be created so that our voice can be heard and to make up for the demographic weight we lose every year.

This is the main thrust of our brief, Mr. Chairman. We sincerely hope that the members of this commission will take it into account and that they'll also take all the other briefs filed by youth groups into consideration when they make their recommendations, so that the future which will soon be ours is truly what we want it to be. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): That was Mr. Alain Fortier, speaking on behalf of the students of Cégep de Lévis-Lauzon. We'll now hear from Sébastien Audy, who represents humanities students at Cégep de Matane. Sébastien.

**Humanities Students
Cégep de Matane**

Mr. Audy (Sébastien): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, we're here today to present our views and comments, our vision, in other words, of the Québec that we'll be living in. Our reflection on this matter made us aware of our shortcomings and lack of information for dealing with such an important issue. We felt that we couldn't pass up this opportunity, however.

We live in an area with a very high rate of unemployment. We see our friends getting an education here and then having to head for large urban centres either to continue their education or to find a job in their field.

The Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie regions might look like unpolluted pristine paradises to you, but one of our most important resources is the St. Lawrence, which you've polluted. Did you know that we've never been able to eat any of the mussels that mete out an existence on our shores, despite the fact that there are federal and provincial departments of the environment to protect us?

We're all aware of the rate of unemployment here in Québec. We know that it's always been higher than the Canadian average. But why is this? There are two government departments responsible for Québec's development and its regional development. The same goes for agriculture, which is clearly in a sad state. We're told, however, that some of Québec's best land is found in our region. But our land is deteriorating for lack of farmers. People prefer to move to the city because it's getting too expensive to set themselves up in farming.

These are some of our recommendations. In order to improve its situation, we feel that Québec must declare itself sovereign and take on all its powers. It would be preferable to accomplish this by means of a referendum. We think that it would definitely be best to establish both political and economic ties with the rest of Canada by means of agreements or treaties.

If it's sovereign, Québec we will no longer come under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. Québec will inevitably have to set up a supreme court for its internal problems and work towards developing an arbitration court for settling any eventual disputes between Québec and Canada.

Immigration is bound to be an important tool in developing Québec's territory. Québec must therefore be the only one to decide on its policy vis-à-vis new immigrants.

To ensure fair and equal development in all of Québec's regions, Québec will need to have all the economic development leverage at its disposal. More important still, we must decentralize development areas. Québec cannot grow if it develops large urban centres and leaves the regions to waste away.

The Québec government will have to take on full responsibility for the environment and make it one of its top priorities. The St. Lawrence River should be a key concern on its agenda.

(3:45 p.m.)

Writing this brief gave us the opportunity to stand up and be heard. It's obvious that on its own our brief won't build the Québec of tomorrow, but it will at least have allowed us to feel that we've contributed in a concrete way to our future country. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): That was Sébastien Audy, speaking on behalf of the humanities students of Cégep de Matane. We will now hear Nathalie Charbonneau, who represents Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière.

Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière

Mrs. Charbonneau (Nathalie): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the history of our people and that of our education run a parallel course,

what we're proposing today is a socio-cultural orientation that would enhance the standing of young people in a new Québec. Because the student experience, our language and our culture are our primary concerns, it is our duty, from the angle of a new country of Québec, to do all that is necessary to study, defend and promote interest in our educational system and in the students who make use of it.

Québec has obviously achieved maturity, superior economic strength and a growing reputation on the international scene, and it has managed this through the courage and determination of Quebecers and the education it has given itself and definitely not because of the federal system which, in addition to being outdated, has never favoured the Francophone nation of Québec because we've always been a minority in Canada. You can't negotiate a fair deal when it's one against ten. Once Québec has become independent, we'll negotiate any agreements that we wish with our neighbours on an equal-to-equal, country-to-country basis.

We demand that there be a law that is stronger than Bills 178 and 101 to protect and promote the French language throughout Québec; that there be a law to protect and promote all facets of Québec culture; that, while making French the primary and common language of Québec, we ensure that ethnic communities are able to benefit from their cultures and their languages by offering special courses for each ethnic group in local French-language schools in multicultural districts; that a complete freeze on tuition fees be restored; that the ministère de l'Éducation reform the loans and bursaries system by setting up a system where students are employed or paid as apprentices, since this is what they are, in effect, during on-the-job training; that all current and future taxes affecting cultural affairs be abolished; that the ministère de la Sécurité du revenu revise certain sections of Bill 37 which discriminate against students; that community organizations benefit from special status since they have become priorities for a people that considers itself civilized; that tax laws be revised and corrected so that a system can be implemented that is fairer to everyone; and that Native peoples be recognized as nations and treated as such.

To conclude, Québec's future as a Canadian province was very seriously compromised by the death of the Meech Lake Accord. The integrity of the Québec people as a distinct society was ridiculed for the second time in less than ten years. The majority of the population, or 85%, had already rejected this accord long before Manitoba's Native peoples did and this counts much more in a democracy than an agreement in principle between 11 individuals, even if they are premiers. Since Québec's five minimum conditions were denied, and there's no hope of the situation improving in a federal system, we of

Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière propose that Québec free itself in order to try its own wings. Economic association would be possible once we've obtained sovereign status. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much Nathalie, speaking for Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière. You're bound to get a chance to elaborate on the language issue tomorrow, during the first session on our distinct character. Now, from the labour community, Mario Guertin of the Comité national des jeunes de la CSN will talk to us about his position. So, Mario, you now have the floor.

Comité national des jeunes de la CSN

Mr. Guertin (Mario): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our preparation of this brief was based on a desire to change our society so it corresponded to our vision of Québec. It is the responsibility of the people of Québec, and its young people especially, to define the kind of country they want to live in. For us, it's clear that independence is the option that will enable us to most effectively solve the problems we now face.

The points that we wish to stress in this presentation are simple and can be summed up as a transfer of all federal powers to Québec. Once this is accomplished, it will be easier for us to develop within a spirit of respect for the two resources that we consider essential to Québec's development. I refer to the people who make up our society and the environment in which we live. We will also be able to work towards full employment by recovering the many federal programs that overlap and don't go anywhere.

The Québec of tomorrow will be closer to its regional populations and will therefore be in a position to consider the need of its regions to benefit from the dynamics and creativity of the lifeblood that their youth represents. The regions will not be able to withstand the damage caused by the migration of their young people to large urban centres for much longer. Also, what are we to think of the federal government's social programs, which are numerous, misunderstood and without a future? Once they've been repatriated, Québec will be able to distribute them fairly among the regions, taking regional characteristics into account. This is another reason why want sovereignty.

This transition should be made as soon as possible. Therefore, the scenario that we would like to see includes a referendum in 1991, in which Quebecers would be called upon to answer a clear question. If their answer is "yes", a constituent assembly would be created to prepare a draft Constitution during the year following the referendum. At the same time, negotiations would have to be undertaken between Québec

and Ottawa regarding our transition to a state. Finally, in the summer of 1992, a final referendum would give Quebecers a chance to take a stand with regard to the Constitution of our country, our country Québec, our future.

Basically, this is the position that we wanted to present before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. We hope that our comments will help guide it during its forthcoming examination of this issue. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Fine. So, thank you Mario, speaking on behalf of the Comité national des jeunes de la CSN. Now, the Jeune Barreau de Québec, represented by Carl Tremblay. You have the floor, Carl.

Jeune Barreau de Québec

Mr. Tremblay (Carl): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Commission, participants in the youth forum on the future of Québec, I'd like to begin by saying that the Jeune Barreau de Québec represents people who've been practising law in the Québec city area for less than ten years; it's not the Bar. Secondly, the Jeune Barreau de Québec represents approximately 1100 members in the Québec City area.

The Jeune Barreau does not take it upon itself to state what Québec's future should be. When we were preparing our brief, we identified the following objectives: clarification of the legal and other terms generally used by the Commission and by the community at large, and clarification in terms of the current legal situation both in Canada and in Québec more specifically of the possibilities open to Québec with regard to its future, the possibilities with respect to independence and federalism, and the ways of achieving these different possibilities, either by means of a referendum or consultations.

Basically, our brief says that, no matter what the Commission decides, if it concludes that ties must be kept with Canada, we'll have to enter into negotiations. The Commission should therefore consider how these negotiations will be conducted. At the present time, speaking in purely legal terms, there are two options, or two legal frameworks, open to Québec. They are the following.

First of all, Québec can start negotiating in keeping with the amendment procedure in the present Constitution, that is on the basis of unanimity of the provinces and the federal government where quite a few questions are concerned and, for the remainder, two-thirds of the provinces, representing 50% of the population, plus the federal government. This then, is the inflexible framework we are prisoners of now, and we're familiar with the

results.

There's a second framework open to Québec for negotiating a new agreement with Canada. Negotiations could be conducted between states, or nations, once Québec has full powers. The only rule that would govern these negotiations would be the shared desire of Canada and Québec to conclude an agreement covering specific points. With this desire as a given, everything would become possible, from a superstructure to an association of an economic, social, cultural or even religious nature, but given these things, everything would be possible, and the only - and I'm repeating myself here - element on which this hinges is a desire on the part of both Canada and Québec to conclude an agreement covering specific points. Nothing else could stand in the way of this kind of agreement.

We submit in concluding that only two of the many options that have been discussed here are open to Québec: remaining in the federal system with all the amendments and arrangements possible, or becoming a state with all the powers that being a nation entails, there too with all the arrangements with regard to our relations with Canada and other countries. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you. That was Carl, speaking for the Jeune Barreau de Québec. We'll now hear François Coallier speak on behalf of the Regroupement jeunesse populaire. François.

Regroupement jeunesse populaire

Mr. Coallier (François): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, the option that we present in our brief is that of full and entire sovereignty for Québec. For us, sovereignty is the only solution to the constitutional problem. We're well aware that a return to the status quo or to a form of revised federalism would only be illusory. What's more, we're very much aware that it's up to Quebecers to decide on their future. Not only are we a distinct society, we constitute the cultural difference between Canada and the United States.

Our history has shaped the people we are today; the cultural dynamics of Québec has shown us not only who we are, but also who we want to be. We're in favour of independence because it's the only possible way of fulfilling our aim: a fair, just, prosperous society for one and all. Therefore, the only way we can really have a policy of full employment, the only way we can be an international economic power, the only way we can keep the rich from getting richer and the poor from getting poorer is to become sovereign.

Immigration, which constitutes a human-

itarian action, must continue. New immigrants will have to understand, though, that they're not in an English majority country but in a Francophone country and that this society will accept them. We could have listed the many policies that need to be changed, but we preferred to leave this up to the experts since these problems have become patently obvious for the majority of Quebecers.

We need a change and we need it fast. We don't want any half measures or political games. All we want is sovereignty. We're aware of the fact that a constitutional change would place demands on us and we're prepared to do what's required, but we don't want to be obliged to work only to find ourselves starting all over again later on. We want our constitutional future to reflect the basic expectations of Québec society so that each and every one of us can attain complete fulfillment so that Quebecers will want to continue on as people.

We created our group so that we could put pressure on different actors around us. So, we're here today to tell you clearly that what we want is sovereignty and nothing else.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, François Coallier, for the Regroupement jeunesse populaire. You also have a lot to say about immigration policy in your brief. In this connection, we're going to be talking some more about the demographic situation tomorrow.

The next speaker is Sylvain Gaudreault of the Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec (Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean). Sylvain.

Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec (Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean)

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our brief was written so that we could present the Commission with our views, which are based on a consensus reached during a forum held on October 14, 1990 at Pouce lake, near Chicoutimi. This brief is broken down into four main subjects: culture, employment and the economy, education, and the environment. Finally, in our conclusion, we propose the constitutional and political status for Québec that the young people of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean have said they would prefer. This brief is entitled "The Pouce Lake Accord". (4:00 p.m.)

On the eve of the twenty-first century, and in the present post-Meech context, Québec is inevitably going to have to redefine its constitutional and political status. The youth forum on the future of Québec is of the opinion that the status quo, the present political and constitutional system, represents a serious threat to the cultural and Francophone distinctness of the Québec people, which we must defend,

develop and promote.

This forum sees democracy as the very foundation of the evolution of Québec society. The desire to build a strong Québec may justifiably be perceived as a serious trend in the evolution of this distinct society towards Québec autonomy.

The Forum recognizes and invokes the inalienable right of the Québec people to self-determination for the following reasons: First, Québec constitutes a nation in the sociological sense of the term; second, this nation constitutes a people within the meaning of the Charter of the United Nations. Under international law, this people has the right to make its own choices, the right to self-determination in other words and to the choice of its own political system both externally and internally. This people is concentrated in its entirety on the territory of Québec. Finally, Québec already has everything that constitutes a viable state under international law. The forum's position is also based on the fact that Québec must assume responsibility for itself and for its cultural, social, economic and political development, placing a priority on a form of development that focuses on the regions.

The youth forum on the future of Québec, in a consensus, asks the Commission to give priority to sovereignty as Québec's political and constitutional status. By this we mean that Québec should have exclusive powers to legislate, to make all tax laws, to levy all taxes, and to establish international relations with other states through agreements, treaties, or other means. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you, Sylvain, speaking for the Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec (Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean). Your brief is very clear and very concerned about the issues of employment and regional development. I assume you'll want to elaborate on your views tomorrow when we discuss economic considerations during the fourth session. We now ask a representative from the Commission jeunesse de la Société de recherche en orientation humaine to tell us about the opinions and concerns of her organization. So, it's now Emmanuelle Saucier's turn to take the floor. Emmanuelle.

Commission jeunesse de la Société de recherche en orientation humaine inc.

Mrs. Saucier (Emmanuelle): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Armed with pride in our roots and confidence in the future, not only do we want to live with new population groups, but also to build a nation and create a unified people that is proud to live on Québec soil.

Our neighbours in the rest of Canada have made it clear that we're not wanted and they're

even cynical enough to pretend that they'd like to keep us around, but only as a colonized people, with the renunciation of our cultural identity that comes with this. These neighbours seem unaware of the fact, however, that this is more than just a question of our cultural identity, but one of our entire identity. We are a people and we want to live as a people, with the roots, cohesion and belonging that this entails.

Québec is not a constellation of peoples. No one has the right to break up this people for the sake of so-called Canadian national unity, which in effect demands the obliteration of its identity. What happened with Meech Lake was a signal telling us: Let's stop begging and stand up and say that we're no longer afraid of being rejected. This is how we're going to take up the challenge of the year 2000 and build, concentrating on quality instead of quantity, and bring about unity so that we won't be ridiculed any longer. If the self-determination process leads us to a form of association with Canada, then this should be done with complete respect for our distinct identity. The failure of Meech Lake was a positive thing in the eyes of the youth of Québec. If we want to live, exist and gain fulfillment, we will have to take ourselves in hand and stop waiting for our neighbours to give us the right to live.

The necessary conclusion is clear. We should face the fact that we can't find our future outside Québec's borders and that, to keep our distinct identity and our right to be Québécois, we have no other choice but to demand a structure which enables us to fulfill ourselves and evolve. We demand exclusive powers of legislation in the following areas: taxation, immigration, education, radio broadcasting, television and film, trade and international relations. This will give us the foundation we need for our economic growth, which is not to say that we should refute our special relationship with our partners in the Canadian Confederation.

Demanding these rights is a clear way for us to hope that our future will not be dark, that there's a place for us, and that our children won't hate us one day for failing to hang onto the land of our ancestors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Emmanuelle, speaking for the Commission jeunesse de la Société de recherche en orientation humaine. You might get the chance tomorrow morning during the first session to elaborate on your concern for identity when we discuss our distinct character. Now, Peter Julian is going to talk to us on behalf of the Québec and Canadian Youth Organization, also referred to as "Our Future Together". You have the floor, Peter.

Our Future Together
(Québec and Canadian Youth Organization)

Mr. Julian (Peter): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm proud to be here on behalf of Our Future Together, an organization which represents bilingual Anglophones in Québec, outside Québec and across Canada. I myself am from Vancouver where it's a bit warmer than here.

On the occasion of this youth forum, I'd like to say a few words about certain significant facts that we'd like the Commission to consider at this historic moment for Québec's future.

The first significant fact is the presence of increasing numbers of Anglophones who speak French, bilingual Anglophones in other words. There are now 4 million Anglophones in Canada who already speak French or who are in the process of learning it. These people represent a huge potential market for Québec cultural products, or French cultural products, and the presence of these 4 million new Francophones represents enormous potential for market development and the future of the French language. Remember, we're here to make sure that the French language is preserved, and the fact that there are 4 million of us can help. In addition to these 4 million Anglophones, there are 1 million Francophones outside of Québec, 1 million Francophones who have managed to keep their cultural identity for decades, indeed centuries. If we add these 1 million Francophones outside of Québec to the 4 million Anglophones who speak French or who want to learn French or are in the process of learning to speak French, this gives us a total 5 million people altogether who speak French and, although they're not Francophone Quebecers, they nevertheless consider the French language important. This is why political ties and economic ties with the rest of Canada must be preserved.

We in Western Canada are glad that Québec wants change because many of us have wanted the present Canadian framework changed since the 1920s. We want to join forces with Quebecers to build a better Canada, a more flexible Canada, a true confederation. Never think that Clyde Wells represents English Canada.

Finally, in concluding, I'd like to quote a farmer from the Mauricie who told me: "Everybody needs somebody. If we've understood those people who talked about economic ties correctly, you said that you needed us." (Translation). We English Canadians need you. Together, we will be stronger. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Peter Julian, speaking on behalf of Our Future Together. Now, we'll hear Guy Gagnon speak for another organization of a general nature, the

Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. Guy.

Conseil permanent de la jeunesse

Mr. Gagnon (Guy): Mr. Châtillon, Ladies and Gentlemen, the time has come for the people of Québec to make a decision about Québec's political future. The latest constitutional talks showed once more that there's a major divergence between the aspirations of Quebecers and the great Canadian dream. This decision is one that can and must be made by us without waiting for anyone's permission before ruling on our collective future.

As young people and members of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, we feel that the political and constitutional future of Québec is our concern because it's our future that's at stake. The Conseil permanent de la jeunesse therefore recommends that the Commission on the future of Québec designate sovereignty as the only political option that will allow Quebecers full economic, cultural and social development and that this option be submitted to the people in a referendum. This referendum must be held as soon as possible so that the constitutional dead-end we find ourselves in can be eliminated once and for all. The referendum question must be clear and leave no room for different interpretations of its meaning, either by Canada or elsewhere in the world.

Sovereignty for Québec does not mean that its social values, which have been supported by its young people for a long time now, are being questioned. It's not so much the kind of society we live in as our political and constitutional status that we dispute. The foundations characteristic of Québec society are solid enough for us to build on them. I repeat that we're attached to democratic values and human rights and freedoms and that we're committed to the protection and promotion of the French language within our society and that this commitment is expressed in a spirit of respect for the cultural, language and institutional rights of English-speaking Quebecers.

We want a society that accepts and respects differences between people. We hope that we'll grow in a society that aims for full employment of its human resources and that therefore sees it as its duty to fight poverty; a society that advocates and works towards greater equity and greater social justice; a society that, as a result, refuses to accept the economic and social destruction of its regions by giving back to the people in the regions back the powers they need for their development; a society that accords priority to respect for and protection and improvement of the quality of the environment by promoting economic development based on the sustainable development principle.

Young people also want to develop within a society that advocates peace, especially in light

of current events. For us, a society cannot define itself without asserting these basic principles. Young people want a country that will use all components of Québec society as building materials.

To conclude, we hope that this youth forum will build on the basis of the main consensuses of opinion expressed in our different briefs. We therefore believe that it's on the basis of Québec sovereignty that we have to define the foundation of the Québec of tomorrow.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Guy, for speaking to us on behalf of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. Your brief covered many concerns, many subjects, particularly vocational training, the drop in the birth rate, the aging of the population and employment, and I've left some of them out, as well as other subjects that will be discussed tomorrow.

Now, we have two groups of youth centre representatives around this table; one is an umbrella organization for youth centres and the other represents one regional youth centre. Lucie Dufresne, from the youth centre La Soupape, is going to talk to us about the concerns of young people between 12 and 18 in particular. Lucie.

Youth Centre La Soupape

Mrs. Dufresne (Lucie): Thank you very much. The views presented in the brief prepared by the youth centre La Soupape are thoughts and ideas of young people that reflect their uneasiness with regard to constitutional, environmental, family, social, educational and full employment policies. They're not claiming that they can change the world. They're insecure. They've tried to suggest solutions to the problems they're faced with and, particularly, to make others aware of them so that their situation can finally be rectified.
(4:15 p.m.)

The important thing for us is to submit the question to the people as quickly as possible, to ask them: Are you in favour of Québec sovereignty? We want a country that respects us, that shows its consideration for its citizens with policies that are adapted to our society, that gives the government full powers of autonomy, management and legislation, that would develop a policy for isolated regions, and that places priority on improving our living conditions and providing young people with status.

Their quality of life must be promoted. Youth centres must be recognized as preventive organizations. The real financial needs of youth centres must be reevaluated and they must be allowed to have a parliamentary representative. Power is the ability to act and, more importantly, to provide funds where they're really needed: in services for the destitute, to promote an increase in the birth rate, to

improve the living conditions of needy, low-income and single-parent families, and to enable young people who no longer live with their families to attend Cégep and university and become independent so that they're entitled to maximum loan and bursary amounts. Community organizations could also benefit from funds.

Now I'm going to touch on the highlights of the brief that we've filed with this commission: internationally recognized neutrality for our country; French everywhere; a more active political role by young people; access to training; improvement in education; no three-month DEPs without prospects for the future; a special budget for young entrepreneurs; low-rental apartments and rooms; transportation between cities and towns in isolated regions; recognition of youth centres as preventive organizations; an increase in their budget; fair incomes; and a parliamentary representative. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): OK, thank you Lucie, speaking on behalf of the youth centre La Soupape. Now, for the Regroupement des maisons de jeunes du Québec, Martin Viau has some concerns he wishes to talk to us about. You have the floor, Martin.

Regroupement des maisons de jeunes du Québec

Mr. Viau (Martin): Ladies and Gentlemen, the Regroupement des maisons de jeunes du Québec presents to you here, on behalf of some 85 youth centres across Québec, the changes they hope to see take place in Québec, whether inside the Canadian federation or not. Every year, we are in close contact with roughly 25 000 guys and girls between the ages of 12 and 18 who want to become critical, active and responsible citizens. We are therefore particularly well placed to see firsthand the difficulties they are having integrating into our society.

That's why we've chosen to propose here social changes which, in our view, could change the political future of Québec for the better. In the field of education, we propose nothing less than a Quiet Revolution II, as in Texas Chainsaw Massacre II. By the year 2000, we'd like to see all young people completing their Secondary V. Currently, 37% do not obtain this diploma, which, in our view, is as much of a catastrophe for Québec's future as all the Meech Lakes and other lost opportunities combined.

We also propose that class sizes be reduced to promote meaningful teacher-student contacts, which are cruelly lacking at the present time. We propose a definitive secular conversion of our schools, whereby denominational religious instruction would be replaced by the teaching of religions from a historical and cultural perspective. In this sad week, we think that all Quebecers would benefit from a better

understanding of Islam.

We propose as well that language be the only admission criterion for registering with the school boards, which would foster mutual understanding among all Quebecers. We propose that secondary students be given the right to vote in school board elections, not only because they're the first to be affected by both the good and the bad decisions of the board members, but also because adults aren't interested in the school question anyway.

We propose that all age discrimination be abolished, particularly in the case of a future referendum. Young people between 12 and 18 years of age have the required intellectual abilities to be qualified to vote, just as they are also sufficiently qualified to sit on the boards of directors of the organizations which directly affect them.

Lastly, we believe that the new Québec should have full powers in the areas of health, immigration, employment, training and education. Currently, there is too much overlapping of programs and jurisdictions, which causes a considerable squandering of our energies. It will be clear to you by now that the Regroupement des maisons de jeunes du Québec considers that the political future of our society cannot help but be enriched if we carve out a better place in society for our young people between the ages of 12 and 18. In our eyes, to neglect the youth now is to neglect the future. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, thank you, Martin, of the Regroupement des maisons de jeunes du Québec. Your concern for the democratic participation of young people will have a place in tomorrow's discussions when we debate individual and collective rights or when we deal with the matter of a Québec constitution, if you want to institute this democratic right for young people.

Now, we have two chambers of commerce with us, two junior chambers of commerce, one from metropolitan Québec City and the other from the Montréal area. I'll call first on Robert Vincent, who represents the Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal. Robert.

Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal

Mr. Vincent (Robert): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since Canada is not willing to recognize Québec's five minimum conditions, we have no other choice but to refashion this relationship which is disadvantageous to us. A priori, the status quo is no longer acceptable. Full sovereignty, on the other hand, does not appear to us to be the optimum solution for either party, in view of the interdependence which links us together.

The formula we prefer, namely the creation of a confederal-type body, will allow each of the

parties to control the powers required for their respective economic, social and cultural development, while also allowing them to form an association in areas where their mutual interests will be best served.

Through this development, Québec must seek better relations with its citizens as well as with its Canadian and international partners, guided by the basic principles of democracy, the free movement of goods and people, a free market, the primacy of Québec's French character within the respect of individual rights protected under the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, social development through economic development based on an industrial policy, and the honouring of international commitments.

Our organization proposes an effective, non-dogmatic approach to the pursuit of a new constitutional status, banking on the fact that it is in the strategic interests of both parties to form an association, but that these interests will probably be overridden, at least temporarily, by emotional reactions.

We advocate that the National Assembly of Québec first declare the sovereignty of Québec in order to free itself of the present constitutional amending formula and to put itself in a strong position for the negotiations that will follow. This declaration must include a timetable for negotiating and regaining powers, a process which must be completed no later than 1999. We must give time a chance to do its work.

The declaration of sovereignty should make the Canadian government the trustee of the powers which it currently holds but which Québec wants to regain, the duration of this trusteeship varying according to the timetable. In our view, it would be desirable to negotiate the progressive redistribution of powers, block by block, in two-to-three-year rounds, in order that we may seek the collaboration of our partners while allowing sufficient time for preparation and a smooth adaptation, thereby promoting the greatest possible economic and political stability.

Should Canada refuse outright to negotiate with Québec, we would be prepared to assume the responsibilities of a sovereign State. I repeat: We would be prepared to assume the responsibilities of a sovereign State. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Right. Thank you. That was Robert Vincent, of the Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal. Thank you, Robert. You deal fairly thoroughly with the question of method and procedure. Well, you'll have an opportunity tomorrow, when we discuss the third area, the redefinition of our political status, the process of national assertion, to develop your idea further, if you like.

I'll now turn the floor over to a

representative of the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain, François Cholette. François.

Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain

Mr. Cholette (François): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Commission, members of the Youth Forum, the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain is an organization with a membership of roughly 400 people engaged in service trades, the retail trade sector as well as in manufacturing. Following the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord, the Jeune Chambre de commerce decided to conduct an opinion poll among its members, which showed that 75% of the 171 respondents are definitely against the constitutional status quo and that 70% believe that it's impossible, considering the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, to reach a new constitutional agreement with the federal government and the other provinces within the framework of the current federal system. Furthermore, 69% of the respondents opt for a form of political sovereignty for Québec and define Quebecers as a people or a distinct society.

These findings lead us to discuss the following points in succession: first, the failure of the current federal system, and second, our vision of the Québec of tomorrow.

The failure of the present federal system. The current federal system is a failure, both politically and economically. That's why the constitutional status quo can't last indefinitely. First, from an economic viewpoint, we believe that Canadian federalism has become inefficient for the following reasons, among others: first, the explosion of the federal debt, a problem which is of great concern to young people, who will have to pay it off; second, the inconsistencies between federal and provincial economic development policies. In our opinion, the source of these problems lies in part with the British North America Act of 1867. By way of example, we can mention the spending power of the federal government and the pointless, costly overlapping of legislative jurisdictions.

Now, from the political standpoint. The failure of the Meech Lake Accord has again demonstrated the impossibility of reforming the current federal system to meet Québec's legitimate demands. Since 1867, Canadian federalism has grown more and more centralized, to the detriment of Québec's aspirations for greater autonomy. As well, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982 imposed a uniform set of fundamental values on all of Canada, "from sea to sea", to the detriment of Québec's distinct character. The current federal system cannot be reformed from within, both because of the inflexibility of the amending

formula and because of the fact that, to English Canadians, Quebecers are not one of the two founding peoples, but, in fact, one of ten provinces.

The Québec of tomorrow. Since the great majority of our members - 70% - feel that, in view of the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord, it is impossible to come to a constitutional agreement with the federal government and the other provinces within the current federal framework, we won't deal with the option of renewed federalism. We'll simply put forward various economic scenarios all of which are based on the premise of some form of political sovereignty for Québec, given the views expressed by 69% of our members. In these times of major upheavals on the scene of world affairs, the winds of change have also begun to blow in Québec since the Meech Lake Accord fell through. The disillusionment with Canadian federalism appears to be paving the way for the political sovereignty of Québec. Nevertheless, despite the Québec-Canada political divorce that we foresee, one fact remains, which will oblige the ex-spouses to accept a shared-custody arrangement, namely the interdependence of the provincial economies. The Québec and Canadian economies are, in fact, highly integrated and it's impossible to believe that a political divorce would herald the end of economic cooperation, when Europe '92 is being set up and when North American free trade has become a reality. Owing to the globalization of trade, Québec and Canada can't afford to cut off their trade ties. What form they will take remains to be seen.

We, the jeune chambre de commerce, hope that future economic relations between Québec and Canada will resemble a form of common market even more closely integrated than Europe '92. It is important to note, however, that, as opposed to the Common Market and free trade, which resulted from agreements negotiated between already sovereign States, Québec and Canada are headed for an economic union whose foundations are already in place, but within the context of a redivision of political powers. The provincial economies are already integrated. It's a matter of preserving that advantage. We already have a common currency, the free movement of goods, services and capital, common customs tariffs and a common external trade policy.

In conclusion, the members of the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain are against the constitutional status quo and believe that it's impossible, given the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, to reach a constitutional agreement with the federal government and the other provinces within the present federal system. Furthermore, the majority of the members of the Jeune chambre are in favour of some form of political sovereignty. As for the future economic relations between Québec and

Canada, we hope they will resemble a form of common market more highly integrated than Europe '92.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): OK. Thank you very much, François Cholette from the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain. Now, let's hear from the group of representatives, the young people representing political parties. The first to speak will be the representative of the Youth Association of the Equality Party, Richard Smith. Richard, you have the floor.

Youth Association of the Equality Party

Mr. Smith (Richard): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. J'aimerais remercier les membres de la Commission, de même que le personnel, de m'avoir permis de vous adresser la parole ici aujourd'hui, au nom de mon association. De vous parler de l'avenir du Québec, une question qui a incité tous les Canadiens à réévaluer les liens qui les unissent.
(4:30 p.m.)

All Canadians, for whatever reason, have their own distinctive values and aspirations while sharing certain values common to all across Canada. The Canadian Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights are both intended to reflect this common bond which links us together. We believe that the adoption of a provincial constitution could complement the Canadian Charter by incorporating values and objectives which reflect the hopes and expectations of Quebecers. We recommend that Québec adopt a provincial constitution which would include a charter of rights and freedoms and language rights for Francophones and Anglophones. By the same token, we demand that a Québec constitution be ratified by democratic means such as a referendum or a plebiscite. These could also be included in an amending formula establishing that, in Québec, this power is in the hands of the people.

L'idée qu'il puisse y avoir une constitution à plus d'un palier de gouvernement n'est pas nouvelle, ni menaçante. Les États-Unis permettent aux États de rédiger leur propre constitution, à condition que celle-ci ne soit pas en contradiction avec la Constitution américaine ou la Déclaration des droits.

Drawing up a constitution would offer Quebecers the opportunity to determine what objectives and values we all hold in common because, before Québec examines what it means to be a Canadian, maybe we should examine what it means to be a Quebecer. Quebecers could find themselves involved in the process of devising a new social contract.

En outre, nous devrions exhorter les collectivités linguistiques du Québec à tenter d'élaborer un contrat social linguistique que

chaque groupe pourrait appuyer avec enthousiasme et confiance, et non auquel il consentirait simplement par désespoir, par indifférence ou par crainte de menaces implicites.

To Anglophones and persons whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, Bill 101 does not symbolize this commitment imposed on this community. It implies that Anglophones can't be expected to show good faith with regard to the concerns of Francophones about protecting their language and that, consequently, they must be convinced by force. If the place of language minorities were recognized in a new linguistic social contract, we believe that they would not only respect the law, but also respect its superb spirit. We would like to emphasize that, if the Commission is unable to reach a consensus on the future of Québec, then all the members must at least agree to find a solution using the notion of a Québec constitution as a vehicle for constitutional change, in order to have a constitution as a framework providing us with the opportunity to examine all the relevant questions, each from our own perspective, to see how they interrelate and how they affect each group, for example, language insecurity and regulations respecting communications. At the end of this exercise, however, it must be decided whether the proposed constitution is the constitution of a province or of an independent State.

Pour conclure, disons que notre proposition n'est pas un prototype destiné à engendrer de nouvelles manœuvres sociales de la part des hommes et des femmes politiques. Nous désirons plutôt l'établissement d'un nouveau contrat social fondé sur le respect. Nous sommes inspirés par les Québécois ordinaires que nous voyons, quelle que soit la langue qu'ils parlent, des Québécois qui vivent et travaillent ensemble, en amis, en bons voisins et souvent comme une famille. Il faut espérer que nous saurons traduire leur sens commun et leur bonne volonté. Voilà le Québec dans lequel nous voudrions vivre, dans la dignité et la paix. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Richard Smith, speaking on behalf of the Youth Association of the Equality Party.

Now, on the Parti québécois side, three groups will be heard, two of them regional ones. First, the Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais, represented by Benoît Campeau who now has the floor. Go ahead, Benoît.

Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais

Mr. Campeau (Benoît): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais requests that the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec recommend to the Government that a referendum be held on sovereignty.

The history of Québec is unfolding at an ever faster pace and, in the opinion of the Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais, sovereignty must be the first stage in Québec's political and constitutional future. Any plan pertaining to Québec's political future which would involve Canada's prior consent is doomed to failure and will only lead to instability in Québec.

Similarly, the Commission must be wary of options of the "Meech plus" type which would entail renegotiating the Meech Lake Accord with Canada, but with new minimum conditions added. In politics, where a minimum has been rejected, to think that a maximum would be any more successful is like believing in Santa Claus!

Consequently, once the disputes between Québec and Canada over the dissolution of the federal ties have been settled and once the mutually profitable agreements have been concluded, Québec, having finally solved its problem, could resolutely turn its attention to its economic development. To ensure its economic development, Québec has had to create its own institutions. By freeing them from a federal authority which seeks to rein in their expansion, by freeing Québec from federal policies, such as the high-interest-rate policy, which serve the interests of Ontario at Québec's expense, not to say to Québec's detriment, sovereignty is going to speed up Québec's economic development.

In Québec, the regions are dying. It's not enough to repatriate the federal funds for regional development. Once they've been repatriated, Québec must give them to the regions so that they can set up their own economic institutions, just as Québec has done. Only then will regional development begin to become a reality.

Clearly, as representatives of the Outaouais youth, we are here today to call attention to the distinct character of our region. In fact, because of its geopolitical situation and its expertise in administration, such as the civil servants represent, we urge that the Outaouais be designated an administrative area. You have to understand that, for us, it's crucial. On the other hand, every region must have its fair share of the cake in a sovereign Québec in order to revitalize the regions and curb the exodus of young people towards the major urban centres. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Benoît Campeau, who was speaking on behalf of the Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais. Clearly, your regional concerns will be addressed when we deal with economic considerations under item 18 on tomorrow's agenda, regional development. Now, we have Nathalie Boulianne who has asked to speak on behalf of the executive of the Jeune Parti québécois du collège Lafleche de Trois-Rivières. Nathalie, you may

begin.

Executive of the Jeune Parti québécois du collège Lafleche de Trois-Rivières

Mrs. Boulianne (Nathalie): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, forum participants, my presentation will be brief but it will summarize the basic message that the Jeune Parti québécois du collège Lafleche de Trois-Rivières wishes to convey to you concerning Québec's constitutional future.

In the first place, we categorically reject Canadian federalism. Our reasons for condemning it are many. They include the disparities which still exist between the various parts of Canada, the overcentralization of powers in Ottawa and the refusal to recognize our national identity. All of these and other observations make us doubt the merits of the Canadian Confederation. In addition to that, the division of powers between the provinces and the central government hinders the sound development of the provinces. The duplicate structures imposed on us by Ottawa constitute a major obstacle to our own development at every level.

Having analysed federalism, our group is certain that Québec has no place in Canada, that we must therefore take charge of our future, assume our responsibilities, in other words, become sovereign. An independent Québec will ensure us lasting development adapted to our contemporary realities. We have come to the conclusion that sovereignty is the only solution to the current constitutional crisis which will be acceptable to all Quebecers, since it will give Québec the tools it requires for its self-fulfilment. We want our own country so we can be "maîtres chez nous", take charge of our future and no longer leave it in the hands of those who refuse to acknowledge the realities of our daily lives.

Now that we have informed you of our constitutional option, we will now outline the procedures which, we believe, will respect the primary ideology of Quebecers, namely democracy, and which, in addition, will enable us to avoid the political instability that would result from too long a delay. Accordingly, we propose that a referendum on sovereignty be held 90 days after this Commission has tabled its recommendations and that this referendum be held in conjunction with a general election.

In closing, I'd like to point out that the Québec people is a model of pacifism and tolerance. It must remain so and treat its minorities with more consideration than it has itself enjoyed in the past. We want nothing less than a democratic society respectful of human rights. It's a unique opportunity to build an avant-garde country whose dynamics will be clearly modern and whose wisdom will be drawn from its past. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Nathalie, who was speaking on behalf of the executive of the Jeune Parti québécois du collège Lafèche de Trois-Rivières. Now, representing the Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois, Mr. Joseph Facal. Joseph.

Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois

Mr. Facal (Joseph): Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, dear forum participants, the young members of the Parti québécois have submitted several briefs, each focusing on the issue from a different angle. We're very pleased that you've given them such an ample opportunity to express their views.

On behalf of the Comité national des jeunes, I'll not surprise you either by emphasizing to the Commission the necessity for Québec to attain full and complete sovereignty as rapidly as possible. How? This decision to become sovereign should be made by the Québec people in a referendum which should be held in 1991, at the earliest possible date. We also think that Québec as a country should negotiate as an equal with its Canadian neighbour an economic association in the form of a mutually profitable treaty which would include a monetary union and which would ensure the free movement of people, goods and capital. But the association would be a strictly economic one and, in our opinion, it's not at all desirable for Québec to elect representatives to any authority other than the National Assembly of Québec. Why must we have sovereignty? I won't go back over the basic points of the fundamental arguments that have already been given; we must have sovereignty primarily in order to have the levers that will enable us to develop as a Francophone people. We must have sovereignty so that we will no longer be in the minority; we must have sovereignty in order to put an end to the squandering; we must have sovereignty to put in place an economic policy that will be consistent with our interests, and we must have it so that Québec can speak to the world with its own voice.

Québec will never be able to obtain the necessary powers for that by remaining within the federal system which is impossible to renew. Others have said so here. After the rejection of an accord which conceded nothing essential to Québec, after a minimum has been rejected, to believe that a maximum can be achieved within the federal system is nonsense. In the context of hypothetical bilateral negotiations between Québec and Canada within the federal system, the other provinces will demand the same treatment, and with just cause. And it is precisely within the framework of constitutional conferences with 11 at the table that we will always be just one of the eleven and we will never be able to get

the others to agree to our demands. But it's much more than an inflexible amending formula that is basically responsible for this stalemate. In my opinion, it's quite simply the fundamental incompatibility of the interests and aspirations of two nations which are equally respectable and which could, and will be, the best of neighbours, but that are being forced to share the same house.

That is essentially why, in our view, Québec's future affirmation and sovereignty go hand in hand. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having heard us out so patiently. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Joseph. We've just heard the Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois. Now, the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party has submitted a brief and Michel Bissonnette will be presenting the views of this youth commission. Michel.

Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): Hello. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the young Liberals, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord has more than historic significance. It's a failure that is bringing Québec toward its moment of truth, and the conclusions drawn in the aftermath of this failure have led to a new consensus in Québec such as has never before been seen, particularly among the youth. Beyond the symbols, it's time for Québec to redefine its political status and rethink the political and economic framework in which it wishes to develop. The new constitutional position that the Québec government will be defending must, in our view, first respect two basic principles.

First, Québec must acquire a different political status. Second, the status quo must never more be the fallback position. At its youth congress last summer, the Youth Commission had a proposal adopted in favour of the establishment of a Québec-Canada economic community. In the first place, that implies that Québec must attain full political autonomy, that is, exclusive powers on Québec territory. Québec's youth and all Quebecers have the will to be in control of all areas of activity which directly affect them, to defend and promote their own distinct culture and to acquire the levers to take on full responsibility for their development in accordance with their aspirations as Quebecers.

It is our opinion that the State of Québec must hold now all the powers to determine on its own the areas where it shares common goals with its Canadian partners. As well, this economic community should entail the free movement of goods, people and capital, a common currency, some degree of harmonization of economic policies, and a single trade and

tariff policy throughout the territory of this community. Moreover, certain powers could be delegated to that level of authority if such is the wish of the member States. We believe that, in order for an economic association to remain viable, stable, functional and dynamic, it must be coordinated by a political authority, a supranational parliament composed of elected members. If we decide to maintain an economic association with Canadian partners, we must also make sure that we support that association with a solid and durable institution.

But, as young people, we must, above all, make sure that the various plans for Québec's constitutional future do not become ends in themselves but a means for giving Quebecers all the levers required for their development. It is important to define our objectives as a society and, above all, why full political autonomy is essential to the attainment of these objectives.

In light of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and the numerous other constitutional failures which went before, we young Québec Liberals consider that the only option which allows Québec to redefine its future in accordance with our history and our aspirations is sovereignty. We are defending the brief we're tabling here within the Québec Liberal Party as well, because, as young militants, we are currently trying to induce Québec's leading political party to change course and take the path dictated by the historic failure of Meech, not the path of sovereignty as a symbol but the path of sovereignty to act as a Québec people. Thank you.
(4:45 p.m.)

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Well, thank you, Michel, representing the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party. We have two general-interest groups which are interested in politics. First, speaking on behalf of the Jeunes souverainistes de l'Université Laval, is Alain Bellefeuille. Alain, the floor is yours.

Jeunes souverainistes de l'Université Laval

Mr. Bellefeuille (Alain): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Québec is currently having the most significant second thoughts in its history, a history marked by autonomism and excellence. For more than 200 years now, we have succeeded in maintaining a culture and developing it despite the fact that we are a significant minority in North America. Despite the rigid shackles of the Canadian Constitution, Québec's culture and our taste for a challenge have allowed Québec to develop a sound economy which is diversifying more and more with the onset of the 1980-1990s. As students and young people, it will be up to us to hand down to our children and grandchildren a flourishing culture and an increasingly healthy economy.

To do this, Mr. Chairman, Québec needs to

have a firm grasp on the tools needed. Manpower and employment are tools that keep the economy going; Québec must be able to control them if it wishes to prosper.

Sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867 allow two levels of government to legislate in these areas. Naturally, Québec is limited to its boundaries. However, the federal government may legislate in Québec as part of a federal firm. This creates a considerable difference in the way the two categories of workers are treated. We can give examples: anti-strike-breakers legislation can apply in a Québec company but not in a federal firm. Another notable difference is that the Canadian Labour Relations Board can also declare a strike or lockout illegal whereas in Québec only the courts are empowered to do so. This duality is entirely to our disadvantage from every aspect. For instance, it becomes difficult for the Government to assess the policies to implement as regards employment policies because a great many firms and workers come under federal jurisdiction, whereas other workers came under its own jurisdiction.

Once again, where firms are concerned, from an economic viewpoint, a huge dispute has evolved over recent years concerning the assigning of jurisdiction. Think of transport companies, for instance. These companies might carry goods outside the province once a year. Does this mean they are interprovincial carriers? This enormous dispute has incurred incredible expenses for all companies, expenses that Québec's companies can do without.

Moreover, the Constitution Act gives the federal government jurisdiction over unemployment insurance. It gives Québec jurisdiction over income security and shares jurisdiction governing manpower training. Mr. Chairman, I ask you, how can Québec adopt a fair, clear policy meeting its needs in the context of this power sharing?

Therefore, to standardize Québec's actions regarding labour especially and manpower training and to ensure that these actions are appropriate and equitable given the Québec labour market, we recommend that via its political sovereignty, Québec obtain all powers related to labour in order to ensure future generations of the prosperity of a flourishing economy.

It is to consolidate this economy still more that we reject Québec's establishing a monetary union of any kind with Canada in the long term. By this we don't mean a form of customs union or free trade. We reject the idea of a monetary union. Canada is composed of several regions whose economic performances vary. Ottawa's fiscal and monetary policies are always based on only one province, which is not Québec, and thereby create great disadvantages for Québec, Mr. Chairman, and I will end on

that note.

Therefore, we recommend sovereignty from a labour viewpoint to ensure an enhanced development of the labour market and to ensure better economic development for Québec. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Alain, who spoke on behalf of the Jeunes souverainistes de l'Université Laval. Tomorrow, you'll be able to expand on the issue of monetary union, within the theme of the economic aspects of a possible type of autonomy for Québec.

One last speaker from the political groups, Jean-François Simard, who will speak on behalf of the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec, that is the Parlement étudiant. Jean-François.

Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec inc.

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, dear forum colleagues, every year for five years the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants et étudiantes du Québec organizes mock Parliamentary proceedings which are held in the Blue Room of the National Assembly and which are known as the Parlement étudiant.

This year, our young parliamentarians agreed on a new constitutional status for Québec. Through this status we place our wagers on a new country in opting clearly for Québec sovereignty. As far as we're concerned, gone are the days of hawking the fleur-de-lis to the other Canadian provinces. Gone is the humiliation of the rounds of constitutional talks. We clearly adopt the sovereignty strategy.

In this context, we have felt it useful to share with you the results of our reflections on Québec's political and constitutional future. The following is a short summary.

In keeping with the Act respecting public consultation, we propose that a referendum be held. The referendum question that summarizes our stance is: "Do you agree that Québec should become a free, sovereign State and do you mandate the National Assembly to draft a constitution which, via a referendum, should be adopted by the Québec people, yes or no?"

If the answer to the referendum question is affirmative, Québec would become sovereign in principle. However, it would not be fully sovereign until after a five-year transition period. This five-year transition period, a sort of bridging scenario, would be devoted to negotiating a new agreement with Canada as an equal. Québec's willingness to open up its markets and unite with its partners was evident during the U.S. free trade debate.

Here is the text of the Constitution that

would make such a union possible: In implementing an international treaty, the law may delegate to a supranational body the exercise, in certain well-defined areas, executive, legislative and judicial powers. The proposed Constitution is divided into three main chapters.

Chapter I recognizes certain inalienable rights within a charter of rights. This charter of rights deals with fundamental rights, the rights of French-speaking citizens, minority rights, and Amerindian and Inuit rights.

Chapter II structures a parliamentary, democratic, republican State. We propose no fundamental change to the organization of executive, legislative and judicial powers.

Chapter III ensures the paramountcy of the Constitution which can be modified only by the Québec people and only via referendum. This position is clearly unique, especially since the reflection we have just presented is shared and is based on the aspirations of young people with different political leanings, all of whom are putting their money on change. For more than a week, these young people agreed to defy tradition and go beyond simple political partisanship.

Therefore, young people of all political colours have translated the need to put the country before our parties and have, thus, outlined, I hope, the road open to our society as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): OK, thank you very much, Jean-François. So, in your free time, you run the student parliament and I think that tomorrow you'll be able to expand on the question of Québec's Constitution, just as you have given us a short preview of it today.

To wrap up this round table, it is my pleasure to ask for the testimony of Alain Hébert-Croteau of the Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie. Alain, the floor is yours.

Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie

Mr. Hébert-Croteau (Alain): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie was created on March 31, 1990 by a group of 11 young people whose ages vary from 16 to 30. It currently provides work for some sixty young townshippers. The members of the coop feel that the Canadian government is far removed from the concerns of young people and that it does little for them in areas of federal jurisdiction.

Disenchanted by the federalist adventure, they declared themselves in favour of a sovereign Québec to promote the growth of Quebecers and the development of our young people. The members of the Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie say no to

federalism for the following reasons: the GST will harm the development of small firms; unemployment insurance, added to the precariousness of jobs, is especially disadvantageous for young people; the federal debt is exorbitant and is constantly growing; Confederation has always been to Québec's disadvantage. U.S.-Québec free trade governed by federal jurisdiction would always see the Canadian government sacrificing its minority for the welfare of its majority.

The members of the *Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie* say yes to a sovereign Québec because they feel that the rest of Canada does not wish to ensure the survival of the Québec culture in Canada. With its well-established territory and culture, the State of Québec would develop according to its desires, its specific nature and its needs. We recommend the following: that Québec adopt its own Constitution and that it repatriate all powers; that Québec focus on promoting Quebecers' sense of pride; that the *Conseil permanent de la Jeunesse* be given actual powers; that Québec adopt an interactive employment policy; that Québec make provision for transition measures to help Québec firms benefit from free trade; that Québec adopt an environment policy enshrined in the Constitution; and that Québec use incentives to promote work cooperatives.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, convinced of the viability of a sovereign Québec, the members of the cooperative propose that the repatriation of powers begin as soon as possible and that we call on young people to participate in drafting a new Constitution. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Alain, of the *Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie*. This ends the first phase of going around the table to get the positions of youth groups on the political and constitutional future of Québec.

Briefs Submitted by Individuals

I wouldn't want to end this first period without presenting eight young people who presented briefs to the Commissions as individuals. First, Yves Boulet will be testifying tomorrow. Yves will tell us about sovereignty, a question of social maturity and economic effectiveness.

Then Gary Brazier, who will tell us about the advantages of functional arrangements between periods of centralization and decentralization. That's his brief. André Bzdera, who submitted an interesting brief on the issue of Canadian Supreme Court reform. His brief is a detailed study of the sharing of jurisdictions. Then Sylvain D'Aoust who, in his brief, endorses a sovereignty in which we should create our own currency. Martin Donais, who speaks of a sovereign Québec's environmental priorities,

based on the Swedish model. Christian Genest, a new sharing of responsibilities between Québec and regional and local groups. Pierre Larouche, the economic union with Canada and foreign affairs, which is very well developed. And finally, Robert Yalden, who contributes quite a specific brief on individual and collective rights. So, tomorrow these people will be asked to contribute to the discussions.

This initial round table shows the many concerns of young people. We have divided them into eight areas which, tomorrow morning, will be the subject of debate between young people.

In consultation with young people, the Commission secretariat has developed four areas for study: the first, Québec's distinct character; the second, the obstacles preventing Québec from asserting itself; the third, the redefinition of Québec's political and constitutional status; and the fourth, the economic aspects. These four areas break down into 19 themes.

In the first area: first, the issue of language and culture; second, economic dynam-ics.

In the second area: the obstacles preventing Québec from asserting itself. We'll look more specifically at overlapping jurisdictions and the demographic situation: the declining birthrate, aging of the population and immigration.

In the third area, the framework of autonomy. At this point, we'll talk, in theme 9, about political status, confederalism, sovereignty in the sense of independence, sovereignty-association and the status quo, all political positions found in the briefs tabled. The tenth theme in this third area will address individual and collective rights, the charters. Many charters were included in the briefs. We will talk about Native rights, Anglophone rights, the rights of individuals whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and of institutions proposed in certain briefs. Still in this third area, the redefinition of Québec's political and constitutional status, we'll look at the process of political affirmation: holding a referendum and or holding a general election and the National Assembly's proclamation of sovereignty, the Québec Constitution - the briefs tabled included at least five or six draft constitutions - and international relations.

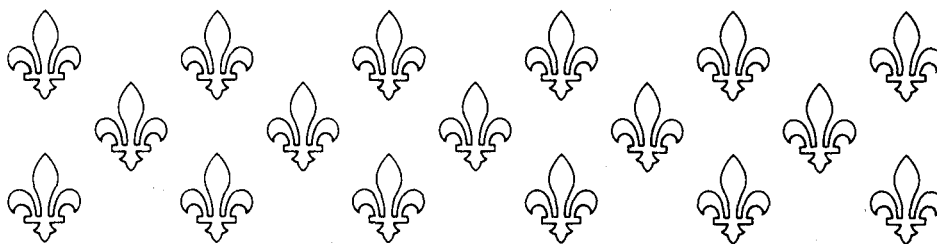
The fourth area, economic aspects. The characteristics: economic association or economic community, free movement of people, goods and capital. The concern voiced very frequently in your briefs: employment policy versus, in some cases, industrial strategies, monetary and fiscal questions. And finally, we'll end with two themes that were also quite common, regional development, the whole question of decentralization, and trade with the United States and the rest of the world.

So much for how our work will be organized. Tonight, among student groups, we'll

draw up the final details on the procedure and functioning of tomorrow morning's important discussions.

So, thank you very much for your cooperation and we'll meet for the second period tomorrow morning in this same room at 9:00. Thank you.

(End of sitting, 5:00 p.m.)



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

PREMIÈRE SESSION

TRENTE-QUATRIÈME LÉGISLATURE

Journal des débats



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

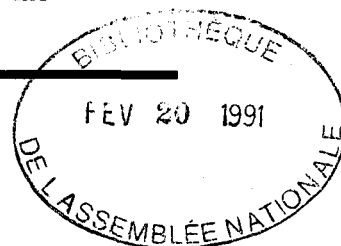
Chairmen: Messrs. Michel Bélanger et Jean Campeau

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Mr. André Bzdera, on his own behalf
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- * Mr. Richard Smith, Youth Association of the Equality Party

- * Other speakers questioned by the members of the Commission

Québec City, Wednesday, January 23, 1991

Forum: "Youth and the Political Future of Québec"

(9:10 a.m.)

The Moderator (Mr. Gilles Châtillon): It is Wednesday, January 23, 1991 and this is the second period of the youth forum on the future of Québec, during which young people, groups of young people, and guest speakers appearing on their own behalf will give their opinions and discuss four fields: the first field, the distinct character of Québec; the second, the obstacles to affirmation; the third, the redefinition of political and constitutional status; and the fourth, economic aspects.

Last night, we worked out with the young people the procedure for the discussions this morning, and we agreed that, in each of these fields, which are divided into 19 themes, there would be introductory remarks, determined by the young people and groups of young people, followed by discussions, which will proceed by requests for the floor. The young participants will inform my colleague that they wish to speak, and the debate on a field will begin at the appropriate time.

The right to speak... It was also agreed last night that each person will have two minutes to speak if possible and, at the end of the two minutes, the yellow card will indicate that the period during which the person has the floor is over. The period may be extended to up to three minutes, but, at that time, the red card will indicate that the person's speaking time is definitively over. But, generally speaking, the participants agreed to speak for less time but more often, so that the debate will be a little broader.

Debate on Themes

Language, Culture and Economic Vigour

Without further delay, the first field: the distinct character of Québec. The young people agreed in their briefs that, in this first field, stress would be laid on language, culture and economic vigour. For this first field, the Commission jeunesse de la Société de recherche en orientation humaine has requested the floor, as has participant Yves Boulet. Serge Trépanier, Commission jeunesse, you have the floor.

Mr. Trépanier (Serge): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comfort and equilibrium of a nation is always measured solely according to its economic attributes with no regard for the other aspects of its development. But is it truly possible to build a country solely on the basis of these criteria of economic rationality, without taking into consideration the human and collective solidarity that underlies the very

concept of society? We don't think so, and this is why we ask that economic profitability and the right to exist not be confused. All we ask is, just that, this simple right to exist.

If all the cultural communities of Canada have managed to preserve their specificity while speaking English as a common language, we, as a founding people, have our language, our identity and our national unity to preserve, and we want to continue to exist. We must therefore see that the language of communication in Québec is French and that there is no longer the slightest ambiguity about this question.

Demonstrating firmness in this regard while respecting the specific nature of each group is, in our eyes, a right and a basic necessity. We openly demand this right to exist, but do not refuse the development of culture, notably through the learning of languages in general, and not only English, since, with the globalization of markets, languages are tools of communication, not tools of identification of peoples.

We are in Québec. We want to live here and contribute to its growth. All those who wish to take part in this approach are welcome, regardless of their origins. But they must agree to be Quebecers for Québec and must work here with respect for what we are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Trépanier. Mr. Yves Boulet has the floor.

Mr. Boulet (Yves): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to draw the attention of the members of the Commission to a point that is rarely raised when we are talking economics. Far from viewing sovereignty as a threat to Québec's economy, I maintain, on the contrary, that sovereignty produces social solidarity and creates extraordinary economic vigour. Too much is said about uncertainty in regard to foreign investors. Too much fear is roused by the floating Canadian dollar, the rate of inflation and any other measure of economic activity. But when we talk about this, we too often forget that it is, first of all, Québec's investors, entrepreneurs and workers who make the economy vigorous. It is also families, their purchasing behaviour, their desire to procreate. It is the entire Québec population that generates economic activity.

It's simple. With sovereignty, Quebecers will realize that we are all in the same boat and that if the boat doesn't make progress, we will no longer be able to criticize Ottawa, we will no longer be able to criticize Canada for not rowing in the same direction as we are. We, ourselves, will be obliged to row; we, Quebecers, we are going to row. Young people like to work. Young

people like to serve their fellow citizens, but we want to do something useful and we do not want to waste our time in endless constitutional discussions. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Boulet. Two requests for the floor, Messrs. Armand McKenzie and Patrick Lacroix. Mr. McKenzie?

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): It's because I'd like to respond to what Mr. Pierre Brun said about language and culture. And I would like to say that, if Québec is sovereign and in its constitution it establishes parameters for its internal operations, we, as aboriginals, would like the aboriginal nations to be included in the distinct character of Québec. I feel it is rather important to mention this. The reason I insist on it is the historic alliance between your people and ours that has existed since your arrival on this land. Aboriginal languages and cultures must be respected and promoted. So, when we talk about the founding peoples and language of communication, from our viewpoint, this will still be a debate in which we defend our languages, which are already losing ground and, in certain cases, are extinct. Therefore, when we talk about the founding peoples, the aboriginal peoples, the First Nations must always be included. This is what I wanted to say.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, thank you, Mr. McKenzie. Mr. Patrick Lacroix?

Mr. Lacroix (Patrick): Fine. I am addressing just about everyone... if someone could answer me. Most of the people here, as you said yesterday, 77% are for sovereignty. The means differ, but everyone agrees that the preservation of the French language in Québec and Québec culture are of paramount importance. This was in the Meech Lake demands, and should be conceded in some manner. But, in trying to preserve these two very important things, what status do you give Québec's Anglophone institutions? I don't know whether someone can answer my question.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Well, the question has been asked, Patrick Lacroix. Another request for the floor, also from the group of students. Mr. André Gagnon?

Mr. Gagnon (André): Yes, very well. You're talking about the distinct character of Québec. One element that is certainly a concern of the Québec people and that means more and more Quebecers are for independence, Québec sovereignty, is certainly the feeling we have traditionally had that we have been discriminated against in Canada on the grounds of our language and a status that, until now, has not

been resolved. Progress has, of course, been made with the linguistic laws that have been adopted, but we know how these laws have been hacked to pieces by the federal government, for example in the language of work, where companies with federal charters are not obliged to comply with Bill 101 and may continue to operate in the language of their choice, even on Québec territory.

So the discrimination we have experienced on the basis of language, which means that Francophones generally have lower incomes not only in the whole of Canada, but in Québec as well, this feeling of inequality means that we truly believe we are discriminated against in Canada.

One thing that stands out in this regard, and represents a rather fundamental difference in vision and means that it is just about impossible to settle this problem within Canada is that Canada does not accept our being a nation and this is what causes so many ambiguities. Once it is admitted that a nation exists, such as the First Nations, such as the Québec nation, it can be admitted that the language of that nation, on its territory, is the common language and, in that way, the distinct character of that nation will not be endangered. But, in Canada's case, ambiguity persists because the nation is said to be Canada, and we are only a province, others are reduced to living on reserves or are minorities, and this is what prevents the true affirmation of French, for example on the territory of Québec, as a common language, as a national language. And this is what must be resolved by independence.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Gagnon. Only one person wishes to speak. It's Mrs. Hélène Gagnon. Mrs. Gagnon.

Mrs. Gagnon (Hélène): Yes, I would like to answer the question asked by Patrick Lacroix, who is from Bishop's University. I represent the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, to which 100 000 university students across the province belong, students from Anglophone and Francophone institutions. What would be the status of institutions, particularly Anglophone universities, in a sovereign Québec? We have debated the question and it is very clear to us that, if Québec has a distinct character because it has a French majority, it is also distinct because it has always respected the rights of its minorities and this, in our opinion, must not change. And, in a sovereign Québec, Anglophone institutions, particularly Anglophone universities, still have their place. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mrs. Gagnon. Two people have requested the floor, and they will be the last to speak in the discussion of the second field. They are Mr.

Serge Trépanier and Mr. Éric Simon. Mr. Trépanier.

Mr. Trépanier (Serge): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to stress that, as Francophones in Québec, we are not xenophobic. We are going to respect minorities if they respect us as a Francophone people in Québec. What is important, I believe, is that, to have a future in Québec, we must all feel we belong to Québec and are part of it, and I feel that young people in Québec are open to the world. This means that, regardless of the culture, I believe that everyone has a single goal. The only path I feel is open to us is to work together, and I hope that each minority and each people is respected in this regard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Mr. Simon.

Mr. Simon (Éric): Yes, I agree entirely with Mr. Trépanier. But when you ask whether the language of minorities will be defended in a sovereign Québec, I look around a little. I come from the western part of Montréal and when I think that there is no Anglophone college in the West Island, the language of the minorities will have to be kept, preserved, but we will have to be sure to consolidate what we now have and truly promote the French language adequately everywhere. We have been fighting for a long time to promote the French language in our regions while we are in Québec. Before we see to the rights of the minorities, we have to see that the rights of the majorities are respected.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Simon. There is an additional request for the floor. I can grant it because we have a little more time now. These will be the last two. We have to finish with this field, even if you have to express any other ideas you may have about Québec's distinct character in discussions of one of the other themes that will follow, and you will have an opportunity to do so. Then I give the floor to Marc-Antoine Adam and François Cholette to end discussion of this field. Mr. Marc-Antoine Adam.

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back for a second to what Mr. Boulet underscored in regard to the economic vigour of Québec. I am from McGill University and at McGill, when we debated this question, there were a lot of people, especially Anglophones, who asked us: But who are Quebecers? Are we Quebecers? The problem is that if we define Quebecers in terms of certain values, if you like... Well, a few years ago, religion was a very important value in defining a Quebecer. Now, there is language and culture. But there are also new values. I believe that economic vigour - I would perhaps use the word

collectivism instead of vigour - is an economic approach that is slightly different from that of English Canada, which is distinctly individualist. This creates an economic vigour which - we noted this at McGill - is the envy of many people who would like to see that throughout Canada, but who, at least at the economic level, are proud to be Quebecers. So, if we begin to define Quebecers in terms of certain values that have traditionally differed somewhat from those of language and culture, which, unfortunately, have a tendency to exclude many Quebecers, and adopt new values, such as economic ones, I believe we can develop a consensus in which, in the final analysis, people will be happy and will want to be Quebecers. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Adam. Mr. François Cholette.

Mr. Cholette (François): I believe that Quebecers are not only distinct from the standpoint of language and culture, but from an economic standpoint as well. One need only consider the whole generation of entrepreneurs who, over the past 20 years, have taken control of the main economic levers in the Québec community. Because of this, I don't think young people fear sovereignty. They believe that we are capable of achieving the economic sovereignty of Québec. We also need only think of what distinguishes us from the other provinces and probably from the United States, of the importance of small and medium-sized businesses to the Québec economy. And we need only think of organizations like the Fonds de solidarité de la FTQ, the Caisse de dépôt et placement, the Société de développement industriel, the importance of the cooperative movement in Québec, the importance of the Mouvement Desjardins, all sorts of institutions and organizations that make us strong, vigorous and distinct as Quebecers from an economic standpoint.

Research and Development, Postsecondary Education, Occupational Training

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Cholette. This ends our discussion of the first field for the time being. We will begin our discussion of the second, entitled: Obstacles to affirmation. In this second field, it is a question, generally, of the overlapping of jurisdictions, notably in programs dealing more with young people, research and development, postsecondary education and occupational training. In addition, we have seen in your briefs that, generally speaking, it is a question of the duplication of responsibilities in programs that concern health and social services, manpower and the environment, and other programs that are duplicated. We are first going to broach the

obstacles to affirmation through the questions of the overlapping of jurisdictions in research and development, postsecondary education and occupational training. The Association des étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique has the floor first, followed by the Fédération des étudiants universitaires du Québec and, lastly, probably in regard to occupational training, the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. The debate will begin with Mr. Stephenne, won't it? You have the floor, Mr. Stephenne.

Mr. Stephenne (Éric): I would like to begin by saying that research is one of the most important levers for industrialized countries. It is synonymous with technological development; it creates jobs, it provides economic prosperity. In this regard, it is the federal government in Canada that allocates funds for research and development here, and the Association des étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique sees two major problems in this. First, Canada is the industrialized country that allocates the least money to research, and, of the amount allocated, only 17% is earmarked for Québec. Hence, there is chronic underfunding of research in Québec.

A second major point... Canada favours certain sectors of the economy that are not always the sectors and strategies Québec favours. We could take, for example, the Hydro-Québec project. Quebecers have made a great effort to develop hydroelectric power while the rest of Canada has opted for nuclear energy, developed it and earmarked money for research to develop it, partly with Quebecers' taxes. To resolve these problems, which we think are major ones, we first ask that Québec have complete jurisdiction over research so that it can make decisions in keeping with what we think is important to develop and, second, that the underfunding of research be corrected, because we feel that research is a core sector and its underfunding is detrimental to the entire economy. Thank you.

(9:30 a.m.)

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Stephenne. A representative of the Fédération des étudiants universitaires du Québec now has the floor. Mrs. Hélène Gagnon.

Mrs. Gagnon (Hélène): Yes. In its brief, FEUQ has taken a stand on the overlapping of jurisdictions in postsecondary education. This is something of great concern to us because, here, everyone is probably aware that, under section 93 of the Constitution, Québec and the other provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over education, but, because of that strange institution known as federal spending power, the federal government instead of the provinces can establish certain priorities in that field, and we find that unacceptable. It is time for Québec to be able to establish its own priorities, particularly since, as was said earlier, Québec is

distinct and all that. We must quickly see to it that these powers are repatriated. We want this accomplished in the short term. Subsequently, Québec would be able to follow the road to sovereignty, but at least education powers and priorities would already be repatriated. This would be out of the way. We would then be able to begin immediately to solve our problems. Furthermore, we believe that the first priority in the area of postsecondary education is to ensure that university education remains accessible. We want to see the problem of the underfinancing of universities solved; we want to see that the public nature of universities remains a corollary to ensuring accessibility to university studies. And, in our opinion, this is a very important concern.

If I may just add something about research and development. Although FEUQ did not deal with this directly in its brief, some of our members, particularly those at the Université de Montréal, and FECUM dealt with this in its brief, and this is something that is also disturbing to them. They are worried about the overlapping of jurisdictions in this area, and we hope that Québec will be able to take full control of the field. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you Mrs. Gagnon. From the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, Mr. Sylvain Tanguay. Mr. Tanguay.

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): If there is one area where the overlapping of jurisdictions does considerable harm to Québec's economic development it is the area of manpower training. It is well known that in this field there are two departments with powers: on the federal side, Employment and Immigration Canada, and on the provincial side, the ministère de la Main-d'œuvre et de la Sécurité du revenu. In the past few years in particular we have realized that the general agreements between these two departments have led to nothing, and the fact that they have led to nothing has created, for young people especially, a problem I would say for the coordination and development of young workers in Québec. This is particularly true for the young people who are underemployed or not employed; we have only to think of those receiving unemployment insurance benefits or social aid. There is a distinct impression that youth has become the scapegoat in federal-provincial conflicts over the general agreements I mentioned earlier.

The lack of coordination and planning in manpower training has resulted in young people being shuffled between unemployment insurance and income security programs, thereby creating, or at any rate allowing us to see, a situation in which the bills paid by the two governments cancel each other out, for all practical purposes. There are young people who do not have access

to training programs. The overlapping of jurisdictions results in inconsistency and confusion, rendering all the efforts of the provincial government ineffectual, and harmful, as I said before, to economic development. If we are to have an effective manpower planning policy and effective employment planning policies in Québec we must not only repatriate but seize all occupational training and employment powers.

Since we are not at the stage of undertaking constitutional negotiations with the federal government, and since we wish to repatriate the powers and jurisdictions that will enable us to respond to our expectations in these matters and others as well, we have to become a sovereign State as quickly as possible.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you Mr. Tanguay. Three persons have asked to speak on these points: Mr. Robert Vincent, Mr. Luc Garneau and Mr. Alain Fortier. Mr. Vincent, you have the floor.

Mr. Vincent (Robert): Early in 1990, a period when there were protests about the increase in university fees, the Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal sent a brief to Minister Claude Ryan. Our brief posed a general question about such matters as research and development, postsecondary education and occupational training. It set forth the issues in a very broad manner, saying: All of these matters and elements must become part of an industrial policy; all the elements we have raised here must be incorporated into a coherent, effective industrial policy. Obviously, execution of such a policy requires the repatriation of all the necessary powers. Our strategy, which we shall come to later, is to recover powers in batches. One of the first will have to be that of all the powers on which an industrial policy depends so as to create an economy. This means research and development, and all the funds and all the powers governing postsecondary education. It has other ramifications, a reform of unemployment insurance and social aid, programs for the retraining of the labour force to adapt it to the Free Trade Agreement, etc. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you Mr. Vincent. We have received enough requests to speak on points 3, 4 and 5, if we want to reserve some time for the others points in the second field. I am therefore closing the list of speakers on points 3, 4 and 5. With regard to general responsibilities, we shall return to point 6. There are many speakers on these questions: Luc Garneau, Alain Fortier, Pierre Moisan, Patrice Beauchemin, Éric Sévigny, Pierre Bénard and Michel Léonard. I ask you, of course, to be diligent and concise in expressing your thoughts. Mr. Garneau.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): Yes. I am going to return to what my friend, Robert Vincent, was talking about, the repatriation of powers. It is important that we repatriate all powers to ensure coordination among the various programs, because what is happening now is that we are casting about on all sides and finding nothing. It is necessary to repatriate all powers to ensure coordination and, above all, to ensure research, whether it be research into education or research into occupational training, so that in the regions, so that it will help regional development. When we talk about applied research, we are talking mainly about applied research. In Canada, under the federal system, it is mainly about that that one speaks because it is immediately profitable, but it is essential not to forget about basic research, which is also important, for it is basic research that underlies applied research. In the distribution of funds we shouldn't forget that.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Garneau. Mr. Fortier.

Mr. Fortier (Alain): Yes. In Lévis-Lauzon, what we are very concerned about is that postsecondary educational institutions should first and foremost, and I think everyone will agree with me, be designed with the students in mind. They are not for the professors; they are not for the administrators, but for the students. On this, we suggest that... It is necessary, to ensure more effective university and college dynamics, that students be consulted about internal changes in the institutions and about training programs in universities and colleges. When a new program is set up in a Cégep, the students should have a part in this, and when necessary changes are made, whether on the teaching, political or physical side, the students should be consulted and take an active part in all changes that may be made, whatever they are.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Fortier. Pierre Moisan.

Mr. Moisan (Pierre): On behalf of CADEUL, I would like to say a few words about what is often called the scandal of research and development funding.

We know that serious observers of modern trends are going to tell us that intellectual development is becoming the most precious natural resource, that is to say, the resource we are going to be able to develop among our researchers, with the resulting innovation.

What has become increasingly clear is that the federal government is interfering in the field of education through its spending power, but it does so shamelessly in a way that favours Ontario. In the Québec government's action plan,

for example, when money is mentioned, we hear: For every dollar that Québec invests in research and development the federal government will invest \$2.70, while for every dollar that Ontario invests the federal contribution will be \$10.20. We have thought about this and have come to the conclusion that sovereignty is the only answer, provided that we can repatriate Québec funds that now go to Ontario and use our taxes to invest in research and development, which is the field of the future, a promising field and a necessary one.

Our conclusion, then, is that postsecondary education must be developed to the maximum. We are already catching up in Québec, and have almost reached the level of our American and Ontario neighbours. We must now invest, go the whole hog. The Québec government's objective in its 1988 to 1992 plan of action is to reach a level of 2% of GNP, whereas countries of comparable size, such as Sweden and Switzerland have levels of 2.79% and 2.28% respectively, and countries like Japan and the United States have levels of 2.62% and 2.83%. It is a priority, then. It is urgent. We must throw off federal tutelage in this field. It is a matter of the vitality and the economic development of Québec. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Moisan. Mr. Patrice Beauchemin.

Mr. Beauchemin (Patrice): Well, what I want to say about research and development is that, of course, since Québec is the poor relation in these matters, it goes without saying that that absolutely does not correspond to the basic criteria of productivity and competitiveness on markets, and therefore of employment. So, Québec being the poor relation, all of these areas are affected. This is one thing.

Second, I want to speak about manpower and employment. All powers in these fields must be repatriated to Québec without delay, considering what we have witnessed for some years: the disparities between manpower programs, unemployment insurance programs and, in what in the end results from that, social aid. We therefore have an immediate problem here, and it is essential to remedy it. Repatriation would settle all these issues. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Beauchemin. Mr. Éric Sévigny.

Mr. Sévigny (Éric): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to add to what Mr. Tanguay said a moment ago about occupational training. We young sovereignists, we're for sovereignty, for occupational training, not only because of the overlapping of programs but because of regional disparities in Canada, which are enormous, and very difficult for the Canadian government to manage.

What is important in the question of occupational training is that it be carried out according to the region and its economy, the difficulties it has in certain specific areas of training. It is very difficult for the Canadian government to manage when there are 10 provinces to deal with, all of them very different.

Knowing Québec, knowing the territory, we would be able to concentrate on specific problems in occupational training. For example, Montréal and Gaspésie have very different problems. There is a real need to adapt training to the region. It is for this reason that we advocate exercising sovereignty over occupational training, because Quebecers have a better knowledge of the territory of Québec. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you as well, Mr. Sévigny. Pierre Bénard, if you please, you have the floor.

Mr. Bénard (Pierre): I would very much like to stress a point that has been more or less ignored. This is the development of a job market for student researchers. In certain areas, there are not so many problems for the job market, but, in some fields of higher studies, there is a particularly difficult employment problem. A great deal of emphasis has been placed upon training researchers, but eventually these researchers have to find jobs. We feel that the way to go about this would be to invest, as everyone has been asking, more resources in research and development, by settling in particular the problem of the underfunding of Québec by the federal government. I am thinking especially of the grants to universities in Québec from federal government contracts where Québec is clearly at a disadvantage.

We should also stress the contribution from industry in Québec. Now that Québec is on the way to mastering its economy, it is to be hoped that industry will contribute much more than it has done in the past to funding research and creating a job market for researchers in Québec.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Bénard. I ask you all to speak closer to the microphone, and a little louder, to make things easier technically. The last speaker on these points is Mr. Michel Léonard. Mr. Léonard, you have the floor.

Mr. Léonard (Michel): In this last field I see some justification for our position. However, I am not quite at ease. According to you, only the complete repatriation of powers will enable Québec to develop fully. I believe that we are seeing that right now. We should make a list; it is essential.

However, I am somewhat ill at ease because a country is more than a list of grievances, even if they are justified and very realistic. A country is more than that. If we want a sovereign Québec, as will soon be evident, when we make these decisions, that is for us inevitable, a normal rendezvous, the advent of a people... It is, in the final analysis, acceding to what we want. Québec is already ours.
(9:45 a.m.)

Now, this is exactly what we need to remind ourselves. The economy, research, development, all these things are important. But it is more than that. It is a country; it is not a matter of equalization.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Léonard. In the same vein, let us go on to point 6, which, generally speaking, deals once again with the duplication of responsibilities, but in other sectors about which some have already spoken. Nevertheless, at this time I am going to ask the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat of the Université de Sherbrooke as well as Martin Donais to give us their opinion about the duplication of responsibilities. I therefore give the floor to the Groupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat of the Université de Sherbrooke. Here is Mr. Pierre Larrivée.

Environment

Mr. Larrivée (Pierre): Students in the master's and doctoral programs at the Université de Sherbrooke are particularly concerned about the environment. Québec must assume complete sovereignty in the matter of its environment, as regards both the production and management of resources, as well as the various forms of pollution resulting from these activities. This responsibility takes practical form first and foremost in the actions of individual Quebecers. In this sense, the government will have to see that respect for environmental concerns in carrying out any project or activity is inculcated in every citizen.

In questions concerning the environment Québec must have exclusive jurisdiction if it is to adopt effective policies. Any duplication in this area would only result in a deterioration of Québec's environment. To improve environmental quality and to limit future degradation we suggest that any jurisdiction with environmental implications be recovered, that the ministère de l'Environnement be made a department of first importance, that we become involved in discussions about the environment at the international level and that we aim for sustainable development by taking into consideration the rate of resource regeneration, recycling of waste, and the immediate and potential dangers from the degradation or

destruction of by-products. We further suggest that a more effective green plan be developed, with powers of verification, control, investigation and intervention, and that the green space concept be maximized in all development plans. The lack of application and promotion of intervention techniques and alternative technologies constitutes a major factor in preventing the adoption of appropriate ecological behaviour patterns. We therefore recommend that studies be carried out in this area. They should include the promotion of incentives for businesses and individuals, the development and use of a model of a network for pickup, recycling, and effective and profitable reuse, promotion of non-polluting production and recycling technologies, and developing technologies for the repair of previous mistakes. Finally, we propose improving the quality and the management of natural resources by increasing the proportion of Québec territory to be set aside for parks and nature reserves, by controlling forest reserves more effectively and through legislation to accentuate the protection of public property and environmental heritage.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Larrivée. Mr. Martin Donais.

Mr. Donais (Martin): I think it is clear that two levels of government with a department like that of environment involved in the same task cannot function properly. We can see that, first, the federal government does not look at problems in the same way as we do, and cannot discern the problems as we can. Having two fields of action of two different governments means harm rather than help in a domain that is of first importance in safeguarding our natural wealth. The environment is therefore a... Sovereignty must enable Québec and the department to take full responsibility for the environment. Once sovereignty is declared, a charter for the environment alone should be included in the constitution, in order to protect it and to provide Quebecers with a healthy quality of life. We should draw on the Swedish model, which includes the creation of many parks and planting trees in the cities, and planting twice the number of trees cut by forestry companies, which should be responsible for reforesting the land on which they have cut. There should as well be pickups of recyclable materials throughout Québec, not only paper but also cardboard, glass, metal and plastic. Such a charter is therefore very important for Québec, if we wish to safeguard the quality of our environment. We can then say how proud we are of our beautiful country, in which we preserve our natural wealth.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Donais. Several others have asked for the

right to speak, but if we want to discuss the delicate matter of our demographic situation we shall have to make choices. I therefore give the floor to three persons only. The three others who asked to speak will have to give their opinions later, at another time about other matters. Therefore, I give the floor to Pierre-Luc Desgagné, Marie-Josée Leblond and Christian Genest. After that, we can go on to the demographic situation.

Mr. Desgagné, Jean-Luc Desgagné, you have the floor.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Pierre-Luc.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Pierre-Luc.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): We of the Association des étudiants en droit decided, in order to contribute to the discussions, to proceed by images and to say that, in our opinion, the story of the Canadian Confederation is a little like the story of the person who went to an evening gathering wearing suspenders as well as a belt, or of the lady who accompanied him wearing both a suit and a long dress, or the story, a little more painful, of a husband in a hurry who was astonished to find that his wife, read Québec, was unsatisfied and wished to leave the bed as quickly as possible, or, finally and more seriously, the story of a State which imposed, by means of legislation, the values of the majority. This is the story of a Constitution where one has poured into the cement a legal jumble that is both painful to us and impossible to reform.

In Québec, and more specifically in the AED, we are becoming fed up with suspenders, so we must tighten the belt. And I believe that, in Québec, we are going to have to make decisions and repatriate all the jurisdictions, all the jurisdictions. Because if we wish to delegate things afterwards we must first of all control them. This is the position of our Association. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Pierre-Luc Desgagné. Mrs. Marie-Josée Leblond. Madam.

Mrs. Leblond (Marie-Josée): Thank you. The importance to be given to the environment need no longer be demonstrated. Yet, the environment is one of the grey zones in the Constitution, which contains no reference to the sharing of federal and provincial jurisdictions in this matter. So we are left with a provincial ministère de l'Environnement and a federal Department of the Environment. In other words, it amounts to our paying twice, and for agencies which will advocate divergent policies. I'm thinking of Grande Baleine, among others. From this perspective, it would be more advantageous

to assign powers related to the environment to one level of government. It would have the added benefit of keeping the decision-making level as close as possible to problematical situations, which would improve reaction time and allow better understanding of the situation.

The PCB saga, the Balmat affair and the fire at Saint-Amable lead me to ask myself the question: What indeed did the federal government do when these disasters occurred? We saw that they did nothing. Having done nothing about these three disasters, we can also ask ourselves why it has meddled in the James Bay II project? We mustn't forget that hydroelectricity plays a major role in Québec's economic life. Québec is reputed the world over for its expertise in hydroelectricity. It is even possible that the federal government is using it as a pretext for interfering in a Québec issue.

Let me say, in concluding, because of the duplication in structures, because of the federal government's inertia, but also because of the interference under the pretext of the environment, clearly, Québec should correct the situation relating to the environment and repatriate all powers to Québec. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mrs. Leblond. Mr. Christian Genest. Mr. Genest.

Mr. Genest (Christian): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this instance, obviously, I think the question of duplication with the federal government has been well outlined. And, obviously too, I subscribe to what the others have said. I, too, am 100% in favour of the idea of repatriating all the powers relating to the environment. Even if all we manage to do is prevent already existing programs at both levels of government from falling all over each other, that would be a step forward in itself.

Without wanting to complicate things further, I would like to say that the environmental issue, as such, cannot be settled by the two levels of government alone, but must involve a third level, and that is local and regional groups. Of course I am a bit disappointed to be the last to speak on the subject of the environment, because I would certainly have liked to hear my colleagues' reactions on this. Nonetheless, I simply wanted to sensitize the members of the Commission to the fact that the municipalities' intervention in matters relating to the environment is not new; they have had the power, historically, to intervene with respect to public health, as it was called at the time.

But it must be understood, from the viewpoint of environmental policies, that those which will have a direct effect on citizens will be the ones implemented by the municipalities, by the RCMS, by the urban communities. To give

a few examples: The municipalities will look after selective garbage pick-up, snow removal, or waste recycling, for the simple reason that these have a direct impact on the quality of life of citizens.

So, I would say in concluding, Mr. Chairman, because I realize that my time is running out, that as far as the sovereign Québec we want to build is concerned, I think, once we have repatriated all these powers, we will have to sit down with the representatives of local and regional governments and see how we can complement each other on environmental issues. And if there is a link to be kept, if we are to maintain a minimum of relations with Canada, I feel duty-bound to say, to my great regret, it should be in the area of the environment, because pollution knows no frontiers.

So, in that sense, we will have to speak to each other. It could be done at the level of international law, mind you, I would have no objection to it being done that way, but in either case, we will have no choice but to cooperate.

By way of conclusion, I would also emphasize, as did my colleagues, the need to repatriate all federal powers relating to the environment, as well as the fact that we will have to work closely with local and regional officers to deal with these problems at the source, where they have a direct impact on the quality of life of citizens. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Genest. You no doubt know that you will have an opportunity to elaborate on your concerns and ideas on regional development later this morning, when economic aspects will be discussed. Thank you.

Demographic Situation

The demographic situation, the third section of this second field: the decreasing birthrate and the aging of the population. La Maison des jeunes La Soupape would like to speak on this subject, as well as on the immigration policy. McGill-Québec has the right to speak on this issue. We only have 15 minutes, so please respect the time limits. Restrict yourselves to the time allotted. Mrs. Lucie Dufresne will speak for La Maison des jeunes La Soupape. Mrs. Dufresne.

Mrs. Dufresne (Lucie): Spending millions to bring in immigrants over the coming years, despite the fact that Québec has more and more areas of extreme poverty, that we are trying to increase the birthrate through incentive programs that don't really offer the support expected by these families, that underprivileged and low-income families have no more alternatives than single-parent families, that young people who no longer live with their parents and who attend

Cegep or university must have independent status before having the right to maximum bursaries and loans, that community agencies serving young people, families and the elderly are accumulating deficits, year after year, with no additional funding - I am not against immigration and the richness it can bring to our culture, etc., but we already have a rich culture here in Québec at the moment, and it is high time that we invest in our own families, young people and elderly people. It is important that Québec repatriate all powers and jurisdictions in these areas, and quickly. Thus, we will be able to develop adequate policies which will restore a climate of security, and put an end to duplication in our programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mrs. Dufresne. Mr. Steven Hogue now has the floor. Mr. Hogue.

(10:00 a.m.)

Mr. Hogue (Steven): Thank you very much. We want to talk about immigration, at the moment. It is well known that we need immigration right now, our birthrate is low. But immigration is only a temporary solution, in our opinion. Obviously, we must have an effective family policy, combined with immigration, if we are to have a long-term solution to the problem of the falling birthrate.

In a more particular vein, we would like to address the problem of our distinct character, which is very vulnerable in North America. We must address the problem of integration, which is of concern to us. Our efforts, therefore, must be directed toward integrating our immigrants. In this regard, the question can be asked: To what extent should newcomers to Québec who want to participate in building Québec society be expected to integrate? There are two concepts here: There is, first of all, the rather American "melting pot" concept, in which new cultures are encouraged to meld with the culture of the majority, enriching it with their own values. We believe this is the way for Québec to perpetuate its culture, with newcomers, with immigrants. There is the other concept, called the mosaic, which is more commonly found in the rest of Canada, in English Canada, where several cultures are grouped together, and coexist in this way. For example, in Western Canada, there are Ukrainian and German communities. But this is not the concept we need in Québec; we need the "melting pot" concept.

In order to solve this integration problem, we consider that Québec must have all the necessary legislative tools in order to define its own standards and its own goals in matters of immigration. First, Québec must ensure that immigration is instrumental in maintaining and promoting Québec's culture, but must at the same time remain an open and welcoming

society; also, Québec must have complete control over all immigration procedures, so as to eliminate all ambiguity concerning the Québec reality. We know that many immigrants come here without knowing, without understanding the real situation. So we must make a concerted effort to integrate immigrants. And, finally, we believe this can be accomplished in a sovereign Québec, through Québec's recovering all legislative powers. Afterwards, we can speak of regionalization, but that will certainly come later.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Hogue. We continue with André Gagnon. The following speakers have asked for the floor, and this will bring the round on the subject of the demographic situation to an end. Messrs. André Gagnon, Sébastien Tassé, Karim Amegan, Mrs. Emmanuelle Saucier, Mr. Martin Donais and Mrs. Isabelle Bouchard. Mr. Gagnon, you have the floor.

Mr. Gagnon (André): With respect to the overall demographic question, and immigration, I think the basic solutions to these problems hinge on economic and social development, basically. Because if we have problems with a falling birthrate at the present time, these problems, we think, arise from social programs that have not been adapted to the new social realities of the Québec of today, and that a blueprint for an independent Québec should include a social program adapted to social realities. We have increasingly encouraged women to integrate into the job market, but very often, generally, I would say, they are left with the twofold responsibility of family and a job outside the home. And if no efforts are made to ensure, on the one hand, a better sharing between men and women with respect to the family, but also with respect to social policies which provide ways and means of being part of the work force without taking on double and triple tasks, we cannot think of promoting an increase in the birthrate. We won't succeed in doing it simply by giving a \$3000 bonus for a third child.

On the other hand, immigration is often brought up as a problem, as a danger for Québec. It is a false problem, because the real problem, obviously, is taking control over our own destiny and affirming ourselves as a nation. And if we affirm ourselves clearly, it will be clear to immigrant communities; if the language of work in Québec is French, if, as the saying goes, things are done in French in Québec, the problem will resolve itself.

I think, actually, as the previous speaker said, that the different communities must participate in forging our national identity, but I would soft-pedal the "melting pot" question, because, in the United States, the "melting pot" has also meant coercion, imposed uniformity and

integration into a set of dominant values. I don't think this should be our attitude. We mustn't forget our origins. It is often said that Québec's origins are French, but the people... our ancestors who came here did not speak the same language. They spoke Angevin, Breton or Parisian. It's really because there was a common language, the language of the administration, that unification of the languages occurred, because the people, if they were to live together, couldn't live in a Tower of Babel. They were obliged to speak a common language, and that is what should be done; uniformity should not be forced on the population.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Gagnon. Quickly, for the five speakers, please, so that we can remain within our time restrictions. Sébastien Tassé.

Mr. Tassé (Sébastien): Mr. Chairman, I think we all agree that immigration contributes greatly to Québec society, but immigration is not enough. I call attention to the fact that the governments, those in power, now and before, have overlooked one very vital thing, and that is the importance, in the eyes of our generation, of having a family policy. We talk about the deficit at the present time, which is all well and good, but when we realize that, in the year 2015 or 2020, the Québec population will be substantially reduced, and if we want to keep the social services we wish to have, we will probably need people to pay for them. So, our generation, more likely than not, may well be left with the burden. We pay enough taxes as it is; it doesn't augur well for the years to come. So, this family policy must be implemented, and if it is to be implemented effectively, it is absolutely imperative that all powers be repatriated to ensure coordination. At the moment, this is absolutely impossible, since some powers are in Ottawa, and some are in Québec. Consequently, I think it is very vital to the present generation that Québec understand the importance of putting forward a family policy, and quickly, all of which, obviously, will take into account the harmonious integration of immigrants. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Tassé. Mr. Karim Amegan.

Mr. Amegan (Karim): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to emphasize the importance of linguistic integration for newcomers. When we speak of independence and sovereignty, we are speaking mainly of institutional structures, but Québec's distinctness goes well beyond that, and the real basis for this distinctness, at present, lies in its origins. The elements that have fashioned its present characteristics, the fact that it is the only Francophone nation in North America is what

distinguishes us from those around us. So Québec is now confronted with a constant threat, which is the power of attraction of the English language to newcomers and others who would want to come to Québec now or later. In the coming years, these people will inevitably form a growing portion of the population. That is a well established fact, I believe. Therefore, it is essential that future immigrants have an accurate picture, that they have an accurate picture of what Québec is, of its specific nature, and of the fact that Quebecers want to live in French.

In this sense, sovereignty would be a tool. It would give the foreigner a better picture of the reality of Québec, while at the same time maintaining a policy of openness essential to the fundamental values upheld in all democratic societies. Québec must be perceived in the light of its French character. Immigrants would, therefore, be better prepared for the realities of Québec life, their linguistic integration would be made that much easier, and the present problems of integration into the Anglophone majority would, for the most part, be eliminated.

A point I would also like to stress is related to respect for other cultures, which is very important for the Québec of tomorrow. The much talked-about integration of immigrants should not be tantamount to attempts at assimilation. It should not be attempted through coercive laws. It should be done through encouragement, through national affirmation, so that people perceive what you are and decide to integrate willingly, while at the same time keeping their own cultural distinctiveness, to which they have as much right as Quebecers have to theirs. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Karim Amegan. Mrs. Emmanuelle Saucier.

Mrs. Saucier (Emmanuelle): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a lot of discussion about the falling birthrate in Québec, about the individualism of youth, but, in our view, this is closely linked to the fact that the last two years have been characterized by the complete lack of a coherent blueprint for our society. To have children, one must have confidence in the future, and we feel that Québec's self-determination will give us faith in the Québec of tomorrow, and the conviction that we can raise children in a society that offers them a promising future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mrs. Saucier. Mr. Martin Donais.

Mr. Donais (Martin): It is clear that, given the aging of the population, immigration remains a very important means of countering this decrease, but we must look for immigrants in

countries which are mainly Francophone; it will be easier for them to adapt to our society because they will already speak the language. We won't succeed by recruiting immigrants from Hong Kong just because they have money, saying: Fine. They'll come here, they'll invest. It isn't true; it's been proven that immigrants from these countries don't want to know very much about Québec, it's just a port of entry for them; afterward, they will leave Québec to live elsewhere in Canada. That's why we must look for immigrants who speak French, who can contribute by bringing other ways of living to our Francophone society, while keeping the same language, which will make for an even stronger society.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Donais. Mrs. Isabelle Bouchard, you asked for permission to speak on this question of population. Mrs. Bouchard, you have the floor.

Mrs. Bouchard (Isabelle): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the young peoples' forum focused its attention on the problem of immigration. Well, it's true, and the different speakers have said it, Québec needs immigrants, on the one hand, because of the falling birthrate, and on the other, because of the aging of the population. In our opinion, their contribution to Québec society is immeasurable, culturally and economically, and on many other levels. So the problem facing us is the francization of newcomers. In our view, decentralizing the process for integrating immigrants by introducing it in the regions is an effective solution. For example, I would say that, for an immigrant arriving in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, a region where French is spoken 99.999% of the time, it will be easier to learn French than if he or she arrives in Montréal, where half the people speak English and half speak French. As far as we're concerned, this francization policy for immigrants could only be implemented in a sovereign Québec.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mrs. Bouchard. A last speaker, quickly, Mr. Mario Dumont. Mario.

Mr. Dumont (Mario): Yes, coming back to the question of the falling birthrate and the population pyramid, which, as we know, is now inverted in Québec, two big questions arise: The first is the question of family policy. We spoke about the duplication of resources and energy with the federal government, which certainly works against family policies. If the Québec government could have control over all the levers... We must have a policy, whether it be for day care centres, for financial aid to families, it must then be an overall family policy... We could set the population pyramid

right, but this question gives rise to another. We, as a generation, will never be able to correct the fact that, demographically, we will carry less weight. I think we've spoken about many sectors: the environment, education, the situation for young people in the regions, where the young people must really speak out. We say: We want to be closer to where decisions are made; we want the National Assembly to decide for us in all these areas. I think what must be kept in mind is that, more than ever, when we have the National Assembly deciding for Quebecers in these areas, we will have to address these issues as young people, and identify what our priorities are in these areas. I think organizations such as the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, among others, could play a major role here, and as I said, our weakness demographically will have to be compensated for by the energy with which we identify our priorities and defend the concerns of young people.

(10:15 a.m.)

Political and Constitutional Status of Québec

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Dumont. This brings the discussion of the second field to a close. The third field is the redefinition of the political and constitutional status. We will first discuss the framework for political autonomy; then, the process of political affirmation. In the context of political autonomy, the question naturally arises, as you know, of political status, and also, of individual and collective rights, of charters, of which there are many, of proposals for charters as stated in your briefs, notably also, of the rights of aboriginals, Anglophones and allophones.

We shall begin with political status. In reading your briefs, one can readily see that there are four political options being sketched out. I shall list them in alphabetical order: confederalism, sovereignty, taken to mean independence, sovereignty-association and the status quo. So, on the subject of political status, the following groups have asked to speak. These will be followed by those with the right to speak. Regarding the latter, I would ask you to be very precise with my colleague and wait until she has given her consent, certifying that you have been registered; if you do not, if there are too many registrations at once, she can miss some. Registration begins the moment I finish calling out the list.

For this third field, we have 90 minutes for exchanging views. So, normally, we should devote 45 of the 90 minutes to the subject of political status. The following groups have asked for permission to begin the debate. They are: the Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal, Un Avenir ensemble, the Coalition CESAQ-AGECA from the Cegeps, the Jeune Chambre de

commerce du Québec métropolitain, the Student Representative Council of Bishop's University and the Youth Association of the Equality Party.

To begin with, I give the floor to the Jeune chambre de commerce de Montréal. Mr. Serge Girard will be the speaker. Mr. Girard.

Mr. Girard (Serge): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A number of things are clear. Clearly, the Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal rejects the status quo, as well as all forms of federalism. If there were a choice between federalism and independence, the Jeune Chambre de commerce would opt for independence. But there is also consensus on a number of issues, yes, on autonomy, but also on the importance of maintaining ties with the rest of Canada. We believe it important to give this association a framework, to try to give it substance. We therefore propose the confederal formula.

I would immediately caution the members of the forum that the word "confederal" may have been used erroneously with respect to Canada. Canada does not have a confederal system. What is meant by a confederal system is an association of fully sovereign States, which therefore means that Québec, in moving in the direction of a confederal system, would, of necessity, first have to assert its independence. Having done that, it would be a question of negotiating an agreement with Canada as the only other partner, an agreement between States, between the Québec government and the government in Ottawa. And what course should these negotiations take? Well, a confederal system should be one which emphasizes, first of all, the development of the member States for whom this system has been created; a confederal government composed of representatives, not elected by the people, but appointed by the members, that is, the States, people appointed by the governments in Québec and Ottawa, whose only powers would be those delegated by the member States.

The role of an organization such as this would be one of concerted action, and, possibly, administration or management. It must be understood that a system of this kind does not make distinct or independent entities of the States which form it. Every Québec citizen would answer to one State, that is, the State of Québec. The Québec State could delegate powers, and without going into an exhaustive list, we can imagine certain things that come up regularly, such as for example, the administration of a common currency. So, a central bank which would be common to Québec and Canada, with people appointed by both governments to administer it.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Please come to your conclusion...

Mr. Girard (Serge): It is a question,

therefore, of an association of fully sovereign States. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Girard. The second speaker, represents, if I'm not mistaken, the group called Un Avenir ensemble. Is it... Mrs.?

Mrs. O'Gallagher (Christine): Christine O'Gallagher.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you. Mrs.?

Mrs. O'Gallagher (Christine): O'Gallagher.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Madame O'... you have the floor. I'm sorry.

Mrs. O'Gallagher (Christine): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have noted several briefs which state that, on account of the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, the rest of Canada rejects Québec. Or, it is not ready to negotiate, or it does not want to negotiate. This may be true for Clyde Wells, but fortunately, he does not represent the rest of Canada. We mustn't deny the fact that 80% of the Canadian provinces, which represents 95% of the Canadian population, supported Québec's claims. The most relevant question today, I believe, is the future of the French language, and what has to be done to guarantee that it continues to flourish.

It isn't simply a question of protecting it by isolating it from the rest of Canada. We must cultivate it. A language is a living entity that evolves, that changes. Sovereignty will only build a wall which will keep the French language from flourishing. Some four million Anglophones are already bilingual, or not far from it, and the one million Francophones living outside Québec cannot be ignored. It is extremely important to keep the dynamic among Francophones which has developed over the last 10 years. Economic and political ties with the rest of Canada must be maintained.

For this reason, a true confederation is a system not to be repudiated; it provides the ideal climate for the growth and development of the French language. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mrs. Christine O'Gallagher. We now give the floor to a representative of the Coalition CESAQ-AGECA, Mr. Michel Léonard. That's right. Mr. Léonard, you have the floor.

Mr. Léonard (Michel): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important, Mr. Chairman, in a debate as vital as this, not to confuse, intentionally or otherwise, certain aspects of the various concepts. What 25 000 young people have chosen, 80% of them, let's not forget, is full and

total sovereignty. For us, sovereignty is the legal translation of the term independence. For us, sovereignty implies that only the Québec government will collect income tax and other taxes on Québec's territory; that only laws passed by the National Assembly will apply to the territory of Québec, and will not be subordinate to any other law; that only the Québec government will, on behalf of the Québec people, sign agreements or treaties with other sovereign countries; that only sovereignty will enable the Québec people to determine their own destiny.

Actually, the other solutions, such as confederalism, renewed federalism, sovereignty-association or the status quo, even if they are no longer being discussed, would enable the rest of Canada to have a say in the future Quebecers would choose. Never again will we give them this choice, never again will the choice be made in Newfoundland, or in Calgary. In reply to what my colleague has just said, I'm sorry, it was 80% of the Premiers not 80% of the people, and the polls clearly demonstrated that the majority of Canadian people were against Meech, and rejected Québec.

As for the other options, Mr. Chairman, sovereignty-association included, they would not give us a full vote at the international level. In fact, I can't see the Québec government negotiating an agreement with the GATT, for example, or telling the Québec people that it can't completely respond to Québec's needs and interests, because, under some agreement or other, it must take into consideration what is happening in the Prairie provinces. Really, Mr. Chairman, economic association should never be a pretext for, should never give birth to political integration. There is no need to elect members to a supranational institution. The economy is not managed by elected members. So, any supranational or hybrid institution is totally superfluous, is a concept that enables one to play for time, once again, to complicate the situation. Consequently, we repeat, Quebecers, and Quebecers only, will decide. In concluding, Mr. Chairman, we reject all partial solutions which will only serve to postpone the main aspect of the problem. Québec has never been a distinct society, and never will be; we are, ourselves, Quebecers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. That was Mr. Michel Léonard, of the Coalition CESAQ-AGECA. We continue now with the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain, and it's Mr. Patrice Beauchemin. Mr. Beauchemin.

Mr. Beauchemin (Patrice): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The members of the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain are against the status quo in constitutional matters, and

believe that, given the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, a new constitutional agreement with the federal government and the other provinces, in the context of the present federative system, is impossible. For this reason, we must contemplate a Québec-Canada agreement based on a relationship between equals, that is, between two sovereign States. By the term "State" we mean a political entity having its own territory and its own people, with a culture, a language and affinities. As for sovereignty itself, it can be defined as the capacity of a State to determine the scope of its powers as regards international law. This association between sovereign States, Québec-Canada for example, can assume various forms. First, there is the free trade model, a type of economic integration which imposes few constraints on the sovereignty of the partners. It presumes, as does the agreement negotiated by Canada and the United States, the free movement of goods in the free trade zones through the lifting of tariffs and the gradual abolition of non-tariff barriers, such as subsidies.

A model of this kind is not realistic for Québec and Canada since it presupposes an end to the free movement of workers and capital between provinces. Then, there is the more comprehensive form of economic integration, the customs union. For the same reasons, for the reasons given previously, a model such as this doesn't seem to be realistic for future economic relations between Québec and Canada either. Indeed, at a time when international communities seem to have found a form of cooperation, and areas of agreement on common jurisdictions, while maintaining their sovereignty, this could well be the course to follow for the new Québec-Canada reality. I am referring here to the European Economic Community. Québec and Canada can ill afford to sever the ties of economic cooperation and trade that already exist. Given this fact, the common market model seems to be more appropriate. In addition to the free movement of goods and services, it provides for the free movement of workers and capital.

To be viable, this system of common economic policies necessitates the creation of community institutions to which the member States delegate part of their sovereignty. They are responsible for seeing to the harmonization of legislation, as well as coordinating policies which have a bearing on the economy. I'm thinking here of the EEC Council, which has the power to pass laws that will apply to all the nations in the Community, the EEC Commission, which is responsible for preparing draft legislation and its implementation, as well as the EEC court of justice, which ensures respect for the law as applied in the interpretation of the Treaty of Rome. It is foreseeable that future economic relations between Québec and Canada will resemble an even more integrated form of common market than the Europe 92 model.

In summary, from the viewpoint of an association of sovereign States, Québec should first accede to full and complete sovereignty, which will enable it to define its areas of exclusive jurisdiction. Secondly, the member States should define the terms of their association by establishing together the nature of the common jurisdictions that will promote the economic development of the member States themselves, as well as the exclusive jurisdictions of the common market. This, then, is a broad outline of the position taken by the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métro, after consultation with its members. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Beauchemin. Now, a representative of Bishop's University, Mr. Pierre Barbeau Jr. Mr. Barbeau, you have the floor.

Mr. Barbeau (Pierre Jr.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To favour the status quo today would obviously not be very realistic, I admit. Since 1980, the federal government itself has been aware that the Canadian system is no longer acceptable in its present form. This followed a 20-year nationalist movement in Québec, beginning with the Lesage government, and regional divisions which began to surface across Canada. Still, I don't favour the status quo in an overall way, if you will, for the political and constitutional future of Québec. However, we don't believe that everything should be changed within the Province of Québec itself. So, if this is how the term status quo can be applied, we could perhaps associate it with that point. (10:30 a.m.)

I am referring to Anglophone institutions, and more particularly, to our university, Bishop's University. We believe that if the rights and interests of Anglophone students, and Francophone students who wish to ally themselves with Anglophones in Québec and elsewhere in Canada, if their rights and concerns can be addressed by Québec, so much the better. If not, we must ensure the maintenance of ties, or some other form of association with the rest of Canada. That is our main concern, and I believe it could be achieved in Québec, with sovereignty, with sovereignty-association or any other option. But what is important to us is that the concerns of minorities be well and truly addressed.

Just as the Francophones in Québec strive to protect their culture in a sea of Anglophones in North America, so the Anglophones in Québec must strive to do the same for theirs. And I am happy to see, Mr. Chairman, that since yesterday, many students and young people have spoken out and stated that, indeed, there will be a place for Anglophones in the Province of Québec, and I'm delighted to hear it. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you,

Mr. Barbeau. Mr. Gary Brazier, you, on your own behalf, have presented a brief to the Commission, and the floor is yours, Mr. Brazier.

Mr. Brazier (Gary): To begin with, I am Gary Brazier. I would first like to share with you a few extracts from our brief, which advocates the status quo. This brief was prepared by my colleague, Mr. Jean-Paul Murray and myself.

Exceptional historical circumstances have dictated that two peoples coming from different cultures should coexist on the North American continent for over 300 years. Whereas this coexistence had very eventful beginnings, and its fair share of ups and downs, on the whole, its development has given rise to a society that enjoys freedom and prosperity which are envied the world over. Many statistics support this assertion. According to the economic and geopolitical yearbook for 1989-1990 entitled *L'État du monde*, of the 170 nations of the world, Canada ranks among the first in material well-being.

In our view, the constitutional status quo is the ideal framework for enabling French Canadians to develop economically, socially and culturally.

When one looks beyond the rhetoric and strong feelings following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, one realizes that the so-called constitutional problem is really a political problem. The problem was created by a set of specific circumstances related to politics, which is understandable if we examine objectively the mishap surrounding the defining of the Meech Lake Accord. Actually, its failure is the result of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's negligence and ignorance in relation to the history of Canada's balance of power.

It is illusory and dishonest to contend that the constitutional status quo has not served the interests of French Canadians well. To give an example, one has only to remember the clear-sightedness and ability of Sir George-Étienne Cartier, when, at the Charlottetown and Québec City conferences, he claimed that Canada should be constituted as a federal State. This ran counter to the wishes of Sir John A. Macdonald, and has characterized the very essence of our nation, of its balance of power.

Given that the present problem is political and not constitutional, we must conclude that a complete overhaul of the system is not the solution. The politicians responsible for this build-up of alarmist and insipid rhetoric should go back to the table, at some point, and negotiate the course this country should follow. This time, however, they should take into account the lessons of history. Since 1763, French Canadians have succeeded in getting what they fully deserve. The failure of Meech certainly won't make us call everything we have

achieved into question. When politicians tell us that, from now on, things should take place among us, they should realize that the "us" they are talking about is Canada, that our roots and our loyalties are Canadian, and without Québec, there is no Canada.

Finally, if we are to continue to evolve as a nation, the voice of race should give way to the voice of reason. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Gary Brazier. The floor now belongs to Mr. Giuliano D'Andrea from the Youth Association of the Equality Party. Mr. D'Andrea, you have the floor.

Mr. D'Andrea (Giuliano): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think it will come as a surprise to anyone that we, in the Equality Party, are federalists. We still believe in Canada. The problems we had at Meech Lake are somewhat the same as those we have here. We are speaking in very vague terms, without ever giving any exact definitions. For example, the distinct character of Québec was mentioned, but what, in fact, is it? How do you define it? Nothing is really being said. The talk is very vague. That was the problem with Meech Lake. In the rest of Canada... I know the nationalists want to say: Oh! Les Canadiens anglais ne veulent pas de nous. Ce sont des fanatiques. Ils détestent les Canadiens français. That is not the problem. The problem in the rest of Canada, and even here in Québec, with some Quebecers, is the distinct society clause. What did it mean anyway? On ne peut pas présenter un chèque en blanc à quelqu'un et lui dire: «Signe ça et je vais écrire le montant plus tard.» When we negotiate, we want to know exactly what we want to give, what we want to agree on. So, our party has a very simple solution: Why not draft a constitution right here in Québec, a provincial constitution, in which we will give very simple, very concrete definitions of what is meant by a distinct society? Because, frankly, when the language and culture of Quebecers was discussed this morning, I didn't fit this definition.

We also want to say, in our party, that there has been un petit peu trop de tyrannie, à notre avis, chez les allophones et les anglophones. C'est la méthode du bâton: ou vous acceptez ça ou on se sépare. Pourtant, nous avons d'autres options, M. le Président, et l'une d'entre elles est la partition. Ce que je veux dire, c'est que si le Québec a droit à l'autodétermination, pourquoi n'aurions-nous pas le même droit? Pourquoi n'aurions-nous pas le droit de diviser cette province? Thank you.

Individual and Collective Rights

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. D'Andrea. On this subject of political status,

we have finished with what we could term the kick-off speeches, situating the various positions. We have received 10 requests to speak, and we have some 20 minutes to debate them, although on point 10, individual and collective rights, some could present their development, their explanations, and also, on the holding of a referendum, the process of political affirmation, as well as on economic aspects, economic association or the economic community, your thoughts will be that much more precise. So, we have received 10 requests to speak on political status. We are not taking any more, that is understood, and I will list them: Messrs. Pierre Larrivée, Luc Garneau, Karim Amegan, André Gagnon, Pierre Brun, Éric Simon, Sylvain Tanguay, Mrs. Line Poirier, Messrs. Marc-Antoine Adam and Joseph Facal. To begin with, I call on Mr. Pierre Larrivée. Mr. Larrivée.

Mr. Larrivée (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am quite astonished at what I just heard. Three short comments first of all. First, here, the most pertinent question is the future of Québec, and not only the future of the French language, but I want to say that bilingual English Canadians and foreigners from all over the world will be welcome in a sovereign Québec, and we will always invite them.

As far as history is concerned, we did history, too, and I will mention the following names only: Durham, Riel, conscription, that could make us think about certain things as well. Finally, what is a distinct society? What is a people? Then you will be able to define what a distinct society is. There are two choices to make. Either we choose the status quo and try to get as much as we can from the federal system, given the examples from history we have, or we choose sovereignty, meaning independence, sovereignty or independence. Then, whether it's confederalism or sovereignty-association, it should be negotiated with the other partners, but, first, we must achieve sovereignty.

To illustrate just how clear the situation is at home in Sherbrooke, this morning we received news from Sherbrooke, the region of the so-called "townshippers". I will read you this communiqué: Members of the youth forum, members of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec, the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke presented, last December 6, in Sherbrooke, its brief advocating Québec sovereignty. The Fédération étudiante de l'Université de Sherbrooke, which represents the undergraduate students, last evening, January 22, 1991, at its head office, adopted the REMDUS brief, with the following proposal: "It is proposed that the Fédération étudiante ratify the brief of the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat, while

emphasizing the importance which should be given to culture in any blueprint for sovereignty". The motion was unanimously adopted. Our brief, therefore, represents 18 000 students from l'Université de Sherbrooke. Furthermore, the Fédération, in concert with the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat, held a referendum last January 21 and 22, the results of which are the following: Of the three options offered, 10.5% of the students supported the status quo, 14.5% supported renewed federalism, and 71.6% opted for Québec independence. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Pierre Larrivée. Luc Garneau now has the floor. Mr. Garneau, you have the floor.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): For myself, I wouldn't want to enter into a debate I would qualify as sterile, in the sense that, according to my way of seeing things anyway, one doesn't acquire a country through the rejection of the other. Nor does one acquire a country because one gets back less than one contributes. One acquires a country for its own sake. We are giving ourselves a country because we want to, for no other reason. To hear people say it's because of English Canada rejecting us, I want nothing to do with that.

I'm giving myself a country because I want to, period, subject closed. It doesn't matter what we decide to do afterward. Whether we decide on a supranational government, confederalism, which we are very familiar with in the CSN... what is important is to go and get our mandate for independence or sovereignty, because we can't negotiate empty-handed; it just isn't done. We know what we're talking about on that score as well. We never negotiate empty-handed; never, never, it makes no sense. We get a mandate, first of all, and with that mandate in hand, we can negotiate whatever we want, whatever we want it to include. After that, it's a piece of cake.

Why achieve independence? I said it was for our own sake, but it's to get closer, for the people to get closer to the seat of power. We want nothing to do with an independent Québec that would be centralizing and inward-looking. We want an open Québec, a Québec for its people, for its citizens. We want these citizens to have the right to speak and the right to express themselves anywhere, and as often as possible, whether it be on the environment, whether it be on social programs, or whether it be on programs of reform, we want them to have the right to speak and be heard. We can shout all we want, or preach in the desert, but it will not lead to anything. We must be heard somewhere, and that's why we are acquiring a country, not because of rejection of the other

side. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): That was Luc Garneau. We shall now hear Karim Amegan. Mr. Amegan. (10:45 a.m.)

Mr. Amegan (Karim): Earlier, someone stated that the present problem was political and not constitutional. It triggered a reaction in me, because, in my opinion, regardless of what people think, the problem is first and foremost a constitutional one. This dates back to the history of the federation, to 1867, if you will. At that time, true, the Anglophones made concessions to Québec in accepting a federal State over a unitary State. The latter was what John A. Macdonald initially intended, but George-Étienne Cartier succeeded in obtaining a federation at that time. But it was the last concession Anglophones made. Since then, Québec has tended to be marginal, the one-in-ten province, with no right to speak, and this was shockingly evident, even revoltingly so, in 1982, when the bid for power occurred, with the Constitution being amended and repatriated without Québec's consent. And we're still stuck with it. It illustrates the imbalances which this kind of federalism has created, which isn't federalism at all, since one of the two founding nations had this amendment imposed on it without its consent, and since all subsequent attempts to try and repair the "mess" thus created have resulted in utter failure.

Now, we must choose an option other than federalism in its present form. These solutions must necessarily take account of sovereignty and the amending formula we are stuck with, which Québec never ratified, which is the Constitution of 1982. It requires the agreement of at least seven provinces, which represent at least 50% of the population, and one can see, in examining these numbers, that amendments could once again be made without Québec's consent. Therefore, it is an unacceptable framework both for Québec and for the other provinces, which have demonstrated that they are not ready to defer to Québec's demands on constitutional matters.

So, among the other options open to us is the setting-up of a supranational government, a kind of loosely defined superstructure, an option which certain people have tried to put forward. This would mean that, over and above the Canadian government, over and above the federation, over and above the provinces and the central government, a third order of government would be established, which would drastically change all of Canada's existing structures. This would be asking English Canada to bend over backwards to accommodate Québec, which would then be an independent State.

I believe it would be altogether unrealistic to expect this solution to work, and we must accept the cost of sovereignty without rejecting

the other options envisaged. Sovereignty is the first step, then we will see what kind of arrangement can be made. But from our studies, we have the impression that these adjustments would have to be made with a minimum of upheaval, so as to be as acceptable as possible to English Canada. So, the setting up of a third order of government is altogether unrealistic as far as they're concerned.

Finally, quick, quick, sovereignty, why do we maintain that it is the ultimate solution? Simply because it is based on the well known principle in international law on the sovereignty of peoples, the right to self-determination, which is recognized by the Charter of the United Nations. I believe that Québec, being a people, should choose now.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Amegan. Mr. André Gagnon.

Mr. Gagnon (André): With all the debate, the question isn't simply constitutional, nor is it only political, it is profoundly social. What concerns us is our national development, our development as a nation. They were speaking before, calling for equality. We are really touching on the question of equality. Equality among nations, a dimension to be taken into account in any society that wishes to be democratic. And that is not what we have within our present system. Basically, we have inequality. The only way to resolve this problem, in our view, is to accede to sovereignty, to independence, to become a nation acknowledged and accepted as such. That is the central question. One doesn't move forward, one doesn't make an omelette without breaking any eggs. We must first establish our sovereignty, our independence, and not try to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, as we did, for instance, with the Meech Lake Accord. So as not to disappoint Canada in its opinion, which I would qualify as chauvinistic, that the only nation in Canada is the Canadian nation, we have diluted the message, and we say: We are a distinct society. What distinguishes Québec is that it is the home of a nation. We are not simply a minority, we are a nation.

Not on the advice of Mr. Chrétien, I travelled across Canada a number of times in my youth. And what I've concluded, the problem is that Canada never seems to understand, despite every effort that people make, that we are a nation. I recently read a book written by two political scientists from Ontario, both very well informed on Québec, who discuss the issue of sovereignty-association. McRoberts and Postzate, in *Développement et modernisation du Québec* say, in their concluding remarks, that it will be difficult for Canada to accept treating another as an equal when its numbers are different. If we can't have the principle of equality, the

respect of other nations, regardless of numbers, in a society which claims to be democratic, what kind of democracy do we have? It's the rule of might is right. The nations with smaller populations don't have the same rights as nations with bigger populations.

We are a nation. We have a National Assembly, we have national trade unions, we have a national holiday. When will this be accepted? English Canada asks us to be patient. Canada will soon be 124 years old. We are not recognized as a nation. How much longer are we going to wait? Should the First Nations have to wait until the end of the world to be recognized as First Nations? Should we wait that long too? To be recognized, in order to be recognized, we must become sovereign. Only then will they realize that we are a nation, and only then will they be ready to negotiate some form or other of association or cooperation.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Gagnon. Mr. Pierre Brun.

Mr. Brun (Pierre): Over and above problems of political understanding, of definition, of the distinctiveness of Québec, the Jeune Barreau considers that the problem is essentially constitutional, in that the structures we have established for ourselves in Canada, which is the Canadian federation, are at the bottom, are the source of many of our problems.

The Jeune Barreau considers, on this subject, that there are only two options open to Québec: federalism or sovereignty. In order to understand the political structure within which we live... What is a federation "at large", not only Canada, but a federation? It implies jurisdictions shared by two levels, shared jurisdictions, which, if not interwoven in a rigid and stable structural fabric, will lead to a certain amount of chaos. So, any federation with this kind of rigid structure will tend to impose uniformity, and to carry equality to extremes among its members. So that is the choice we have with the federation or the federative system, which also implies that, if we want to renew it from within, we must follow the rules we imposed on ourselves. We know what these rules are, they are the amending formulas. We saw the result of these with Meech Lake. They are rules essential to a federation, and we must respect the rules of the game.

The Jeune Barreau considers these formulas, in the Canadian context, inadequate. Their failure is obvious and we no longer believe that renewal from within is possible with this framework. The only other option for Québec at present is to break away from this federation. We must get out of this situation. In order to get out of it, we must, of necessity, declare ourselves sovereign, and sovereignty, at this stage, involves the repatriation of all powers. We

must have power over our own jurisdictions if we are to define what we want. Then, afterward, we can enter into specific agreements, but the important thing is to get to that point first.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Brun. I remind you that, last evening, you agreed that two-minute blocks of time would be appropriate to increase the number of speakers. I now call on Mr. Éric Simon. Mr. Simon.

Mr. Simon (Éric): What I want to say is that, over the last 20 years, the Québec people have gradually matured and moved toward sovereignty. What frightens me a little, is to see people who are leaving out certain steps. We are in the process of creating a consensus; it took many people 20 years to understand that sovereignty was three small things: Adopting one's own laws, taxes and international treaties. The consensus is there, and there are people telling us that we can by-pass certain things and, right away, begin to delegate powers. We haven't even repatriated. We don't even know, as a people, what we can do with these powers, we don't know what it will bring, if it will be excellent. We can't predict the future on that score. Certainly, there have to be economic associations, but they're saying that, right away, they'll delegate certain powers, create supra-national confederations, or whatever. I say: Let's not leave out any steps. Let us begin... They said it themselves: We must have sovereignty first. Let's declare sovereignty and then discuss what we want to have. We aren't at the stage of discussing technicalities for later; we are at the point of deciding that we want to become a people, that we want to become a nation.

I hope people will realize that it isn't by throwing dust... It's as if they were telling us: Instead of renewing federalism, we will first become sovereign, but for such a short time that all we'll really be doing is renewing the federalism we have now. I absolutely reject, we absolutely reject this method. What we want is sovereignty for Québec, subject closed.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Mr. Éric Simon of the Regroupement jeunesse populaire, thank you. Mr. Sylvain Tremblay, of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. Mr. Tanguay.

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): Yes, Mr. Chairman. At the present time, in Québec and in Canada, we are involved in a constitutional debate, or a political debate. I think, and our organization thinks, that we should break out of the impasse, that is, put an end to the constitutional quarrelling, and there are two ways of accomplishing this. Either we decide, as a people, by way of a referendum, to remain in federalism, and thus maintain the constitutional status quo,

or else we decide, also by way of a referendum, to become a sovereign State.

We must get out of the impasse once and for all. We must not move toward sovereignty, toward our own sovereignty, simply as a way of reacting to Canada, or against Canada. We will always have to maintain relations with our immediate neighbors, as well as with other countries. So, achieving sovereignty is not a reaction against others. Mr. Garneau, of the CSN, emphasized that earlier, and I think he is absolutely right on that score.

Furthermore, we should be very aware that we want sovereignty because we wish to have all powers, all jurisdictions in order to develop as a nation, as a people, and have a role to play as a people, as a nation, on the international scene.

In conclusion, I would say, as I don't want to go on forever either, many things have been said... Beginning now, we must prepare the ground for becoming a sovereign State. We can't wait until the morning after a referendum and simply assume all the powers sovereignty implies. The government will have to, the government now in power in Québec has to begin to prepare our Québec institutions to assume all powers so that, the day after the referendum, we can announce our sovereignty and assume the power it implies, and move forward in our development as a new nation. Whether it is a matter of discussing the drafting of a constitution, of changing our blueprint for society, that will come later, but at least, our institutions must be ready to welcome sovereignty and to build a new nation. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Sylvain Tanguay, thank you. Mrs. Line Poirier of the Francophonie étudiante de Lanaudière. Mrs. Poirier.

Mrs. Poirier (Line): Good day. As an opening comment, I would like to respond to what my colleague from Avenir ensemble said earlier. She said that sovereignty for Québec would undoubtedly not be good for the development of the French language. Much as I sincerely believe that the four million bilingual Anglophones in Canada respect Québec, respect our culture, etc., I don't think there is a real political will to prevent outright assimilation - assimilation is the word - of the Francophone population in the long term. One just has to look at statistical examples. In most Anglophone provinces, the rate of assimilation of the Francophone minority is over 80%, while here in Québec, the Francophone majority is in the process of being assimilated into the Anglophone minority. These numbers are from Statistics Canada. They're quite convincing, I think.
(11:00 a.m.)

To return to the subject itself, I think the only way to really protect ourselves, linguisti-

cally, culturally and economically, is through full and complete sovereignty. Procrastination, we've had our fill of it really. We're sick and tired of it, especially the ordinary people. Association, renewed federalism, all those options... for me, and Mr. Guillano D'Andrea proposed it as well, it's the Québec constitution. I believe, with all due respect to my colleague, that these are either grotesque jokes or dirty tricks. We want sovereignty, period. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Mrs. Line Poirier. Mr. Marc-Antoine Adam. Mr. Adam, you have the floor.

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take up again what my colleague from the Jeune Barreau du Québec said. Here, confederalism, sovereignty-association, sovereignty, independence are all being discussed, along with renewed federalism, the status quo and asymmetrical federalism. I think what needs to be understood, and this is reflected to some extent in the preceding presentation, is that what we want to decide at the present time, OK, is not what ties we want to have with Canada, because we can't decide that on our own, we must negotiate that with Canada.

But there's one thing we don't have to negotiate with Canada, and that's sovereignty. To get an agreement, whether it be confederal, that is a big question mark, I don't know what it means, but, an international agreement, something like the free trade agreement, or a bit more comprehensive, first of all, we must be sovereign because one cannot conclude international agreements if one is not sovereign. That is a recognized principle of international law. So we must not spread ourselves too thin. What we must choose is the legal framework within which we can establish relations with Canada.

It can be done within the present Canadian constitutional framework, which involves the existing amending formula, which involves several constraints which, let's say, have worked against Québec for quite a long time. It can be done within the context of international law. In the latter case, we have the right to be sovereign, if we are a people, if we are a nation. And we are that, I think; therefore, we have the right to be sovereign.

The moment we achieve sovereignty, we declare it. Sovereignty is a unilateral act, not a bilateral one; it is not negotiable. If one sets out to negotiate sovereignty, it's no longer sovereignty, OK? In trying to negotiate, we deny it. It's a unilateral act which should undoubtedly be realized by way of a referendum, because without one, it could be illegitimate. But once that has been accomplished, we can enter into negotiations on the subject of association and

everything else. In any case, once sovereignty is declared, certain transitional procedures will have to be followed to avoid chaos the morning after. All we need to know is, if the National Assembly is not satisfied with a law, it will incorporate federal legislation and the Criminal Code. A legal void must not be created in one fell swoop. We incorporate the federal laws, and if the National Assembly is dissatisfied with these laws, it will have the power to amend them. That is the way we see it. One mustn't think that, starting from day one, there will no longer be anything, that there will be chaos; all the laws will have to be debated, the Criminal Code revised. That's the way it will be.

So, all I wanted to say is that we shouldn't dissipate our forces. First, it's sovereignty, and as far as association and economic links are concerned, we can debate these in the same way we debated free trade, in any case, it must be bilateral, and we can't do that now. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Adam. We don't have much time left; in fact, according to our plan, we don't have enough time. To finish off this point, I give the floor to Joseph Facal. Mr. Facal, please.

Mr. Facal (Joseph): Mr. Chairman, it is so nice to see this broad consensus among us regarding sovereignty. Actually, I think that the five or six fields that were established are somewhat artificial and, as the representative of the Jeune Barreau mentioned a moment ago, if we really want to look at basics, there are only two main options: federalism and sovereignty. However, since things have been presented to us in this manner, I think at least two labels, which I consider totally unacceptable, have to be eliminated: the status quo and the so-called renewed federalism option.

Just now, as I was listening to a certain speaker defending the status quo, I thought I was hearing Mr. Chrétien's argument, word for word, and we know how well he incarnates the political and constitutional future of Québec. When people tell me everything is fine in Québec, I honestly wonder if this is the case. What has the whole of Québec, all the proponents of the various options, been doing around this table for three months?

I find it particularly ironic and cruel to hear the supporters of the status quo or of federalism, who cover their eyes and ears all year long, and, each time that Quebecers stir a little, they tell us over again: Ah! But you know, deep down, we love you. We are learning French. Look, when it comes to... But the status quo option, although unacceptable and sterile, at least has the merit of being clear. This clarity is not found in the so-called renewed federalism option, which is surely the option whose contents are the least discernible. Because, for

the past three months, this Commission has been asking partisans of this option: How are you going to renew federalism? And I am still waiting for an answer to that question. Look, renewed federalism, as Mrs. Bissonnette wrote in *Le Devoir* a few days ago, is basically asking Canada to commit hara-kiri just because we are so nice. It makes no sense at all. It's impossible. If you negotiate within federalism, you remain subject to the Canadian Constitution, which has an amending formula that says powers are repatriated unanimously in certain fields and according to the 7-50 formula in others. So, it's absolutely impossible.

If you want to hold bilateral negotiations between Québec City and Ottawa within the federation, the other provinces are justifiably going to demand the same treatment, and we must understand them. And, in the framework of 11-party constitutional conferences, well, we will never be more than one of the 11, and we have seen how useful that has been. Therefore, the current impasses are confined neither to the amending formula nor to the absence of good will around the table. The problem is much more fundamental. Quite simply, there are two nations which have incompatible aspirations. If we allow them to be neighbours, they will surely, I hope, have an excellent relationship, but they are being forced to live in the same house.

The Rights of Aboriginal Peoples, Anglophones and Allophones

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Facal. Mr. Facal is a member of the Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois.

The tenth theme: individual and collective rights, or the charters. In particular, we are going to discuss the rights of aboriginal peoples, of Anglophones and of allophones. There are seven speakers. I cannot accept any more speakers, since this would cut into the time we have for the process of political affirmation, and those six speakers are going to use the 20 minutes we had reserved for that theme. They include: Québec's Native students, Mr. Robert Yalden, the Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval, Mr. André Bzdera, the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec and Mr. Denis Verret. I give the floor to the aboriginal students of Québec. I don't see your name. Would you introduce yourself, please. You have the floor.

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): Armand McKenzie.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): I believe Québec is entering a decisive phase of its history, and we can see the reason for this move. We can say we

are here to provide answers to the numerous questions that have been raised by the people at this table, the Commission members and the population of Québec itself. In the end, we have come mainly to give you the chance to talk with us, to talk with you and to get to know you better so that we can understand one another better. I think the fact that, in its move toward sovereignty, Québec is trying to obtain more powers and to gain better control over its future is completely justified. We are not against this, but we are saying that, unless Québec sovereignty takes the sovereignty of the First Nations into account, there is something wrong with it.

So, in order for your project to be credible on a national and an international level, I think a dialogue must be established. There is something I would like. In 1992, or as quickly as possible, which would be even better, I think it will be the 500th anniversary of the discovery, of the so-called discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. So, on the occasion of this 500th anniversary, wouldn't it be nice to have a new social contract, to have a fresh start between you and us rooted in the equality of peoples and the equality of our nations, so that we can live together without confrontation. Confrontation is not something you want and it's not something we want.

What I remember, if we talk, the image that perhaps comes to your mind when discussing the summer of 1990 is not of the 100 000 or so Quebecers marching and declaring their political right to self-determination, to make themselves a nation, on June 24 and 25. Rather, what we remember about this summer, which was very quickly forgotten, is the image of the confrontation between the aboriginal peoples, the First Nations, and your people. It's too bad that in your initiative this image has remained.

Therefore, I think that, at the dawn of this discovery of the land of America, I personally hope that we, that there will be a new social contract based on the equality of peoples. If you have any questions about the self-determination of Native peoples, about what we want, I am willing to answer them.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. McKenzie. We did receive you. Mr. Robert Yalden now has the floor. Mr. Yalden.

Mr. Yalden (Robert): Mr. Chairman, I for one am very glad that we have had the chance to hear Québec's Native students. I think the question of relations between the aboriginal peoples and non-Native Quebecers leads us all to reflect a little upon connections between collective rights and individual rights.

I also see this question of collective rights as important if we accept it, and I affirm that it is important for Québec to be able to promote

the French language. When discussing the question of collective rights and individual rights, I feel it is important to emphasize right from the start that, in 1975, our National Assembly adopted a charter of individual rights and freedoms, thereby proclaiming not only that it attaches special importance to protecting the rights of citizens, but also that it embraces the same democratic liberal tradition that many countries, including Canada, embrace.

We often tend to forget that this democratic liberal tradition contains a clear notion of collective rights, the idea that a group's language and culture must be protected and promoted so that the individuals who belong to this group, who share this language and culture, can fully develop. At the same time, it seems important to emphasize that this notion of collective rights is rooted in respect for individual dignity. It is this same respect for the individual that gives us the parameters to respect in pursuing our common objectives. In fact, in the democratic liberal tradition, collective rights are limited by the rights of the individual. Therefore, according to the democratic liberal tradition, it is wrong to suggest that collective rights must sometimes infringe upon individual rights to protect a group. There is almost no room for an argument which suggests that individual rights must yield to collective rights in the context of Québec's increasing commitment to human rights since the beginning of the 1970s. Quite simply, if we take measures to promote a group's identity and these measures encroach upon the individual rights of the members of another group, we are no longer honouring the democratic liberal tradition, we are no longer dealing with collective rights, which are rooted, I repeat, in respect for the individual's dignity.

Whether or not we are part of Canada, I for one must say that it would be sad if, in declaring we are Quebecers, we rejected our Canadian heritage. But, let's not pretend that, since our view of collective rights is different, we Quebecers are different from Canadians outside Québec. We could very well have different economic objectives and a different culture, but as far as human rights are concerned, we share the same tradition as Canadians outside Québec. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(11:15 a.m.)

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Yalden. Your speech was within the time allotted; you did not take advantage of your privileges. The Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval now has the floor, and Pierre-Luc Desgagné is going to speak. Mr. Desgagné.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two brief comments to begin with. I

would first like to say how lucky we were to have a representative of the Equality Party with us this morning, the future president of Saint-Léonard in exile, or something of the sort, since Québec must be shared. This said, secondo, certain people in this room have called upon fond memories of John A. Macdonald and Sir George-Étienne Cartier. However, they should be careful, because, if there is one thing French-speaking Quebecers know well, it is surely their history. And, if you read the famous letter that John A. Macdonald wrote to the chairman of the Orange Lodge of Ontario, he predicted that in the years to come the provinces would disappear, while George-Étienne Cartier was in Québec. In a few years' time, the federal government is going to disappear. There has been an enormous misunderstanding. And I thank Mr. Brazier for allowing me to make this remark.

This said, why have we at the AED become interested in political institutions? Because they are the political mirror of a nation. They are the State organization of a people. In these times of change, we must take care not to throw everything overboard. Since our parliamentary system, an adaptation of the British, is already one of the best in the world, we insist on maintaining this democratic, parliamentary system. However, we are proposing and we strongly recommend the abolition of the positions of the lieutenant-governor and the monarch, at \$40 000, and the creation of a presidential system. Whether this president is elected by universal suffrage or by two-thirds of the National Assembly is a matter of mechanics. This president would be assigned well-defined powers in a Québec constitution.

We also suggest that people stop talking about decentralization and experience real decentralization.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Mr. Desgagné, excuse me, but you are not exactly on the topic of individual and collective rights.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): I'm sorry, institutions are part of this part. You can read it, it says...

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): We'll talk about it later. You're speaking of a new constitution. I'll let you complete your idea anyway.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): You even assured me, last night, when I asked if the topic I was to discuss was in fact institutions, that I would have the right to speak about them.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Go on. Finish your speech.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We also suggest that we stop talking about decentralization, as I mentioned, and experience this decentralization, all the while respecting the principle of a unitary State.

To conclude, and this is kind of my pet subject, we are proposing the creation of an "all age" institution of sorts, where decision-makers of all ages, according to the majority, of course, could meet, exchange ideas and even make decisions. This generation gap must be narrowed. I don't see why we should put the minimum age at 55 years of age and tell people who are 35 and under: Get back in your hole. So, in conclusion, a democratic, parliamentary system, a presidential system, a decentralized system and closing the generation gap. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Desgagné. You were certainly on the topic of individual and collective rights. Mr. André Bzdera has also submitted a brief in which he deals with these questions in particular. Mr. Bzdera, you have the floor.

Mr. Bzdera (André): Thank you. The Charter of Rights and the sharing of power have been discussed. I am going to talk about both of them, not just about the Charter of Rights. When examining these issues, one must examine the Supreme Court, because this institution interprets and applies both the Charter and the sharing of powers within the Canadian federation, or what could even eventually be a confederation or a Canada-Québec community.

Depending on the option chosen, sovereignty or federalism, either renewed or not, there will be a dramatic change in the role of this judicial institution. In the current federal system or in a slightly modified federal system, somewhat "à la Meech", the Supreme Court prefers and has always preferred to centralize powers. It has favoured centralization, shall we say, in all the important cases of the past 20 years. We should not be surprised; all the supreme courts of the other Western federations show a similar bias.

But, this is more than a question of the sharing of powers; the Charter of Rights is also involved. Robert Yalden said a moment ago that all of us, Canadians and Quebecers, share certain objectives pertaining to individual rights and freedoms, and I think he is entirely correct. Objectives are one thing, but designating someone to interpret these objectives and to put them into practice is a completely different matter. English-speaking Montrealers are often quite happy that the decision-making powers are held by judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, because this is an English-language institution. Therefore, whether it is in the Canadian federation or a renewed federation, Québec is

always in a very difficult position, since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is interpreted by judges who are not part of its society.

I must say, in concluding, that in the case of sovereignty, the only real question is the question of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I do not necessarily see the use of having a charter of rights in general, because the defence of the rights and freedoms of individuals can very well be handled by the National Assembly. At times, I am somewhat surprised to hear certain aboriginal peoples who are still advocating a charter or even a second charter of Native rights, and not calling for three or four seats in the National Assembly, which, I think, is quite plausible. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Bzdera. The Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec, Mr. Pascal Paradis.

Mr. Paradis (Pascal): I understand that we are now moving on to discuss the process of political affirmation.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): No, we are on individual rights. Do you want to talk about the political affirmation process?

Mr. Paradis (Pascal): That's what we heard yesterday.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): We'll reserve time for you to speak on that topic. We will finish off the theme of individual and collective rights with Mr. Denis Verrette of the Regroupement des associations des cycles supérieurs du Québec. Mr. Verrette.

Mr. Verrette (Denis): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To bring this topic to a close, I will try to make a connection, if you will, between the perception we have of the institutions and a tentative response to the conclusions which have been drawn from the failure of Meech Lake, since we have heard some interpretations which our organization certainly does not agree with.

We accept the failure of Meech Lake, which is not an indication of the rejection of Québec by Canada, but the rejection of the conception Québec has of Canada. How does Québec see Canada? There is a strong desire to exert full control, to be fully responsible, as much as possible, as a Québec majority, as a nation, for the institutions that govern us. And how does English Canada see the institutions? They look at the equality of provinces, regions, the equality of regions, also multiculturalism, rather than professing or acknowledging the existence of two nations.

So, since that perception is so different, they attempted to arrive at a compromise, one that they tried to maintain by voluntary

confusion, that is, they used words with relatively general meanings, they secretly negotiated so that they could, if the people were in agreement, make those people who were in agreement understand what they wanted to see in that content. And when we say: Yes, it's the politicians' fault that Meech Lake was not ratified, etc. Yes, this is true, but it's the politicians' fault because there were basic tendencies to perceive control over our institutions in different ways. Their wills are irreconcilable. This isn't a quarrel or a tiff; things are simply different. However, this does not hinder economic associations, by any means, nor does it prevent cultural exchanges on all levels. If we resolve the fundamental problem, we will avoid this sort of tension. And the fundamental problem entails repatriating powers and responsibilities to Québec. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Process of Political Affirmation

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Verrette. We will move on to the final theme, "The process of political affirmation". Note that we are 20 minutes behind schedule and that there are a few major points left to discuss, so your cooperation is required on two fronts: in staying within the allotted time and in keeping strictly to the topics on the agenda, plus a few more. So, everyone will certainly not be able to speak on these points. We will divvy up the time so that more people can speak.

The process of political affirmation involves two major issues: holding a referendum and or a general election and a declaration of sovereignty by the National Assembly. The twelfth point is a Québec constitution and the last point, point 13, international relations. The right to speak has been granted to the Association générale étudiante des secteurs sciences humaines, arts et lettres de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, to the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec, to Mr. Pierre Larouche, and to the Jeune Barreau de Québec. I give the floor to the Association générale étudiante des secteurs sciences humaines, arts et lettres de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Who is representing this group? Mr. André Gagnon. Please stay within the two minutes you agreed to last evening. Mr. Gagnon.

Mr. Gagnon (André): Yes. First, I would like to point out that the Association générale étudiante is composed of women students as well, not strictly of men students. I think that in the movement toward Québec's political affirmation and self-determination, this is also a very important point: all Quebecers must be consulted.

In the process of political affirmation, we would have preferred, as we indicated yesterday,

an States General formula, instead of this Parliamentary Commission, consisting of elected, mandated representatives from all walks of life to draft a proposal for Québec's political and constitutional future, which would be subjected to popular consultation, in a referendum where the people of Québec could decide.

Should the population of Québec decide, in the present circumstances, following this Parliamentary Commission, to hold a referendum on the political and constitutional future, should the people choose independence, should they choose sovereignty, we believe, at that point, that Québec should obviously declare its sovereignty and, at that point, a proportionally elected assembly having the mandate to proceed with the preparation of a Québec constitution should be put together. Of course, the draft constitution which is ratified by a constituent assembly should again be submitted to the Québec people in a referendum in order to be adopted and, if it is adopted, of course, the election of a new national government should follow. Yesterday, a speaker suggested that, instead of a constituent assembly, the National Assembly or a committee of experts could draw up a new constitution. We do not agree. We really want all Quebecers to be involved in the process; they need to be heard.

I am going to give a simple example of a disproportion which is sometimes visible in the National Assembly and which exists here today. Of the 78 youth organization representatives, 13 are women. Could a National Assembly of which 80% or 90% of the members are men actually be called to rule on women's rights, for example, and to draft bills which would truly represent more than 50% of the Québec population? This is why we believe there must be a constituent assembly, so that the disproportions that are very frequently noted, in the National Assembly, for example, as a result of our electoral system, are not repeated in the drafting of a new constitution. In that constitution, we think the rights and fundamental, democratic values of the Québec people must be affirmed: collective rights and freedoms, social rights. We believe that national rights, the First Nations' right to self-determination and the rights of cultural communities must be entrenched. In that constitution, respect for the rights of Anglophone and allophone communities is also important, and Québec must make a commitment in this regard.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Gagnon. From the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec, Mr. Pascal Paradis. It's your turn, Mr. Paradis.

Mr. Paradis (Pascal): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, if you don't mind, my speech is going to focus on the sovereign and constitutional approach recently approved by the

members of the Parlement étudiant du Québec. Let me tell you from the outset that they clearly rejected the possibility of an election-referendum and opted to proceed in a different manner from the one initially proposed by the framers of the constitution, who had suggested a single-question referendum telling the Québec people something like: Here is the new Québec constitution prepared in advance. If you accept it, we will become sovereign. Do you accept it, yes or no? The members of the Parlement étudiant, the delegates, have chosen a two-stage procedure. (11:30 a.m.)

The first stage is to ask a clear question on Québec sovereignty. The people of Québec are asked: Do you want Québec to become sovereign and do you give the National Assembly the mandate to prepare the new Québec constitution? Unlike the people who just spoke, we believe that this is a totally democratic way to write a constitution. Who is in a better position to prepare this constitution than the elected representatives of a people? For instance, we could proceed with a special commission like this one, which, I believe, represents Quebecers quite well. A kind of proportionally elected constituent assembly has been suggested. If the speaker thinks the National Assembly is not representative of the Québec people, I wonder if that constituent assembly would be any more representative. And how would it be elected, proportionally to what? This is another question we can ask ourselves. So, the National Assembly drafts a new constitution and, when it is ready, it is presented to the people of Québec in a new referendum in which they say whether or not they accept it. So, if it is approved, it will naturally come into force immediately.

However, realistically, sovereignty is not achieved overnight, just like that, with a snap of the fingers. Therefore, the delegates of the Parlement étudiant also considered having a transitional phase between the declaration of sovereignty and the actual declaration, a five-year waiting period, and only after five years would we be fully sovereign. This gives us time to negotiate an agreement with the federal government, possibly an economic one, for example. During this period, we must achieve a certain stability and ensure there is no legal vacuum; there's nothing complicated about that. We ensure that Canadian laws will still apply until amended or repealed by Québec laws. Only after five years would we become fully sovereign. Of course, a detailed constitution would be introduced. I see that my yellow card is up, so I will end on that note. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much. The Parlement étudiant has good habits. Thank you, Mr. Paradis. Mr. Pierre Larouche. You have the floor, Mr. Larouche.

Mr. Larouche (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just now we heard a debate over collective rights. I really liked the shopping list that was presented to us: the rights of cultural communities, the rights of aboriginal peoples and Anglophones and so on. I would like to warn of one danger in particular: the concept of collective rights is very illusive. It is a legal abyss. It has no limits, because, first of all, we do not know what a community is; anyone, any group can claim to be a community, and it can also claim any right. These are not like individual rights, which are easier to define. In fact, we should not speak of collective rights; we should speak of the political aims or objectives of various communities. Using terms denoting rights only supplies people with ammunition. Instead of talking about their objectives, they will talk about their rights; this will rigidify their positions, but the conflicts will remain. Those rights will surely require arbitration. The best way of protecting common and individual interests, in my view, does not reside in the adoption of a complex charter which gives rights to everyone, but in the reform of parliamentary institutions which could expand the debate. Actually, even if Québec gains sovereignty, the society will still be faced with numerous debates, as I think the differing positions of everyone here, although most of us are in favour of sovereignty, attest to.

We may have to modify the structure of the National Assembly slightly, since there is currently only one House and the power is relatively concentrated in the hands of the Executive. A balance is often struck by the federal Parliament or the federal government, which, since there is a broad overlapping of jurisdictions, can often intervene and counter-balance the provincial government, a role in which I believe it is not very effective; most of the time, it throws a spanner in the works and, in a sovereign Québec, it would be much better if the balance between rights and the debate were achieved in the National Assembly rather than before the courts. Therefore, I would suggest adding a second House to the National Assembly, one which would be elected according to a democratic principle unlike the one the National Assembly follows. I am thinking, among others, of the proportional principle, which is the most obvious choice. This should also be accompanied by a slackening of party discipline in the National Assembly. Today party discipline is very strong in the National Assembly. It is probably one of the strongest in the Parliaments of British tradition and certainly stronger than in Ottawa. Relaxing party discipline will not be easy; it means changing a political culture. This is not carried out by changing the laws or anything, but it would allow the various groups to use the National

Assembly to put their views forward by having MNAs elected in places where they are concentrated and so on.

This is the only way, in my opinion, that we will increase the legitimacy of the actions of the State and make people feel that they are participating in the debate and that their rights or interests are being defended well.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Larouche. There is one last group, the Jeune Barreau de Québec. Please be quick, Mr. Tremblay.

Mr. Tremblay (Carl): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for the purposes of this exercise, we are taking for granted that Québec has in fact decided to become a State.

For the purposes of this exercise, attaining the status of a State should be examined in two lights. The first is the legality of the move, the second, its legitimacy.

In terms of the legality of the move, Québec can count on two main instruments. First, it can count on the right to self-determination which is recognized in various documents, including the Charter of the United Nations, the declaration regarding friendly relations and, lastly, the declaration regarding non-self-governing territories. Therefore, in terms of legality, Québec can now and henceforth rely on this right to self-determination.

In addition, Québec can count on what is called a *de facto* power in achieving its independence. This principle has been applied on several occasions, notably in Rhodesia and, closer to home, in Manitoba, when Manitoba's unilingual laws were declared unconstitutional.

Once this legality is established, we can assert, without the danger of too many errors, that a simple unilateral declaration of independence by the National Assembly would be legally sufficient. However, legitimacy is an extremely important factor. In the case we are dealing with, it is the crux of the matter. Québec will be able to use this element to dismiss any dispute over its right to self-determination. Consequently, we believe that Québec should proceed by way of a referendum before unilaterally declaring its independence. Why? Because the international community must clearly understand that this is not the will of a few intellectuals who are desperate for new challenges, but a clearly established will of the people to declare themselves a State with all the powers and rights that this entails.

One last point, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Quickly, please.

Mr. Tremblay (Carl): It's about the constitution. The members of the Jeune Barreau

believe that a sovereign Québec should have a charter of rights and freedoms, and 76% of the members we consulted endorsed this alternative. And, to conclude, 94% of the students of the École du Barreau who examined our brief with us were in favour of an election-referendum, rather than a charter. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Tremblay. We will now hear the 13 people who have requested the floor. Technically, the time we allotted for this theme has elapsed. I suggest we proceed as follows: We will keep strictly to the two-minute time limit, and I would even ask you to use one minute, so that the important field of economic matters will not suffer.

I will read the participants' names that were recorded when you indicated that you wanted to speak. They are: Mr. Hilaire Beaulieu, Mrs. Héliane Gagnon. Messrs. Éric Stephenne, Alain-Marc Couturier, Michel Léonard, Pierre Moisan, Peter Julian, Sylvain Tanguay, Christian Genest, Jean-Yves Boulet, Serge Girard, Karim Amegan and Alain Fortier.

You will understand that, with a list like this, you must be brief and the microphone will be turned off when the two minutes are up. You have the floor, Mr. Hilaire Beaulieu.

A voice: ...

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): There is no point of order here, Sir. We will proceed as agreed. Mr. Hilaire Beaulieu, where are you? Mr. Beaulieu, you have the floor.

Mr. Beaulieu (Hilaire): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a short digression. When I speak of young people in my speech, I am referring to 12 to 18-year-olds. Our group, the Regroupement des maisons de jeunes, is divided three ways on the Constitution: secularism. I will not get into this subject; it was discussed yesterday in the presentation of our brief. As regards proportional elections, why would we prefer proportional elections? Because the little umbrella parties are often most in keeping with the aspirations of youths between 12 and 18. If we think of the environment, if we think of peace, the peace marches that have taken place here in Québec have been held by the 12 to 18-year-olds.

Also, entrenched in the Québec constitution, we would like to see citizen status for young people under age 18. Setting the right to vote at 18 years is arbitrary. A moment ago, I agreed that those who had reached the age of majority could vote, of course, but I am convinced that, 70 years ago, it was also agreed that only men were allowed to vote, I'm convinced.

In terms of young people's rights, why citizen status? So that people will stop violating the rights of young people. We have reached a

point where everyone can dig into the files of young people in the secondary schools. The police often resort to informants to get the information they want. These methods must be eliminated and young people's files in the secondary schools must be confidential. This infringing of the rights of young people has to stop. Young people have the right to live too and the right to be citizens. Not only are they consumers, they are also citizens.

To conclude, I would just like to say that there is a lot of talk about visible minorities. For the Regroupement des maisons de jeunes, young people are the invisible majority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you for your cooperation, Mr. Beaulieu. Mrs. Gagnon, you have the floor.

Mrs. Gagnon (Héliane): Thank you. The nine member universities of the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec are earnestly requesting that, in its report, the Commission unanimously recommend holding a referendum as soon as possible before the next elections. University students, both Francophone and Anglophone, have had enough of this constitutional uncertainty. They want to concentrate their efforts on other things. They want to solve problems: the underfunding of universities, the environment, employment. Therefore, we would like this issue to be resolved as quickly as possible.

In addition to consulting the population in a referendum, we feel it should also be consulted on the procedure. A moment ago, certain people were suggesting that only the National Assembly should be given the mandate to draft a Québec constitution. Others say: A little more consultation would be required. In our view, a little more consultation must be carried out either by an States General, by public hearings, or by a constituent assembly. Finally, regardless of the means, we think that the population and we young people in particular, who are going to live with this constitution, should be included in that process.

In particular, another reason is that the political will to work certain things into this Québec constitution is dubious. For our part, we want to see the Charter of human rights and freedoms entrenched in the Québec constitution. We want to see a right to education in it. We want to see a charter of the environment in it. And we feel that in order to guarantee this, the people must participate. This is what we are recommending. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mrs. Gagnon. Mr. Éric Stephenne.

Mr. Stephenne (Éric): To illustrate the

problems with international relations, one could think, for example, of the flag war that took place during the last Francophone games. One could also think of Canada's constitutional right to impose... to prevent Québec, for example, from selling electricity to the United States. One could also think of what happened at GATT when Canada was divided between defending the interests of the West and defending the interests of Québec. However, I am going to focus particularly on another aspect. We have been discussing repatriating powers over immigration and the environment.

One thing must be said. If we agree to repatriate powers over environmental issues, can you tell me what good this would do if, at the same time, it is not legitimate for us to sign agreements, for example, with the United States, since we do not live in isolation? We are not the only ones who create pollution, but it is becoming inoperative to say: It is entirely legitimate for us... we have powers in environmental matters, but having no power in international relations is unacceptable. So, that's all I want to say. I think that to be credible, we must also have sovereignty in international relations. Thank you.

(11:45 a.m.)

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Stephenne. Mr. Alain-Marc Couturier, please.

Mr. Couturier (Alain-Marc): My speech will centre on two aspects. I had all sorts of things to say, because I will admit that I have been wanting to have the floor for a very long time, but that's already history. Concerning the political affirmation process, the RACSQ, the organization which I am representing, of course, will not hide from anyone the fact that we are for sovereignty, as much, from hearing all the briefs that were presented yesterday, as those speakers seemed to be. In our minds, it is also clear that in order to make a decision, everything must be put to a referendum. On these points, I believe that in all the briefs, everyone is also of this opinion. But one thing which is important, which I feel is important for me to say, to the Commission members in particular, is that, unfortunately, there are no young people, as such, on this Commission, but we are the ones who are going to be stuck with the outcome later on.

I am going to tell you something quite sincerely, I am really looking forward to seeing how this will turn out, but I will tell you quite simply that the now generation, our generation, does not want to spend the rest of their lives fighting over this issue. I am anxious for sovereignty to be attained, for this to be over with in Québec and for us to go on to something else. All the political experience I have revolves around it, and I am very anxious for it to be settled. But, I'll tell you just one thing in

conclusion. The RACSQ, and others, of course, discussed a referendum, a constitution, of course, but there is one thing we had our hearts set on. We said to ourselves: Of course, these are apparatus, these are tools, but still there are 12 points which we wanted to be recognized in this future social contract. First of all, the right of all nations to self-determination should be reasserted. In our minds, this includes the right of Amerindians to proclaim their distinctiveness in the same way Quebecers want to be distinctive in Canada. Of course, this constitution must stipulate Québec's right to be a French-language State; the rights of the First Nations, as I mentioned, must of course be recognized; we must acknowledge the acquired rights of English-speaking Quebecers, I think this is clear; we must reassert all the rights included in Québec's Charter of human rights and freedoms, particularly women's rights; we must commit ourselves to adopting, among others, a policy forbidding all discrimination against women.

We must also... and I think perhaps it is equally important to commit ourselves to ensuring a healthy environment and respecting ecology, especially if we want to try to leave something later on to our children. We are not bent on this, but it could be something to think about. Certainly, I think we should also look at, and enshrine in the constitution, having a universal system of free medical care and, of course, the right to an accessible, high quality education. This goes without saying.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Are you almost finished, Mr. Couturier?

Mr. Couturier (Alain-Marc): I would just like to mention, in conclusion, that I think it is unfortunate that the subjects I consider the most important have been covered so quickly. I want you to know this, Mr. Chairman. I really want you to know this: a great many students would have liked to speak a moment ago and we could have debated all day long. However, I hope we will have this chance some other time.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you very much. Yes, these topics are indeed of great interest. Mr. Léonard, you have two minutes in which to speak.

Mr. Léonard (Michel): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, it is very simple. What the Coalition is proposing as a means of attainment is very simple. First, in the four months following this Commission's report, that we vote in a referendum, a referendum on a clear question so as to avoid ambiguities, to prevent the results from being interpreted for partisan purposes. Then, if the results are in favour of Québec sovereignty, and we hope they will be,

Québec's National Assembly will make a solemn declaration of independence. Once this is done, we will proceed with negotiations to repatriate powers, a procedure which would focus on a repatriation schedule, not on the nature of the powers to be repatriated. At the same time, we can negotiate economic agreements and association with various countries and set up a commission or constituent assembly to draft the Québec constitution.

In the second part of my speech, I would just like to respond to certain comments made a moment ago and to parts of the Equality Party's brief which gave me a bit of a start. In section 12, the Equality Party's Youth Association recognizes the right of Québec's minorities to self-determination. However, they are promoting a united Québec within a united Canada. How can one recognize the right of certain individuals to self-determination and deny this right in the other case? So, do you have an idea of what self-determination is? If so, why this choice? Second, I would also like to comment on the section which shocked some of my colleagues, where it says: This could include petitioning the federal government to divide the province up, in the event that Québec's status as a province is repealed. I would like to know: Is this a threat? Is this a warning? Be careful! You know that if Québec should ever declare its sovereignty, the West Island or Saint-Léonard, as mentioned just now, or any region in which a majority voted to stay in Canada, would separate. Are we being threatened with balkanization? I would like to know. Are they going to attempt to blackmail Quebecers by scaring us again? I would like to know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Léonard. Your neighbour now has the floor for two minutes. Mr. Pierre Moisan.

Mr. Moisan (Pierre): I would like to go back to the question of international relations.

A voice: I think something is wrong with the microphone. OK.

Mr. Moisan (Pierre): At Université Laval, we are customarily in contact with students from all countries. This is one aspect of university life which is very enriching, especially in Québec City, where this contact is very rare. In Montréal, it is a more common occurrence. I think this is an aspect which should not be ignored, on the contrary. Furthermore, the point I want to make is that Québec sovereignty must be achieved in a climate of openness, of mutual interest, of mutual respect with regard to other peoples of the Earth. Today it is undeniable that market globalization and the globalization of

human interaction, whether by technology or travel, is enriching for all concerned. This is an unavoidable phenomenon; therefore, Québec must be sovereign to be able to open itself to the world, on its own terms. One has only to look at the history of Québec's international relations to see how often, how many times the federal government has attempted to keep Québec from being heard on an international scale. One could think of the Francophone summits, which, for years, Pierre Trudeau did his utmost to prohibit Québec from attending.

Under the Conservative Party, we eventually gained the status of a participating government, but, for years, we were reduced to playing second fiddle to Ottawa, and they told us what was good for us in the community of French-speaking nations, imagine. Majority Anglophones knew what was good for us in relations with the French-speaking world. We also had great difficulty being represented anywhere. In Washington, the Canadian government made agreements with the United States so that Québec could not be represented there. When you consider the amount of merchandise and the contacts we have with that country, personally, I find this sort of thing unacceptable. It is time we moved on to sovereignty so that we will be able to face the world, to open ourselves to the world, on our own terms. Thank you very much.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Pierre Moisan. Mr. Peter Julian, please, you have the floor.

Mr. Julian (Peter): Thank you. According to the briefs, it is clear that we want to preserve economic ties. Many briefs even discuss political ties. This means that the political information strategy is very important. In fact, in the actual steps English Canada has taken, their willingness is apparent, in the commissions touring throughout the Canadian West, in the change in Ontario's government and the Ontario Premier talking about an altered Canada, a flexible Canada. This is the evidence we must examine to determine English Canada's willingness to negotiate, not the book written by a political analyst from Ontario or a few surveys published in *Allô Police*, but their concrete activities.

If this good will is present, would the best strategy in the world be to slam the door, then return a few days later and ask them to negotiate economic ties? Obviously, these are just as beneficial to English Canada as they are to Québec, but it is not a good strategy, in view of the present circumstances and the willingness that exists. If we want to negotiate, we must use the will and vitality that exists in Canada right now. If we use this vitality, things will turn out better than if we make declarations

which provoke both sides. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Julian. Mr. Sylvain Tanguay, you have the floor.

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak only on the question of a referendum. The Conseil permanent de la jeunesse is in favour of holding a referendum rather than an election-referendum, for the good and simple reason that we think the question is important enough, very important even, that it must not be subject to, or leave room for any possible interpretation. If we decide to hold an election-referendum rather than a referendum on sovereignty, the result could be interpreted as a vote against a political party or for a political party and not for the option which is at the heart of the question on which the population is voting.

We firmly believe, therefore, that the people must decide in a referendum on a single, very clear question, which leaves no room for any conceivable, imaginable interpretation, in Canada or elsewhere in the world, and that the answer to that question will determine Québec's future.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Tanguay. Mr. Genest, no more than two minutes, please.

Mr. Genest (Christian): Yes, I think I'll be able to stay within two minutes this time. From the outset, I would like to respond to my colleague from Un Avenir ensemble by saying that powers over international relations, or powers over anything, will be delegated when we have them. For the time being, we don't have them; let's go and get them and, when we have what we need, we'll decide on our ties. We will not immediately get into putting ourselves in a position of weakness with regard to international trade relations, as such. When the time and the place are right and we make our recommendations on international trade, let's realize that today trade relations are no longer between one nation-State and another; they are between regions, especially since there have been free economic exchanges. Take that into consideration. So, if you want to develop an adequate international trade relations strategy, do so by creating partnerships with the regions, or at least with regional operators.

Furthermore, there is so much truth in what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that one has the impression, let's take the American example, that in New York, for example, it seems easier to obtain economic information on what is happening in Tokyo than on events in Philadelphia. This is a result of new dynamics and electronic communications, which means that

trading is done from pole to pole. So, I return to my idea of partnerships again.

On the subject of the constitution, briefly...

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): I am stopping you. In any case, you will have the chance to come back to that topic in a moment. Your time...

Mr. Genest (Christian): What about the subject of the constitution, Mr. Chairman?

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): But your time has run out. Mr. Yves Boulet, followed by Armand McKenzie. Mr. Boulet.

Mr. Boulet (Yves): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When speaking of the process of affirmation, I think it is naïve to expect a nice unanimity in Québec. There are various opinions, and it is healthy to have various opinions and for them to be expressed. In our political system, these opinions are expressed through political parties and this is also the way things get done. The Bélanger-Campeau Commission is all well and good, and although I respect the ladies and gentlemen of the Commission, the end result of commissions is a report, and a report has never accomplished anything. Political parties are the ones that take action and resolve issues. Now and henceforth, it is taken for granted that the Equality Party will be the federalist route. We know that the Parti québécois takes a sovereignist stance, but, after sovereignty, what ideology is the Parti québécois going to fight for? There is the Liberal Party, which is also a sovereignist party, not in front of the cameras and not officially, I admit, but all you have to do is chat a little with the militants in Québec to realize that the Liberal Party is a sovereignist party. And the Liberal Party is a party whose achievements have been impressive since the Quiet Revolution. It is an action party. So, I am inviting all Quebecers, particularly the young people, to take advantage of party channels to put forth their ideas and settle matters. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): We have heard your message, Mr. Boulet. Mr. Armand McKenzie, followed by Mr. Serge Girard. Mr. McKenzie, you have the floor.

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): There is something that doesn't seem clear here. I am a little disappointed by the off-handed way the aboriginal question has been treated, that is, things have been mixed together: institutions, cultural communities, the Anglophone question and the Native peoples. I don't know if you realize that, if the First Nations quickly become involved, just like that, in this move... This doesn't work for us. We want to be seriously

involved in your business. If you want to march forward, we are prepared to march forward with you, except that we need to talk seriously, because the question of the self-determination of the First Nations involves powers, it involves the Québec constitution, it involves the question of health and social services, it involves education, all the points that we mentioned: points 1, 2, 3 and 4. I think you have to realize that, when we speak of the Québec constitution, when we speak of a constituent assembly, I feel it is quite natural that, three-quarters of the time, these matters concern your people, the people of Québec. However, if we have to work together, we will work together, but let's work seriously, rather than having a quick consultation just so that there will be a reflection of the Native peoples in the Québec constitution, or something like that. No. If you want to work with the aboriginal peoples, you are going to put something, some meat into that constitution. Otherwise, what is going to happen is quite simple: we're not included in the game, fine, we'll do our debating and continue to march forward.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Mr. McKenzie, could I ask you one question? Can you suggest, at this time or later on, at what point you want to get involved and through what channels you want to be involved in the process of political affirmation?
(12:00 noon)

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): There are a few very interesting proposals here, which can be discussed and negotiated. In our brief, we mentioned an independent commission. At the beginning, when the Bélanger-Campeau Commission was formed, we discussed holding a Native peoples forum.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, alright.

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): There was a seat, then there wasn't. We are proposing an independent, neutral commission, a forum; at the very least, there needs to be a dialogue on the Native question between the people of Québec and the First Nations. I understand that these matters will not be resolved in two minutes, in 20 minutes, in two or three days, but a dialogue must be established. We are used to being the last people consulted, third-class citizens in constitutional priorities, on the second or third round, or the fourth or fifth. All of a sudden, everything is decided and we are told: Well, this is what we have decided on for you. That's enough. If we have to understand one another and live together, I think we need to work seriously. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you, Mr. McKenzie, your message has been

heard. Mr. Serge Girard, please, no longer than two minutes.

Mr. Girard (Serge): OK, Mr. Chairman. When we discuss the process, I think it is important to not let ourselves be blinded by the euphoria of the big day. It is important to think about what will come after we have declared our independence. This is why it seems to me that in addition to reflecting, and this has been very well documented, on the process which will lead us to the declaration of sovereignty, we have to ask ourselves how we will go about repatriating powers and what kind of relation we want to have with the Canadian government, with Canada, while repatriating these powers. Therefore, I think that, contrary to what has been said today, when we ask ourselves about relations of that kind, they won't be a piece of cake.

Therefore, the Jeune Chambre de Commerce de Montréal would agree to a process in which there is a referendum leading to a declaration of sovereignty or independence by the National Assembly, accompanied by a moratorium on the repatriation of powers and by a negotiation schedule, a repatriation schedule, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the creation of ties with Canada. There has been a great deal of discussion about a written constitution and a charter of rights. As regards the constitution, we must not follow the same irrational behaviour and act like the abused child who falls into the same pattern of abuse with his own children, and prepare a written constitution for ourselves which is so inflexible that, in a few years, we will find ourselves with the same kind of problem we have now. As for the charter of rights, we seem to want to emphasize and put a lot of energy into creating a charter. In my view, the emphasis should be on giving the Québec Parliament more power.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Girard. Mr. Karim Amegan. No more than two minutes, please.

Mr. Amegan (Karim): OK. What I have to say is a bit the opposite of what Mr. McKenzie just said: I will discuss the importance of a charter of rights in a future Québec constitution. I will explain why it is important. First, because it's normal for minorities to worry about their rights when faced with nationalism of any kind. It's perfectly legitimate, and I think this is something people are worried about in Québec at this time. Therefore, it's important that the future constitution of Québec include a charter of rights which integrates internationally recognized principles of justice. The current Québec Charter is a charter of this type, but there are others as well, such as the Canadian Charter, which could also serve as a model for Québec's

future constitution.

It's important, therefore, to emphasize the spirit of openness that will have to animate a sovereign Québec. In this sense, the cultural communities must be considered a constant source of new ideas and values that are often different from our own and that enrich Québec society. Québec should therefore strive to integrate cultural communities in a constructive manner so as to take full advantage of this cultural diversity which, as I said, enriches our society's culture.

I also wanted to say that it's all very well to declare that people will be equal by law in a sovereign Québec. But we also have to consider that, in practice, people don't have equal rights at the moment. We have seen an example of this. Native demands are one of the most glaring examples. Legally, Natives are citizens with equal rights but, in practice, this is far from true. Integration means allowing newcomers, both now and in the future, and people who have lived here for several generations, to have the status of Québec citizens not only *de jure* but also *de facto*.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Native people are an integral part of Québec's future. However, it's up to them to decide what they want. In other words, we mustn't impose solutions on them, but listen to what they have to say. As my colleague said, one of the problems of this Commission is that the Native people were ignored when it was set up.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Amegán. I would like to call on Mr. Alain Fortier, who is the last speaker in this part of the sitting. The floor is yours, Alain.

Mr. Fortier (Alain): I would like to point out that, because of the low birthrate and the aging population, we young people will probably not be adequately represented soon in Parliament, the constitution, and the various spheres of authority. Therefore, unless there is a major change in either the constitution or currently existing institutions, the situation won't improve. It was mentioned on several occasions earlier that young people will need to have certain guarantees in the constitution to enable them to assert their rights. Huge demonstrations, like those which brought about major changes in the 1970s, will soon be impossible. This is why we need an institution with more powers than the Conseil permanent, some of whose representatives are present here. I'm not implying that the Conseil doesn't make good recommendations. It's a good agency and we need it at this time. However, it is the first step toward ensuring that young people are represented, while the one we want to set up would be the second.

We want an agency that would be written

into the constitution and made up of and elected by young people throughout Québec. It would have the right to examine and maybe even have power of decision over laws passed by the National Assembly. It would serve young people alone so as to ensure that our representatives are heard, that our views are heard, and that the future belongs to us and truly reflects our needs. Thank you.

Economic Aspects

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Fortier. This concludes our third topic of discussion. It goes without saying that the fourth, namely, economic aspects, will help you to form a complete picture of the political situation. We will talk about the various features, namely, economic association, employment policy, currency and taxation. In other words, we will first discuss points 14, 15 and 16 and conclude with points 18 and 19, 18 being regional development and 19 foreign trade, with the United States in particular.

Eight people already have the right to speak. To conclude this part of the sitting, I will be able to hear only seven more speakers, each of whom will have two minutes. So far, we have agreed to hear the Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois, the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party, the Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie, Mr. Sylvain D'Aoust, the Jeunes souverainistes de l'Université Laval, Mr. Christian Genest, the Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais and the Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval. We cannot agree to hear more than seven speakers to conclude this debate, that is, seven speakers in addition to those who have already been granted the right to speak. I will now give the floor to the Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois. Joseph Facal is at the table. You have two minutes, Mr. Facal.

Mr. Facal (Joseph): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As I said before, the association between Québec and Canada should, of course, be exclusively economic. There should not be any form of political association which, by definition, would be a negation of sovereignty. The vast majority of economic associations are based on agreements, on treaties which both partners promise to observe. If we opt for the monetary union hypothesis, which I think would be a good idea, we can already anticipate that there would be a central bank. It would also be advantageous, I think, to maintain the current tariff union. Obviously, once Québec is sovereign, and as long as Canada is divided into an eastern bloc and a western bloc, we will have to conclude a durable agreement that guarantees freedom of movement across Québec, between the Maritimes and the West, by land, water, rail and

air.

Today, we often hear people holding up the EEC as an example. But be careful, because the European Economic Community is a monetary, commercial and economic association, not a political one. People say that there is a European Parliament. This is true, but this Parliament doesn't legislate. It makes resolutions. The text which governs relations between the various EEC countries is not a constitution, but merely an international agreement. The EEC budget is not the budget of a State, but the operating budget of various institutions. And 33 years after the Treaty of Rome, all EEC countries are still fully sovereign.

In short, a sovereign country does not recognize the authority of any constitution other than its own. We must not envisage creating, because of a poorly understood association, an entity that would levy taxes, make laws and have us renounce full sovereignty. Since we would be in the minority, we would recreate a structure that would be just as limiting as the current federal system. This, therefore, is the basic sovereignist stand and I am very pleased to be one of the first to know, even before the Liberal convention in March, that its delegates will adopt the position that we've been defending for 20 years. Congratulations!

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Mr. Facal, I will have to interrupt you. You have made some surprising statements, but your colleague and friend, not opposite you but beside you, has asked to speak immediately. He is Mr. Michel Bissonnette of the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party. Mr. Bissonnette.

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): Yes, I'm pleased to see how happy my colleague is. However, I think that, as Quebecers, we shouldn't lose sight of our two basic objectives. One of our objectives is political, and we have defined it in our capacity as young Liberals. Sovereignty must be achieved now if we are to secure recognition for the State of Québec and full political autonomy in the territory of Québec.

What worries me about the current constitutional debate is that we're becoming very wrapped up in our own concerns. Perhaps we should try to open up to the outside world. But, yes, I think it's important for us to make sure that we have full political autonomy and that the National Assembly is the centre of Quebecers' political power. I also think it's important for Québec to be open and strong economically. Quebecers, therefore, have economic objectives. In drawing up a political proposal, it's important that we also define the kind of economic association we want and that we determine how we can make this economic association a reality. We have to define Québec's economic objectives. But, above all, we must determine

how we can achieve them. I think that, as Quebecers, we must remember that economies are interdependent. We have to take this into account. We must also remember that it is important to have strong partners in an economic union and bear in mind that Québec must be strong economically.

As young Liberals, we believe that both States, namely, the State of Québec and what remains of the State of Canada, should set up an economic community where it will be possible to ensure the existence of a real zone, a real economic zone in what is now Canadian territory. In our opinion, it would be to Québec's advantage to continue allowing goods, services, people and capital to move freely, to have the same currency and monetary policy, and to ensure the existence of a single tariffs and trade policy.

We have talked a lot about structure. The Parti québécois defines it one way. We define it differently in our brief. Some people have proposed that this economic association be managed by various committees. But when we truly have the same economic goals as our partners, I think that we must also ensure that the structure in charge of this association is stable, efficient, functional and, above all, legitimate. Because, when we know, for example, that interest rates affect Quebecers' standard of living and way of life, we must make sure that we are aware of this when decisions are made.

Therefore, in our opinion, yes, a supra-national parliament is necessary. But it must be clearly understood that this parliament will have only those powers that are delegated to it by the member States. Secondly, we must above all ensure that Quebecers decide the areas in which they will pursue the same objectives as others.

I will stop here, because I can see you making signals to the effect that I'm taking up too much time. We'll largely be playing on labels. I think it's important to consolidate...

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes. Thank you. You're right to stop there.

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): You will soon have other opportunities to elaborate on this subject. Mr. Alain Hébert-Croteau of the Coopérative de travail des jeunes de l'Estrie. The floor is yours, Mr. Croteau.

Mr. Hébert-Croteau (Alain): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that Québec is a wealthy country, not only in terms of its material resources, but also in terms of its human and monetary ones. We mustn't forget that we have a very strong Caisse de dépôt. We also have a highly original Fonds de solidarité. However, in

the midst of all this wealth, poverty is gradually gaining ground and affecting primarily young people. Most of the time, such poverty is caused by underemployment. Underemployment often has other consequences, namely, crime. We must therefore develop a logical and coherent employment policy in Québec, just as we developed an educational system and a health and social services network in the sixties and seventies. They were revolutionary at the time. There will probably be more emphasis on the need for a consensus in formulating an employment policy. This is necessary, we think. (12:15 p.m.)

This question has already been discussed by several speakers, and we mustn't forget to mention the employment forum presided over by Mr. Béland. This employment policy will certainly include such basic features as manpower training, retraining, and income security, which is closely linked to family policy... they go hand-in-hand. It's hard to really dissociate the two. As we saw earlier, this is also the case of research and funding. It's certainly not through lack of will or mobilization. On the contrary, it's more because of an inability to follow up on recommendations and to actually implement this global policy which would respect Québec's distinctive character. Why? We also saw this earlier. Obviously, it's because of the presence of the federal government; the omnipresence of the federal government. Whenever Québec tries to act, it comes up against the federal government, against federal general development agreements and piecemeal federal programs which are ineffective and which, in the end, serve no purpose.

Québec, therefore, regardless of its future status, should recover all powers in the employment sector... absolutely all. There will then be no reason why we won't be able to establish an appropriate and effective employment policy. Young people will have an important role to play in drawing up and defining this policy because, at the moment, they are often left out and, yet, they are often the victims of the economic recession.

In this sense, Mr. Chairman, we, as a cooperative, would perhaps like to help define this policy. Once the customary features of the policy have been established, we should also envisage original forms of economic development. This is precisely our approach.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Will you please get to the point?

Mr. Hébert-Croteau (Alain): Yes. All right. Our goal is to provide young people with work. We have explored various alternatives and usually in sectors where young people work. We have tried to help them gain control over these activities and get them more involved in

decision-making, so that, in the end, these decisions will be made by them and for their benefit.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Croteau. The Jeunes souverainistes de l'Université Laval. Mr. Alain Bellefeuille.

Mr. Bellefeuille (Alain): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we said in our brief, we are definitely opposed to any form of long-term monetary union with the rest of Canada. We have many reasons for feeling this way, but given the limited amount of time available, we will discuss only two.

The first is that Québec, especially if it has only recently achieved sovereignty, will not be in a position to allow itself to give up vital economic powers when it has to cope with new markets and set up new institutions that will still be fragile. In this sense, Québec must keep such important powers under its sole jurisdiction, for they will affect its future viability. Delegating economic powers to another government and to a government that will probably view Québec sovereignty unfavourably... Delegating it the power to control currency and interest rates is likely to create conflicts which Québec economic agents can do without.

The second reason is that Canadian monetary policies are not adapted to the various regions. In fact, Canada consists of several regions with extremely different economic bases and performance and, in this sense, interest rates cannot be adapted. A monetary policy cannot be adapted to each region. I mean Canada can't do this. Canada can only provide a global economic policy and, as a result, Canadian policies are often poorly adapted to Québec policies. Moreover, as Mr. Bourassa said in October 1990, Canadian economic policies are focused primarily on one province. I think we all know which one.

Therefore, I think that the best way for Québec to control its own economic development is to start controlling its fiscal and monetary policies. In addition, Mr. Chairman, if Québec is presently unable to assert its economic importance in Canada, I ask you: How will it be able to do so when it breaks ranks? Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much for your question. I will let the other groups try to answer it. I now give the floor to Sylvain D'Aoust. The floor is yours, Mr. D'Aoust.

Mr. D'Aoust (Sylvain): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to monetary policy, I'm inclined to agree with my colleague who just spoke. I don't see how, and so much the better, since some people claim to know the answer, Québec could possibly express its views or needs

with regard to monetary policy in a monetary union. Although I admit that my knowledge is very limited in this area, I would be inclined to support the idea of having our own currency. This is important, because the high interest rates we have experienced were often decided by Ottawa, without Québec having any say in the matter. We have seen our provincial governments disapprove, in the past, of Ottawa's way of doing things.

But one thing is certain. Regardless of the option we choose, we must ensure that we will be able to have a monetary policy that truly meets our needs and not those of the province next to us, because high interest rates raise the cost of capital and, incidentally, incur additional expenses for businesses. This in turn makes us less competitive and, if we agree that we must be able to compete internationally, we must make sure that we do not become less competitive, that we can do everything possible to remain competitive at the international level. This is very important for, among other things, promoting employment and creating an economically promising future for young people. We must do everything possible to ensure that we are competitive at this level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you for your contribution, Mr. Sylvain D'Aoust. Pierre Moisan is the last person already entitled to speak. He will speak on behalf of the Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval. You have two minutes, Mr. Moisan.

Mr. Moisan (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will talk about trade with the United States and the rest of the world. Undeniably, and this has been proven by economic theory and practice, it has long been profitable to trade with other nations. As of the 19th century, Ricardo talked about the comparative advantages, which demonstrated that it is always in a country's interest to trade on the basis of differences in productivity and cost price. When Québec achieves sovereignty, it, of course, will be no exception to the rule, and it will want to trade with other people around the world.

Québec is a country that already exports a great many products. It needs to export. It has to protect its markets. It also has to develop new ones. Therefore, we'll probably see new agreements, perhaps with France or Europe, and, ultimately, it will be a good idea to diversify our sources of purchase. We can already think... The President of the United States wants to extend free trade to Mexico and, eventually, to Latin America. Québec would no doubt be in a good position to take part in such agreements. Think of Mexico, for example, which has already

recognized our distinctive character by calling us "los tabernacos". We definitely have things in common. Our cultures, which are Latin in character, resemble one another. We have the same type of civil code. Therefore, it is certainly to our advantage to do business with countries like Mexico or other Latin American countries. Québec has been highly successful in the export market. Think, for example, of Bombardier and of Lavalin, Raymond, Chabot, who are going to privatize the services of the City of Moscow. Therefore, we're already on a solid footing and can compete internationally. We should concentrate our efforts in this area, train students in international affairs, and promote exports, language training, knowledge of foreign cultures, and university exchanges. As for those who say that Canada will no longer want to trade with us... I don't think we should take this threat seriously. Merchants will always want to do business. Even though Meech Lake failed, business hasn't come to a standstill. Merchants want to make money and those on both sides will want to trade. When Communists are eating Big Macs, you can't tell me that people in Ontario will stop buying maple syrup. Thank you.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Regional Development

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Moisan. Mr. Christian Genest, who introduced the question of regional development, you now have the floor.

Mr. Genest (Christian): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, I will make a superhuman effort not to take up more than two minutes.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): You'll succeed this time.

Mr. Genest (Christian): Yes. Ha, ha ha! OK. In that case, I'll skip the first three paragraphs and concentrate basically on regional development. I would first like to say that my speaking on behalf of local and regional groups does not mean that I recommend the federalization of Québec. It's not that at all. I'm simply saying that if Québec achieves sovereignty and independence, as I hope it does, all powers cannot be concentrated in Complex G, here in Québec City. We'll need regional solutions for regional problems. People are capable of assuming more responsibilities at the regional level, provided, of course, that we give them the means to do so. Local groups have taken over jurisdictions which, theoretically, may not have been theirs in the first place. I'm thinking about leisure, housing and even the arts. Why? Because they're related

to their citizens' quality of life. In this sense, there isn't any problem. We can have confidence in our regional elected representatives. They are no longer suppliers of services. Moreover, I wonder if they ever were. In any case, they've gone beyond that stage. In many ways, they've become agents of development and joint action.

This means that we can work toward decentralization if, of course, we give them the fiscal means and don't, as we're doing now, unfairly burden local and regional groups by transferring bills to them. Obviously, if we give them more responsibilities, we'll have to resolve certain problems which local elected representatives will not be able to deal with. They won't be able to do what they do now, that is, work on a semi-volunteer basis. I mean... I think that society will also have to pay part of the cost. Ultimately, we must have confidence in them. In conclusion, Madam Chair... Mr. Chairman, I will say that, in the sovereign Québec we would like to build, because there seems to be a consensus on this... We are telling the members of this commission to wake up and take action. Then, Mr. Chairman, we'll have a sovereign Québec, a sovereign Québec that will think globally but act locally. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Genest. Still on the theme of regional development, a member of the Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais, Mr. Benoît Campeau. Mr. Campeau.

Mr. Campeau (Benoît): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Christian took the words right out of my mouth. Regional development is, of course, the question which has captured the interest of the Jeunes du Parti québécois de l'Outaouais. Québec's regions are dying. The Conseil des affaires sociales made this tragic observation in its report, "Deux Québec dans un", in 1989. (12:30 p.m.)

Economically, the Canadian federation caters to its centre, Toronto, while Québec caters to its centre, Montréal. In all cases, therefore... I mean, in both cases, outlying regions are not taken into account. In this sense, Québec's regions are doubly penalized. Obviously, it will not be enough to merely recover federal regional funds. Once they have been recovered, Québec will have to transfer them to the regions so that they can set up their own institutions. It is only then that regional development will become a reality. The goal would be, on the one hand, to revitalize the regions in order, obviously, to stop the exodus of young people from these areas to large urban centres and, on the other hand, to stimulate economic development in various sectors. The Québec government could, for example, set up regional development corporations. These corporations would be able to respond more

quickly to regional concerns than a more centralized system of management could. This, in our opinion, is one of the ways in which the regions could play a determining, if not fundamental, role both economically and socially. And we believe, Mr. Chairman, that this type of measure will allow Québec to improve the lot of its regions and of the Québec nation as a whole. Have I been brief enough?

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Above all, you were clear. Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Campeau.

Mr. Campeau (Benoît): Thank you.

Economic Aspects (cont.)

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Eleven people have asked to speak on this question of economic aspects. I will list their names: Messrs. Jean-François Simard, Marc-Antoine Adam, Yves Sauvé, Karim Amegan, André Gobeil, Carl Tremblay, Mrs. Isabelle Bouchard, Messrs. François Cholette, Robert Vincent, Luc Garneau and Sylvain Tanguay. First, Jean-François Simard. The floor is yours.

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Thank you, Mr. Châtillon. There are many forms of sovereignty, including, of course, cultural sovereignty, linguistic sovereignty, political sovereignty and, a form that we have often discussed, constitutional sovereignty. We have now reached the stage of discussing economic sovereignty. As a result of the current debate, we have come to realize that the processes of political integration and economic union are very intimately related. We are in the midst of a debate, and I will take advantage of the opportunity to put a question to the members of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission who are here with us. After all, it's our privilege. Einstein said that, ultimately, human nature is sustained not so much by good answers as good questions, and I would like to share a few thoughts with you.

I think that an economic association should take three basic elements into account. First, we should think about which type of economic union would promote the full development of Québec's economy, while taking the management of the debt into account. I think, therefore, that we should consider sovereignty particularly in terms of the debt. Secondly, we also have to consider the strength of our currency. We must have... We must find a better way of directly controlling the strength of our currency on a continual basis. If not, how do you think that, even if we are politically sovereign, we will be able to achieve economic sovereignty with tangible repercussions for small and medium-sized businesses? Thirdly, of course, we will need to edge in directly on interest rates. We will have

to be able to have our say in this matter. These are the three points I wanted to raise with respect to the importance of economic integration versus political integration.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Simard. Mr. Marc-Antoine Adam.

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to note that, except for a slight difference in wording, the youth sections of the Liberal Party and the Parti québécois seem to be making almost the same proposal, and I hope that their elders will follow suit. However, I also noted several differences with regard to institutions. As Mr. Facal mentioned, the European parliament is nothing like the Canadian or Québec parliament. It is not the legislative body of the European Economic Community. First point.

You, the Liberal Party, talk about a supranational parliament. I have problems with this, because as soon as you talk about a supranational parliament... There are elected representatives. This seems more democratic. It's better than having people appointed by the member governments, namely, those of Canada and Québec. The problem is that political parties will be formed and that these parties will be the same in both Québec and Canada. They will undoubtedly have a party line which, although perhaps not as strict as in our system, will be something along the same lines. People will support one another. And then you'll have the same problem that we now have with the federal government, that is, mass opposition to Québec. What do you expect? They represent 75%, while we account for 25%.

I will give you a good example of this. I have taken it from the events which prompted this debate. In 1982, when Québec said: We didn't sign the Constitution; we don't agree; it isn't valid in Québec. Mr. Trudeau said: Why not? More elected representatives from Québec voted in favour of this Constitution than against it. Québec accepted the 1982 Constitution. I see this same kind of problem arising with a supranational parliament, as it were. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Marc-Antoine Adam. I will now give the floor to Mr. Yves Sauvé. No more than two minutes, please, Mr. Sauvé.

Mr. Sauvé (Yves): Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to mention two points with respect to the employment policy. First, a recommendation. Master's and Ph.D. students from McGill University have suggested that the responsibility for skills development should be transferred from the ministère du Travail to a new department that would be in charge of

ongoing training. This new structure might entail the transformation of the social aid and unemployment insurance system into a guaranteed income system that would be coordinated with ongoing training and skills development programs.

Another important point. We talk about our wonderful French language, but we seem to be forgetting a very serious problem. And I find it distressing that no one has mentioned it today. Did you know that, according to a Statistics Canada survey done in 1989 - and this will surprise those who aren't aware of this - 30 percent of Francophones here in Québec are functionally illiterate, that is, they are unable to read a text and understand its content? I therefore ask you the following question: How can these people find a good job? At the moment, there isn't a single government agency that looks after this problem. Therefore, we, McGill students, and probably many others, urge the Québec government to set up a government agency to deal with this problem as soon as possible. That's all we wanted to say. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Sauvé. Mr. Karim Amegan.

Mr. Amegan (Karim): As for the economic aspects of sovereignty, a sovereign Québec will obviously continue to be part of the global North American economy as it is now. In our opinion, therefore, a future economic association between Québec and Canada will not necessarily have to be based on a political union any more than the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States is. We wonder why certain people absolutely insist on a supranational parliament. Perhaps they're simply nostalgic for the time when they believed in federalism and they still can't get over the fact that things have changed. Perhaps they're trying to transmit this nostalgia to current generations. However, as you can see, it's becoming more and more difficult to get the message across. People, therefore, have to be consistent with their positions. Those who want a sovereign Québec mustn't get bogged down in proposals, which won't necessarily be to their advantage, for a supranational parliament of which Canada will inevitably be a member.

In other words, we have to agree on a realistic proposal, that is, take control of our destiny and eliminate all elements that might be subject to the subsequent approval of English Canada. We have to give ourselves the means to negotiate and then determine the basis on which an economic association will be established with Canada. Thank you.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Amegan. Mr. Carl Tremblay, please be brief. The floor is yours, Mr. Carl Tremblay.

Mr. Tremblay (Carl): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, the Jeune Barreau does not claim to be able to advise the Commission on the need for or pertinence of limited agreements on currency or banks, for example.

However, the Jeune Barreau would like to warn the Commission about various aspects. First, it is extremely dangerous for the Commission... for the Québec government to be bound by a declaration of independence that says: You have to reach an agreement with the rest of Canada on this point or that point. This would give our adversary, so to speak, certain elements or a mandate, depending on its advocates... Obviously, if we give our representatives the power to negotiate while telling the other party what its mandate will be, our representatives will be at a complete disadvantage.

To keep independence flexible, all agreements should be fairly limited in scope and not concern jurisdictions which, because of independence, will be fully controlled by Québec. They should therefore be limited agreements that will not concern these jurisdictions. This is the point we wanted to make, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mr. Tremblay. Mrs. Isabelle Bouchard.

Mrs. Bouchard (Isabelle): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As young people, we are particularly affected by the current job situation. The exodus of young people is a serious problem for outlying regions. Between 1985 and 1988, the number of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 fell by 26.7% in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. Our chances of entering the job market are poor, to say the least. Therefore, we have reason to be worried.

We associate a real, full employment policy with an adequate regional development policy. We recommend that new exchange mechanisms be set up between the representatives of the educational sector and employers, and that better information be available on sectors with too little or too much manpower.

For this purpose, a sovereign Québec should have sole jurisdiction over employment. In the regions, especially, it will be essential to invest in transportation infrastructures and support regional businesses. The only way that the regions can prevent themselves from deteriorating is to keep their human resources. It is extremely important for the Québec of tomorrow to ensure that they do.

Past experience has shown that centralization is costly and favours certain regions at the expense of others. In our opinion, it is obvious, therefore, that a sovereign Québec should opt for decentralization and regional development. We must find an effective way of distributing investments and infrastructures

fairly.

We support the creation of a regional government with sufficient financial resources, decision-making power regarding the distribution of resources, and a system of regional equalization. You know, a more profitable form of sovereignty will only be achieved through lasting development that takes into account the specific features of each region of Québec.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much, Mrs. Bouchard. Mr. Dave Quirion of the Université du Québec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The floor is yours, Mr. Quirion.

Mr. Quirion (Dave): Thank you. I will briefly discuss regional development. Like Québec, which is asking Canada for a limited degree of sovereignty, we the regions feel a bit left out. We often tend to be forgotten. We have a fairly large supply of natural resources in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, you know, that generates billions of dollars for the Québec economy. But we don't get much in return. We don't want to take control of these industries at the expense of their current owners, but we would like training and development tools to be located in our region.

It would also be a good idea to have a kind of ongoing socio-economic conference that could develop the various regions in concert with local groups. This is our position to a certain extent.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Quirion. We receive you loud and clear. Mr. François Cholette, you may now have the floor.

Mr. Cholette (François): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain believes that, in addition to sovereignty which, in our opinion, must be achieved, a form of economic association should be established with the rest of Canada. Sovereignty, however, should not be subject to the establishment of such an association. This economic association would include the free movement of goods, people, services and capital. In short, it would be similar to the Common Market. Community institutions should be set up to manage this economic association with the rest of Canada. They would be responsible for harmonizing legislation and coordinating economic policies. According to the Jeune chambre de commerce, the members of these community organizations should be appointed by the governments of the member states. We don't think that a system involving an elected supranational parliament would be viable.

In conclusion, in addition to establishing an economic association with the rest of Canada, Québec should open up to the outside world and promote economic relations with other countries.

Québec should adhere to the North American Free Trade Agreement, which, in a few years, may be extended to America as a whole. It must also make all the necessary efforts to establish strong, powerful ties with the European Economic Community and to develop and consolidate its position as the gateway to North America for European investors. Last, we must remain active at the international level through the GATT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Cholette. I will now give the floor to your colleague from the other chamber of commerce, Mr. Robert Vincent.

Mr. Vincent (Robert): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to say that, in our opinion, the constitutional issue, in itself, is not the basic issue. Both the political and economic questions originate from a need for social development. Our approach is based on the following reasoning: Yes, we want to achieve sovereignty. We want to achieve it in order to promote social development. And this social development would make it possible to resolve some of the problems that have been raised at this table: social problems caused by underemployment. The fact that young people no longer have a positive and optimistic view of the future is a source of great concern, since the market depends on people and, when their financial situation is poor, economic problems arise. So we say: To promote social development, we need lasting economic development with tangible results, based on an industrial policy which, among other things, includes regional specialization, focuses on select industrial sectors in an increasingly open economy where competition is essential, and pinpoints specific areas that will allow us to perform well at the international level.

Moreover, this industrial policy, which could also be seen as an employment policy... We feel, however, that a full employment policy is utopian or not very realistic. An efficient and highly effective industrial policy could create a large number of jobs. Therefore, there is a link between employment and the economy. In our opinion, this is very important. It inevitably depends on the formulation of a very specific industrial policy focused on the strategic objectives of this province, our future country, let's hope. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Vincent. You are the first person who has established a relationship between industrial policy and employment policy. I now give the floor to Mr. Luc Garneau, of the Comité national des jeunes de la CSN. Mr. Garneau.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): Thank you. I can see

that the debate is finally becoming more realistic, because agreements, in my opinion, don't take people into account. When we talk about agreements, the purpose is to create jobs and help people. And when we talk about a full employment policy... it's strange, but 50 percent of the briefs I've read talk about full employment and, once again, we find ourselves with an employment policy, a bit like the forum that was supposed to be a forum on full employment and yet was merely a forum on employment. It's always the same thing. In discussing employment policy, I would talk more about a political will to create jobs, which is something completely different!

What we need is for people to be able to find employment in their region and not be obliged to leave in order to make a living. We must be able to provide people with an opportunity to find jobs and, for those who are able to create them, the chance to do so. We won't do this by saying: agreements. OK. Agreements are all very well, except that people, those who are unemployed or on welfare, aren't interested in them. What they want is to find a job. This is where we should concentrate our efforts over the next 10 years. This is the greatest challenge that Québec will face as a sovereign nation.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Garneau. Mr. Sylvain Tanguay of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. Mr. Tanguay.

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): I don't know why Mr. Garneau always takes the words right out of my mouth whenever he speaks before me, but...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Have you finished?

Voices: Ha, ha ha!

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): No, no, I still have a few things to say.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Go ahead.

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): We, of course, agree to a certain extent with the speakers who have discussed regional development, that is, with what they have said about the importance of decentralizing regional economic development powers by transferring them to the various regions of Québec. This is extremely important for the regions. However, we must understand that, before we decentralize powers and even decide whom they will be transferred to, we must achieve sovereignty and control... the Québec government must control all these powers. Once it controls them, it will be able to

transfer them to the regions and the municipalities through agreements with elected municipal representatives. I would also like to point out what has emerged from the discussions to date, namely, a consensus that sovereignty is the only political option that should be envisaged for the future and that this political option must be presented to the population through a referendum. I think that this is the consensus which has emerged from our discussions this morning. The wish that I would like to express to the members of this commission is that, during their discussions and closed-door sittings, which will culminate in their report, they will reach the same consensus we young people have reached. I would also like to stress the harmony that exists between the young people of Québec's two main political parties. Thank you very much.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you, Mr. Tanguay. Mr. Serge Boulard of the Jeune Parti québécois du collège Lafèche in Trois-Rivières. The floor is yours, Mr. Boulard.

Mr. Boulard (Serge): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. After hearing the thoughts expressed by Mr. François Cholette of the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain and the presentations of Mr. Luc Garneau and Mr. Tanguay on Québec's economic situation, it is obvious, and I agree with them, that we must have practical policies on employment, on full employment. We must also conclude economic agreements with other major powers. And we mustn't wait until we've achieved sovereignty.

One point I'd like to mention is that Québec will have to compete extensively at the international level, cope with very difficult markets, and be unusually dynamic over the years to come. As Mrs Gagnon said earlier, the system will definitely have to be changed. Mrs Lalonde of the Polytechnique also said this, if I'm not mistaken. We'll have to review our policies. We'll have to review our social programs. But, at the moment, we should be asking ourselves... the members of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission should be asking themselves the following questions: To what extent will we be able to maintain these social policies? To what extent will we be able to assume our sovereignty and power? I think that, at some point, we will have to make certain decisions, make necessary choices and decide which of the various social programs that we have implemented can be maintained.

I think that, today, everyone at this table has reached a fairly strong consensus on constitutional status, programs and agreements. There is a considerable will to introduce programs and produce tangible results. However, we should perhaps review these programs and determine which ones we will be able to

maintain. If we look at the situation at the federal level, we have run up a fairly enormous debt that will be hard to pay off. However, on the basis of our resources...

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Your conclusion, please.

Mr. Boulard (Serge): Yes. I think that, as a society, Québec will have to make decisions and take responsibility for the choices it makes. I hope that the Commission will be able to think about these choices. Thank you very much.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Pierre Larouche. The last speaker on this question. Thirty seconds, Pierre.

Mr. Larouche (Pierre): Very briefly. I agree with most of the people who have said that Québec must recover jurisdiction over economic matters. The federal government manages its economic policy poorly. However, we mustn't forget that the federal government doesn't have unlimited room to manoeuvre in this area. If Québec recovers these powers and wants to remain open to the rest of the world and to continue trading, we won't be able to do everything we want, either. Therefore, sovereignty should not be presented as the key to unlimited economic opportunities. If we continue to be open to the rest of the world, we will be subject to the same restrictions as the federal government with regard to our economic policy.

The Moderator (Mr. Châtillon): Thank you very much. We have just finished studying the four areas. Briefly, some information. Please return to this room around 2:15 p.m. I have also been informed that two speakers will be able to sit at the table at a time during the third part of this sitting. Also, there will be a transcription of the discussions, which will probably be mailed to you next month.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for having made my work of allowing you to express and discuss your ideas relatively easy. It was my mandate.

Once again, we see that young people are capable of visions of the future. We were right to draw upon your energy, open-mindedness and ability to understand the interdependence of the stakes involved. My role is finished now that this second part of the sitting is over. This afternoon, you are invited to this room to hear the Commission members and the participants exchange views. These discussions will be presided over by one of the chairmen of the Commission. I would like to express my sincere thanks. It has been very interesting for me. I have learned a great deal from this debate and I also hope that others will take what has been

said into consideration. I'm convinced they will. Enjoy your meal. See you later.

Government party. Mr. Dauphin.

(Proceedings adjourned at 12:54 p.m.)

Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party

(Proceedings resumed at 2:40 p.m.)

Exchange of Views Between the Commission Members and Youth Groups Representatives

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Welcome to the third part of today's sitting. During this part of the forum, the members of the Commission and the representatives of the various youth groups will exchange views.

The groups that appear at the table have been chosen on the basis of the questions submitted by the Commission members to the secretary's office this morning. In other words, the group that has received the most questions will be the first to appear, and so on.

I remind the members that the time you have been allotted is the total amount of time you will be allowed to speak this afternoon. I will begin by repeating the rules that have been adopted for this sitting. There are 15 minutes for the Chair, 40 minutes for the Government parliamentary group, 40 minutes for the Official Opposition parliamentary group and 85 minutes for the other members, each of whom will have 5 minutes.

You have submitted questions for more than one group. When one of the groups you wanted to question appears, you will each be given a turn to speak. If you decide to speak at that time, and I'm addressing the Commission members here, and you speak for five minutes, you will have exhausted your five minutes for the afternoon. If the group, or one of the groups, which has received the most questions, and therefore appears at the beginning, is on your list and you are asked to speak, you may skip your turn and speak later if your priorities have changed or the question you wanted to ask isn't your most important. This may seem complicated and it certainly will be. If you feel that the Chair makes unfair decisions during the sitting, tell yourself that you're right and that it will try to be unfair to everyone. This will make things fair in the end. So there!

Of course, the groups which appear... There are two groups at the table. One will be questioned while the other waits. When the first group is finished, another will take its place while we go on to question the second group.

We will begin with the first group: the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party. The first group of Commission members who will ask commissions... questions... I almost said "will give commissions"... I mean, will ask questions. We will first hear from a representative of the

Mr. Dauphin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to welcome the representatives of the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party and congratulate you on the presentation you made yesterday. Since we're entitled to five minutes, I think I should ask you my question immediately.

You propose in your brief, and I think that this was adopted during the Liberal youth convention last August, that certain powers be delegated to an elected supranational parliament by the member states. You give two main reasons in your brief. Since time was running short when you made your presentation yesterday, I think that it would be interesting for the Commission members, here today, if you could elaborate on this elected supranational parliament. Why did you propose this so-called supranational parliament? How would it affect and benefit the free, democratic society of Québec?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): One of the points you raised in your question, Mr. Dauphin, is that, first and foremost, a supranational parliament would have only those powers that are delegated to it by the member States, and this is the very spirit of the resolution we adopted this summer. In other words, we believe that, first and foremost, we must ensure the recognition of Québec's full political autonomy so as to make sure that the National Assembly has sole jurisdiction over the territory of Québec.

However, as I explained during today's debate, we also feel that it is important not to consider Québec as the centre of things. Yes, we have political objectives which should allow us to achieve sovereignty and exercise complete political control over the territory of Québec from now on. We should also make sure that we are a strong economic partner so as to play an effective and visible role in the various economic systems of the world.

In this sense, we feel that it is important to form an economic community with a Canadian partner. We do not share the view that we need various committees to legitimize an economic community. Therefore, if we, as Quebecers, feel that we should have the same currency as our partners, that goods and services should move freely, that we should have the same monetary policy, and that certain economic and special tariffs and trade policies should be brought into line, then we think it's important to have a parliament to legitimize an economic bloc and an economic community. It's in this spirit that we proposed a supranational parliament.

(2:45 p.m.)

In your question, I think I also detected...

many people ask us if this isn't just a recreation of the federal government and if we're not just giving it another name and changing the plaque on the front of the building. I think that one thing should be clearly understood. The federal government, as we now know it... Québec is not a member State, but a province within that Parliament.

In our opinion, it is important for a supranational parliament to have a certain legitimacy so that it can manage sectors in which the member States are willing to cooperate. However, it will not be able to seize additional powers or exercise ones that have not been delegated to it, provided that the parties of the member States have agreed to delegate powers.

Mr. Dauphin: All right. Thank you very much. Can I keep the minute or two I still have left for later?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have a total of 40 minutes and, if you wish, you may use all of your time now. This might be at the expense of your colleagues a bit, but...

Mr. Dauphin: My colleagues wouldn't like me. But I'll be back later, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): All right. We will now hear the questions of the Official Opposition. It's Mr. Parizeau, I think.

Mr. Parizeau: I would first like to tell the people who are now before us, the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party, how important I find the conclusion they have reached, namely, that Québec should achieve sovereignty. We can talk about means, superstructures and whatever we want later, but this, we mustn't forget, is important. It's essential. That's for sure!

However, the Youth Commission said, and you just repeated it: we need a supranational parliament. We need a supranational government to manage a certain number of things that will be delegated to it by the member States. My first question is: Which member States? Who delegates? Do you mean that Québec will be one of the member States and that the rest of Canada, the nine other provinces, will make up the other State? Or, will the member States that delegate powers to the supranational parliament, which will be a supranational government in itself, be each of the 10 existing provinces, which will be called States for the purpose in hand? How many members do this supranational parliament and supranational government have? Two or ten?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): Thank you very much for asking this question, Mr. Parizeau. It

gives us a chance to explain a point which you don't seem to have clearly understood in our document. It's no secret and I'm not telling you anything new when I say that the day Québec declares sovereignty, it will be hard to predict the reaction of the other Canadian provinces. However, one point seems essential to us at this time: If, once Québec declares sovereignty, English Canada decides to form a country with nine provinces, to remain united or associated, the member States would be the State of Québec and the State of Canada. If, however, other provinces opt for sovereignty, just as Québec may decide to do, we would have to deal with the various economic partners. But, in our opinion, Québec would obviously have the status of a State. If, once Québec declares sovereignty, other Canadian provinces also decide to become sovereign States, the economic community could be made up of more than just two States. We have envisaged this scenario. We have considered the fact that, like Québec, other provinces have the right to self-determination, and we have allowed for this possibility. However, we also think that if Canada decides to form a united country with nine provinces, only two States should be recognized in the economic community, namely, the State of Canada and the State of Québec.

Mr. Parizeau: In those conditions, if I understand you properly, and supposing that no other province would want to become a sovereign State, there would be two. There would be two States. That means that, for English Canada, I am simplifying things a little speaking of English Canada, but you will understand what I mean, what you are preparing for English Canada is three-tiered government then. That is, their provinces, which I imagine will still exist, a federal government for the nine provinces and a supranational government over Québec, on the one hand, and the federal government of the nine provinces on the other. Obviously, that means a dramatic change in English Canada's current political system. That's quite a revolution. You are asking them to really change their way of government. That poses the problem of knowing whether there is any chance of their accepting something of the sort. Now, it must not be forgotten that it is not... We are trying here to redefine Québec, but with proposals such as yours, you are redefining them too then, extensively. Let's suppose that they do not even want to discuss the reorganization of their political system at our request. What do we do? If they say: "Listen, your formula for a supranational government, for us, no way. We are not interested. Does your declaration in favour of Québec's sovereignty still stand?"

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): I think that the document was very clear on that point, and I

think that you must very humbly confess that, no matter what the political project defended by whatever political party, any post-sovereignty scenario will always be a project and a proposal we will make to the rest of Canada in terms of economic association. Some people might take it for granted that different committees would be more acceptable within the Canadian political structure; others could think it would bring increased instability in terms of economic strength, both for Canada and for Québec. The way we read it, yes, it will call for an additional political structure for English Canada, or a reorganization of their political structure; but it would guarantee economic stability for the entire Canadian territory, which is essential, in our view, for the economic development of Québec.

As we pointed out in our document, on page 16 - they are giving me information - there is something fundamental for us, and that is: if Québec chooses political sovereignty, it will be first and foremost because it decides that it can no longer fall back on the status quo. And if English Canada, unfortunately, said no to our proposal for economic association, we could not then become a province once more. I think that was clear, both in the document we voted on this summer and in all the discussions that were held. When we choose to become a sovereign State, we accept all the accompanying responsibilities. As Quebecers, we can make the best possible proposal for economic association but, ultimately, we will always have to bear the consequences of our decision to become a sovereign State, with all that that implies.

Mr. Parizeau: One last question, then, so that everything is quite clear. If, in answer to your proposal to English Canada, you are told: Québec, a sovereign State with a strong economic association with the rest of Canada, O.K.; but a supranational Parliament, a supranational government, three levels of government for English Canada, to that we English Canadians say no. If that is the answer: Economic association, O.K., but an upheaval of our political system, so say the English Canadians, no; is that O.K. with you? Is it still a go?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): I think that, as I said earlier, once we have chosen to be sovereign, you never go back on decisions like that and we could not go back on the decisions made by the people of Québec.

Mr. Parizeau: Thank you very much, Sir.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Nicolet, to be followed by Mr. Libman and by Mr. Hogue.

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

would have liked to have heard you...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would remind you, Mr. Nicolet, that you have five minutes for the whole afternoon; you may take them all now or take only some of your time.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Nicolet: Ha, ha, ha! I will try to take only some of it, Mr. Chairman. You go into the control of monetary policy and you make it the responsibility of this supranational Parliament. How do you reconcile this view of things with the practice that seems to be developing elsewhere in the world, of entrusting management of monetary policy to a central bank which is completely independent of political authorities?

Mr. Dumont (Mario): I think we mustn't confuse the issue. We did not say that the central bank should be managed directly by Parliament. What we say is that, once...

A voice: ...monetary.

Mr. Dumont (Mario): O.K. I will try to clarify that situation. What we say is that, when we have a central bank that we want to put at the service of an economic community, we obviously have two choices: either we can make it entirely independent of political power, or else we can make it accountable, up to a point, to some kind of political power. Except for a few States such as Germany which had very particular experiences in its past - we won't go into that again - in terms of hyperinflation, generally, States nevertheless have a central bank accountable to a certain political or executive power. What we say is that, in choosing an association of States, there again, another choice must be made as regards a central bank, always supposing that we want it to be accountable somewhere along the line to a political power: either accountable to the powers that be in each of the member States, or accountable to an umbrella power. The problem, if it is accountable to each of the member States, is that if, at one point... I am thinking of some proposals for economic association: we have already seen. If we say that the governor of the bank, for instance - which is the kind of decision that will have to be made - is appointed jointly by the member States, it all runs on wheels as long as everyone is in agreement, as long as everyone agrees on what is required, what must be done, what type of policy should be contemplated. The moment there is disagreement, on the one hand, we agree that there can be no compromise on the type of policy a central bank is to carry out, and I don't think we can afford uncertainty or times

when decisions are not made. That is why we think there must be... And it is one of the reasons we believe it would be more advantageous, for a viable economic association, a viable economic community, to have a legitimate institution oversee everything.

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

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. I would remind you that the rule we have that each of the two parties has 40 minutes - I am not reminding you, I am telling you for the first time, I didn't tell you earlier - must be interpreted in relation to another rule which states that each discussion must last no longer than five minutes. Therefore, it is not possible, despite what I said previously, for one or the other of the two representatives of the parties to take 40 minutes at once.

With that noted, we will go on to Mr. Libman who will be followed by Mr. Hogue and by Mrs. Pagé.

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. President. I read the brief four times. It is the only one of the 600 briefs we received that I read four times. My first question, Mr. Chairman, is a bit political, but I think it is important that the question be asked.

Your position favours full political autonomy for Québec, with economic ties with the rest of Canada. On page 16 of your brief, you say, "Should the rest of Canada refuse to follow Québec's lead and pool their economic interests, Québec will continue its venture". If I understand your reply to Mr. Parizeau, that means your position, if Québec does not get the economic association it would like, will be that Québec is ready to become a completely sovereign State, a complete rupture. If I understand what you said. Yesterday, in *La Presse*, you said, "It is in the interest of Liberals and Péquistes to work together for the sovereignty of Québec". So, my first question is, as I said, a bit political. I want to know how much support you feel in your own party for the position you are taking today?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): First of all, I have no wish to join the club of the misquoted...

Mr. Libman: They are talking about Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): Far be it from me to wish to join the club of the misquoted. What I said to *La Presse* was that, for me, what's important is that the next constitutional political project that emanates from Québec be defended by a majority of Quebecers and we must ensure that it goes beyond party allegiances, and is a

consensus of the people of Québec. To my mind, you cannot talk of a referendum, of sovereignty if, for all that, you simply tried to convince people, but that Quebecers are not behind the project, do not support their self-affirmation as a nation, and do not support a project for economic association with clearly defined objectives as regards the proposal we would make to the rest of Canada. And that is what I meant by a consensus. Some people interpreted it as meaning that the young Liberals would be ready to join the young members of the Parti québécois. I can assure you that, right now, as a young militant in a political party, I realize that I have here the most important vehicle there is for defending the position that young people voted for in the youth convention last summer. I believe it is important to get the most out of the structure given us because I think it is one of the most important pieces on the Québec chessboard, Québec's political chessboard. It is the new stand the Québec Liberal Party will take.

(3:00 p.m.)

As for the reaction of the other members of my party, I do not think that it is part of the mandates defined by the Bélanger-Campeau Commission to defend or to explain here the dynamics working within my party. As young militants in a political formation, we have described a project in keeping with the wishes and viewpoints of the young people of Québec, and that is what we have come to present to you within the framework of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission.

Mr. Libman: I accept your answer. My second question: In the project you have submitted today, do you advocate a Québec passport?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): I think we have seen with the Economic Community that dual nationality is possible. You can have a European Community passport in France, but, in terms of citizenship, the French Republic... We did not broach all those symbols within the framework of our document this year, even though I know they are all fundamental. We wanted rather to define the political and constitutional framework and we certainly do not claim to be constitutional experts who can print volumes. What is important for us is to define the political and economic frameworks, which are important for the young people of Québec.

Mr. Libman: O.K. The last question, Mr. Chairman. There are two words that are not mentioned, not even once. I looked for two words throughout your document: the word "Native" and the word "Anglophone" or "Québec Anglophone". My last question is on the absence of these two subjects in your documents. The

question or the challenge of finding a balance between the collective aspirations of the majority here in Québec, on the one hand, and the individual rights of minorities on the other, is fundamental in our discussions. First, I would like to hear your answer on that point. Second, the Native question or what rights do you recognize for Québec's Native peoples?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): First and foremost, I think that in the wording of our proposal, what was fundamental for us was to see that the new Québec would not be a Québec which would only favour collective rights, but that it would recognize the importance of individual rights and freedoms. That is why we recalled the importance of a charter. However, on page 17 of our document, we also defined the promotion of fundamental rights. We purposely avoided devoting specific pages to Québec's Anglophone community or to allophone groups because, for us, when we spoke of a consensus in Québec, when we spoke of a project that must be defended by Quebecers, Anglophone and allophone Quebecers were included. That was the spirit in which we wished to avoid placing certain groups on the fringes of Québec society because, for us, at this point in time in Québec, following the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, the important thing is that Quebecers see in Québec's National Assembly the heart of political power in Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The five minutes allotted for this discussion are over and we now call on Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read your brief and particularly appreciated pages 8 to 12 where you reestablish a certain number of facts. It is satisfying to be able to read, and practically live, in those pages, the fundamental difference that existed between the federal Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the definite efforts that the Conservative Party - Mr. Mulroney - made. I congratulate you.

That being said, I listened to the interesting and pertinent answers you gave Mr. Parizeau, but I would like to go a little further in my question, doubtless because of my background. If the Liberal Party does not accept your proposal, would you separate to form a new party or a splinter group which would then come back to talk with the Liberal Party to which you belong? The question is hypothetical and you are not obliged to answer, but I am asking it anyway.

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): As I said in answer to Mr. Libman's last question, we are here to defend a project in which we believe. It is also the project I am defending at the same

time within my party. But I do not think that makes the Bélanger-Campeau Commission an appropriate occasion for explaining the internal dynamics of the Québec Liberal Party.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): O.K. I understand. That is why I nevertheless asked the question, because you do not snap your fingers at democracy and you do not set aside values such as loyalty. These are notions that can be written about, but that can also be lived. You are therefore an organization and you are making proposals which, in the game of democracy, have not yet been accepted. Do you think it would be preferable to continue with the group and, within it, to continue to support your position rather than withdraw and return later to knock at the door?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): I think it would always be of interest to have a commission on the political future of the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party, but there are a lot of "ifs" in your question, Mr. Hogue; lots of "ifs" with which we decided to defend this position because we believe in it and we will see in good time. But I can assure you that, in my opinion, Québec has always been strong, historically, when it has been united behind its leader and behind a project. I hope that the Québec Liberal Party will defend a project in order to rally all the people behind it so that, in the coming months, the Québec government will be able to make the necessary decisions straight-away.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): Well then, if I have lots of "ifs", supposing that Canada rejects the idea of economic union, you say that Québec will continue with its project alone, looking at economic associations with other States; relatively speaking, that is being either bold or hypothetical. What sort of States would these be: large, medium, small?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): We have not defined the format.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): It remains hypothetical, so there are "ifs" in it.

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): There are lots of "ifs" in it.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): O.K., that's it.

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): Except that you understand as well as I do that the day we decide to make Québec sovereign, we also decide not to turn back afterwards. If you read our brief with interest, as I believe you did, you also noticed that we brought forward a good number of arguments which we think underlie both

English Canada's and Québec's interest in sharing common economic objectives and creating an association at that level. To that extent, we are extremely confident that English Canada would accept a very advanced form of economic association, for its own good and for ours. However, when we choose to propose sovereignty, we also choose to assume the responsibilities that go with it. It's what I answered earlier.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The last two speakers for this group will be Mrs. Pagé and Mr. Bouchard.

Mrs. Pagé: Good afternoon, Gentlemen. In your brief, you propose something like a confederation with an elected supranational parliament. In answer to a question by Mr. Parizeau, you specified that your concept, if Canada maintained its present make-up, is one of two member States. I would like to know why, in that context, you project a supranational parliament in which only 25% of the members would come from Québec. Is there not a danger that one sovereign State would be subordinate to another, since the play of numbers would be to the disadvantage of one of the two sovereign States from the outset?

A second question. Experts have come to explain the concept of confederation to us and they have argued that it would be preferable, in the case of a supranational parliament, to have representatives delegated by the sovereign States rather than elected representatives since elected representatives would be tempted to justify their existence by passing legislation. So, I would like to know why you have rejected the idea of a supranational parliament made up of delegates from the two States constituting the Confederation.

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): O.K. Your question is interesting. I think it will enable us to clarify a number of points on our ideas respecting a supranational parliament. Just one point. I think it must always be repeated because we are often tempted to see the supranational parliament as the federal parliament we are familiar with today. I think it is very clear in our document that any powers conferred on a supranational parliament would be conferred by the member States because they are convinced that they have common objectives and they want to work together in those sectors.

To quote Mr. Parizeau, it is always possible to delegate powers, as long as you have them to delegate. That's what he said at the opening of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission.

I think the question can always be asked.

In our opinion, if people were appointed by the member States, and we had a nomination formula or a formula with various committees, it would tend to invite infiltration by the other State which, as you said, is bigger with interests that might defend only what their own central government might believe with respect to the issues. If we really have common objectives, we think it would be much more advantageous for Québec to have an elective formula which would guarantee a representation of the entire Canadian territory so that we would probably have much stronger allies with respect to some economic objectives than we could have with a parliament which would be infiltrated by a central structure of the other member State.

Mrs. Pagé: And the numerical proportion?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): As for numerical proportion, well, I think everyone agrees that, ideally, we would have 55%-50% representation, but we also have to be realistic with respect to our partner and our own situation in terms of strength and weakness, in terms of a people who want to have a State. I think that some people, not to mention the political formation, even said that Québec should be a minority in the Bank of Canada. For us, ideally, we would be 50%, but we want to be realistic in the project we are proposing. We think it should respect either the proportion of the population, or of the economy, that is, about one-quarter.

Mrs. Pagé: Thank you.

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

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back to the question of the composition of a supranational parliament of elected members. I heard the answer you gave with respect to national... supranational dynamics. But have you examined the problems that result from having two parliaments, in parallel, competing, two sorts of Québec parliamentarians: some in Québec, some in Ottawa once again? Are you not perpetuating a problem that we have had since the beginning with people who are sometimes from different parties, with a natural antagonism that, by the nature of things, develops between the parliamentarians in Ottawa and those in Québec, both claiming the legitimate right to represent the people of Québec with, in the end, a splitting up of Québec's political force, a sort of neutralization of what we can do as a sovereign people?

Mr. Bissonnette (Michel): I think that, to the detriment of... at the risk of repeating

myself, I mean, it appeared fundamental to us, if it is to Québec's advantage to share certain powers and certain economic viewpoints with its partners because it is convinced it will come out stronger, it is important, if that is so, that it delegate certain powers. We can always suffer from the trauma of federal government - I think you know what I mean - but we must also be aware that if we want to have a real economic community and base it on something serious, in my opinion, we must base that economic community on a parliament. And, to make it really functional, it takes people in that parliament who are there to defend the interests of the community and not the interests of the respective member States where once again I think there would be a lot more uninteresting discussions and confrontations with our partners than we could have with people who are there to defend the interests of the community in sectors where the member States decided to confer powers, that is, people who are there in order to come to an agreement in areas where they have been delegated power and given room to manoeuvre commensurate with the responsibility they have to shoulder.

Mr. Bouchard: One minute more?

The Young Chamber of Commerce of Montréal Inc.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): If you take all your time now, you will have less later. You're passing? Fine.

So, that ends the presentation by the Youth Commission of the Québec Liberal Party. We will now hear from the Young Chamber of Commerce of Montréal. I would remind the group that will be taking the Youth Commission's place not to forget, if possible, to bring their easels and set them up in front of them so that they can be more easily identified for television purposes.

The first questions for the Young Chamber of Commerce are from a representative of the Official Opposition party, Mr. Boisclair.

Mr. Boisclair: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You will perhaps allow me, from the outset, to thank all the permanent members of this Commission who agreed to hold two days of hearings to listen to the point of view of the young people. A very rapid comment to say that you thus recognized the fact that young people want to participate in Québec's development, and not only want to, but you also implicitly recognized that they are partners in this economic development. On that note, I think we can simply thank you and thank also all the groups of young people, particularly the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse, which made a number of requests for hearings such as are being held today.
(3:15 p.m.)

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my political party, the members of the Young Chamber of Commerce of Montréal can be thanked. I would like to greet them and thank them for their presence here because I have also had the opportunity several times of participating in some of their activities. I also think that the brief presented here today testifies to the serious nature of the organization and demonstrates the care they took to consult their members before preparing such a brief.

Quickly, since time is short. Two questions came to me while I was reading your brief. You suggest a process in three stages. The process should begin, you say, with a declaration of sovereignty by the National Assembly. I would like to ask you, first, where would their mandate come from? From an election? From a referendum? I note, by the way, that you say that reform from within the federal system is impossible. That is an important point.

My second question, rapidly. You say that the timetable for negotiations and the entire process of acceding to sovereignty should not exceed 10 years. To what extent can you reconcile this position with that which I am sure your members all share, namely, the urgent need for stability in order to prosper in a strong and prosperous Québec?

Mr. Vincent (Robert): First of all, we have not worked out and, since we have not really studied the matter, we will not work out, a particular mechanism, a declaration of sovereignty based on a referendum or an election-referendum. Obviously, a desire for the greatest legitimacy possible would influence us in favour of a referendum; a plebiscite, an extremely clear election-referendum could play that role. Obviously, it's relative. It depends on the clarity of the process. But we do not, a priori, have... we do not exclude any mechanism. It must be clear, that is the key, that's all.

Mr. Boisclair: Rapidly, the second question, on stability.

Mr. Girard (Serge): Yes. As regards the question of a 10-year period, you must understand that in our report, in our brief, we say that this transitional period must not exceed 10 years. We hope it will be shorter than 10 years. On the other hand, we must look realistically at the possibilities of making such a drastic change in a society. I do not think it is something that can be settled in a few months, for two reasons: the possibility of reaching an understanding with the rest of Canada if we want to maintain ties with that country and the capacity of Québec's economy to absorb very important new powers both in terms of their quantity and in terms of the structures that may have to be created. In the process we propose,

we suggest a step-by-step approach in which different powers will be acquired at different times. We have not gone into the details of which powers should be brought home first. Working hypotheses could be drawn up. Two-year periods in which to negotiate and reach an agreement.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The questions from the other members: first Mr. Allard, next Mr. Marcotte who is replacing Mr. Poissant, and then Mr. Bouchard who may use, if he wishes, the time remaining to him, about two and a half minutes. Mr. Allard.

Mr. Allard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, I would like to continue the discussion already begun on the option you favour, that is, a confederation. You say that the first step would be to declare sovereignty. That's where we begin. Does that mean we declare now that we are sovereign today, or that we would eventually become sovereign once we have completed the negotiations you speak of elsewhere in your brief? How does it work?

Mr. Girard (Serge): In concrete terms, what we suggest, what we propose is that we actually become *juridically* independent the moment the declaration is made in the National Assembly. Why? On the one hand, to escape the burden of the amendment formula in the Constitution which represents a major hindrance to negotiating a new agreement. On the other hand, to identify our vis-à-vis. We do not as yet know for sure with whom we will be negotiating. If we wanted to renew federalism or seek a new balance or a new agreement, whom should we address? The federal government, or an assembly of the 10 provinces and the federal government? If we are an independent State, we will be negotiating an international treaty between two States and there it is clear that the Canadian Constitution as it stands gives that power to the federal government. So, yes, juridical independence from the start, but a moratorium on the effects of the patriation of powers until we reach an agreement or until the deadline we will have set in a timetable at the outset.

Mr. Allard: So, we are sovereign immediately, but it doesn't give us anything more for a while. Is that it?

Mr. Girard (Serge): It gives us...

Mr. Allard: Excuse me, you said: We will have to choose the people with whom we will negotiate. Do you think it will be easy or difficult to identify those people? We might want to negotiate with the federal government, but the other provinces might not decide to give the

federal government a mandate to negotiate in their name.

Mr. Girard (Serge): As for the first part of your question, in the short term, the declaration of independence would not give us any new powers immediately, but it would give us the legal status to negotiate a new agreement. So it does change something. On the other hand, as regards identifying our opposite number, if a foreign country wanted to make an agreement, a treaty, a free trade agreement, whatever, with Canada, right now, today, it would address the Government of Canada. If there were political negotiations within the country, between different levels of government, they would not concern the foreign country, if they were internal. So, if Québec, once it is sovereign, addresses Canada, it will address the federal Parliament or the federal government. And the political negotiations that will take place within Canada will not concern us. The federal government will decide for itself how to go to get its mandate.

Mr. Allard: Suppose that it works, the negotiations work, and you foresee that powers could be brought home progressively and it could take up to 10 years. Suppose that during that time, Québec obtains most or all of the powers it requests, what difference will there be between your Confederation and a renewed federalism?

Mr. Vincent (Robert): The strategy is meant to be subtle. Perhaps it isn't, but the idea is to obtain powers, that these powers be, on the one hand, chosen by Québec. It is proposed in a timetable, that is, when the document proclaiming Québec's sovereignty is tabled, there is a two-year timetable, for instance. Strategically, the powers are described in it. For two years, we try to negotiate. Motions in English Canada prevent it from choosing, from negotiating with us. Two years later, we acquire all the powers. So, it is described. We know ahead of time what will happen. We get the powers. The second group of powers comes up. Say it's the fourth year. They hesitate. They hesitate. We acquire the second group of powers. I can assure you that, to my way of thinking, when the third group of powers comes up for negotiation, after six years, people will have calmed down and will have decided to negotiate with us because we are pulling the blanket to our side of the bed without asking any questions. That is to say, we do not hesitate to pull the blanket, in fact. If there are no negotiations, we get the blanket. So, we, they...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): That ends that part of the discussion. We will now continue with Mr. Marcotte.

Mr. Marcotte: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A declaration of sovereignty would perhaps mean uncertainties in the short term and also, perhaps, economic difficulties for the people. Are you aware of the problem and are you ready to play your part?

Mr. Girard (Serge): As for uncertainty, we believe that a gradual process is doubtless the easiest way or the best for decreasing that uncertainty. An abrupt separation, without an agreement or a timetable, or without any indication of how we intend to repatriate our powers, I do not think that would be a situation where there would be less uncertainty. Nor do I think that the status quo is without uncertainty. I think, on the contrary, that all the constitutional quarrels we have had for so many years prevent us from dealing with the real issues, the economic issues. I do not believe that the process we suggest would create more uncertainty than the status quo. It would clarify things, and that enables me to make a link with the previous question. There will be some very obvious differences compared to renewed federalism, beginning with the fact that Québec would no longer have any members of parliament in Ottawa since it would be an independent country.

Mr. Marcotte: Second question: Do you think that the people have all the information they require to make an enlightened decision and, if not, what should be done?

Mr. Vincent (Robert): Is this forum not one of the mechanisms? Beyond that, we could perhaps think in terms of States General, but I think that the present situation and, yes, the effectiveness of the mechanism that has been set up with this Commission, satisfies the need for information to a large extent.

Mr. Marcotte: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Bouchard, you had about half your time left.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Still with respect to the confederal model, you heard your colleagues from the Québec Liberal Party's Youth Commission earlier propose an elected supranational parliament. I would like to know three things: would you like to have an elected supranational parliament or not? Would there be a confederal government? And would there still be a Supreme Court at the confederal level?

Mr. Girard (Serge): As regards elected parliamentarians, we take the position straight-away that the only people Quebecers will elect will be in Québec. There will be no other

elected parliament. As for the nature of the delegates to a confederal parliament or organization, I would refer you to the document prepared by Mr. Yves De Montigny and submitted to the Commission in the first days of its hearings. I believe that on this point his argument is much like ours, namely, that there would be representatives from the two members of the confederation, which are not individuals, but two States. So, appointed people, on the one hand.

Mr. Bouchard: A government? Would a government come from...

Mr. Girard (Serge): I think we should rather speak of an administrative body. The way in which the Young Chamber of Commerce sees that particular confederal tie, there would be essentially two roles given such a body: consultation; I think there are a certain number of things on which Canada and Québec would do well to coordinate their policy and that body could make recommendations; and a second role of management. But if you want to know whether there would be a government that would make laws, no.

Mr. Bouchard: The Supreme Court?

Mr. Girard (Serge): It's a body that could be interesting, if you think that - for instance, in criminal law - it would be advantageous to have standardized rules of law. But it would not be the Supreme Court we have today, you understand; it would be a body to which people would be appointed by each of the two members.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): For the last set of questions for the Young Chamber, we will go to Mr. Benoît Fradet, representative of the Government parliamentary group.

Mr. Fradet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by thanking the Commission for the time it has made available to young Quebecers. I think it was very important to do so. As you can see, we are having very, very, very satisfying discussions, and we have an upcoming generation that, in my opinion, can, in any case, take in hand all the Québec values they will have to defend later on.

You are young businessmen; you are in the foreground, among other things, of economic action in Québec. We know that, at present, we are going through difficult economic times. We will have decisions to make and decisions on the constitution too. I would like to know what values young businessmen must defend, what values you defend or should be defending and what values we, the youth of Québec, should

defend in today's context.

Mr. Vincent (Robert): Consideration of not only the constitutional issue, but of things in general, over the past two years at least, has led the Young Chamber to the following observation. There is a major problem in Québec. There is no point in fooling ourselves; it is not a simple situation. There are economic problems that some people think are structural; I hope they aren't - I think they are but, anyway, I hope they aren't - so, there is loss of employment and the creation of related social problems. So, we link the constitutional question with the economic question, the interface being what I call employment. So, we make changes to obtain powers so that we can develop our economy in such a way as to favour employment. This job creation, and this quality of employment - not only the quantity but the quality - will make it possible, in our opinion, to solve certain social problems linked to the loss of employment. Therefore, we tie all this together. There is no point in discussions on the constitution if there is no social interest involved, if no social development results. The economy does not serve your furniture; it's for people, and the same is true of the constitution. So, we link the two together, the three actually: job creation through an industrial policy and economic development. And to do that, we need powers we do not have. (3:30 p.m.)

Mr. Fradet: May I... Yes, thank you. So, one of the values would be economic stability. Economists came to meet the members of the Commission and warned us that, should we declare independence or Québec's sovereignty, Québec would probably have to go through a very difficult period of economic transition. A group of professors pointed out that it could last between 5 and 15 years. I would like to know what the Young Chamber of Commerce of Montréal thinks. Do you think the economic transition could actually last between 5 and 15 years? And what, in your opinion, would the consequences of this economic transition be on entrepreneurship, on young business people and on the outlook for employment in Québec?

Mr. Girard (Serge): It is evident that any change of constitutional status for Québec will cost us something. It would be dishonest to pretend anything else. I think that the Young Chamber of Commerce of Montréal is ready to pay the price. We have tried to define a process that we think will minimize the danger of uncertainty or the upheaval that could result. As for the end result, I will not try to predict the future, but simply say that, to the extent that the Québec government or Québec's Parliament holds all these powers, it will perhaps be better able to guide Québec's development. So, yes, it is perhaps a risk, but I think it is

worth taking.

Mr. Vincent (Robert): I would like to add that our approach aims precisely at setting up, over the 10-year period during which there are levels of power to recuperate, to implement, first, in a first phase, probably... to recuperate all the powers that would enable us to implement an industrial policy.

Mr. Fradet: Yes, but what I said was, should there be a declaration of independence?

Mr. Vincent (Robert): Yes, right.

Mr. Fradet: I don't suppose a declaration of independence, sovereignty, will take 10 years.

Mr. Vincent (Robert): No. We said earlier that the declaration of independence as such will not change much the very next day, or two months later, or even six months later. Two years later, there will be a change. And during those two years, it is up to us to set up the mechanism in order to minimize the impact of recuperating a level of power; not all the powers, because we thought that would be too great a shock. So, during that period, you recuperate the powers required to implement an industrial policy. You began working on it the day you declared independence, or even before, hopefully. Therefore, theoretically, the growing accumulative and positive effects of that industrial policy should, we sincerely hope, compensate for the successive shocks of recuperating power.

Mr. Fradet: So, a repatriation of powers by stages, gradually, could, in your opinion...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You have only a few seconds, or, actually, half a minute, to answer this last question within the allotted time.

Mr. Fradet: ...make the transition easier, the economic consequences easier to overcome for Québec.

Mr. Vincent (Robert): Those are the conclusions...

Mr. Fradet: Because it is us, the young people, who will be suffering most from those consequences, anyway. If it lasts 10 years, 15 years, at our age, young businesspeople like you... You will be suffering the consequences, I expect.

Mr. Girard (Serge): Perhaps we could say that it would be the least disagreeable solution.

Mr. Fradet: The least disagreeable solution? Thank you.

Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, that ends the discussion and the testimony of the Young Chamber of Commerce of Montréal. Thank you.

We will now hear from the Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval. First Mr. Beaudry, followed by Mr. Béland.

Mr. Beaudry: We pass.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You pass, Mr. Beaudry? Mr. Béland, then.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your brief, the first reasons you give for declaring sovereignty are economic ones. You say, as your first example, too, the monetary policy, because you say that the Canadian monetary policy does Québec quite a bit of harm. Am I to understand, then, that in the Québec constitution you suggest, you suggest full control over Québec's monetary policy and does that extend to a Québec currency?

Mr. Gobeil (André): I am very pleased that you have asked that question because, just this morning, I wanted to join in the discussion on that point and, unfortunately, the right to speak is so limited that I did not get the chance to.

We will begin, then. Any sound economic reasoning begins with two hypotheses. First, let's say that Québec is sovereign, which is highly probable. As a second hypothesis, let's say that Canada consists of the remaining provinces, which is, in my opinion, highly unlikely. Suppose that the two negotiate a monetary union. How will the main guidelines of the monetary policy be decided? I don't know, but it will probably be very difficult, because we know that Canada and Québec have diametrically opposed requirements with respect to monetary policy. Several briefs submitted here, briefs from young people, briefs from economists too, have pointed out these differences. I do not believe that such a disparity would disappear with monetary union and sovereignty. Those disparities will continue to exist. If we are to negotiate, it will still be a question of who will pull the blanket hardest to his side. I don't think it can be avoided.

Great economists - I will not list them, because they are quite numerous - have pointed out that the currency of an independent country depends on the confidence in that currency at all levels: regional, national and international. We know that, at present, one of the largest financial organizations, of which you are the head, believes in it. We believe too that the

process of acceding to sovereignty will be very democratic. I think that a commission such as this one is clear proof of that. We know that the fruit is ripe and that confidence will be built up on those foundations. I don't think a currency, a national currency, could find a better basis. Thank you.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will now hear from Mrs. Campbell Steer who also registered. Do you wish to speak now?

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you. I would like to continue in the same economic vein. Do you foresee any kind of link with the rest of Canada?

Mr. Gobeil (André): I think that it goes without saying that there will be a link with Canada. For that matter, Canada has so far been our principal trading partner. The country was founded on that fact, on an economy "from sea to sea" so, we won't change that tomorrow morning, that's for sure. I expect the rest of Canada will still want to negotiate with us on economic matters. It's a question of their survival, as well as ours. To refuse to negotiate with us at an economic level would be like grabbing someone in a pool to drown him. The chances are you would both drown. So...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: That means you think there should be a link between us, but on the international scene too? Do you think you could be recognized apart, or that Québec should be recognized apart, as Québec. My fear is that Canada, with or without Québec, will remain in the group of seven. Québec alone will not be in the group of seven and will perhaps have some catching up to do to pull its weight on the international economic scene.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Personally, I am not ready to give my blessing and sacrifice Québec's sovereignty on the altar of the seven. Allow me to add, too, that economic integration - I think it's the personal hobbyhorse of certain politicians at present - economic integration in the EEC did not result in a loss of political sovereignty. So, it's very important to lay the cards on the table and to show that economic integration does not mean loss of political sovereignty. In my opinion, Québec, on an international level, that's actually why it wants its sovereignty...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: But it was especially because I saw a remark in your brief that said that you thought... You gave me the impression that perhaps you would rather be recognized apart, as Québec, on the international level. In

my opinion, we are taking a risk if we do that and we are perhaps better integrated internationally... So, it doesn't say that we will lose our political autonomy, but I really think that we have to remain integrated in that respect.

Mr. Gobeil (André): I do not think that Canada's presence among the Seven has resulted in rocketing economic growth. There is recognition of course, but if the process of acceding to sovereignty is democratic, I think that the rest of the nations will recognize us as a sovereign people...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: No, what I meant was...

Mr. Gobeil (André): ...they will want economic negotiations with us, no fear.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: ...but our market of 6 million is smaller than a market of 25 million.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): As for basing our market, having confidence in our exports, I don't think we need any advice. We realized long ago that our market was restricted. As for knowing how to export, I think we do know how, in Québec.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Go ahead. Yes, you may go ahead. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We will go on to Mr. Rémillard, then.

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, welcome to this forum for young people. I read your interesting brief with great interest. It doubtless testifies to your personal abilities, but also, allow me to say that it testifies too to the training you get at the Law Faculty of Laval University. We have had here the opportunity of hearing the expert opinions of Nicole Duplé, Yvan Bernier, Patrice Garant, Henri Brun, Professor Arbour who published an excellent article in *Le Soleil* this morning. In short, in reading your brief, we realize that you have benefited from the knowledge of many of your professors. Referring to your brief and, if you will allow me, to the process you suggest for acquiring sovereignty, I have a little trouble understanding it. Your first step would be a constitution... drafting a constitution. You are right in that drafting a constitution is the first juridical gesture men and women who want to live together, to organize power, will make; it is an essentially democratic principle. But we, ourselves, have to make an initial gesture to decide on our autonomy, since that is what you suggest, full sovereignty. Why is it, then, that I do not perceive, that I do not seem to

perceive, a referendum in the process you suggest?

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): First, Mr. Rémillard, we were very sorry to learn, recently, that you had given up your tenure and that your position had not been kept. So, the students who come to Laval will no longer have you, perhaps. We were very sorry. With that, on page 6...

Mr. Rémillard: No, no, no, you are mistaken...

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Eh?

Mr. Rémillard: At any rate, I do not want...

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Oh! There were persistent rumours at the faculty.

A voice: Oh, my God!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rémillard: Rumours! You have to be careful of rumours. You too see me elsewhere now, do you?

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Oh! Well, you know how it is. Page 6, as I said, no, page 4. How does the process of acceding to sovereignty...? If we go right to the first paragraph, I must first point out that the continuation of our process depends on the people's vote for sovereignty, a vote that should be obtained in a referendum in which the options are clearly defined. I think we first use the word "referendum" at the top of page 6.

Mr. Rémillard: Will the referendum be on...? What I wanted to learn from my question is whether your referendum will be on your constitution or on the decision to become sovereign.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): We do not want to put the cart before the horse, as they say. We do not want to write a constitution that will perhaps be submitted to the federal State first and then perhaps become the constitution of a sovereign State. What we want, first of all, is for Quebecers to make their will known and after that we would set up the mechanisms to enable Quebecers to express their opinion on institutions and on a fundamental text describing them as they are. In our opinion, there should be a referendum first, which would say yes or no to sovereignty and, in our brief, we opt strongly for a yes. But afterwards, we will get into the cart and open the road to the future.

Mr. Rémillard: You take courses in poetry too.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Rémillard: I do not mean that you have tabled a poem here, mind you. But as regards the economy, you tell us, and I quote you from page 3, "Represented by its own ambassadors and delegations, it could certainly better promote its advantages as a doorway to the markets and as the cradle of the French culture in North America". Experts have come to speak with us, including Professor Bernier, and have said that Québec would no longer belong at that point to the member countries of the Group of Seven, or that our position within GATT, as Professor Daniel Latouche came to tell us, would obviously be much weaker than it is now. And all the other international institutions in the field of international trade could be affected. Doesn't all that make you stop to think a little?

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Mr. Rémillard, I am very pleased to be able to quote another professor from Laval, Professor Arbour, whose book on public international law I have here. There is a complete chapter on State succession. As you probably well know, State succession is covered by two conventions, one on State succession as regards treaties and one on State succession as regards property, archives and national debts. As I understand your question, we are interested primarily in the convention on treaties. It goes into the matter at some length and I did not see, after thoroughly perusing the chapter several times, anything against Québec's sovereignty or, more particularly, anything against a possible practically unlimited access to all the treaties of which Canada is now a part.

(3:45 p.m.)

Mr. Rémillard: I am obviously not questioning the book written by Mr. Arbour, an excellent professor; what I want to say is simply that Canada now belongs to the seven most industrialized countries, which meet every year, as you know, and which therefore influence international trade considerably. Should Québec become sovereign, I think you will understand, as I do, that we might not be among those seven. Within that context, and thinking of GATT and everything, my question is simply whether it does not make you stop and think of the consequences it might have with respect to international trade.

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Apart from being one of the seven most industrialized countries in the world, from being a member of the Group of Seven, apart from the extra work entailed for the RCMP when they came to Montebello, what do we get out of it, except cocktails for ambassadors and photo opportunities? I mean, should everything be sacrificed on the altar of the seven? I don't think so. And

some countries whose economies are quite strong, thank you, and who belong to other economic organizations, have a very acceptable standard of living if not a high standard of living and they did not sacrifice everything. They are not ready to sacrifice their identity in order to offer themselves to this Group of Seven to which, in my opinion, we attribute far too much importance.

Mr. Rémillard: Mr. Tassé, do you agree with that?

A voice: Mr. Tassé?

Mr. Rémillard: Gobeil. Excuse me. Not Mr. Tassé, Mr. Gobeil.

Mr. Gobeil (André): I must tell you that we worked together on our brief...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Rapidly.

Mr. Gobeil (André): ...and I can only agree with my colleague's reply; in fact, it is what I tried to say earlier to the lady who asked me the same question on the importance of the Group of Seven.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Gobeil. Mrs. Harel.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We must also remember that, according to the most recent studies of the OECD, six of the ten most prosperous countries have a population of less than 10 million inhabitants and none are members of the Group of Seven. You advise the Québec government and you are in a strategic position to perhaps tell us today - in your brief, on page 10 - not to follow the advice of certain experts who still suggest that we give one last chance to Canada. You say that Meech Lake was only the very last and these experts think there should be a very, very last effort. And you ask us: Why waste more precious time? When the fruit is ripe, it must be picked. I would like to know... You explain it a bit when you tell us on page 6 that first of all Québec must get itself a constitution that will make it a true country. There will have been a referendum beforehand on the future of Québec and, thus, it will be the second step. And here I would like to call on your legal training. You see this constitution implemented by a constitutional committee as well as by another referendum. You thus envisage two referendums?

Mr. Gobeil (André): Yes, we envisage two referendums. So that the constitution will be above the legislature and the House will not be able to change it. It must absolutely be voted by

the people. It could have a quasi-supralegislative value, like the present Charter, but that is not what we want for the people of Québec. We want a real constitution.

Mrs. Harel: But, as jurists, you surely know that, in spite of everything, few constitutions are adopted by a referendum, and they are not, for that reason, any less legitimate or credible. It was done in France for one – the fifth I think – but it is not done very often by referendum. Do you recommend it?

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Does the fact that there are countries with constitutions that are considered legitimate and that were not the object of a referendum prevent Quebecers from "over-legalizing" their process and wanting to guarantee it by a referendum?

Mrs. Harel: But all this is a process that must be gone through, according to you, then – this first referendum on the future and another on the constitution – before beginning negotiations? Is that right?

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): I do not see any conflict between writing the constitution, taking our place on the world scene and, at the same time, starting negotiations with Canada and our other partners.

Mrs. Harel: At the same time?

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Yes. There is no...

Mrs. Harel: Because it is not really clear, on page 7, when you say, "We maintain that, from that moment – that is, after the referendum on the constitution – it will be much easier for Québec to negotiate..." That means that you do not expect the entire process leading to a Québec constitution to be completed before negotiations begin. Is that what we are to understand?

Mr. Desgagné (Pierre-Luc): Because once the vote has taken place, and supposing it is a yes and that we decide to go ahead with sovereignty, then, after that, discussion will begin within Québec society on the nitty-gritty details and we will have to decide what to negotiate. So, first of all, we will consult among ourselves, but after that, while the constitution is being drafted, the people are being consulted, there is nothing to prevent other people mandated by Québec to go and negotiate whatever we want to propose be pooled. So I don't see how there could be any conflict between the two.

Mrs. Harel: Fine. Thank you.

Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. Thank you also to the Association des étudiants en droit de l'Université Laval whose presentation is now finished. We will go on to the Forum des jeunes sur l'avenir du Québec. The first question is from Mrs. Hovington.

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to begin by congratulating you and Mrs. Bouchard. She is the first woman we have had before us today and, unfortunately, I must say that there are not enough women in the youth forum. I noticed this morning again that all the young students around the table wore ties. There were no women. I must mention that.

However, there are young people who have come from the regions. I myself am from the outlying regions. There are a lot of young people from the regions here today, at the forum. There are young Cégep students from Matane. There are young people from Abitibi. You are from Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. During the Bélanger-Campeau Commission's regional tour, which was good for some Commission members, for one thing, because it got them out of Montréal and Québec for a while and made them aware of regional needs. I can tell you that, despite the respect I have for the Commission members here, anyway. The message was clear. We heard the heart-felt cry of the regions while we were on tour and the message was clear. In several cases, they said: Go and get the powers from Ottawa and give them directly to the regional authorities. And you yourselves point out that you want a sovereign, independent Québec. How do you see this decentralized power in the regions?

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): First, I would like to thank you for your interest in regional development. I am very happy to hear that, in the regions, the message has borne fruit, that, in fact, there is now a certain awareness of regional development.

More precisely, now, how we see regional development – we see it in different ways. We say clearly in our brief that, for us, Québec's sovereignty depends on regional development, planned regional development, highly structured regional development, with, among other things, a form of regional government which would have certain decision-making powers, certain regional powers.

Mrs. Hovington: Would it include certain exclusive powers? Could it go as far as taxation powers, really a new level of government in the regions? The central power would be in Québec... It's almost a confederation, in fact, that you

want us to refashion. There would be the central power in Québec and each region would be sovereign with certain powers given to Québec. How do you see it?

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): Let me stop you right there because, you see, if we want to get out of Canadian federalism, it is not to recreate another federation in Québec. That is obvious. You know, there is a myth going around. When we speak of regional government, people are afraid that we will recreate a form of federalism. That is really not it. It's just to be able to give, to the RCMs among others, more power in their field, in their region, adapted to the reality in each region because, you know as well as I, you are certainly very well aware - you come from the Gaspé - you are very well aware that each region has completely different resources from the region next door. Those regions, those governments, must be adapted to the reality of each region, depending on their resources, depending on their needs.

Mrs. Hovington: The young people are moving away from the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, just as they are leaving the Gaspé, the Bas-Saint-Laurent, all the regions. How do you deal with this phenomenon and how could a sovereign Québec deal with it or the regions? Do you two plan to return to work in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region when you have finished studying?

Mrs. Bouchard (Isabelle): We certainly hope to be able to work in our region when we have finished studying. But, realistically, about 26.7% of the young people leave the region these days. It is difficult. There is not much work for young people in the regions, because our natural resources are taken out and are processed somewhere else. There are a whole lot of factors that add up to a loss of jobs in the regions. We will have to count on the particular characteristics of each region if we want Québec's sovereignty to be economically viable one day.

There is no point in building a sovereign Québec if we do not look to regional development because it will turn into a monumental flop, if you will pardon the expression. The population will be drained from some regions and there will be others with a kind of built-up area in the centre.

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): If I may add something, very briefly. For us, the solution to the phenomenon of young people leaving the regions can also be found in education. Because, why do many young people leave the regions? Because the courses that interest them are not offered in their region. We think it is important that the Cegeps, the regional universities, offer the courses other universities offer to... draw

young people into the regions and, eventually, keep them there. And also, depending on the industries we have, well, be able to develop areas of education related to our industries. In Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, we have the aluminum industry. Well, why couldn't we have research programs, more specialized courses in that area?

Mrs. Hovington: OK.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, your time is up, Madam.

Mrs. Hovington: Yes, unfortunately, my time is up. I would just like to tell you, anyway, that the recommendations of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission will have to take regional development into account. You may be sure of that. Thank you.

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

Mr. Brassard: Thank you. First, I would like to welcome the representatives of the young people of the Republic of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: Your brief is called the Pouce Lake Accord, taken from the name of a summer camp in your area. It's already an improvement on the Meech Lake Accord. And it is to be hoped that, when we obtain sovereignty, it will be as the result of the Lac-Saint-Jean Accord. In your brief, you obviously come out in favour of Québec's sovereignty. You maintain that democracy should be at the very heart of any Québec society. But you do not have much to say about the process or the road that will lead us to sovereignty, except to say that the constitution of a sovereign Québec should be approved by a referendum. But before arriving at that point, how do we get there? What is the democratic process we should follow?

Mrs. Bouchard (Isabelle): I would like to begin by saying that, for us, the forum is one short event. There are many things we did not go into in depth, including the point you have just brought up. For example, it is true that we ask for a referendum as quickly as possible. The people of Québec must be allowed to express their opinions. Earlier on, I don't remember which member of the Commission asked: Do you think the people of Québec are ready to express an opinion? I think that's a bit like saying: Oh, well, we don't know enough about it; we are not interested. It's not true. It is our future and we can give our opinion, we can put an X on a referendum ballot. At some point, you will have to understand.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: So, if I understand you...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Brassard: ...as soon as possible, once the Commission's report has been tabled in the National Assembly, in the following months, you would like to see a referendum on the status and on the sovereignty of Québec.

Mrs. Bouchard (Isabelle): Exactly. I think that we are ready to give our opinion on the issue. We have listened to enough talk and threats no longer scare us. We can make our own decision.

Mr. Brassard: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Nicolet, you have two and a half minutes left.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Insofar as I can in two and a half minutes, I would like to hear in greater detail your view of regional government. First, in order to agree on the terms we are using, for you, does region mean an administrative region or the RCM, as you seemed to imply earlier?
(4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): OK. It's a bit of both. The RCMs in the administrative regions. That is, we see, first and foremost, a regional government that, as we say a little further on in our brief, we speak of democracy which is the very essence of society. But, in the regional governments, we want to find that same democracy. We know that, at present, the wardens are not elected directly by the people. OK, so that could be an example, the wardens could be elected by the people and it would work by RCM, but there could be an additional structure that would meet, well, at a given moment...

Mr. Nicolet: A consultative structure at the level of the administrative regions?

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): Consultative, yes, for the RCMs or the wardens elected there.

Mr. Nicolet: But accountability, the power to spend, to justify your mandate to the people, would be delegated to the elective power, that is, to the warden who would be elected by universal suffrage.

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): Right. The warden would be elected. We consider it very important that the warden of an RCM, which would be the regional government, perhaps the word "government" is a bit strong but, anyway, which would

be the form of regional government, that that warden be elected. That seems perfectly normal to us and it would also make people aware anyway of the importance of that level. It would bring the people closer to the RCMs.

Mr. Nicolet: There's still a bit left. The other question also refers to the presentation you made earlier. You said, and I quote, "That Québec's sovereignty depends on decentralization". Is that for you something that will be done in time, or is it a prerequisite? Let me explain. Do you think we must first clarify our view of decentralization, before dealing with sovereignty, or will sovereignty enable us to broach decentralization and to bring a project of that sort to fruition?

Mr. Gaudreault (Sylvain): I think that, to some extent, it's both together in that, today, we are asking ourselves questions, at least, that's where we are at in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region. For us, the reasons for sovereignty are known. We are at the point of asking ourselves how to structure Québec as a country. So, it is in that sovereignty that we will find everything... I can't say whether it is a prerequisite; it goes together. Sovereignty will simply be attained with that decentralization, and with those regional governments.

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you.

Conseil permanent de la jeunesse

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This brings to a close the testimony of the forum on the future of Québec, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, so we shall now hear from the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. Questions from Mr. Paré.

Mr. Paré: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well I, too, would like to welcome the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse and to thank it for always being involved in current debates that are important for youth. We need think only of employment, vocational training and, now, sovereignty. These are things that are important, for sure. Yesterday, I heard in the speeches, and this morning in the debates, several groups of young people come to talk about, yes, sovereignty and, in majority numbers, sovereignty; but sovereignty is, finally, just a vehicle. It is a tool to do something with. There are people who have said that we must have goals for society. We have to do something about it; it must be useful to gain sovereignty, and many groups spoke too about full employment, which could be an objective, were we to give ourselves the means.

For the last few years, much has been said about it in Québec, but unfortunately we are

speaking of it less because we are realizing something: that it doesn't seem to be applicable at the present time, given our system now, because full employment is possible and feasible in a society with a more restricted population where solidarity is possible. In Canada, right now, this is unthinkable. When we speak of a full employment policy, that means touching on areas such as postsecondary education, vocational training, research and development, regional development and even, to a certain extent, family policy. So, we have to have all the powers. Unfortunately, in Québec, discussions probably stopped because we found ourselves up against a wall, seeing that the sharing of responsibilities is preventing us from being capable of planning anything. You have given your opinion on all the subjects I just mentioned, or almost, and, during your consultations across Québec, you went to see young people in all the regions, and employment was the primary preoccupation.

When we gather up all that information, and if we say that here people are saying: We have to give ourselves a goal for society, and the primary preoccupation of the young people you represent is employment, the goal could be full employment. Am I correct in saying that, at this very moment, as we are speaking, even if Québec wanted it, the full employment policy is inapplicable, and the only way we can give ourselves an objective and be capable of achieving full employment in Québec is to repatriate all powers and be sovereign?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): Clearly, any thought of developing an employment planning and development policy for full employment in Québec would require holding all powers as to research and development, skills development for people on the job market right now, and training for upcoming workers, not just vocational training alone. There is also all the planning of manpower in matters of economic development, in matters of regional development, because full employment cannot be merely one area of development. It is all areas of development, whether economic or educational, that permit us to develop a full employment policy for Québec. Clearly, the fact that we have shared powers, with difficulties, too, because we know full well that, between the provincial government and the federal government, referring to master agreements, to skills development, it is extremely difficult at the present time. All parties in Québec agree on that point, claiming that, as soon as possible, all manpower and manpower training matters must be repatriated, that we must start moving forward, and, I would say, implement, in this crucial sector of our development, coherent, well organized policies.

Clearly, we must have all the powers in our hands to develop a full employment policy. In

that case it would not be utopian to speak of full employment. There are countries that manage. I can't see, personally, why Québec would not be capable of managing, too. Of course, we won't be able to boast full employment the day after we become sovereign, but if, in declaring sovereignty, and developing our sovereign country, we take on employment development objectives for full employment, we would then be in a position to manage it with mastery over all powers.

I would say, however, that, from now on, with the consensus in Québec on the entire question inherent in skills development and manpower, we should take over, as rapidly as possible, by having the National Assembly legislate, all powers concerning manpower and skills development, because we have a consensus at the present time. Let's start paving the way for a manpower policy that will bring us closer to sovereignty in the coming months, we hope.

Mr. Paré: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Pelchat, would you please take the floor?

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should also like to welcome the members of the Conseil permanent de la jeunesse. In 1988, SORECOM surveyed young people from 15 to 25, and I would like you to comment on the findings. SORECOM polled young people about their major concerns. The results were: job-career, 33%; unemployment, 23%, which makes 56%; drugs, 10%; language, 5%; studies, 4%; the economy, 3%; the environment, 2%; and the family, 1%.

How, in your opinion, will independence, that is, sovereignty, help solve these concerns of youth, that is, 56% of young people who tell us that their primary concern is unemployment, employment, their future careers?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): Clearly, as I was saying, the fact that we will hold all the powers will permit us to develop coherent employment policies... also coherent economic development policies according to our needs. And, a full employment policy for young people means that they will have jobs. Our present situation, one of dual jurisdiction, also means that young people find themselves unemployed and on welfare more often than not, or too often still, but in a form of incoherence in which they find themselves governed sometimes by social aid measures and sometimes by unemployment insurance measures.

Mrs. Pelchat: Mr. Tanguay, how is independence going to promote, for example, attainment of a full employment policy? Because I think that the Conseil permanent de la

jeunesse has participated for a year in the forum on employment. You have been in a position to discuss these things that are very important and that preoccupy not only 56% of our youth, but the entire population, I think. So, how do you make the link between sovereignty and a full employment policy?

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): We make the link first by getting out of the incoherent situation in which we are at present, that is, the federal that has its programs and the provincial that has its own; and, between the two, it's not always obvious. We make the link, too, in a political will with mastery over all powers for developing employment. And we also make the link - because we are also speaking of regional development - in a perspective from which we will be able, as a people and as a government, to decentralize to the regions the necessary tools, so that the people in the regions also develop, for their citizens, employment, the economy, in their communities.

Mrs. Pelchat: OK. One short last question, Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes.

Mrs. Pelchat: How do you explain young people's low rate of concern for the environment? As Parliamentary Assistant for the Environment, that surprises me considerably, particularly because that survey was carried out in the fall of 1988, right in the middle of the PCB crisis.

Mr. Tanguay (Sylvain): I'd say that that can be explained thus: the unemployment rate for young people has always been quite high, even very high. And, at the present time, it is more dramatic than it has been for the last five years. Furthermore, young people have always been prime candidates for social aid. And the young people who are studying hope for a career and hope to enter the job market when they finish their studies. Therefore, it is clear that the primary concern is there. That doesn't mean, however, even if the response rate on the environment seems low, that young people are not concerned about the environment. They are concerned about the environment every single day, although in a survey like that one, their primary concern was obviously their immediate situation.

Mrs. Pelchat: It is comforting to hear you and to have heard young people, too, yesterday and today, tell us to what extent the environment is important. Thank you, Mr. Gagnon; thank you, Mr. Tanguay.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank

you, Madam. This completes the testimony for this group. We shall now proceed with the students' association... No, pardon me, pardon me, pardon me. The Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois.

A voice: No, no, no...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I'll go back a page. The Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain.

A voice: That's more like it.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Hurray! I won the draw!

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I apologize, Gentlemen. I shall turn the floor over to Mrs. Marois.

Mrs. Marois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought we alternated, but I am of course pleased to...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We do alternate, but no one else is down, so...

Mrs. Marois: Great!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...you're up first.

Mrs. Marois: Fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your brief is indeed brief, but well done and well compiled. On page 12 of that brief, you say: "It is foreseeable that future economic relations between Québec and Canada will resemble a form of common market... In fact, integration of the provincial economies no longer has to be achieved; it just has to be maintained". So, you are for Québec sovereignty, but you say you want to preserve our economic gains.

I don't want to take things too far, but does that mean, from your standpoint, where you say: The economic gains are already there; let's not touch them; let's become sovereign... Does that mean that, if there were to be tariff barriers, for example between the provinces, it would be because the rest of Canada has decided to erect them if Québec decides not to do so? Could things go that far in your thinking, according to your brief?

Mr. Cholette (François): Listen, I think that

the reactions of English Canada, further to a declaration of independence on the part of Québec, or a referendum in which Quebecers voted in the majority in favour of sovereignty, are difficult to predict. As the Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain, we hope that what has already been gained with the other provinces... That is, that there is already a free flow of people, goods, services and capital... We ardently wish to see this remain. Now, if the English Canadians, further to Québec independence, decide to erect trade barriers with Québec, obviously we'll have to live with that.

Mrs. Marois: In your brief, you also mention the debt, saying: The federal system in which we are living has made a fine mess financially because of the spending power and the duplication of responsibilities that are carried out any old which way. Therefore, we have this debt on our backs and it's a real mess.
(4:15 p.m.)

In this context, and in a perspective of Québec sovereignty, isn't it more advantageous for the federal government than for us to negotiate to make sure that the debt is shared as equitably as possible, or taken on generally by the new States that a new Canada and a sovereign Québec would form?

Mr. Cholette (François): You are absolutely right, but before answering your question specifically, I'd like to speak a bit about the deficit, because it's too bad: at the Bélanger-Campeau Commission's youth forum, unfortunately, we didn't discuss that problem which is, in the end, a problem that concerns young people. In the end, young people, in the years ahead... Right now, out of each tax dollar paid, some \$0.35 serve to pay interest on the debt. That is for services that our elders had. In the end, it's for past errors, and young people have to pay that deficit. So, on that score, I think we are directly concerned. As the junior chamber of commerce, what we say is that, for the future, if we want to continue to have decent social services, if we want to maintain our standard of living, well, it's too bad, but we're going to have to rationalize. We think that independence for Québec is a way of rationalizing expenses by avoiding duplication of programs, and duplication of administrations. We think we are going to be capable...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I was going to say that you are out of time, but you may finish your sentence anyway.

Mr. Cholette (François): We think that independence is going to be a way of better managing the deficit. Certainly, by the mere fact

that English Canada is going to want us to effectively take on our share, our share of the federal debt, surely that's a serious argument for forcing them to negotiate. That's an ace up our sleeve.

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

Mrs. Simard (Monique): Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): ...your time.

Mrs. Simard (Monique): One very short question. You have arrived at the same conclusion as many other groups here as to the option. You justify it with economic and political reasons. But, I should like to hear what you have to say about the way of consulting the population of Québec. You do not mention that clearly in your brief. So, how do you think the population of Québec should be consulted? And, if it should be done rapidly, when?

Mr. Beauchemin (Patrice): If I may be allowed to answer that question. The way in which we could proceed would be, first, to hold a referendum and, second, to declare the independence of Québec at the National Assembly. Of course, during that first phase, once it has been done, that will allow us to begin negotiating exclusive jurisdictions, that is, what we must repatriate from the federal government and, second, that will also allow us to start discussing the joint, shared jurisdictions of both States or of the States that will be part of the future agreement.

Mrs. Simard (Monique): At what point do you think the referendum should be held?

Mr. Cholette (François): I'd say as soon as possible...

Mrs. Simard (Monique): Thank you.

Mr. Cholette (François): ...so that we can settle this matter once and for all; we've been talking about it for 30 years.

Mr. Beauchemin (Patrice): Exactly, for almost 20 or 30 years, we've been living in uncertainty, in a climate of uncertainty, and we feel that by asking the question as quickly as possible, well, we will be able to find a solution, obviously just as quickly.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Jeune Chambre de commerce du Québec métropolitain. We shall now go on to the Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois. First Mr. Maciocia, followed by Mr. Chevrete.

**Comité national des jeunes du
Parti québécois**

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The youth of the Parti québécois are clearly for the full-fledged sovereignty of Québec. And, once we have become sovereign, you speak of an economic association with the rest of Canada, on an equal footing. In your brief, which I have read attentively, you speak very little of the monetary question.

My first question would be: Would you be in favour of a monetary union? And, if so, through what institution would it be managed?

Mr. Facal (Joseph): We are for a monetary union because it seems to us the present world trend. Québec sovereignty, we are deeply convinced, is also a gesture that is in keeping with the present trend elsewhere.

We are positively convinced that monetary union is in the interest of both countries. It is also much simpler and much easier to implement. But, I must add that if ever Canada did not want monetary union, several experts have come before this Commission to say that, technically, minting Québec currency would pose no particular problem, but we are still for monetary union because it is simpler, easier and faster. As to administration of the monetary policy, that is, the actual minting of currency, that is, setting the discount rate, and so forth, it would be assumed by a central Québec-Canada bank in which Québec would probably be a minority shareholder, but this would still represent enormous progress over the present situation, but in which, for example, the governor of the bank could be appointed by both partners, by mutual consent.

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you. My other question would be: In all the opinion polls of young people, we always have at least two-thirds of youth who are preoccupied with employment, jobs. We have had the vast majority of constitutional experts come before this Commission. They have told us that if Québec separates, or becomes sovereign, there will still be a very difficult transition period between separation and ultimate economic association with the rest of Canada. Aren't you concerned about that period that some say could be as long as 5, 10 or 15 years?

Mr. Facal (Joseph): I shall respond as briefly as possible. At this time we are already in a climate of uncertainty, and I think that sovereignty seems a solution to settle this problem once and for all. Respecting the employment problem for youth, I shall remind you that Québec is now an integral part of the Canadian Federation, which doesn't prevent Montréal from having one of the highest

unemployment rates, if not the highest unemployment rate, of all the major cities in the country, which affects young people in particular. Moreover, we must understand that if we want to fight unemployment among young people, we have to fight on several fronts. At this time, the unemployment insurance policy is in the hands of the federal government; the social aid policy is in the hands of the Québec government, and skills development is the constant bone of contention between the two. How do you hope to tackle this problem head on when you are in a situation where the left hand hardly knows what the right hand is doing? Sovereignty, by permitting us to repatriate all these powers, would allow us a coordinated struggle, and this would certainly represent tremendous progress over what we are experiencing right now.

Mr. Maciocia: Fine. Since our time is so limited, my last question is: How do you reconcile your position with that of the youth of Trois-Rivières regarding the process for holding a general election at the same time as a referendum?

Mr. Facal (Joseph): We of the Parti québécois want a referendum as quickly as possible, and if this Commission were to come to the conclusion that it should be held as quickly as possible, we would be extremely happy. Moreover, should the government decide to consult the people in an election... well, we're ready. For the rest, we all agree on the need to ask the people to vote in a referendum. If the government prefers elections, well, it's up to it to decide.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We shall now go on to Mr. Chevette.

Mr. Chevette: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You will allow me, Mr. Chairman, to express the wish, as I begin my remarks, that the Québec people will reach a consensus similar to that of the young people of Québec, the youth of Québec and, if any politicians occasionally wonder about the quality of the upcoming generation, I hope they will be pleasantly surprised today and no longer concerned.

Having said this, as to the objective, I think there is truly a vast consensus, but differing opinions as to how it should be attained. Personally, I have just one question to ask you: In your opinion, does economic integration necessitate de facto political integration?

Mr. Facal (Joseph): The answer is no, but obviously I shall elaborate a bit further. Economic integration is already a reality and it

makes neither necessary nor automatic any political integration. A sovereign State, as we would like Québec to become, will have its own constitution; therefore, it will not recognize any higher authority with another constitution. A sovereign State simply signs international treaties and accords with its partners. Now, if in the name of an integration that is poorly understood we were to create a political superstructure in which the Québec representatives, simply for demographic reasons, would be condemned to remaining a minority, we would have recreated the situation that we have been experiencing for so long.

If, in addition, we were to give this superstructure the power to pass legislation and levy taxes, that would remove entire facets of sovereignty. And, in that respect, I should like to stress that we must be leary of comparisons, hasty perhaps, with certain foreign models, particularly the European Economic Community. What the EEC is providing us with is an excellent example of economic association between sovereign States, with monetary and trade unions, but no true political association.

I am told: There is a European Parliament. That is true, but that European Parliament does not legislate: it issues recommendations. The text that governs relations among the EEC countries is not a constitution; it's a treaty. The EEC budget is not a government-type budget in a normal country; it is the budget that serves to make the institutions operational. And if we compare it to the population that is covered, it is an entirely insignificant budget. And today still, 33 years after the Treaty of Rome, all the EEC countries have kept their political sovereignty. There are even two of these that have decided to have their own nuclear weaponry.

So, being economically integrated does not imply *de facto* political integration. I have difficulty understanding, in fact, that people can take seriously any scenarios that, to come to a successful conclusion, in essence ask Canada to close shop for love of us and to accept three levels of government. In the present context, to think that, where a minimum has failed, Canada would be willing to make this type of concession is really building castles in the air.

Association des étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Your time is now up, Mr. Chevette. I should like to thank the Comité national des jeunes du Parti québécois. We shall now go on to the Association des étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique. Mr. Beaudry.

Mr. Beaudry:...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You're passing. If you keep on passing, you won't be able to play before the end of the game!

Mr. Beaudry: That's fine.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): But you're passing. Therefore, I shall call on Mrs. Campbell Steer. You have half of your time left.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: It's like bridge. I pass.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You're passing, too. So we shall go on to Mr. Benoit.

Mr. Benoit: Very well. In your brief, on page 21, Recommendation 11... Your brief is very clear. There are 11 recommendations; that's a good engineers' brief. It's precise, solid and stands up well. On page 21, at Recommendation 11, you say that you hope for an equitable, durable economic association with the rest of Canada. How do you see this economic, equitable and durable association? Would there be a political structure above or around that? What does the word "durable" mean? And the word "equitable"... What does that mean in this 11th and probably most important recommendation of your brief?

Mr. Stephenne (Éric): I shall start with "equitable". Without going too far into the "ins and outs", I should say, the idea behind it is that it is unthinkable that Québec should decide to separate, to become sovereign, and leave all the powers to the Bank of Canada, as it is doing now, in the hands of Canadians, and that it be stuck, in the end, with the fluctuating interest rates and everything that results from that situation.

What we mean by "equitable" is that there should be representation of Québec and representation of Canada; that is what we mean by "equitable". We could perhaps think of what is going on in Europe - one country, one vote - to orient currency policy, for example. That is "equitable". (4:30 p.m.)

As for "durable", I don't necessarily see that as long-term, because we cannot claim that in 100 years we will still need a common currency with Canada. But I am looking more at the short and medium term. This economic alliance can be justified thus: Foreign investors see the sovereignty of Québec in a slightly scary way, in the sense that it is the first time an industrialized country is deciding to separate from the rest of the country. So, this is new. Foreign investors don't know quite how to react. Nor do certain Quebecers, I might add. So, the only way to keep some stability in the economy, in the dollar, and with foreign

investors, is to have a common economy, one dollar, to have at least a basis, something familiar on which... Foreign investors have worked with the Canadian dollar and know how it works. That would make it possible to concentrate our efforts on the political level. The political restructuring that would have to be done in the country seems to be leading two battles head on: one political battle, on the one hand, with the rest of Canada, and an economic battle on the other hand, to tell other countries investing in Canada: Don't leave, don't be afraid, it won't be so bad. I think that would divide our efforts. So, that is why we are for an economic alliance.

Mr. Benoit: That economic alliance, Mr. Stephenne, would have a political structure? Can you explain this structure to me in a few words, say, define it a little more clearly? What do you mean by an economic alliance?

Mr. Stephenne (Éric): What we mean by that, first of all, is a common dollar.

Mr. Benoit: I see.

Mr. Stephenne (Éric): And the policies currently directed by the Bank of Canada... there would be a representative for Canada and one for Québec. As I told you earlier, I am not an expert in the matter, I won't enter into all the details, but... Well, we often make comparisons. I would compare that sort of to the European ecu. They make decisions together for the major features of the ecu. We would do the same thing here for the dollar.

Mr. Benoit: Very good. Thank you very much.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This ends the testimony of the Association des étudiantes et étudiants de Polytechnique. We shall now proceed with the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke.

Just a minute. Just a minute. Just a minute. I think our papers might be slightly mixed up. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Polytechnique, if you would be kind enough to be seated. Mrs. Blackburn.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam, Gentlemen, hello. In your brief you state: "Considering the scope of the constitutional amendments necessary to ensure the full development of Québec, sovereignty alone will enable us to achieve it with an economic association". Among the powers that you identify as being indispensable for economic, cultural and social development in Québec, you mention research, and rightly so, I think. There are

research professors who have come to tell us here that research should be in the realm of shared jurisdictions with any future Canadian structure or association, and you are of a different opinion. Could you explain to us why, and what are the effects of federal grants on universities?

Mrs. Leblond (Marie-Josée): Yes. I shall be delighted to answer that question to enlighten people on a part of the brief that we consider very important. First, we can note under-financing of research in Canada. I would like to cite a few statistics. We are one of the industrialized countries that invests the least in research and development and, of that, Québec gets only 17%, compared with 47% for Ontario. Furthermore, the GDP... Moreover... I'm going to skip to another field, that is, federal interference in that area. We need only look, for example, at the James Bay II project, which comes under provincial jurisdiction. Environment Canada is developing a whole program in that area, whereas, for example, it is not paying any attention at all to the treatment of hazardous substances. We can wonder why it's doing that, when we know that hydroelectricity is an extremely important sector of Québec's economy.

There is also, obviously, the division there. We see duplication. We see interference. Therefore, from that standpoint, jurisdiction over research must be primarily provincial.

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you. I would have so many questions, but, since we want to hear other briefs, I will just have to thank you for your participation.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Now, this time, this ends the testimony of the étudiants et étudiantes de Polytechnique. Thank you. We shall now go on to the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Mr. Léonard.

Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke

Mr. Léonard (Labelle): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to emphasize the outstanding clarity and conclusion of your brief and congratulate you for it. First, I would like to question you, or at least ask for your comments, on the part concerning education, and research and development. You are studying at the master's and doctoral level and I would like to draw the attention of Commission members to a statement on page 3, which reads as follows:

"We would like to draw your attention to the financial problems encountered by graduate students while they are studying, and the problem of their employability, especially as regards researchers."

"For example, a student wishing to engage in a career as a researcher has to face three years in the master's program, four years in the doctoral program, and often two or three postdoctoral fellowships each lasting two years, living all the while below or near the poverty line. This will give the student, now well into his thirties, the possibility of finding a job in his field in Québec. During this time, he will have been the very basis of university research."

I mention this, I underline this because I believe that this is true and that graduate students are facing major financial problems while there is a great deal of unemployment and students who stay for a long time in university experience these problems. I would like to thank you for drawing our attention to this situation because, in my opinion, in a sovereign Québec, they will make up the scientific technological elite. For this reason, we must attach special importance to this matter.

You have certainly heard about the proposals on the table, which have been worded in different ways, concerning the funding of research and development, for example by taking 1% of the total payroll. I suppose this could be done, bearing in mind that we would have to repatriate Québec's responsibilities and powers in this field, and return them to Québec. I wanted to make these remarks because I feel they are important.

I would also like to ask you a question. Do you deem it detrimental that or would you deem it detrimental if the committees awarding research grants are or were under Québec's control, although allowances would be made for participation by members from other countries on the granting committees... Do you think that Québec alone should be responsible for appointing these committees?

Mr. Bénard (Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I should mention that our brief is also that of the Fédération des étudiants sous-gradués, FEUS, which adopted it last night. To answer your question: I do think that that would enable us - if the appointment of the committees came under Québec's jurisdiction - to establish purely Québec policies tailored to Québec's needs in the realm of research and development. We feel that this would give us an unquestionable advantage. However, it would be important that the committees in question have foreign members to ensure complete impartiality when decisions respecting research grants are reached.

Mr. Léonard (Labelle): I agree with you and understand that you do not necessarily share the opinion of a number of experts who have come here to tell us that they would like to see research committees continue to fall under federal authority.

Mr. Bénard (Pierre): I don't think so because we have observed on several occasions that we get a lot less from the federal government, particularly with regard to grants generated by federal government research contracts. I think that it is very important that the entire question fall under the sole jurisdiction of the Québec government.

Mr. Léonard (Labelle): Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen from the Regroupement des étudiants à la maîtrise et au doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke. We now turn to the group Un Avenir ensemble (Organisation québécoise et canadienne de la jeunesse). Mr. Roy.

Un Avenir ensemble (Organisation québécoise et canadienne de la jeunesse)

Mr. Roy (Bruno): On page 2 of your brief you state that growing numbers of young, bilingual English-speaking Canadians will cause the French language to expand in Canada. On page 5, you more or less state the reverse corollary: "The possible independence of Québec will hinder the future of the French language in North America". From a strictly Québec standpoint it will be rather hard to accept a statement such as that, because, to my mind, you are affirming one thing and the contrary. How can you explain both statements to Quebecers? If they wish to achieve the autonomy of their language, doing so will impede the development of their language, and if they leave control over the language in the hands of others, that will foster the language's expansion in Canada. We are talking about the French language. I would like to understand. I can't make any sense whatsoever of those statements.

Mr. Julian (Peter): That is a very good question and we are glad that you asked it. The fact that there are many English speakers, millions of young English speakers who are learning the language means that there is an enormous potential market for Québec cultural products. If Québec achieves its independence and these groups are separated, if there are no longer any political links between the rest of Canada and Québec, this dynamic will no longer be the same. English speakers are learning French because it also belongs to us. Perhaps it took us a long time to realize the fact but now we do realize it and the fact that there are hundreds, thousands of young English speakers in immersion classes across the country... There are immersion classes that are chock-a-block. Teachers are being sought everywhere. If anyone wants to teach in British Columbia, jobs are available. The fact that this trend exists is

certainly not detrimental to French. It's a potential market and it must be exploited. This means... This Commission, we sincerely hope, will examine and contemplate other scenarios, other ways of exploiting, of increasing the presence of the French language in North America. If we achieve separation, this dynamic will no longer exist and as there are still one million French speakers outside Québec, it is certain that things won't go better for them either, should Québec become independent.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): When we look at statistics outside Canada, they are discouraging and even disturbing. How can a Quebecer hope that the French language outside can... that the defence of the language can be ensured by English speakers? This is the question I would like you to answer.

Mr. Julian (Peter): Over the past 20 years or so, assimilation among the French-speaking minorities has diminished. We are using figures from the Secretary of State.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): That's news to me, eh?

Mr. Julian (Peter): OK. Second, there is also the matter of more rights for French speakers outside Québec. The fact that Bob Rae was elected Premier of Ontario on a platform bluntly advocating official bilingualism in Ontario reveals a change in attitude. We won't obtain all of these changes overnight, but this does represent a change in attitude among English speakers regarding the French language. With a collective will, if Quebecers and English speakers and French speakers outside Québec work together we can sustain the renaissance among French speakers outside Québec.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Thank you.

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

Mr. Marcotte: Mr. Chairman. You recommend to the Commission, concerning the elaboration of a new Canadian constitution based on the model of a veritable confederation... Do you think that the other provinces are prepared to make this change? This may mean a less centralized federalism.
(4:45 p.m.)

Mr. Julian (Peter): I'm from Vancouver; that means that I hail from Western Canada and I know that, in Western Canada, we are also experiencing some measure of frustration. Many people in Western Canada were disappointed that the Meech Lake Accord failed; it's frustrating for us as well. Is there a will? Yes. But have we drawn up our blueprint for the future? Not yet. You are in the process of doing so here in

Québec. There are also commissions travelling around in other parts of Canada. This is going to take time, but I think that if everybody is patient we can agree on the future. The events surrounding Meech Lake, even events this summer involving the aboriginal peoples, show us that we must change what we have, that Canada as it now stands no longer works, and I believe that yes, especially among young people, there is a desire for change.

Mr. Marcotte: How can we interpret the failure of the Meech Lake Accord? You say that at that time it did not mean that English Canada rejected Québec. How can we interpret it?

Mr. Julian (Peter): I would say that it is indeed a failure of the current system. When a provincial premier can withdraw his support for the agreement and an MLA in a province can hold up adoption of the agreement, that shows that the current system is not sufficiently flexible to allow for adjustments. But the fact that there were so many governments that supported Québec's demands shows that there is a will; the evidence is there. We have been discussing this for the past two days. People often speak of Meech Lake as a rejection by English Canada of Quebecers. Let's take a closer look; the evidence shows that there is widespread support in English Canada, even though we are still trying to understand the Québec phenomenon.

Mr. Marcotte: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Aboriginal Students of Québec – Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Mr. Marcotte. This brings to a close this group's testimony. Thank you. We now turn to the aboriginal students of Québec. First, Mrs. Harel, followed by Mrs. Simard.

Mrs. Harel: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your brief, you recommend the establishment of a joint independent, neutral commission, involving the First Nations and Québec. You go on to describe what could be the commission's mandate with regard to relations between Québec and the First Nations. Do you think that such a commission should wait for a referendum on sovereignty, or do you feel that the current government could establish it now?

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): I think it is urgent – this is very important – to set up this commission as soon as possible; it would be jointly established by the aboriginal peoples, the First Nations, and the Québec people. I think this is very important because your initiative

involves many things. Your initiative, which is entirely legitimate, involves many things and I think this initiative cannot be carried out without the aboriginal peoples.

If we think about building a house on foundations whose owner we do not know, or if there is disagreement with the very foundations, I think there will be problems. During this young people's forum, you have noticed that much has been said about plumbing, about the mechanics of Québec's accession to sovereignty. We have talked about language and culture; we have talked about obstacles to various areas of jurisdiction; we have talked about the matter of political affirmation, the constitution, and economic development which affects all of these issues. We feel that all of these vitally important questions must first be settled, must first be resolved with the aboriginal peoples, because we think there will be problems.

Mrs. Harel: But we understand each other when, in your brief, you talk about the right to self-determination. I presume that you do so in light of all the briefs of the other chiefs who have appeared and who have told us: For us, the right to self-determination does not mean the independence of the State; it does not mean a country, a separate State. You say: There is a single State but we want several nations to coexist. Is that what you mean?

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): If Québec becomes sovereign, what I would like, what we would like, is that the political sovereignty of the First Nations in Québec be recognized.

Mrs. Harel: What does that mean? Do you mean that Québec is a State, or do mean a State of the First Nations? How do you conceive this State?

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): Each aboriginal nation could define its sovereignty with your people. We must not be afraid at the outset of the word "sovereignty". As I have already said to the Commission, your concept of sovereignty is not the same as ours. What troubles us somewhat, what bothers us in your process, in the governmental process of dealing with the aboriginal peoples, is that we never have any rights as long as the government doesn't give us any. It's not complicated. We are nothing as long as the government doesn't tell us what to do. It's not complicated. We don't accept this approach and will never accept it; we will do all we can to get rid of it. Our forebears did this, political leaders have done so and we are going to do so - it's not complicated - with all necessary means.

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

Mrs. Simard (Monique): I think we will all agree that we are becoming aware, at present, that the question of aboriginal rights and the rights of the First Nations is one of the most complex questions we will have to deal with now and later on. You first wish to make yourselves heard before an independent commission of the First Nations. However, do you also acknowledge the urgency... I understand that, as a First Nation, as an aboriginal people, you have displayed infinite patience but that we must urgently seek to settle and determine as quickly as possible what will happen to Québec. Is it not possible to achieve concurrently what you are demanding, that is, the establishment of a commission - you call it a commission - to get to the bottom of various questions which concern you, while at the same time participating in a political initiative which will lead Quebecers to take a stand on their political future? Are you putting one before the other or is it possible to do both at the same time?

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): I think we can do both at the same time. We are asking Prime Minister Bourassa of the Québec government, of the Québec people, to sit down with us and reach an agreement with us. He cannot move ahead, attempt to obtain Québec's sovereignty or, in any event... He has not yet settled his various sensitivities and all. We are asking Mr. Bourassa to sit down with us and discuss with us. Because if he thinks he can achieve sovereignty or confederation, whatever, if he thinks he can carry out James Bay and if he thinks he can carry out Sainte-Marguerite on the North Shore without the aboriginal peoples, that's the end; we don't accept that. So, I think it's an urgent question. We are young, we have been patient but now we're at the end of our tether. We're at the end of our tether, it's not complicated, we're at the end of our tether. We saw it this summer, we're at the end of our tether. So, I think he has to agree with the aboriginal peoples to set up this commission. That could eventually lead to an initiative centred on agreement, trying to align our agreements with your initiatives. I think both can be achieved at the same time...

Mrs. Simard (Monique): Fine. Thank you.

Mr. McKenzie (Armand): ...but the sooner the better.

Mrs. Simard (Marie-Josée): I, too, would like to add that we feel that the constitutional process Québec embarks upon cannot be carried out without the participation of aboriginal peoples.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): You are registered, Mrs. Pagé. You had several minutes left.

Mrs. Pagé: Yes, but as I had the same question as Mrs. Simard and it was fully answered, I'll reserve my right to speak later.

Comité national des jeunes de la CSN

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Madam. This ends the testimony of the Aboriginal Students of Québec, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa. We now turn to the Comité national des jeunes de la CSN. I invite the Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval to be seated around the table.

Mr. Beaudry has a question for the Comité national des jeunes de la CSN.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question refers to the brief - because you have adopted the brief submitted by the CSN, you say that you fully adhere to that brief - and is very short: The CSN brief demands that the right of association and the right to strike be enshrined in the constitution which the CSN recommends Québec adopt and which is to be adopted. I would have liked to put this question to the CEQ. I spoke about it with Mrs. Pagé. Unfortunately, I was not recognized at the time. In the CSN file I was not recognized either. I am asking you the question as you adhere to that brief. Do you not think that by enshrining the right to strike in the constitution - we know that once it is in the constitution things become more complicated; to alter the right, you cannot eliminate it through legislation - that doing so could lead to a parallel government should a general strike be called? At that point, the government's hands would be tied because the right to strike is enshrined in the constitution. That's my question.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): The government's hands would indeed be tied to some extent by the right to strike in the constitution. However, the right to strike is fundamental and must remain with the union.

Mr. Beaudry: But you have it now.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): We have it now, but if I look at strikes in the public sector, the regulations are so complicated that, to all intents and purposes, we no longer have the right to strike.

Mr. Beaudry: But you continually exercise the right in all sorts of...

Mr. Garneau (Luc): We exercise it, but illegally.

Mr. Beaudry: In your opinion you exercise it illegally?

Mr. Garneau (Luc): Well, the repression of Bill 160 clearly showed that.

Mr. Beaudry: Am I to understand from your answer that this is the reason for which you are demanding that the right be enshrined? Under the circumstances, you could prevent the government from resuming government or other operations. Is that what you are seeking when you say that you want the right enshrined in the constitution?

Mr. Garneau (Luc): It is the basic right of any union to reach... When you are compelled to put into practice your right to strike, it's because you have tried everything. It is a fundamental right and it is the only right that remains under the circumstances.

Mr. Beaudry: So, you take the stance that you'll bring the government to a halt and as long as your problem is not settled there's no way around it; everything grinds to a halt. That is what you are saying.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): Not "everything grinds to a halt".

Mr. Beaudry: I beg your pardon?

Mr. Garneau (Luc): The government apparatus continues to function except that we are using our right to strike.

Mr. Beaudry: But you could not be compelled to return to work by a simple law.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): No.

Mr. Beaudry: So that would effectively halt operations.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): Yes.

Mr. Beaudry: That is what you are seeking.

Mr. Garneau (Luc): Yes.

Mr. Guertin (Mario): I think there would also be... You mustn't necessarily assume that the government would be paralysed, but I think that in a undertaking such as this, there would also be an opportunity to force the opponent to reach an agreement to avoid ending up in a situation where everything is paralysed. I think we must set this tone in negotiations. During negotiations, we must ensure that both parties involved in the negotiations get something out of them. Insofar as we have no control over the means or what deprives us of the right to strike, what we deem to be an acquired right is important, to the extent that we have no control - my friend was talking about Bill 160; I

think this is a good example of the very limited control we exercise over this right, in quotation marks, because let us agree on what the right to strike is — then, insofar as we are no longer in control at present, that might well force both parties to agree before the strike occurs, to the extent that paralysis might be the outcome.

Mr. Beaudry: Given that this could create a major problem if it is enshrined in the constitution, am I to understand from what you are saying that you would consider the possibility of withdrawing it, although it may mean bolstering this right in the Labour Code or elsewhere?
(5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Garneau (Luc): I'd like to say, Mr. Beaudry, that the first objective is to achieve sovereignty, proceed with the referendum and, once we reach what I'd call the fine-tuning stage, we'll see what will and will not be put on the bargaining table. At this point, we still haven't decided on the nitty-gritty. Once we reach that stage, we'll see if we should withdraw the right to strike. In my view, the CSN brief is sufficiently clear, at this moment, to suggest what it means by enshrining the right to strike in the Charter.

Mr. Beaudry: And my interpretation is correct.

Mr. Guertin (Mario): It's your interpretation.

Mr. Beaudry: No, no, I am asking if it is correct. I know it's mine. That's what I'm asking about. Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Guertin (Mario): Let's say that...

Mr. Beaudry: I'm asking you if it's right. Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Guertin (Mario): I would say it diverges somewhat from ours.

Mr. Beaudry: Yes, fine. Thank you.

Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen of the Comité national des jeunes de la CSN. I would now like to ask the Association générale des étudiants et étudiantes du cégep de Lévis-Lauzon to replace you at the table while we hear from the Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval. Mr. Guy Bélanger.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Since this morning, on several occasions student groups

have told us to first achieve independence, then negotiate association with the rest of Canada. In this regard, they frequently rely on polls. We have learned about surveys conducted among students which draw this conclusion. I have before me the survey conducted by the Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval, on the basis of which you draw the following conclusion: the majority supports sovereignty, 44.9% are in favour of sovereignty, 32% favour association with a Canadian economic community, 17% advocate independence without any association, and 4.3% are for renewed federalism. Without going into detail, the figures in the survey suggest that 83% of the students are in favour of a new form of association with Canada, and that the majority advocates independence.

I have two questions or, if you like, my question is twofold to be sure we don't take up too much time. First, I would like you to explain what you perceive to be the difference between sovereignty and independence. Second, or more generally, do you think the desire for a new association is shared by all Québec young people?

Mr. Moisan (Pierre): First, we have never said that the majority is in favour of independence. We said that they were for sovereignty, with or without association, because you can be independent and sovereign, that is, not maintain an association with other States. That is the case in several parts of the world, although the trend today everywhere is to establish agreements which draw countries together in all manner of cultural, economic, political and other groupings. When we read the survey, which was also interpreted by Vincent Lemieux, who is an expert in the matter, we observed that respondents who want sovereignty-association want sovereignty combined with association. So, sovereignty is the supreme power, the power to make laws... As you know, you have talked about it enough here, it is the power that is not subject to any other power. Thus, people want independence, that is, sovereignty, without being bound by treaties or without placing their powers in a subordinate position in relation to another entity, then... Yes.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): In your mind, sovereignty and separation are synonymous?

Mr. Roy (Martin): The survey question referred to sovereignty-association and independence without association with Canada. It was completely unambiguous. Mention was made of sovereignty-association and independence; separation is a new term that you are adding.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): To use your terms, sovereignty and independence strike me as synonymous, based on what your colleague has given as a definition.

Mr. Roy (Martin): When you are sovereign, you are independent. If we decide to associate, then we must shelve certain aspects of our sovereignty for a set period. At that point, sovereignty will be shelved, but it is always virtual, it can always potentially be exercised because there are always provisions in treaties which make it possible to withdraw from the treaties and regain the full range of sovereign powers.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Do you think that Québec young people generally share this viewpoint?

Mr. Moisan (Pierre): Absolutely. Yes, yes, entirely. What I mean is that we look at issues and consult among ourselves. We hold province-wide and regional meetings. People travel. We have only to discuss matters with our families and among our friends. Meech Lake dealt a fatal blow to any hope for reconciliation. People are fed up. First there was Laurendeau-Dunton, then Pepin-Robarts, then London, then Victoria. We've had it with all that. We have witnessed the preceding generation spend its time, staggering sums of money and incredible energy trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. We've had enough; we want to build our own country then strike an agreement after. I believe there will be agreement because merchants always continue to do business. Merchants don't engage in business and they are afraid of risks and force majeure when political instability or violence and so on occurs. Given the circumstances, we are headed for a quiet independence. I think that the merchants will always want to do business with a peaceful people like Quebecers.

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Fine, thank you.

Association générale des étudiants et étudiantes du cégep de Lévis-Lauzon

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): This ends the testimony of the Confédération des associations d'étudiants et d'étudiantes de l'Université Laval. Would the Jeune Barreau please take their place at the table... We now turn to the Association générale des étudiantes et des étudiants du cégep de Lévis-Lauzon. Mrs. Campbell Steer.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Hello. There are just two little things that struck me and, above all, the first one. When you stated that each

business should contribute financially to creating government programs, do you not think that companies already contribute significantly through taxes to all government programs? What were you thinking about when you said that?

Mr. Fortier (Alain): What we meant, essentially, was that businesses must contribute to programs which largely affect education and endeavour to harmonize the financing that companies and the government contribute to programs and the beneficiaries of these programs, to harmonize each one's financial contribution, to avoid the underfunding now prevalent in the universities, to avoid problems related to a lack of resources, and avoid all manner of problems which...

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Given that businesses already contribute through taxation to the general financing of the government and that it is up to the latter to decide where it wants to spend, do you not think, perhaps, that it would be more efficient to leave the system as it is at present and that companies invest above all in chairs? They will invest in the universities, in classrooms, in courses, as a charitable gift. Perhaps these gifts could be encouraged through a higher tax rate? It strikes me as a bit much that you want to ask companies to contribute to financing.

Mr. Fortier (Alain): Indeed, all Quebecers contribute to financing all social programs, all existing programs. To suggest that we leave the current system as it is means, in my opinion, overlooking the fact that there are shortcomings and failing to want to remedy them.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: I don't know whether we can overcome all the shortcomings by putting the burden on corporations. I would like to ask you another question, concerning the Québec and Canadian charters of rights. What shortcomings do you perceive in both charters at present? In the Québec Charter? What would you like to add to the Charter?

Mr. Fortier (Alain): The first thing would be to add rights respecting the environment, young people, and all other social groups. Earlier, we heard from the aboriginal peoples. We listened to various organizations... We would incorporate into the Charter various rights and acknowledge these social groups so that they are not neglected in society.

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you. I think my time is up.

Jeune Barreau de Québec

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I

thank the representatives of the Association générale des étudiants et étudiantes du cégep de Lévis-Lauzon. I would ask the representatives of the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec to replace them at the table. We now turn to the Jeune Barreau de Québec. Mr. Béland.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to congratulate members of the Jeune Barreau as their elders did not feel it advisable to appear before the Commission. You have had the courage to appear, and I congratulate you.

I have a very simple question. At the very end of your brief, which is dated December 20, you announce a consultation among your members. You say: "We will inform you of the outcome". I would like to know whether the consultation took place and what were your findings.

Mr. Tremblay (Carl): Unfortunately, you did not receive the January 15 version of the brief, which includes the findings of the survey.

Mr. Béland: Oh, I see! Do I still have some time, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Yes. In terms of refereeing the time, both parties have run out of time.

Mr. Béland: Oh, I see!

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): The members have five minutes each; they have exhausted their five minutes but some time remains for the members overall. We'll stretch things a bit for the members and, with the others yet to come, I'll try to indicate in advance the group and the member on the question list, if there are any, over the remaining 15 minutes.

Mr. Béland: Well, I will consult...

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): So, Mr. Béland, you have a few minutes.

Mr. Béland: Thank you. I'll consult the other brief. In your brief, you establish a very clear distinction between internal law and international law. You say, in short, that were we to secede under internal law, this would obviously be an illegal act. Have you studied the matter? Because one of the premises of this Commission is that the Constitution Act, 1982, was adopted despite the opposition of the Québec National Assembly; it is one of the premises of the legislation that set up the Commission. Do you think this is a valid legal argument in Québec's favour, to justify what would, theoretic-

cally, be an illegal act?

Mr. Brun (Pierre): Yes. Indeed, this is one of the premises, undoubtedly one of the major premises, that led us to conclude that our act is not entirely illegal. However, it must be admitted that in 1982, when repatriation occurred, there was no constitutional amending formula. It is the Supreme Court which determined the mechanics and procedures governing the repatriation, and it decided that only the consent of a large number of provinces would be sufficient. So, the fact that Québec did not accept this Constitution at the time did not prevent the Constitution from coming into force in Québec and imposing itself in Québec.

Now we are stuck with the amending formula and we must respect it. There is an important distinction. Politically, it could be said that we have never accepted it. Legally, this line of reasoning is somewhat weaker, but I think we can employ it in terms of legality. Under British law, there is de facto recognition of certain illegalities. It may be recognized that a Parliament carried out what were illegal acts but, subsequently, that it was entirely within its powers to do so. It is on this basis that we could internally legalize Québec's act.

Mr. Béland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec inc.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Alright? We thank the representatives of the Jeune Barreau de Québec. Would the representatives of the Association des étudiants en sciences humaines du cégep de Matane please be seated at the table. I now give the floor to the representative of the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec. Mr. Beaudry. Mr. Beaudry, order please. It's your turn to ask a question.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I told you earlier, you think too often.

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question will not be long. In your brief, you opt for sovereignty. You state that sovereignty or the powers you want to repatriate, the areas of jurisdiction you want to repatriate, that this come about over a period of five years. In this regard, your viewpoint coincides to some extent with that of the Jeune Chambre de Commerce de Montréal, which mentioned earlier a period of 10 years.

Did you settle on five years because you think that sovereignty will necessarily mean that Quebecers will experience reduced incomes, a

negative financial impact of some sort, and is that why you'd like to see this impact spread over five years so that it is not too unsettling for the Québec economy?

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Thank you very much for your question, Mr. Beaudry, which I think is very relevant. At the outset, indeed, we spoke of a five-year transitional period. We put forward this figure because any government negotiating with Ottawa will have to have a new mandate, the maximum length of which is five years. Now, there is no reason that the negotiations could not be carried out in less than the five years proposed.

(5:15 p.m.)

Obviously, the five-year period is uncertain because, given a number of problems or imponderable factors, the deadline could be extended. You were talking about economic integration. You have undoubtedly read and consulted our brief. You have no doubt noted that we were careful not to mention which type of economic integration we advocate. Initially, we simply tried to define a legal and constitutional framework in which to adopt the type of economic integration we are seeking.

Different experts can talk to you about different types of economic integration, ranging from free trade, customs unions, common markets or monetary unions to economic unions. A number of possibilities can be contemplated, depending on the perspective chosen. So, we said to ourselves: We will give ourselves a five-year mandate, possibly to negotiate some form of economic union, possibly some form of political union, depending on what happens.

Mr. Beaudry: When you negotiate this union, the other party will, perforce, have to agree to negotiate.

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Of course. That is self-evident.

Mr. Beaudry: If I understand your brief correctly, if this were hard to achieve, you are not prepared to sacrifice the option you have chosen. Negotiations could, at some point, become tense, depending on the option you choose.

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Yes. One thing that is certain is that negotiations would be conducted openly on the basis of Quebecers' clearly expressing their desire for sovereignty through a referendum. I believe that negotiations could take place in a climate of trust, engendered by stability, which in turn is rooted in certainty. As I said at the outset, we will seek this certainty through the desire of Quebecers to free themselves and become a sovereign society.

Mr. Beaudry: The message you are sending the other provinces is that Quebecers want to be sovereign, that we are of good faith and wish to sit down to negotiate in good faith, and if we can do so, so much the better. If we can't do it, then we will remain sovereign, but we'll take care of our problems. That's about it.

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Listen, there are...

Mr. Beaudry: You don't want that, but that is the mandate, the message you would like to communicate.

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Listen, there's a nuance. Earlier I spoke of varying degrees of economic integration and there are several possibilities concerning a political union. At present, under the Free Trade Agreement - heaven knows I am not an economist - there is a Canadian-American arbitration committee which is a form of supranational government, about which we spoke regarding our government. There are several avenues that can be explored.

Mr. Beaudry: That's fine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mrs. Pagé: Yes, probably because of the very nature of your organization you have thought a great deal about institutions. In your brief, you broach the matter of the organization of the State. You also bring up the question of the proposed Québec constitution and I would like to say, on the basis of a situation I have been observing since yesterday and which has deeply troubled me, I will ask you questions on the representation of women.

Since yesterday we have heard many organizations. Judging by the representation of the sexes, it would seem that women account for 14% of the Québec population, not 52%. When you talk about a constitution, should it be drawn up by a constituent assembly made up to accurately represent the Québec population, half of which are women? Second, to change the weight of tradition, should we not seek equitable representation for women in our legislative, executive and legal institutions?

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Well, Mrs. Pagé, your question is indeed interesting...

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): You have touched upon a problem facing the Québec parliamentary system and, undoubtedly, the entire

Canadian parliamentary system, that of representativity. During the last session, roughly 35% of our members in the student Parliament were women. Obviously, this is still not enough. We are still aiming at 50%.

Once we obtain a mandate with respect to sovereignty, we envisage a two-phase transitional scenario. First of all, as our brief indicates, we would say: Now, listen, there is not a legal void. Canadian legislation overall is still in force until we can abrogate it after five years. Fine. First. Second, we will set up a constituent assembly, as you call it, which will conduct a broad-based consultation with a view to writing a constitution, upon whose broad outlines we have reflected and an example of which we propose.

Obviously, I am speaking to you as a representative of the student Parliament. It goes without saying that, given the nature of our organization, we favour, as you will readily understand, a constituent assembly made up largely of elected representatives because, in our opinion, the leading role of the National Assembly is to serve as the foremost forum of Quebecers, all Quebecers from all over Québec, whether they speak French, English or other languages. Obviously, the problem lies at the grass roots level. We must attain some degree of representativeness. How can we reconcile both imperatives? The question remains to be asked.

Mrs. Pagé: Do I have any time left?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): There is some time left provided the answer is not too long. Let the question serve as an example in this respect.

Mrs. Pagé: The Conseil du statut de la femme recommended that, in a new Québec, we should seek equal representation of women and men in various institutions. Do you accept the recommendation of the Conseil du statut de la femme?

Mr. Simard (Jean-François): Well, obviously it is a desirable and praiseworthy objective, that goes without saying. However, it does imply a significant reform, no doubt, of our parliamentary system. Obviously, if we had to contemplate reforming or reorganizing the system, we would, in particular, have to make provision for the representation of women.

**Association des étudiants en sciences
humaines du cégep de Matane**

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We thank the representatives of the Assemblée parlementaire des étudiants du Québec. As the end of the meeting is approaching, I will immediately give the list of those who will be called upon to testify and those who will ask

questions, to enable everyone to get organized. I'm beginning to find it hard to keep order in my papers. We will hear from the Étudiants en sciences humaines du cégep de Matane; Mr. Béland will be the questioner; next, we will hear the Association étudiante François-Xavier-Gameau, which will replace the Assemblée parlementaire at the table; Mr. Bouchard will be the questioner; next, McGill-Québec, with questions from Mr. Roy; then the Youth Association of the Equality Party, with questions from Mr. Hogue. That will conclude the afternoon's proceedings. We will now hear the Association des étudiants en sciences humaines du cégep de Matane. Mr. Béland will ask a question.

Mr. Béland: You talk about the referendum, and this is what I would like to question you about. I was astonished to read in your brief: It would be preferable to achieve this through a referendum. Is this a polite or diplomatic way of saying that you absolutely want one, or do you mean that it is not absolutely necessary? I did not find this part clear. Are you demanding a referendum?

Mr. Audy (Sébastien): We are demanding one because... This could also perhaps be achieved through an election-referendum but we really prefer a referendum. It is clearer. People will take a clear position on the question.

Mr. Béland: OK. Do you make economic association a condition? Would the referendum focus on sovereignty provided there is economic association?

Mr. Audy (Sébastien): No. That is secondary.

Mr. Béland: So, your viewpoint coincides with that of the Commission jeunesse du Parti libéral to the effect that, if there is no association, we'll manage with sovereignty.

Mr. Audy (Sébastien): That's right.

Mr. Béland: Thank you.

**Association étudiante
François-Xavier-Gameau inc.**

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you. We now turn to the Association étudiante François-Xavier-Gameau. Mr. Bouchard has a question. I would ask the representatives of McGill-Québec to replace the representatives of the Cégep de Matane. Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you. In your brief you mention the referendum you held on sovereignty in various Cegeps, especially your own, in which

88.6% of the respondents opted for sovereignty. Of course, when you describe the process leading to accession to sovereignty, you talk about the referendum which will be held, a province-wide referendum in Québec on the great collective project of sovereignty. Have you thought about when the referendum would be held? As you know, this is a question that will be asked more and more frequently and with growing intensity within the Commission and among Quebecers in general. As you know, there is widespread debate on whether it is not premature to carry out the referendum within weeks or months of the tabling of the Commission's report or whether it is not better to wait for an undetermined period. What is your position in this respect?

Mr. Poirier (Thomas): Yes, we believe that the best time to hold the referendum would be between June 23 and July 1, 1991, that is, between Saint-Jean-Baptiste day and Canada's national holiday. This is a time when citizens are supposed to feel a sense of belonging to their country. This would be relevant.

Mr. Bouchard: Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you for the question and for the testimony. We now turn to McGill-Québec and a question from Mr. Roy.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): I would ask the representatives of the Youth Association of the Equality Party to be seated at the table.

McGill-Québec

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was quite astonished in reading your brief to note that you discuss culture at length. This is one of the few briefs that has attached real importance to the matter. I would like you to be more specific. On page 2 you state: "Renewed federalism and sovereignty-association resemble each other". I would like you to clarify what you mean. How do they resemble each other?

A second question. You also talk about the notion of multiculturalism which has overshadowed the absence of a veritable national culture. Bearing in mind that in Québec we talk about a Québec culture – a national culture – if we maintain the status quo, that is, a federal system, does not the notion of a national Québec culture contradict the notion of a national culture that Canada would like to acquire?

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): I will answer your first question about renewed federalism and

sovereignty-association. These remarks are not original to us, if you will. We repeated to some extent the ideas mentioned when the Commission began its deliberations. What we meant was that, if you have sovereignty-association... They are similar from a practical standpoint. If you have sovereignty-association, you have certain powers that the federal government now exercises. The federal government is sovereign with regard to those powers, but it exercises them, administers them and legislates with respect to them.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): ...it.

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): Aside from federal powers but with respect to sovereignty-association, the federal government now has jurisdiction over certain matters and it is sovereign; there are some powers that would be jointly administered with the rest of Canada. The National Assembly would not administer these powers.

With regard to legislating, one may well wonder... There was the question of an elected Parliament. Perhaps, among ourselves, we don't want this. Instead, we would prefer delegates, but it's obvious that if you want to share things, a currency, for example – I think that everyone wants that, even the Parti québécois – you need an organization to oversee everything. You can't have people from Canada and from Québec meeting every Thursday to decide...

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Those are procedures, but I don't understand how renewed federalism resembles sovereignty. It strikes me that the very word sovereignty excludes the notion of federal States or...

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): Well, in terms of the administration of powers on a day-to-day basis, they are quite similar because, ultimately, the National Assembly is not solely responsible for adopting legislation from day to day to manage the powers we will pool under sovereignty-association. Do you understand? It's at this level. In terms of sovereignty, where there is a difference between sovereignty-association and renewed federalism is in the different balance of power regarding sovereignty-association. If you like, the possibility of altering the agreement is different. Québec is granted a great deal more power because Québec controls those powers, which determine what we can do with them and whether or not we share them.

If we decided tomorrow morning to no longer share them, we can do so in the same way that... If, tomorrow morning, the National Assembly decides that, from now on, the municipalities will no longer adopt, I don't know, by-laws governing roads within the municipalities, it may do so. Under sovereignty-association, we

would certainly enjoy this power. Obviously, this has political consequences, but the power is there. This is not the case under federalism.

Broadly speaking, the day-to-day administration is similar, although we may repatriate a number of powers.
(5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Even under renewed federalism, indeed, ideally, can there be two national cultures?

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): In my view, it is the very essence of a federation to focus on the criterion of "nation". Any federation endeavours to keep its constituents together by developing the idea of a nation. This is what we observed last June 9 at the Meech Lake Accord signing ceremony, although Meech ultimately failed. Of the 11 premiers who spoke, seven said it was a great day for the Canadian nation. I think this will always be the outcome under renewed federalism. This is what we see in English Canada and at McGill University. English Canadians want a nation...

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Yes. In Québec...

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): ...and they want to include Québec...

Mr. Roy (Bruno): ...are claims to a national literature, a national culture, conceivable under federalism?

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): I don't think so. I think we are always going to go against the grain of majority opinion in Canada. Those people will always seek a nation which includes Québec. They want the federal government to represent their nation and, unless we distort federalism...

Mr. Roy (Bruno): If this logic is taken to its extreme, Canada and Québec appear to be mutually exclusive?

Mr. Adam (Marc-Antoine): If we are a distinct nation and want to remain so, I don't think we can stay in a federation.

Mr. Roy (Bruno): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Youth Association of the Equality Party

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen of McGill-Québec. We now turn to the Youth Association of the Equality Party. Mr. Hogue has a question.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Well,

one question... A reasonable amount of time for asking questions, Mr. Hogue.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): Thank you. On page 8 of your brief, in the last paragraph, are you firmly committed to an analysis of the economic ramifications or do you refuse to engage in debate on the economic situation? Could you comment on this.

Mr. Smith (Richard): Oui, Monsieur. C'est un engagement ferme et complet. Nous croyons que les questions économiques sont importantes, mais, l'unité du Canada... Le Canada est un pays qu'on suppose fondé sur des valeurs et sur des droits. Si le Québec demeure au sein du Canada simplement pour des motifs d'ordre économique, personne n'y gagnera. Le pays a des objectifs et des aspirations. Si les Québécois partagent ces objectifs et ces aspirations, je pense que les Canadiens les accueilleront avec plaisir. Mais si les Québécois ne veulent rester au Canada que pour des raisons d'ordre économique, seulement par crainte des conséquences économiques, tout en continuant de saper les bases de la Charte des droits et libertés ou de ne pas respecter la Charte canadienne, je ne pense pas que l'une ou l'autre des parties puisse y gagner.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): Ça répond assez bien à ma question. On page 52, you state that the cultural communities have a right to self-determination. What, in your view, does this right to self-determination entail? Could the English-speaking community in Québec invoke such a right?

Mr. Smith (Richard): Je voudrais expliquer davantage notre position. Aucun membre de notre association de jeunes ne milite en faveur de la partition du Québec. Notre idée maîtresse, notre principal objectif est de donner au Québec une constitution compatible avec le fédéralisme canadien, qui comporte un nouveau contrat sociolinguistique. Je pense toutefois que cette constitution ou toute constitution à laquelle ont songé de nombreux membres de la Commission doit être rédigée avant que l'indépendance ne soit mise au vote ou qu'il y ait un référendum ou quoi que ce soit d'autre. Je veux dire, vous devez... Je pense que le Québec doit bien à sa communauté anglophone et à ses communautés minoritaires la dignité d'essayer tout au moins de leur dire la position qui leur sera réservée au Québec si ce dernier devient un État indépendant. Si le Québec leur refuse même cette dignité, comment empêcher les gens d'opter pour la partition? Nous prenons ainsi un grand risque.

Qu'arrivera-t-il si la constitution québécoise impose des choses qui ne font pas exactement le bonheur des groupes minoritaires parce qu'on pense que cela vaut quand même mieux que de prendre la voie de la partition, susceptible de

provoquer des désordres? Je pense même à une guerre civile. Ça pourrait arriver. Nous en prenons le risque. Nous pensons que c'est un beau risque pour nous. Nous pensons aussi, toutefois, que cette constitution doit être ébauchée avant et nous voulons que la partition reste... Nous tenons compte de la partition parce que si elle vaut la moitié d'un contrat social... Nous ne voudrions pas que les anglophones et les allophones votent en ce sens parce qu'ils y voient une mesure de conciliation, à cause du contrat social, mais qu'ils votent pour si c'est ce qu'ils veulent. Autrement, ils ne respecteront pas le document. Ils ne participeront plus au développement social de Montréal s'ils ont cédé à la pression.

Notre raisonnement est donc le suivant: nous tentons d'éliminer la pression exercée par le recours à l'indépendance, de sorte que les gens pourront faire un choix en paix, de bonne foi et la conscience libre. Je pense qu'une majorité d'anglophones et d'allophones de cette province voteraient de bon cœur en faveur d'une constitution québécoise lors d'un référendum qui proposerait un contrat social, la Charte des droits et libertés et inclurait la question de la langue. Et je pense que s'ils ne subissent aucune pression, ils respecteront l'esprit du document qui en découlera. Nous aurons alors posé un geste social apte à faire progresser le Québec.

Mr. Hogue (Jean-Pierre): Merci beaucoup. Merci M. le Président.

End of Public Sitings

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Thank you, Gentlemen. This concludes today's sittings and the youth forum. I think we should emphasize that, as is to be expected, the young people – the 37 groups and eight individuals who agreed to participate in this forum and first submitted briefs to the Commission – as it to be expected, the young people have expressed their viewpoints, of course, with energy, generosity, frankness and courage, as young people can do and, of course, we must congratulate them and thank them for it. However, even more, I think we should congratulate and thank them for various qualities less frequently ascribed to young people. Specifically, they submitted to the numerous constraints, directives, time limits and organizational procedures imposed by the forum so that it could take place within the allotted time. For this, we must, of course, congratulate them and assure their friends that they have not necessarily got into a bad habit, permanently, by submitting to discipline and constraints. I believe that the young people who have participated in this forum, too, have been able, at least this afternoon, to observe that members of the Commission have also subjected themselves to numerous time constraints and timetables for

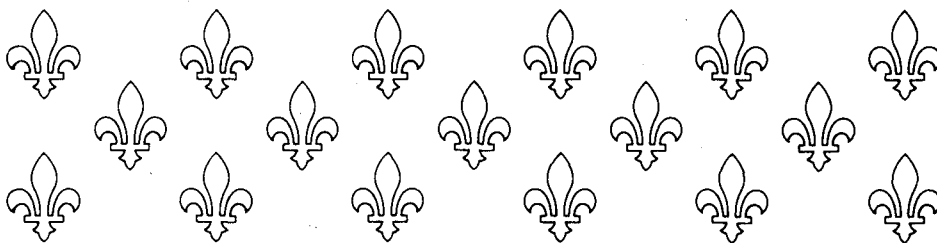
intervention which are not always pleasant to administer, but which are necessary if we want to achieve something.

On behalf of my colleague, Jean Campeau, and the members of the Commission, I would like to thank the young people who participated in this forum. What they have said, the overview we have received of their activity today amounts, undoubtedly, to put it briefly, to a desire to confirm themselves and to grow in a generous, pluralistic spirit, but one specific to Québec.

I would also like to point out that this marks the end of our public proceedings. It brings to a close a highly agreeable portion of our deliberations and heralds the beginning, in the near future, or the continuation of a somewhat more monastic phase of our work, that of drawing a conclusion from all that has gone on before. With the conclusion of the public sittings, I would like to thank, on behalf of all the members of the Commission and my colleague, Jean Campeau, everyone who made our task easier, technically and otherwise, and of course, everyone who submitted a brief to the Commission, who appeared before the Commission, and who submitted to the anguish of timed questions and agreed to participate in our deliberations, thereby helping to complicate our task, because there was no shortage of ideas to be expressed, and to bring us closer to our conclusions.

I thank everyone, and hereby declare this sitting adjourned.

(End of sitting, 5:40 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, Wednesday, March 27, 1991

No 31

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Québec City, Wednesday, March 27, 1991

Closing Sitting

(9:40 a.m.)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen. This morning's sitting is basically an opportunity for each member of the Commission to make his or her final comments, which will be followed by a short address by the two Chairmen and, to conclude, the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Prime Minister will take the floor.

I remind the members of the Commission immediately that there will be a number of events following this sitting that may require their presence. First of all, around 11:30, which means we hope to have finished by that time, there will be a small reception in the Chairman's room, here behind the Salon rouge. Then, when the report is tabled in the National Assembly at 2 p.m., the members of the Commission who do not sit in the National Assembly are invited to the President's Gallery in the National Assembly for distribution of the report at that time. Lastly, after the report is tabled, the members of the Commission will receive a copy; they will be given their copy of the report right here, very simply, without ceremony. And this will enable them to make their final comments about the report among themselves.

Agenda

If you don't mind, we are now going to begin to go through the items on this morning's agenda. The members of the Steering Committee will have the floor first, in alphabetical order. Then the other members of the Commission will have the floor, also in alphabetical order. Next, the Secretary of the Commission will present an administrative report. Then the two Chairmen will speak, followed by the Leader of the Official Opposition and, lastly, the Prime Minister.

You will recall that the chairmanship of the sittings of this Commission alternated. Since this is the last meeting and, even more symbolically, the last time we will serve as Co-chairmen, we are going to change places, my colleague Jean Campeau and I, at about mid-sitting, i.e. after Mrs. Hovington speaks and before Mr. Laberge takes the floor. Neither of them should come to any conclusions about this.

You'll note that I am taking quite a long time to make my preliminary remarks. This is to give the gentlemen of the press enough time to take photos. But I think it's time now for us to begin and, if you would clear the centre of the room a bit while continuing to go about your business for the time allotted, we will begin the

comments.

First, the members of the Steering Committee. Mr. Claude Béland will be the first speaker. Mr. Béland, I give you the floor.

Comments by the members of the Commission

Mr. Claude Béland

Mr. Béland: Messrs. Chairmen, we are coming to the end of our work and I would like to tell you how honoured and pleased I was to be invited to collaborate in the work of this Commission. It has been an extremely enriching experience, and this is why I want to thank all those who made it possible for me to be here, particularly you, Messrs. Chairmen, Mr. Secretary, all the members of your staff, and each and every one of you, my fellow members of the Commission.

At the start of our work last November, I expressed the wish that the Commission provide an opportunity for Quebecers to become better informed about the important question of the constitutional status of Québec. Democracy is much more successful when everything is out in the open, and, in this regard, I believe the Commission has contributed immensely to shedding more light on the constitutional problem, the issues, the challenges and possible solutions. It has contributed and I believe it will continue to contribute through the Commission's report itself and the many reports by experts, which can be consulted in the future and will no doubt fuel our discussions.

I believe that never before have so many people taken the trouble to ponder this question and to seek solutions. I am thinking of all those who prepared briefs. I am thinking of the many experts. Though a few months ago there was little research being conducted on the subject in our universities, there is undoubtedly much more today, and now that research has begun, I am convinced it will continue. At least I hope so. And I am thinking of all those who, thanks to television and the media, have been able to follow the deliberations of the Commission regularly.

The work of this Commission and particularly its report are analogous to the sowing of new seeds and, as I have noted in our meetings, the seeds are abundant and robust. I have also noted that the soil is rich and fertile, and that many people are prepared to work our land. This is why I now hope that the National Assembly, having given our report a favourable reception, will take great care of these precious seeds, make them sprout prudently but confidently to produce an abundant harvest that

will satisfy the deepest aspirations of Quebecers. Messrs. Chairmen, I thank you.

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

Mr. Guy Bélanger

Mr. Bélanger (Laval-des-Rapides): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to give a brief assessment of the work of each of the Commission members here. I won't comment on each individually because I only have three minutes. I believe that all of us here worked with the profound conviction in our hearts and minds that we were defining or helping to build a Québec that, if I have understood correctly, we all love deeply. This made our work more interesting and more respectful because all of us, in defining our convictions forcefully but with a certain flexibility, that is, while accepting the viewpoints of others, made it possible to arrive at a consensus I find worthwhile, or at least one I can live with over the next two years.

Secondly, I would like to direct my words to the rest of Canada or the other Canadian provinces. I would like to tell them: Be advised that, henceforth, for Québec, everything is clear. At the latest, in October of 1992, the curtain will fall for the last time. The referendum on sovereignty will provide Québec's clear answer. This is not a threat, far from it. I believe that Québec has never in its history made threats. This is much more than a feeling that has developed in our hearts over the past 30 years and is now being expressed forcefully. Until then, we await your offers. They must be substantial, very substantial, because we have set high standards. Our requirements are stringent, and a few small powers will not be enough to satisfy us.

As for us Quebecers, a major task awaits, a task first of all of informing, analysing and evaluating possible offers from the Canadian government. All that will lead us to a clear, definitive choice. As for me, Guy Bélanger, Member for Laval-des-Rapides, representing that riding in the Québec legislature, I will defend a Québec that, regardless of its decision - since it isn't up to parliamentarians to make the decision, but up to all Quebecers, up to the Québec people - whatever the decision, new powers or sovereignty, I would like a Québec that will, in the end, have the means to be unequivocally and forever the master of its fate.

I would like us to acquire this quiet sovereignty in the same way we made the Quiet Revolution that enabled our province to evolve to such a degree. Béland mentioned seeds a moment ago. I believe we are now sowing great hopes. When a farmer sows, it is first an act of faith since, while the seed is in the ground, he doesn't know whether it is dead or germinating.

Only when he sees the stem does he know that something is growing. I hope that this stem will be fertile in many ways for the future of Québec.

It is from this perspective that I will work in the coming years with all the force of my convictions to build this Québec, whatever its decision, new powers or sovereignty. But I want a Québec that is the master of its fate and I will work with all my strength to achieve this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Jacques Brassard.

Mr. Jacques Brassard

Mr. Brassard: Mr. Chairman, there was much talk of consensus during our work. Every day, almost every hour, we worried, we wondered about the extent of the consensus, which varied from one hour to the next. What must be said about the consensus, Mr. Chairman, is that, in regard to the basics, that is, the choice of a status for Québec, there was no consensus. There has never been one. There was none at the beginning and there is none at the end. I think if we are honest we have to admit this, and it was very clear, very obvious in the voting on Monday night on an amendment tabled by us, by the Opposition, to modify the conclusion that meant the Commission would have chosen sovereignty as the future status of Québec. The vote was 15 in favour of sovereignty, 17 against. There is therefore no consensus on the basics, on the option. But there is one on the process, i.e. the holding of a referendum on sovereignty some time in 1992. I want to point out, and I think this is important because the public is already confused, and this is the only referendum vote recommended by the Commission, by the 30 members of the Commission who voted that way. The only vote recommended is a referendum on sovereignty.

Unfortunately, for the past few days, Minister Rémiard has made it clear that his government is prepared to hold another referendum under the Referendum Act, this one dealing with an offer of renewed federalism, which only his government will deem acceptable or not. This referendum would cancel the referendum on sovereignty provided for by the Commission through a law to be adopted for this purpose. I think Mr. Rémiard's words are regrettable, deplorable, because they clearly indicate that his government intends to ignore the Commission's consensus on a referendum on sovereignty in 1992, and the ink of the Prime Minister's signature is not even dry.

In fact, Mr. Rémiard admits that his government intends to distort the meaning of the Commission's consensus by evading the obligation to hold a referendum on sovereignty. By

affirming that his government could hold a referendum on an offer of renewed federalism, which would cancel the one on sovereignty proposed by the Commission, the Minister is, I must say, sapping Québec's strength in regard to English Canada by a profession of faith in his Leader's federalism. No sooner had Prime Minister Mulroney heard mention of this consensus or Mr. Rémillard's words than he hastened, yesterday, to discredit the scope of the consensus arrived at by the Commission.

We say to the government — these will be my last words, Mr. Chairman — that the Opposition will be constantly vigilant and that any attempt to distort the meaning of the Commission's consensus on the holding of a referendum on sovereignty some time in 1992 will be fought tooth and nail because the consensus corresponds to the aspirations of the very great majority of Quebecers, as we saw in the public hearings, and, if the government wishes to evade the obligation to hold a referendum on sovereignty and hold another on renewed federalism, as Mr. Parizeau said yesterday and I repeat, he will find us heading him off at the pass. I want to point out, in concluding, that, in our opinion, considering Mr. Rémillard's words and the intentions of the government, I say to the Prime Minister that, as of now, he is, in our opinion, under house arrest in his bunker.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Guy Chevette.

Mr. Guy Chevette

Mr. Chevette: Mr. Chairman. I had understood the mandate of this Commission to be as follows: clear recommendations were to be made concerning Québec's political status. We were to do our duty and we all did in terms of listening to experts, individuals and groups, and I must thank all these people who came before us and told us clearly what they thought.

Some groups refused to indicate their preference for an option. We badgered them in a way so that they would tell us one way or the other: I opt for federalism or I opt for sovereignty. And when we wrote our report, the very people who badgered the groups and individuals who came before us did not have the courage — I mean us, the Commission members — we did not have the courage to say which option should be chosen. But we badgered witnesses to tell us what option they wanted. I personally find that part of the report very offensive. I don't think we can, in all decency, ask people to take a stand on an option while we, who are responsible for making recommendations concerning an option, refuse to do so.

As for the process, as my colleague Brassard said, yes, if we show a modicum of

respect for the report and if the words still have meaning and convey a truth, the process proposed by the Commission is one that will lead clearly in the coming months to the political sovereignty of Québec. There will, of course, be people with a different interpretation. The late Judge Cliche, with whom I sat on a commission, said to me: In politics or in life, you cannot continually straddle the fence. In politics, you have to have the courage of your ideas and the conviction to express them. And I believe that, in this regard, the Commission does not do justice to or reflect what the people who came before us said.

Mr. Chairman, I understood this mandate to be that we, as Quebecers, had to give ourselves a genuine first chance, not try to define a last chance for English Canada. It was with this in mind that I myself worked, Mr. Chairman, to arrive at conclusions that would have been in keeping with our mandate, that would have respected what the people told us and that would have reflected the courage and strength of our convictions. Mr. Chairman, I personally reject the path of humiliation. The sovereignty option is a clear one. It is aimed at proving our ability, our pride, our know-how, and I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is no longer any room for maybe's: maybe, maybe, maybe no longer has its place. The chameleons should show their true colours in public and say aloud what they feel in their gut in favour of Québec and Quebecers, instead of trying, Mr. Chairman, to talk out of both sides of their mouth at the same time, one speech for one wing and another for another wing. I think the process about which there is a consensus cannot be interpreted as being other than one of pride, with the ability to take full responsibility for ourselves. Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Claude Dauphin.

Mr. Claude Dauphin

Mr. Dauphin: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, my initial words will be congratulations, Messrs. Chairmen, Mr. Bélanger and Mr. Campeau, and Mr. Rousseau, the Secretary of the Commission, for your fine work throughout these five months of the mandate given us by the Québec National Assembly. Of course, I also want to thank all the groups, all the organizations, all the individuals, all the guest experts who came before us, before this Commission, to present their views, their vision of Québec, in the case of the experts obviously and in the case of the groups, organizations and individuals as well.

Mr. Chairman, Québec, through this historic, broader Parliamentary Commission, has spoken with one voice, notably in regard to the

process, as Mr. Chevette and Mr. Brassard have just indicated. Now it is indeed English Canada's turn to arrive at a consensus. With this Commission, Québec has built a consensus, at least a consensus among a clear majority, and it is now, in my opinion, up to English Canada to make us very substantial offers in the next 18 months if it wants to continue to maintain the ties that now bind us. A consensus, Mr. Chairman, of which I am extremely proud because it will enable Québec to be united and stronger than ever in the coming months and years.

(10:00 a.m.)

I'm comfortable with the recommendations of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. As I said a moment ago, in a few months, it will be up to English Canada to arrive at a consensus and, to respond briefly to my colleagues, Messrs. Brassard and Chevette, it is obviously the people who are sovereign and it is the people, in the final analysis, who will decide their future, as Bill 90 creating this Commission in fact stipulated. Obviously, a bill will be tabled in the National Assembly this spring that will ratify the consensus created by the Bélanger-Campeau Commission. Two extremely democratic Parliamentary Commissions will also be created, special commissions, one to prepare, if I may use these words, Québec's accession to sovereignty, if this is the will of the people, and the other, working simultaneously, to evaluate and judge the offers that English Canada makes us, which should, I repeat, bind the Government of Canada and the provinces. So two Parliamentary commissions will be set up and they will report to the Québec National Assembly.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that, in my opening address, I stressed two issues that have been the subject of parliamentary experiences in which I have taken part since 1961. The first concerned young people. They are, I repeat, our main natural resource. It is young people who, in my opinion, will have to live much longer than we will with the future of Québec that we are going to decide on together. I am proud, and I also want to thank you, Messrs. Chairmen, for holding the youth forum, the only forum we held, which enabled hundreds of young people to express their views about their future. I want to thank you for this. I also want to thank the two Chairmen and the Steering Committee as a whole for welcoming so many members of the cultural communities, who also expressed their views before this Commission. These communities make an extraordinary contribution to Québec. I hope the cultural communities will experience with us the entire evolution, the whole process of arriving at the Québec of tomorrow. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs.

Christiane Pelchat.

Mrs. Christiane Pelchat

Mrs. Pelchat: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I feel that we have just taken a necessarily crucial step in our political development. Never before have we seen an assembly composed of people from so many different walks of life, working together to find solutions that will break the constitutional stalemate we have had since 1982. This Commission, which we all affectionately named the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, can certainly be proud of the work it has accomplished.

No, Mr. Chairman, this Commission has not found a miracle solution to our constitutional problems, but it has the merit of having found, through its public hearings and consultations with experts, feasible solutions that the public wants to be attempted. If there had been a miracle solution, Mr. Chairman, we would certainly not have been here for nearly six months.

What I retain of the message we received is that Québec wants more powers, more control over the levers of its development, the elimination of overlapping between the two levels of government, greater attention to the participation of all the distinct elements that make up Québec and, especially, more say for the regions in decision-making and in defining the objectives of our society.

But Mr. Chairman, you will agree that, above all, the message is clear: the public wants to be consulted. I believe that the main recommendation of this Commission paves the way toward satisfying these demands. Few people came before us to say that the ideal choice is either the accession of Québec to the status of an independent State or the renewal of the federal system as we now know it. The steps that the Commission recommends be taken will, I am convinced, provide the elements necessary for the people to make an enlightened choice in the end through a formal, democratic consultation.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you, Mr. Bélanger, you, Mr. Campeau, and Mr. Rousseau, for the extraordinary work accomplished. I must say that I feel the consensus we reached the day before yesterday is in large measure your doing and I thank you for it. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Gil Rémillard.

Mr. Gil Rémillard

Mr. Rémillard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have had the opportunity in the last six months to take part in one of the most democratic experiences of my life as a parliamentarian. The

Bélanger-Campeau Commission has made it possible for me to learn a lot from Quebecers. I have listened attentively to the people from all regions of Québec who testified, as I have listened very attentively to the experts who explained the main constitutional issues to us. I therefore want, first of all, to thank all the people who testified. They are the very foundation of the success of this Commission, like you, Mr. Chairman, and your Co-chairman, like the Secretary of the Commission, his staff and all the members of the Commission, who, without exception, have done a remarkable job, and I want to thank them.

I feel the Commission's report is in every way consistent with the message we received from Quebecers. After more than 30 years of sterile discussion, the message we received is that Quebecers want to decide their constitutional future once and for all. They want to be the ones to decide, no one else, and this is exactly what the Commission's report very clearly establishes.

The Commission's report reflects what Quebecers think. It highlights two options in a parallel manner: on the one hand, a new partnership with the rest of Canada and, on the other, sovereignty. After the failure of the Meech Lake Accord, the message for the rest of Canada is clear. It is very clear. If we do not have any offers from Ottawa and the other provinces for a new partnership, if we do not receive offers that are able to satisfy the legitimate expectations of the Québec people, there will be a referendum on Québec sovereignty in the fall of 1992 at the latest. Québec has made enough offers in the last 30 years; we will make no more. It is up to the rest of Canada to offer us a new partnership. We will no longer negotiate with 10 other parties. We will only speak with the federal government. Quebecers want to have the means they need to fully express what they are from a social and cultural standpoint as well as a political and economic one. Quebecers want to share, as a full-fledged partner, what they have in common with the rest of Canada, and we have much in common. The offers we receive should formally bind the federal government and the other provincial governments.

Mr. Chairman, regardless of the meaning we give the words "formally bind the Canadian government and the other provinces", regardless of the meaning we give these words, Quebecers are not fools. As a government, we will not abandon any of Québec's rights. As a government, we will not agree to change one iota of what Quebecers are entitled to. We will not agree to begin again the unfortunate experience of the Meech Lake Accord.

If the governments do not respect their commitment, we have a guarantee. It is there in the report. It is clearly expressed. And this

guarantee is a referendum on sovereignty in 1992 at the latest.

Mr. Chairman, two options are offered in the Bélanger-Campeau Commission's report. These two options will be carefully studied by special Parliamentary Commissions. They will make recommendations to the National Assembly that will enable us, as a government, to meet the basic requirements of any responsible government to preserve the well-being of Quebecers and to promote the economic, social, cultural and political development of Québec.

Mr. Chairman, a moment ago Mr. Brassard said the Prime Minister was under house arrest. This is an expression usually heard after a coup d'État. There has been no coup d'État in Québec. There is a legitimately elected government that is here to govern and is going to govern.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of the very democratic process that has resulted in the Commission's tabling of this report, which reflects a broad consensus, it is my pleasure to say there is a winner, and that winner is the Québec people. Quebecers are the winners of this exercise. A stronger Québec, more determined than ever; a Québec more than ever the master of its own choices. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): We have heard the members of the Steering Committee. You've noted that we have not been keeping a very strict account of the time each person has used, as we did in previous sittings. I made the firm decision not to interrupt anyone this morning, believing that everyone would keep to the time allotted, more or less, exceeding it only a little. The beginning of this sitting perhaps aroused a certain enthusiasm. I remind you that each person has three minutes to speak.

The members of the Commission will now speak in alphabetical order. Mr. Marcel Beaudry.

Mr. Marcel Beaudry

Mr. Beaudry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me tell you right away that I am generally satisfied with the content, conclusions and recommendations of the Commission's report. The experience we have had over the past six months, the many people we have heard, the study and analysis of some 650 briefs, not counting the background papers placed at our disposal, made it possible for me to know and understand my fellow Quebecers better and to appreciate them more.

I am particularly proud and pleased that the Commission recognized, in its conclusions, the vulnerability of the Outaouais and that it recommends in this regard that specific programs be set up immediately so that employment and economic activity in this region are not affected by any change in constitutional status. I hereby

inform the Prime Minister and the members of his Cabinet that I fully intend to see this recommendation implemented in the very near future. But what we should focus on is the broad consensus that has been reached concerning the process proposed and adopted, let me say in passing, with 30 votes in favour, two against and one abstention.

That the representatives of the Liberal Party and the pro-federalist members of the Commission acknowledged that sovereignty is perhaps the ultimate solution to be considered, and that the representatives of the Parti québécois and the pro-sovereignist members of the Commission also agreed to recognize that renewed federalism is still possible if Canada makes Québec serious offers in this regard and that the public can be consulted on these offers, this is almost a miracle. In my opinion, the Bélanger-Campeau report is a genuine victory for Québec.

In closing, I want to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for the confidence he has shown in me by enabling me to participate in the work of this Commission, as well as the Chairmen, the Secretary and his staff, and all those with whom I worked on this report in a spirit of collaboration, openness, cordiality and friendship. (10:15 a.m.)

The Bélanger-Campeau Commission has been a revelation and an extraordinary experience that I would, without any hesitation, participate in again. I express the wish that, through the results that we expect from the work we have just completed, Quebecers will be able to satisfy all their aspirations in the Québec of tomorrow.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier.

Mr. Jean-Claude Beaumier

Mr. Beaumier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, here we are at the end of our work. A report will be tabled this afternoon that, unfortunately, cannot contain all the messages we received during the public hearings. It would be a shame if some of these messages went unheeded. Our tour throughout the province provided many groups and individuals with an excellent forum in which to express fears and demands that had nothing to do with the constitutional future of Québec. But these people hoped much would result from their efforts. They came to tell us that they wanted a more equitable society. They came to express the needs of the poorest, the misery of some segments of our population. And I express the wish that these briefs be given special attention and be forwarded to those who will prepare the future of Québec.

I would also like to say that the

representatives of the municipalities were honoured and pleased to take part in the Commission, which was a first in Québec. And I repeat on their behalf our great willingness to collaborate.

In closing, let me pay particular tribute to the two Co-chairmen, to the Secretary and to the entire staff of the Secretariat of the Commission, who accomplished a titanic task. My fellow members of the Commission, I will always have excellent memories of you and great admiration for you. You were able to reconcile your convictions with the aspirations and wishes of Quebecers, and thereby arrive at a very broad consensus. You have earned the respect of everyone, since you have helped advance the cause of Québec. Bravo! Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Louise Bégin.

Mrs. Louise Bégin

Mrs. Bégin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, after five months of work, and after hearing over 250 briefs from various milieus and regions of Québec, we have now come to a consensus on the constitutional and political future of Québec. After many meetings, the Commission members have chosen two possibilities for Québec: one of a federalist nature, a renewed federalism, and the other, full, complete sovereignty for Québec.

There is consensus on the way in which the National Assembly will have to proceed to determine its constitutional future. Between now and the end of spring 1991 it will have to adopt legislation providing, among other things, for a preamble that will denounce the Constitution Act, 1982, which was proclaimed despite Québec's opposition and which took away some of its powers without its consent. In addition, the recent failure of Meech Lake is forcing us to redefine Québec's political and constitutional status.

Section I will announce the holding of a referendum on Québec sovereignty, which must take place on October 26, 1992 at the latest. This section will also provide for the creation of a special Parliamentary Committee to analyse and study the whole question of the accession of Québec to full sovereignty. Naturally, if the Government of Canada should make an offer for economic partnership, this Committee would also have the power to analyse such an offer and to make recommendations about it to the National Assembly.

Finally, Part II will provide for the institution of another special Parliamentary Committee by the National Assembly to study any offer of a new constitutional partnership from the federal government. It may of course make recommendations in this regard to the

National Assembly.

It is quite clear, Messrs. Chairmen, that if the members of this special committee, set up to study constitutional offers from the federal government, judge these offers acceptable and make a recommendation accordingly to the National Assembly, at that moment the government can turn to the Referendum Act to consult the Québec people and ask them whether they accept the federal government offers. If the people turn thumbs down on these offers, the government will then have to amend Part I of the act establishing the process to determine the political and constitutional future of Québec, which has particular reference to the referendum on sovereignty.

Messrs. Chairmen, this is the consensus that has come out of our work. I hope it will strengthen Québec's position. In closing, I want to say to the federal government and the other Canadian provinces that Québec is serious about this process, and that if action by them is needed, it must be taken as quickly as possible. Thank you, Messrs. Chairmen.

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

Mrs. Jeanne L. Blackburn

Mrs. Blackburn: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to salute and thank the Co-chairmen and my colleagues on this Commission for having maintained, throughout the discussions and despite our differences, a climate that has been generally peaceable and courteous.

For me, the hearings revealed a broad consensus, i.e. a Québec that is sovereign or a Québec that exercises most powers within its own territory. Several speakers indicated that renewed federalism was a mission impossible, because there are in Canada two peoples with a radically opposed vision of the country, not to say an antagonistic one. Quebecers want a strong Québec that exercises most powers, leaving the federal government with some powers to ensure relations with the outside world, while the rest of Canada envisages a strong Canada, strongly centralized, in which the provinces are all equal and French has minority status.

We must remember that, apart from a few minor changes, the country suits English Canadians just as it is. They want to keep it and that's legitimate. I share Mr. Louis Bernard's opinion in this. Allow me to remind you of what he said before this Commission and I quote: "We Quebecers do not have the right to demand that the Canadian people change the country to suit us". Noting these facts, most of those appearing before the Commission said to us: "Let's make our own country; we have the means and the competence".

A first comment. With the exception of some experts, there were, fortunately, few who presented sovereignty, as the government does, as a threat made by the government to force Canada to negotiate; nor were there many who presented sovereignty as a solution made out of spite or by default. Quebecers who demand sovereignty think of it in terms of the requirements of a complete society. The Quebecers heard by this Commission claim sovereignty in order to have a veritable blueprint for society. They want a State in which men and women are equal, where minorities are respected and the rights of the aboriginal peoples and Anglophones recognized. A modern, democratic State.

Quebecers want a country. One would have to be deaf not to hear this cry, and I regret that this Commission has not come to this conclusion. In addition, I would be remiss if I did not remind you that the tour we made of the regions showed us their dynamism, their imagination and their determination to take part in the building of a country. They unanimously demanded the authority, the means to pursue their development. We must not ignore this determination.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the work of the Commission will make it possible for Quebecers to take over the constitutional debate, which is, fortunately, less and less a debate among experts. I would like to have seen the economic studies discussed in public as well.

I want to thank all the Quebecers who contributed to our work, as well as those who followed our discussions throughout. It is now up to the people of Québec. Mr. Rémillard said to us earlier: "The real winners are the Québec people, but I'm afraid the government is in the process of stealing their victory from them".

Mr. Chairman, the report of the Commission is clear: one referendum on sovereignty. The campaign has begun. The people must demand that the government, the Prime Minister, respect its results. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Lucien Bouchard

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Chairman, the feeling uppermost in me as we come to the end of our work is one of confidence in the solidarity of the Québec people. This solidarity is manifest in the consensus that is now bringing us together in reflection, but above all in support of a process that tomorrow will lead Québec to its chosen political destiny.

Québec has been on this path for several decades, it is true, but now there is a need for greater agreement on essentials and, most important, the decisions that will point the way

must be taken by the people of Québec, who alone are responsible; sole expert, judge, actor, decision-maker. Quebecers have had enough of listening to us, the politicians, businesspeople, labour leaders, discuss, argue and discourse endlessly on what they want or do not want, what they hope for and what they fear. The people of Québec want to express their own wishes for the future.

And when we speak of the future we must talk about sovereignty, for sovereignty is at the centre of the political scene. Whether we are already for or still against, it occupies us fully. When, because of its composition, this Commission was unable to have done with half measures, it had to propose that the decision be up to the people. Apart from the ups and downs in the offing, despite the attempts of those who, in Ottawa, have always based their power on our divisions, we know now that there will be, at the latest in October 1992, a referendum on sovereignty in Québec. The Prime Minister's signature and the National Assembly guarantee us that.

Between the point of departure today and the referendum, we must put up with an interval that some of us did not want, but between the two points the road is marked out. The commitments are formal; the people will demand strict compliance. The confidence I spoke of earlier will not rule out vigilance.

In closing, dear friends and colleagues on the Commission, allow me to express the pride I feel for having worked with you and having signed the report with you. I hope with all my heart that our separate ways will bring us together again, at the end of the course, this time within Québec sovereignty, an exultant, responsible, open, necessary sovereignty which we shall build together. Thank you.

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

Mrs. Cheryl Campbell Steer

Mrs. Campbell Steer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and my fellow members of the Commission. I have been listening with a great deal of interest to your concluding remarks this morning. Seriously, I am proud, and I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to take part in this analysis and study of the political and constitutional future of Québec.

As one who still hopes for renewed federalism, I thank you for your courtesy and openness of spirit in discussion, given our political leanings and personal differences. The report to be submitted this afternoon reflects, in my opinion, a Québec reality as far as the stage of our political evolution is concerned. Two possibilities for far-reaching changes in the political and constitutional status quo of Québec

have been chosen.

I think that if a choice is to be made, Quebecers must take part in the public discussions of options and, since we are going to need economic partnership with Canada, whatever way is chosen the rest of Canada must take part as well.

Recommending a referendum, even a suspenseful one, within a very short period of time, it seems to me, would have had the effect of reducing the possibilities of negotiating a profitable partnership for everyone. Nonetheless, I have personal reservations, as expressed in the report, about our decision to impose a time limit as short as 18 months for receiving and studying the response of our federal and provincial partners, although I do agree that a limit is necessary, so that Quebecers are not kept waiting again.

(10:30 a.m.)

I agreed to the recommendations; I am convinced that serious discussion has already begun and that these recommendations will allow the Québec government to accept offers from the Canadian government and to consult Quebecers about such offers or the accession of Québec to sovereignty. Because in the end, it is us, Quebecers, and not you, members of the Commission, who have the right to make the decision and the final choice after receiving the information needed. Thank you for the chance you gave me of working in concert with you on our common future. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Before giving the floor to Mr. d'Anjou, there was some difficulty with the sound which was very weak. But the recording has been made. Mr. d'Anjou.

Mr. Guy d'Anjou

Mr. d'Anjou: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the National Assembly once again for allowing a school officer to sit on this Commission, and I would like also to thank the Prime Minister for having confidence in me.

I signed the report of this Commission without reservation. I think we have reached the consensus that was possible, the only one possible, leaving it up to the people to render their verdict on the main constitutional options for Québec in the future. I expressed no reservation because this report respects our institutions. We have a government that is responsible to the National Assembly. We have a democratic system in which the government is elected by the people. And this government regularly renders account to the people.

This report also respects the people, for we are not going to make decisions on their behalf; we have confidence in them, saying: You will eventually have to make your decision as to sovereignty. It also leaves it up to the people to

judge offers of a new Canada. I think this is the basic right of Quebecers, to have the final say both as to sovereignty and to interesting offers of Canadian renewal. But what is clear is a firm rejection of the status quo. I think we all agreed on that.

I would have liked the time to study other questions in detail. I wish we could have come to a very clear decision on a special status for Anglophones in Québec, by stating that any constitutional amendment, whether of the Canadian Constitution or a Québec constitution, would protect the historic rights of Anglophones and guarantee their management of their own institutions.

I would have liked more emphasis on the status of the aboriginal peoples in Québec. We share the same territory, the same government. Eventually very specific decisions will have to be made in this regard, guaranteeing for them as well the right to manage their own institutions.

Well then, thank you all. Here I have been able to realize a wish, one we all sincerely hold, to serve the people of Québec, a sincere desire to see Québec continue to grow. If we hang on to these feelings, even though we have certain differences, I am sure we shall be able to go on working together. I thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Ghislain Dufour.

Mr. Ghislain Dufour

Mr. Dufour: Thank you, Messrs. Co-chairmen. I signed the report of the Commission for several reasons, four of which are of great importance to me. The first is that the conclusions propose two main constitutional options to Quebecers today, a major overhaul of federalism and independence. This conclusion is consistent with the positions taken and the discussions going on in Québec society.

The second is that the Commission's report, far from coming down clearly on the side of sovereignty, as some will claim, is intended first to give Canada another real chance. And I am convinced, even though the proposed time period is very short, that Canada will make offers to Québec that Quebecers will be called upon to make a decision about, thereby confirming the legitimacy and room for manoeuvre of any democratic government.

The third is that I am firmly convinced that Québec society will emerge enriched by the work of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec. One of the achievements of the Commission is the abundant research that will help Quebecers assess what is at stake in the proposals that are being made and will be made to them. The constitutional question is certainly one which arouses emotions, but the work of the Commission will enable

Quebecers to better determine what is at stake economically.

The fourth reason is quite simply that the report seems to me, from the federalist point of view, to be superior to the content of the Allaire proposal, and I feel more comfortable with ours. However, I do have some reservations about the report. For example, I find that it is overly critical of existing federalism, which has given us one of the highest standards of living in the world. I still think that the referendum on offers from Canada or on sovereignty should not take place before the end of 1993. I also believe, contrary to the report, that the automatic accession by Québec, should it become independent, to partnership in the Free Trade Agreement should not be taken for granted. If Québec opts for political independence and has to negotiate a new agreement with Canada and the United States, a difficult economic situation will arise.

Messrs. Co-chairmen, in closing, I hope, for the sake of maintaining and perhaps improving the standard of living of Quebecers, that the signals the report sends to Canada are seen and understood, for it is a matter of our collective future, which we all want to be as bright as possible. Thank you, Messrs. Co-chairmen, Mr. Secretary; thank you Prime Minister Bourassa for my appointment to this Commission, but, unlike my friend Marcel Beaudry, I would rather not have a repeat.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Louise Harel.

Mrs. Louise Harel

Mrs. Harel: Mr. Chairman, after five months of intensive work, and considering the conclusions of the Commission, you will not be surprised that I can adhere to every word I said when I spoke on Tuesday, November 6, 1990 at the opening session of the Commission. The enthusiasm engendered by possible consensus, as I said at that time, must not cause us to lose sight of the inevitable question of our minority or majority status, which must be settled. In this perspective, the question of the country was at the very heart of our work, and the people could not understand our setting it aside.

In fact, the scenarios are not so numerous. Either we are here to give an umpteenth last chance to the renewal of federalism or we shall offer sovereignty its very first chance. I want this first chance for all those who languish in poverty and underdevelopment. Fifteen Commission members, Mr. Chairman, chose, in clear terms and immediately, to give this first chance to sovereignty, while, in the end, 30 members were almost of the opinion of most Quebecers in choosing, for 1992 however, a referendum on sovereignty. Yes, Quebecers want to make the

decision and they would have made it clearly by now if the government had not chosen to put it off for another year.

As our work comes to an end, two things must be made clear: first, renewed federalism is in a sad state for it has had scarcely any support and, second, Québec sovereignty, subject of expert studies that will be published today, emerges from this exercise legitimized, richer and strengthened. Messrs. Co-chairmen, Mr. Secretary, thank you for these economic studies which allow us beyond any shadow of a doubt to conclude that the sovereignty we desire is definitively viable and obtainable. This will be a major historical contribution which will allow us, as of today, to envisage, with serenity, a successful referendum campaign for sovereignty. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue

Mr. Hogue: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have spent many hours together since last November. The experience was sometimes difficult, but it was above all exciting and rewarding, for it reflected Québec life. I am honoured, as well as very happy and grateful to all those, including the people of the riding of Outremont, who enabled me to take part in the Commission's work.

You all know my position on the final proposal submitted. My abstention was intended to take into consideration above all the fact that I represent the Government party in Ottawa. I therefore had to abstain in the vote on the recommendation. I had no choice. Moreover, it had become evident that the compromise arrived at two evenings ago would be broadly supported. You all know as well that I voted against the proposal recommending the separation of Québec. If a final recommendation along these lines had been made I would also have voted against it.

In any case, it was and still is certain that, as member of a government that will have to play an essential role in the negotiations to come, I could not support or disavow a position of our spokesman at a possible negotiating table. Future negotiators must be respected and allowed the greatest possible room for manoeuvre. A vote for or against binds the parties in advance. It was neither my role, my duty, nor my right. My position was known to most of you here. I had received your assent. Finally, the Commission, by not winding up with a real consensus, mirrors the reality of Québec, for it faces in the near future the choice of remaining in a reconstituted Canada or independence.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to have seen

the Commission insist more on the true Canadian and Québec reality, which is interdependence. This has existed since before Confederation, not only for the past 25 years. Even though the report gives Québec its due value in terms that no one can dispute, I would have preferred to see its overall development placed in the real and beneficial context of its participation in Canadian life. I am convinced that it is not possible for Quebecers to make an enlightened choice when it is claimed that Québec is isolated from the rest of the country and when the relations between the two founding peoples that have developed throughout the country's history are not always considered.

I want to say to the Canadian people that the report does not want to give the impression that Québec is seeking confrontation. Rather it seeks cooperation. I believe it is imperative for the people to make the final decision and I am pleased to see, Mr. Chairman, that the Commission recommends informing the people as fully as possible of the consequences of the decisions it must make. I am certain that Quebecers do not want to break up the country they spent so many years building. They do, however, want important and necessary changes, but do not wish... They cannot in any case wipe out the past. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mr. Richard B. Holden.
(10:45 a.m.)

Mr. Richard B. Holden

Mr. Holden: Mr. Chairman, my time with the Commission fascinated me. Me, a guy from Westmount, where would I have met all those Québec union leaders? I love them all... They really are mistaken in their constitutional option, but that is their absolute right. And among parliamentarians, I find that the Commission allowed a certain complicity to develop, and that too may be for Québec's greater good.

My friend, Guy Chevette, tells me he likes best those who say openly and exactly where they stand. Well, I have not budged. I was for Canada the first day of the hearings and I am still for Canada.

M. le Président, le rapport ne me satisfait pas pour un certain nombre de raisons. D'abord, la dernière recommandation ne donne pratiquement aucune chance au reste du Canada d'accomplir presque tout ce que la Commission lui demande avant de commencer à négocier une nouvelle entente avec le Québec et les autres provinces.

Deuxièmement, je vous demande, M. le Président, MM. les Présidents, quel gouvernement sensé prendrait le risque politique d'adopter une modification constitutionnelle qui serait ensuite présentée au Québec, qu'elle soit acceptable ou

non?

Enfin, l'introduction du rapport me paraît être un équivalent moderne des lamentations de Job, peut-être à cause de la perception que j'ai de l'histoire du Québec. Je sais que M. Laberge n'aime pas le mot «lamentations», mais pour moi, ce sont vraiment des lamentations. Une personne qui lirait le rapport sans connaître depuis de nombreuses années le Canada et le Québec pourrait croire que tous les problèmes du Québec viennent du fédéralisme, les seuls bonnes choses survenues dans cette province étant dû à un geste ou à une décision prise au Québec et par des Québécois. Disons-le sans détour, M. le Président, ça n'a aucun sens!

Mes critiques visent toutefois principalement le peu d'attention que la Commission a accordée aux droits et au statut des minorités et, particulièrement, à ceux de la minorité anglophone du Québec. Ses membres ont été traités d'une manière cavalière, comme s'ils étaient une quantité négligeable.

Permettez-moi de vous dire, M. le Président, sans vouloir me faire menaçant ni pontifiant, que si le Québec décide d'agir d'une manière inacceptable pour nous, de la minorité, le monde entier le saura. Ne soyez pas surpris si le *New York Times*, le *London Times*, le *Globe and Mail* et les médias du Canada anglais veulent connaître cet après-midi mon opinion sur le Rapport Bélanger-Campeau. Dites ou pensez ce que vous voulez, il reste que le Québec sera jugé en grande partie sur la façon dont on y traite les minorités.

M. le Président, je conclurai sur une note qui est, je crois, plus optimiste. Le Québec est partie intégrante du Canada. La Commission prétend qu'il peut le rester. En revanche, ceux qui s'opposent au Canada disent qu'il est impossible de le sauver. Moi je vous dis, M. le Président, je dis à tous les membres de la Commission et je dis à tous les Canadiens du Québec et de tout le pays: nous sauverons le Canada; nous vaincrons. Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington.

Mrs. Claire-Hélène Hovington

Mrs. Hovington: Thank you. Messrs. Co-chairmen, dear colleagues on the Commission, our challenge was to seek a political framework and a constitutional climate that would allow Québec to preserve its cultural identity and develop an original blueprint for society. During the public hearings, the Quebecers who testified gave us a clear message, and this was it: We do not want the status quo, we want greater autonomy for Québec; we want to put an end to the overlapping action of the two governments, while preserving our economic ties with the rest of Canada.

The majority of the briefs heard, however, do not suggest how to proceed to achieve greater autonomy. The Bélanger-Campeau Commission, in its wisdom, selected two possible paths, two parallel ways: Canada making offers to Québec or Québec assuming its own destiny by becoming sovereign. But in the final analysis, and I feel this is extremely important, it is the people of Québec who will determine their future.

Mr. Paul Gérin-Lajoie said that politics is the art of enabling the greatest number of people to live together happily and in harmony. The important thing, he said, was not to see a particular formula triumph, but rather to find one that attains this objective, and, in my opinion, this is what has come out of the recommendations that the Bélanger-Campeau Commission is tabling today.

We did not adhere to a formula as such, but tried to find avenues to explore that would best respond to the wishes expressed by the Quebecers heard during our public hearing tour.

Mr. Chairman, I was proud to receive this appointment and I am still proud today, perhaps even more so today, after several months of work, to put my name on the report which, I am certain, is going to change the history of Québec, and above all is going to mark an important turning point in the lives of every Quebecer. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): As I mentioned at the beginning of the sitting, we alternated the chairmanship throughout our work, and we are going to do the same in the middle of this closing session. To avoid constantly confusing us, as happens sometimes, I am taking my name plate before changing places with my colleague.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Laberge, it is my great pleasure to give you the floor.

Mr. Louis Laberge

Mr. Laberge: OK, but I was all ready for the other one.

Voices: Ha, ha, ha!

Mr. Laberge: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Prime Minister, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and dear colleagues, fellow members of the Commission, like others I came to the Commission with a very specific idea: to secure a referendum on sovereignty this year, in 1991. There have been discussions, there has been an incredible amount of information provided. I think the Bélanger-Campeau Commission has indeed made its mark.

Some people have tried to discredit it. I

believe one of the Premiers said that the Bélanger-Campeau Commission was not very important. On the contrary. The Commission has destroyed a few myths. One is that Quebecers don't care very much about their constitutional future. We have seen that the opposite is true. Despite the recession, despite dreadful unemployment, despite the war in the Persian Gulf, Quebecers are concerned about their political future and have followed the work of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission more closely than they have ever followed such work before.

If the Commission had been able or had wanted to hear all the individuals, all the Quebecers, all the groups that wanted to testify, it would not be in its last public sitting because there would still have been many to hear. But we learned such enriching things! Another myth that bit the dust was that sovereignty is the apocalypse. This is not true. We learned that there are still out-and-out federalists, people who are honestly federalist, and they have to be respected, and that there are hard-core sovereignists, who also have to be respected.

As soon as we arrived at the Commission, we, the unaligned — I won't call us those with no ideas — the officially unaligned... If a vote had been taken the first day, we would have had basically the same results we had yesterday. But where there was an absolutely remarkable change was in the discussions, sometimes virulent, which we had among ourselves. My dear friend, Commission member Holden, said that I did not like the word "lamentation". OK, let's say he's right. I won't ever reproach you again for it provided I hear your lamentations rather than my own.

I think this has been an extraordinary experience. We got to know one another much better and we learned more about Québec. Briefs were submitted. We heard experts, 65 of them, I believe, who demonstrated very clearly that myths existed and opened our eyes to many things. Sovereignty is definitely not the apocalypse. It is viable. Obviously, federalists believing that Canada will make substantial offers for profound changes, well, this is what made us accept the idea that instead of having a referendum on sovereignty in 1991, we would wait until 1992. But, in our opinion, it's clear, no later than October 1992, there will be a referendum on sovereignty.

If the government receives offers it feels are substantial enough to submit to the people, it will do as it likes. Our friend Brassard said a moment ago that he is watching the Prime Minister, who is under house arrest. Let me tell you that we are going to be watching all the others, the non-aligned people, and the Opposition, too. We reckon that the Opposition will do its job and that your government will too, for the greater good of all Quebecers.

At the very start, I said to a journalist

who asked me about it that I was confident that a consensus would be reached. I admit that some evenings I tried to slip by the journalists because it had been like pulling teeth. But I am pleased today to see that there is such a broad consensus. That can only strengthen Québec's cause; that can only enhance the reputation of the Commission. I very sincerely congratulate you, Messrs. Chairmen, for the work you have done; you, Mr. Rousseau, the Secretary of the Commission, who spared no effort, and the whole Secretariat, which was extraordinarily effective. Québec has been enriched by so much information and so many new opinions, which will always be useful.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this isn't the last... It is perhaps the last official day of the Commission, but it is not the end, it is the beginning. We must now continue to build this Québec, to make it even more open and more hospitable by guaranteeing the rights of each and every person in it. And if the federal government wants to make a place for us, it now knows that the place it makes will have to be a bigger one, since, I think, it seems to me, we have gained in stature somewhat. So thank you and good luck to us all.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Laberge. Mr. Gérald Larose.

Mr. Gérald Larose

Mr. Larose: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No matter what is said, no matter what is done, Québec has already made its choice. And the time to express it is already upon us. The Bélanger-Campeau Commission has finished its work. The campaign for sovereignty has begun. It is up to every man and woman of Québec who cherishes this project to become involved, to make sure that no one stands in its way. Sovereignty: for a societal project. Sovereignty: a plus for everyone. Sovereignty: a solidarity project.

Mr. Chairman, 620 briefs, 280 hearings, 54 experts: grassroots Québec has reflected, debated, and proposed that we come out of this clearly, rapidly, against no one, for ourselves, and also for those who will one day have to build their lives again, but certainly otherwise than with us. This Commission has done a colossal job of informing people, of explaining things, thanks to you, Messrs. Chairmen, thanks to you, Mr. Secretary, thanks also to the extremely devoted and highly competent staff, thanks to the members of the Commission, too, obviously not all in agreement, but, for the most part, well-intentioned, to whom I extend my friendship.
(11:00 a.m.)

A date was set for us. Mr. Prime Minister, it would be possible to move it up if the cost of

the waiting period is too high. No matter what is said, no matter what is done, the future of this country will be a sovereign one. We shall all see to that. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Larose. Mr. Jacques Léonard.

Mr. Jacques Léonard

Mr. Léonard: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should first like to thank the leader of my party, Mr. Jacques Parizeau, for having appointed me to this Commission and allowed me to participate in the proceedings of this noble Commission which is, in a way, half-senatorial and half-parliamentary.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to tell you that, for me, the most genuine part of this Commission has been to hear the citizens of Québec come before the bar and express their thoughts about the future of their country. It took them courage to do that, and this courage has been lacking here, I think — but they showed it. They came from all across Québec, from all our horizons. They expressed a majority wish for a sovereign Québec, thus echoing the polls that have given the same results. They want sovereignty and I think that they are right — culturally, socially, economically and politically. Sovereignty is the gateway to their country, especially the gateway to their country.

Time has gone by since the creation of this Commission, but especially since the Meech Lake fiasco. Since this wound was inflicted on Quebecers, nine months have gone by. That's a long time. Confusion has continued to reign as to the future of the country, and that could still be the case 20 months from now. At the end of that time, I say that we will be yet further into our financial miasma. Since last June 23, \$22 billion have accrued in the federal deficit, and when we hold our referendum, that figure will have risen to \$75 billion. Quebecers, I think, would like to get out of this situation as soon as possible. We hoped, like them, that it would be in 1991; it will be in 1992.

Quebecers want to control their own affairs. They want a country. They want to be a people with a land, with a government that has the right to pass legislation, levy taxes and sign treaties. In this perspective, Mr. Chairman, at the end of our work, 15 members of the Commission made a proposal, a recommendation, in the sense of Québec sovereignty. This conclusion, this recommendation was not kept and we could indeed believe that these conclusions or the conclusions of the Commission were in a way part of the very composition of the Commission. I should like to recall, however, that we had the mandate to recommend a status for Québec, a status for Quebecers. That was at the bottom of everything. And, on that plane, I

should simply like to rapidly recall the basis of the recommendation. We said that the political and constitutional status quo was not desirable, in fact was totally undesirable, for Québec. Canadian federalism no longer contributes to Québec's social, cultural, economic and political objectives. The work of our Commission proves the viability of sovereignty and its ordered feasibility. It is necessary that particular importance be granted to maintaining and even improving Canada's economic latitude.

Québec's constitution, including the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, must enshrine the French nature of Québec, fundamental human rights, and equality of the sexes. The restructuring of Canadian federalism cannot be carried out in the sense of the interests of Québec. What comes out of the work, briefs and hearings of the Commission is that the preferred solution for Québec is sovereignty. Finally, the choice of sovereignty must come directly from the men and women of Québec, who must express their opinions by referendum as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I signed this report because it recommends a referendum on the sovereignty of Québec. This is the sole consensus of this Commission, in my opinion. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Léonard. Mr. Robert Libman.

Mr. Robert Libman

Mr. Libman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should first like to thank my colleagues on this Commission for an enriching experience. There were some good times on the bus. I will remember the supper organized by Mr. Béland, where happiness reigned supreme, and there weren't many arguments. And I'm sure no one here will forget the Maizerets estate.

Mr. Chairman, these last two years, as head of the Equality Party and, more recently, as a member of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, I have taken advantage of the experience to visit every part of Québec. What struck me most, primarily as a member of the Commission, was the intelligence, the sophistication, the confidence and political maturity of Quebecers. There is a remarkable attachment to our own history and to our institutions. The dynamism and vitality that help make our province a unique place, and different from all others, are visible all across the province. French language and culture are firmly rooted in Québec. Their dynamism and vitality are quite evident and not in any danger at all. Whoever claims the contrary is not looking at the reality of the situation.

This fact, Mr. Chairman, and my immersion in the National Assembly of Québec, have convinced me more than ever that, to survive, to

develop, Québec does not need a particular constitutional status. Québec does not need to manipulate the training of its immigrants. Québec does not need language restrictions and, perhaps more important still, Québec does not need to be sovereign to develop fully.

These concerns are not necessary in the least but, at the same time, they are jeopardizing the lives of the minorities in Québec. That, Mr. Chairman, is an area where I feel the Commission miserably missed its opportunity for rapprochement: the lack of political sense in the final report for recognizing the aspirations of minority groups.

Depuis la fin des audiences publiques, la Commission est obsédée par un consensus qu'on ne trouve même pas dans la population. On nous a forcés à manifester un consensus simplement pour transmettre au reste du Canada un message brutal les enjoignant de se ranger, sans quoi...

Toute cette énergie a été consommée sans considération pour les nombreux membres des communautés culturelles qui se sont présentés devant cette Commission, pour nos premières nations, pour la communauté anglophone du Québec ou pour les francophones de l'extérieur du Québec.

Les Québécois n'ont certainement pas besoin, à l'heure actuelle, d'être entraînés par les politiciens dans une incertitude plus grande encore sur les plans politique, social et économique. Les souverainistes ont été incapables, en six mois d'audiences, de nous dire en quoi la souveraineté profiterait au Québécois moyen. Ils ont livré des messages trompeurs annonçant une vie meilleure quand, en réalité, certaines de nos grandes réussites seront menacées.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, we must continue, and we can continue, to prosper with a positive, broad-minded outlook, not in a dogmatic, narcissistic way, centred on ourselves. It is time for us to appreciate the land in which we live, rather than to follow a false vision. We must work to strengthen and improve what we have: a truly dynamic society, with absolutely everything we need to develop and prosper within a large, secure and stable federation, Canada, a country of which many people can only dream. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Libman. Mr. Cosmo Maciocia.

Mr. Cosmo Maciocia

Mr. Maciocia: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should first like to stress how proud and honoured I am to have sat on this Commission. After hearing numerous witnesses, and a tour that took us to the four corners of Québec, individuals and organizations, as well as the experts who answered our invitation, offered us

a stock of political knowledge. The upshot of these hearings is that the status quo can no longer last. As a result, it is only natural that we should pinpoint avenues for a solution that could help us withdraw from the present constitutional status.

From our work we have seen that two avenues are open to us: a profoundly renewed federalism, or independence. I am very pleased, Mr. Chairman, that everyone, and I repeat "everyone", including the Parti québécois, has agreed to take the enticing risk.

That being said, Canada must be revised and corrected, Mr. Chairman. The challenge thus lies, to parrot Patrice Garant, in seeking a constitutional structure and climate that will enable Québec to preserve its cultural identity, and to develop an original plan for society, while maintaining a high degree of monetary, financial, industrial and commercial integrity with its Canadian partners.

To meet this challenge, some are for a declaration of independence. I do not share that opinion, like Ivan Bernier, who said that he thought it would be irrational to step back, to dislocate, to demolish this union, to then come back and reconstitute it. Because, well beyond fiction, this is what it comes down to. It should not be thought that Québec's breaking away will be the source of rational discussions in a climate of reciprocal good will. Therefore, although I feel that clearly the present constitutional impasse should be disentangled, it seems just as evident to me that the best step to take is toward true negotiation, according to a schedule, and in a realistic climate.

Some will perhaps claim that Canada is not sufficiently prepared for this final round. That does not appear to me to correspond to reality. We would be wrong to believe that our fellow citizens in the other provinces are in a deep sleep. I am therefore happy to support this report, which tenders a bid for a new Canada, and I fervently hope that the Government of Québec will decide, after thorough study, to make submissions, for ratification by all Quebecers, through a referendum. And it will be up to the public to accept or reject them and to choose its political future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Maciocia. Mrs. Pauline Marois.

Mrs. Pauline Marois

Mrs. Marois: Thank you. Messrs. Chairmen, my Commission colleagues. Obviously, it is my turn to support and insist on certain major observations evident throughout our deliberations. I shall summarize them in two words: Québec can and Québec will. When I say "can", I am referring to the feasibility, the viability of a

sovereign Québec.

Analysts, researchers, practitioners, economists and business people have demonstrated to us, with figures, that a sovereign Québec would be viable. The old fears and myths have fallen by the wayside one by one, as proof has been clearly given over and over. The Commission, I should say, Messrs. Chairmen, is bequeathing a marvellous heritage in this respect, a marvellous heritage of knowledge, rigorous scientific analyses and those studies which, having already enlightened the Commission, will surely give food for thought during the discussions, the debates, that will take place in the coming months. Mr. Lévesque said, quoted, "Être informé c'est être libre" (to be informed is to be free), and the Commission will have, to a great extent, and seriously, helped to attain this one more bit of freedom. I should particularly like to thank the chairmen and the secretary.

If Québec can, it also will. And, regardless of what group they belong to, of their professional, cultural or territorial attachments, Quebecers came in majority numbers to tell us what kind of a country they wanted to choose. Some did so basing themselves on our historical background, our culture, our language, our roots. Others did so on the basis of a rigorous, logical analysis of the advantages and shortcomings of the present system, federalism. And they arrived at the same conclusion: they chose, and they are choosing, Québec.

(11:15 a.m.)

Of course, many other things have been said — among others, the urgency of taking action and the need for the Québec people to pronounce itself. I am deeply disappointed, Messrs. Chairmen, that the Commission did not rule on the fundamental choice of the political status of Québec, while, serenely and courageously, our fellow citizens did just that, before this Commission. They were expecting, I think, in this respect, a clear message on our part. Unquestionably, that was truly the object of our profound differences of opinion.

And as to those differences of opinion, and their fundamental expression, Mr. Chairman, I shall allow myself a brief remark. If we want to help enhance people's image of politicians and our institutions, we cannot be asked at the same time to be faithful to our convictions and appear to change them, basically for strategic purposes, when we feel like it. The consensus will have borne essentially on the action as we read it, whereas the expectations bear on the content. And, in this respect, we have not done our job. I shall understand, furthermore, that the only enticing risk that the Commission agreed to take is that of consulting the people of Québec on sovereignty, and thus on its future.

The choice of a people is, I fervently hope, a reasoned choice, but also one of the heart. We

have had the opportunity to hear both ways of expressing it. An editorialist recently recalled that cultures make civilizations and, when all else is done, cultures will remain: a way of being, speaking and living together.

I shall conclude by indirectly quoting the words of Mrs. Pelletier who, in *La Presse* last week said that if Québec becomes independent one day, it will be much more because of its need to escape from a shaky system. Independence cannot be achieved without this mix of ideals, transcendence and dreams, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Marois. Mr. Roger Nicolet.

Mr. Roger Nicolet

Mr. Nicolet: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should first like, of course, like those who have preceded me, to salute and thank the Chair, the secretariat and the office staff. Regardless of what is said about the outcome of our joint efforts, one main conclusion is necessary, I feel. Never has Québec been in a better strategic position to resolve, in the relatively short term, the constitutional imbroglio in which it has been involved for much too long. This is a significant advantage, as much on the plane of our positioning as in terms of controlling the dynamics of the proceedings of the negotiations. The Québec government has therefore, with this report, an important tool that it must use wittingly, but with solicitude.

I insist on the latter because it seems to me that the exercise of choices — or, if you prefer, freedom — that the conclusions and especially the recommendations of the report invite can only be done in full awareness of the responsibilities that it implies. In Québec itself, first of all, regardless of the poll findings, and outside any electoral consideration, the 20% or 30% of the population who have not adhered to the huge current of national affirmation merit special attention. There are, and there will be, wounds to be dressed, anxieties and apprehensions to be placated, but especially explanations to be given and tirelessly repeated until a consensus on our national destiny is truly forged. It is the health of our society that is at stake, as much as the confirmation of the pluralism of Québec today.

But it is outside Québec that the government will have to face the most pressing questions on its directions, and the pressures that are the most likely to affect the progress of the steps that have been begun. In this perspective, it is important that I stress that the Equality Party does not have a monopoly on speaking to Anglophones. I address the following remarks in English to all our interlocutors.

Le Canada anglais, ou le reste du Canada, selon l'expression un peu bizarre qui désigne maintenant les autres provinces, ne manquera pas de réagir avec une certaine colère ou amertume aux conclusions de la Commission. Nous ne pouvons que répondre en rappelant à nos voisins que l'histoire et la géographie, mais aussi des valeurs communes et une préoccupation partagée à l'égard du bien-être de nos concitoyens, nous destinent à un avenir fait de collaboration étroite et d'aventures partagées.

Quel que soit cet avenir, quelle que soit la forme de nos relations futures, le Québec, par ce Rapport, tente de transmettre des messages simples: le temps est enfin venu de balayer une fois pour toutes les vestiges de ce qu'une étude politique récente a nommé à juste titre "deux échecs coloniaux".

Notre société, tout comme la vôtre, est devenue farouchement démocratique, multiethnique et ouverte aux autres cultures et au reste du monde. Son avenir dépend toutefois étroitement de sa volonté, fermement ancrée dans son passé, de demeurer française, tout comme pour vous la culture anglaise est la trame d'une société multiculturelle. Aucun plan n'a été dressé en vue d'une association future, de sorte que votre droit d'articuler des propositions qui reflètent vos besoins et vos perceptions a été intégralement respecté. Ce Rapport, s'il est lu complètement, laisse toutefois voir au lecteur attentif la nature de nos préoccupations fondamentales.

Mr. Chairman, the task the government and the special parliamentary committee must face is crucial. In the coming months we will witness mobilization of all our resources, of all the forces in our society, if we want to collectively succeed in the task that this report is launching. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Nicolet. Mr. André Ouellet.

Mr. André Ouellet

Mr. Ouellet: Messrs. Co-chairmen. Members of the Commission, allow me first of all to thank you for your courtesy toward me and to tell you that I have lived with you, during the last few months, an extraordinary experience. I shall quickly forget the few irritating moments, and remember all the good ones that we spent together working on a very important task for the future of all Quebecers.

It will be no surprise to you that I regret that the Commission did not arrive at a conclusion in favour of renewed federalism. I would have preferred that we send a very clear, unique message both to Quebecers and to other Canadians. I would have liked, of course, for us to say that the future of Québec lies in Canada. The political and economic ties that we, as

Quebecers, have with the rest of Canada have served us well – politically, economically and socially. Furthermore, I urge everyone to read the chapter of the report entitled "Québec: A modern society". This bears eloquent testimony to Québec's success within Canada. I therefore regret that this Commission did not arrive at the conclusion that these political and economic ties be kept, in the best interests of all the men and women of Québec.

I particularly regret that this possibility is rejected. In my opinion, renewed federalism is the only true possibility for our future, and that a step that could lead to the separation of Québec should be touted in the conclusions. Indeed, by concluding that there are two avenues for Quebecers – a new partnership with Canada or sovereignty, the constitutional suspense will continue. Our Commission, might I add, unfortunately does not specify the true meaning either of the new partnership or of sovereignty. In addition, it is proposing an excessively tight deadline that I find unrealistic. Those who, like me, feel that the interests, I should say the higher interests, of Québec reside within Canada and not in the creation of another country should thus work hard and fast in the coming months.

The Liberal Party of Canada will cooperate in defining this new Canadian partnership in the spirit of the brief that our leader submitted to this Commission. The new leaders of our party, Mr. Chrétien, Mr. Martin and Mrs. Copps, spoke out clearly for a renewed federalism. They well know the legitimate aspirations of Quebecers and they appreciate the urgent need to modernize our Canadian Constitution. I shall conclude by saying, on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada that I am representing here, on this Commission, that we want to be and we will be allies of the change. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Ouellet. Mrs. Lorraine Pagé.

Mrs. Lorraine Pagé

Mrs. Pagé: Messrs. Chairmen, dear colleagues, as the work of this Commission comes to a close, the work whose representativeness some people were still recently doubting, it is essential to point up the message it bears: a threefold message of solidarity, determination and hope.

A message of determination that is expressed in the consensus of this Commission on a recommendation aimed at arranging for action that will enable us to definitively eliminate the prior obstacle to the enhancement of the emerging Québec, that of debates, discussions, palaver – interminable, continually taken up again, hopes bashed into disillusionment.

A message of solidarity that is there, in the words and throughout the lines of this report, echoing the legitimate aspirations expressed by the men and women of Québec during our hearings. Of course, the issue at stake is our political and constitutional future – that was our mandate – but, need I recall, politics has not only a constitutional side.

And, finally, a message of hope. For growing numbers of Quebecers, now a majority in our society, the country is no longer only in our imagination. It is in progress. A country where winter still surprises us, as it did on the first morning of our work, last November 6; where spring knows how to make us wait, as on the morning of this last day; a country made up of the fraternity that binds us, of our desire to live together; a country made up of the strength of our dreams; a country made up of the colours of our faces, full of the laughter of our children, of the plans of our youth, of the serenity of our elders; a country made up of the strength of our businesspeople and of the labour of our workers; a country in which all languages are sung, and where French is spoken.

In closing, one regret and one appeal. It would have been inspiring for our collective future had this Commission provided the opportunity to break with the tradition of the underrepresentation of women in our political institutions. Much has been said during the last few hours about manoeuvring room. Mr. Prime Minister, your government today does not have the manoeuvring room to mitigate the legitimate aspirations of the men and women of Québec, or to negotiate them, or bargain for them, or sell them off. The people of Québec are proud of their past, masters of their destiny, and already sovereign; they want to be so with the people they have elected to represent them.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mrs. Pagé. Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant. (11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Charles-Albert Poissant

Mr. Poissant: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should like to thank the Prime Minister for having appointed me to this Commission to represent the business world. I think I came out of it pretty well. No doubt I didn't fulfil the mandate that I had in their eyes, and there is no doubt I was in a predicament at the end, wondering whether or not to sign the report. I remembered the old saying to the effect that one should choose the lesser of two evils and therefore decided to sign the report favourably, with one reservation, however: as negotiators, the time we are giving our partners to make us offers is totally unrealistic. I should perhaps use Mr. Larose's comment, to say to the Prime Minister: If you don't have enough time, perhaps

you could take the stand of postponing the date of the referendum on the aim of what is suggested in the report.

It has been mentioned here – I said so at the very beginning – and I am repeating it in my reservations, that only since the fifties have Quebecers taken over their economic activity. I'll quote that indirectly. Fortunately, this change of attitude here has had beneficial effects on the entire community. For job creators, the present constitutional context is not a hindrance. On the contrary. In this short lapse of time, they have helped raise Québec's standard of living to one of the highest in the world – and I am quoting in particular – in 1987, Québec's standard of living ranked third in the world. My quote was from Mr. Rodrigue Tremblay.

If we have succeeded so well, is there really such a grave problem, or do we really want to create a problem for ourselves? The question must be asked, Mr. Chairman. I await an answer with bated breath. I had said at the beginning that all that was fine and good. Supposing that at the very end we were to opt for sovereignty; we would still have to tell Quebecers how it was going to be achieved. We have called on expert witnesses, we have spoken of the Vienna conventions. My research has permitted me to see that Vienna conventions, yes, but they are perhaps not yet, and this is important, accepted.

Other important points that I asked for at the beginning and that the report has obviously still left out, are how debts, goods, archives, and so forth, will be shared. Are we going to take it for granted that if we go toward ultimate separation, everything will be done in a climate of acceptance? No. In the very areas in which we have to negotiate, each one is pulling to his side. There is one area for which the recommendation has obviously been made that there be a special committee which would study such things. I hope, and I said so at the beginning, that I would rally to the final stand of the great majority of Quebecers on the status they want, and I will even help them to achieve it. However, much information is still lacking, especially to most Quebecers.

When I take for granted the fact that things aren't going too badly in the present business context, I admit there is a recession, and that everyone is suffering from it. I think our businesspeople should continue to work to create jobs and, in the present situation, especially to improve our position. I said this at the beginning and I repeat it: When the economy is sound, everything goes well, and everyone benefits from it. I think that the Prime Minister, at the opening of these debates, told us very clearly that the economy is the nerve centre of society. Once we have that well in hand, and we have it very well in hand now, I think we will be able to continue to function.

I also urge Quebecers to think of two problems that are much more crucial for me: \$10 billion are going to be spent on drugs in Canada this year – ten billion dollars. Take your share, let's say \$2 billion, in Québec. It is not only the economy that is in question, it's our young people's health, and it's the future when we often speak of the youth of Québec. It is there. And perhaps one problem that we shouldn't ignore either is the famous problem of the famous society – the family. There, we have terrible problems to be solved and that is the future of Québec. I think we should direct our efforts toward those two areas.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank you, as well as my colleagues, for having helped me progress a little further in my life. I shall still continue to work for all Quebecers. Thank you.

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

Mr. Serge Turgeon

Mr. Turgeon: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of course, there has been no coup d'État in Québec and evidently there won't be any because democracy does very well what it has to do. It is democracy which, through the exercise we have just experienced, will ensure that, from now on, let's admit it, Québec will no longer be quite the same. It is rather if we had just decided to progress toward our future. And you know that we maintain our balance by advancing.

Have you thought that 1992 will be the 125th anniversary of Canadian federalism? That should be Canada's great celebration. But, also in 1992, Quebecers have an appointment, a rendezvous with themselves. It's not far away, 1992; it's almost tomorrow. All that after 125 years of more or less harmonious life together, one that has become downright intolerable for many reasons, as much for some as for others: 125 years that will have brought us to recognize ourselves not as one great entity – that's one viewpoint – but as two distinct nations that will have to relearn how to rub shoulders and, perhaps, despite all, to respect one another. There is no doubt that the report we just signed, based on the need and the desire to be Quebecers, is founded on the attitude of groups and individuals who came before us not to put Canada or Canadians from the other provinces on the stand, but in a much more positive attitude, that of preparing ourselves for a happy destiny, by saying under what conditions Québec society, that wants to be wide open to the world, could best ensure its development, always and still seeking to define itself and, especially, against no one else.

That is what has been heard by this extraordinary Commission, formed not only of professional politicians, but also of people from

outside the National Assembly, as if politics were too serious a thing to be left to the politicians.

The great merit of this Commission, in my opinion, will have been to make sure that, from now on, nothing will be as before. Nothing, for example, will be played out in the wings, in the obscurity of the corridors in which, finally, only short and long knives are sharpened. From now on, in the open, the women and men of Québec will be able to decide what they want without fear or reproach.

As of today, for me as for all those who believe that Québec, in reality as in its imaginary existence, has everything necessary for fully assuming its future, the question is no longer only whether it will be sovereignty. As of now, we must become sovereign. We must create the Québec that we want, as we want it, in all its social, economic, political and cultural dimensions – in the dignity, the respect, of our basic differences, and with a hard-won pride that we are ready to share. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Turgeon. Mr. Russell Williams.

Mr. Russell Williams

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the opportunity for me to have been part of this Commission. It was a privilege to participate with you, and I should like to thank each member personally for the discussions we had. I learned many things from this experience. I am reassured to have discovered that the Québec people mean well, that they have the spirit to live, and that we have the ability to govern. I believe that this report is a good summary of the opinions we heard. I think that democracy is winning today. I would have preferred one vision, but there are two in the Province of Québec: one with Canada, the other without.

It is clear that I, personally, reject sovereignty as an option. In my opinion, it's a dead-end. But we are going to create two commissions to study both visions, and each vision must prove that it merits the support of the people of Québec, that of a renewed Canada, but also of independence. Both commissions will now analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each option. We shall give the facts and their realities to the Québec people.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I am joining the consensus with conviction, and giving my support to this report, because I think it gives the possibility of a true solution that meets the needs of the people of Québec; but I would also like to stress that, without reservations, I am convinced that we will be able to build a new Québec with, and in, Canada.

Je dois cependant exprimer le grave souci que suscitent en moi le ton négatif du rapport et

l'analyse que j'en fais, surtout en ce qui concerne la réalité de l'impasse actuelle. En outre, je regrette que les besoins particuliers des communautés minoritaires doivent attendre l'avenir pour faire l'objet d'une étude plus approfondie si nous voulons, de fait, marcher vers l'avenir.

Je ne crois pas que le rapport reflète la réalité d'un lien mutuellement bénéfique entre le Québec et le Canada. Je pense qu'ensemble, nous sommes forts. De toute évidence, il faut que notre pays s'ajuste et soit modifié de façon substantielle pour se préparer à l'avenir, pour répondre à nos besoins collectifs. Je crois par ailleurs que le Québec est et continue d'être fort et vigoureux au sein du Canada.

En fait, M. le Président, on peut prétendre que c'est au Canada que la culture et la langue du Québec sont le mieux protégées. Aujourd'hui est un jour historique et les tenants d'un Canada renouvelé et d'un nouveau partenariat voient leur ordre du jour et leur objectif clairement établis. Le consensus que nous avons atteint va nous aider à poursuivre cet objectif.

Je crois fermement et passionnément que nous pouvons construire le Québec au sein du Canada. Je suis heureux de ce que la Commission Bélanger-Campeau donne une autre chance tant au Québec qu'au Canada. C'est aujourd'hui que nous devons saisir cette chance. Les gens de mon comité, Nelligan, croient en majorité qu'il vaut mieux renouveler le Canada, dans le respect intégral des intérêts et des besoins du Québec. Même si le délai me paraît terriblement court, je m'engage sans réserve à participer à la création de cette nouvelle entente entre le Québec et le Canada, entente qui incorporera tous nos intérêts. L'esprit nationaliste et l'esprit de renouvellement sont tous deux bien vivants au Québec. Je réaffirme aujourd'hui mon engagement envers le Québec et envers le Canada. Et, M. le Président, j'accepte le risque et je relève le défi. Merci beaucoup.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Merci M. Williams. Now I shall turn the floor over to the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Henri-Paul Rousseau.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Henri-Paul Rousseau

Mr. Rousseau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and Gentlemen, this morning I would like to make public some details on the management of the current affairs of the Commission.

To begin with, the Commission met 50 times, 19 times for work sessions and 31 times for public hearings, to fulfil its mandate. The Steering Committee sat down to 17 working meetings.

(11:45 a.m.)

The Commission could not have carried out its mandate without the contribution of human resources and the benefit of financial and material resources. Last September, we submitted a budget of \$8 300 000 to the Office of the National Assembly for approval. I am pleased to announce that, according to our preliminary financial statements, the Commission spent less than \$5 000 000, amounting to precisely \$4 650 000, that is, 44%... In other words, \$3 500 000 will be returned to the public coffers. You all understand that, unfortunately, no actual money is being returned. It is simply a question of money that was not spent.

The expenditures in the shape of allowances paid the members attending meetings and of wages paid the secretarial staff amount to a little over \$1 000 000, while operating expenses total... \$3 600 000. These include travelling and living expenses for employees and members, the televising of the Commission's deliberations, the transcription and translation of the deliberations and the printing of the Commission's report, as well as communication, equipment rentals and other expenses.

According to the rules governing the Commission, the members who were not MNAs or MPs received \$130 per sitting, while MNAs and MPs only received this allowance when the National Assembly or the House of Commons, depending on the case, was not sitting. The total sum paid out under this heading was \$132 000.

On the average, \$3680 was paid out to each member in attendance allowances for sitting on the Commission and \$7000 in travelling and living expenses. In short, the report of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec cost \$0.71 per Quebecer.

With respect to material resources, I would like to stress the generous cooperation of the National Assembly which agreed to equip the Commission free of charge with office and computer equipment. The staff hired by the secretariat came, as you know, from both the private sector and Québec's public service. I would like to thank the firms, the government departments and the National Assembly which lent members of their personnel to the Commission, for a consideration, of course.

The assistance provided by the National Assembly should receive special mention. I would therefore like to thank the President of the Assembly, his executive secretary and the secretary general for their precious help. I depend on them to pass our thanks on to the services concerned. My heartfelt gratitude goes to all the members of the secretarial staff, who were most generous. I also wish to thank the members of their families, and their friends, whose private lives were considerably disrupted during the past six months.

Without any reflection on the contribution of anyone else, I would like to proffer a special "Thank you" here to François Côté, my assistant, for his unwavering support.

I also wish to stress most particularly the extraordinary work accomplished by the editorial team – Carole, Michel, Gille, Anne-Marie and Rose-Marie – and my office staff – Esther, Annie, Claudine, Sylvie and Dominique – for their devotion. Since the end of the last working session Monday evening, they have been working nonstop to make sure that the Commission's report will be tabled today. The secretary was of the party.

Tomorrow, four working papers will be made public, consisting of various expert studies that the Commission and the secretariat consulted. These studies provide elements of economic, constitutional and legal analyses, relevant to the redefinition of the political and constitutional status of Québec.

The Commission did not make any statements on the content of these texts or on the opinions of their authors. Its intention here is simply to make them available so anyone may refer to the research on which its deliberations were based.

Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the report of the Commission or of the working papers published by the secretariat may contact the Service de distribution des documents parlementaires of the National Assembly within the next few days. Copies will also be available in all the outlets of the Publications du Québec and in the 25 regional offices of Communications-Québec. The report of the Commission and the four working papers are free of charge. Several thousand copies of the report were made but, needless to say, not as many copies of the working papers were printed. In addition, Québec's tape library will have audio tapes of the Commission's report available within the next few weeks.

Tomorrow, Mr. Chairman, following the tabling of the Commission's report, I will be handing our archives over to the Service de la gestion des documents of the National Assembly, as required by law.

Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for the confidence and support you gave all the staff of the secretariat and myself during the course of our work. "Je me souviendrai...". And I will remember the consensus reached at Maizerets. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Mr. Secretary, thank you for your report. You realize of course how grateful we are for your excellent management of our expenditures. It is now my pleasure to give the floor to my colleague, Mr. Michel Bélanger.

Report of the Chairmen

Mr. Michel Bélanger and Mr. Jean Campeau

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Ladies and Gentlemen, friends, here we are at the end of our mandate. This thirty-first public working session of the Commission on the Political and Constitutional Future of Québec marks the end of our labours. The Commission gave priority to the participation of the public in its work. On September 29, 1990, it invited the public to send in briefs for public hearings no later than November 2. No less than 492 groups and individuals forwarded their briefs within the allotted time. Furthermore, 115 additional briefs were received later on, for a total of 607, a remarkable contribution.

The first stage of our work was devoted to the examination of these briefs and to public hearings. The Commission's Steering Committee decided which groups and individuals would be invited to present their briefs at these hearings. The televising of the hearings brought the Commission's work into the living rooms of the people and enabled a large number of Quebecers to listen to the discussions and deliberations. In all, 235 groups and individuals were heard, not counting the forum on "Youth and the future of Québec", which brings the total to 267. For nine weeks, from November 6, 1990 to January 23, 1991, the Commission crisscrossed the 11 administrative regions of Québec and sat in 11 different cities. It also received the contributions of 55 specialists: political scientists, jurists, economists, sociologists, demographers, geographers and known figures from the arts came in answer to the invitation they had received.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): This wide range of people representing a great variety of milieus and spheres of activity wrote or reported orally to the Commission, expressing their views on the political and constitutional future of Québec. A number of Native groups in particular sent their briefs to the Commission, all of which were heard. The Commission also invited members of the cultural communities that had submitted a brief to present it during a hearing. The extent of the public participation and the concerns expressed revealed the importance of the question of Québec's status for its people. The briefs, the papers by experts and the hearings provided a set of information, opinions and concerns that enlightened the members of the Commission in their deliberations.

If we managed to bring our work to a successful conclusion, it is first and foremost thanks to hundreds of Quebecers who devoted their time and energy to helping define the future of Québec. They thus demonstrated their

interest in the public good and in the development of their country; and they deserve our heartfelt gratitude.

You have just heard a last speech from each of the members of the Commission. The Commission was made up of members who not only brought with them a great diversity of experience but who guaranteed the representativeness of the Commission. Each member had at one and the same time to remain faithful to his or her training, background or origins, and participate with an open mind in the search for the essence of the desired consensus. The path each followed, the respect they developed for each other and the vitality of their discussions ensured the success of our task.

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): Jean Campeau and myself wish to formally yet warmly express our sincere thanks to each of the members of the Commission. Their availability, their enthusiasm, sometimes their impetuosity, almost always their self-discipline, enabled us to reach without mishap the finishing line of what may well have seemed an obstacle course. They have earned both the admiration and the gratitude of all the people of Québec. Some of our members, those sitting on the Steering Committee, were more closely involved in the organization of our work. They did not hesitate to put their experience, their knowledge of parliamentary procedure and their familiarity with committee work to the service of their colleagues, so that our work was organized with quiet efficiency. We owe special thanks, then, to Claude Béland, Guy Bélanger, Jacques Brassard, Guy Chevette, Claude Dauphin, Christiane Pelchat and Gil Rémillard for their support and for the cordiality that characterized our discussions.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): The baggage trains follow a victorious army, but the secretariat goes before a successful commission. The competence, energy and motivation of the young team gathered by our secretary enabled some one hundred people to visit 11 cities throughout the regions of Québec, and made possible the successful organization of the forum and the working sessions of the Commission. The secretariat also had a large role to play in analysing the 600 briefs received by the Commission. Each member of the Commission was thus able to assimilate at a glance the main points of each brief and identify points that had to be examined more thoroughly. The secretariat also had a very efficient administrative staff and a team whose sole task was to see that communication and relations with the members of the Commission were smooth.

The secretariat and the entire Commission were run by a secretary who, physically as well as morally, has few equals, Henri-Paul Rousseau.

His energy, his ability to manage complex dossiers and to organize work, his determination to solve every problem, made life easy for the chairmen. The editorial team he headed had to rework its texts again and again, polish them ceaselessly, keep them clear and informative, while taking into account as best they could the many comments and observations made on their work. In the name of the Commission, we would like to thank all those who contributed, in whatever capacity, to the success of our work.

(12:00 noon)

The Chairman (Mr. Michel Bélanger): When a commission does much of its work behind closed doors, it develops a very special relationship with the members of the press. Luckily for us, we began by touring Québec with the press at our sides. The comradeship that developed as we waited in airports and covered long miles in busses, gave rise to a fellow feeling that yet did not interfere with the objectivity of its analysis. The people of Québec were able to follow the course of our work from day to day, directly on television, or later, through the information provided by the press, thanks to the talent and persistence of those whose job it was to follow our every move and endeavour to discover where it would all lead.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Our report is short and to the point: 72 pages in which 36 authors express their joint opinion. Each member could, in the space of a few pages, add more personal nuances and comments, but the overwhelming consensus sought was achieved. The impact of conflicting visions, the impasse, the possible solutions are described for analysis and reflection. The proposed process aspires to a democratic choice by a sovereign people. In the near future, after open and enlightened debate by the legislative authorities, the situation will have been summed up. It is now up to the National Assembly, to which we will report, and all the people of Québec, for whom we have been working, to take over in a serene and mature manner.

We will now hear from the Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Jacques Parizeau.

Address by the Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Jacques Parizeau

Mr. Parizeau: Mr. Chairman, listening to us all this morning, I imagine that anyone seeing or hearing us must be asking: But where is the consensus? There is a consensus - I'll come back to that later - but it is clear to me that the basic consensus, first and foremost, is being forged among the people of Québec. We are drawing closer to the moment, I think, when we will have to admit that by far the greatest number of Quebecers wants Québec to become a

sovereign nation.

There is a consensus, or almost a consensus, too, in that three-quarters of the briefs presented by people who made known their constitutional stand in the public hearings expressed a clear preference for Québec sovereignty. I recall in particular among the many briefs clearly supporting Québec sovereignty that were presented during the public hearings, that remarkable brief which I said, in my opinion, was a historical landmark, presented by the Mouvement Desjardins, and the presentations made by so many groups of young people.

I believe that this consensus being built among the people of Québec in favour of sovereignty should be reflected in our work. Which is why I insisted that, at one point, even though it clearly was not quite part of the pattern with which we were faced, at one point, the members of the Commission deal with the question of Québec's sovereignty. You are either for it or against it.

I would like to point out, first of all, that the Commission as a whole seems to be lagging behind the people in this respect. Only fifteen of us opted for sovereignty, but I would like to stress the common denominator of those fifteen. They represent a lot of people. I am thinking not only of the labour federations or the Union des artistes. I am thinking of the representatives of the municipal movement, of the Mouvement Desjardins, of course, and of the Bloc québécois. It was, I think, for me at least, the moment of truth for the Commission. The two chairmen, as you know, abstained.

You will understand, I think, how important it was to specifically express our dissidence on that point. I thought it was important, essential, that we register the fact, with respect to the conclusions of the Commission, that we support the sovereignty option, that it be clearly stated.

There were 30 of us who agreed on a process, a process that must be interpreted as it is written in order to understand why, I think, those in favour of sovereignty agreed to it, because, first of all, this process provides for - or suggests - one single referendum, a referendum on sovereignty. It must be read as it is written.

This process also provides for the creation of a parliamentary committee whose work, essentially, will be to prepare for sovereignty, to study how it will be brought about, and - this I see as important too - to see what can be arranged with the rest of Canada with respect to economic association. Québec has never before created a parliamentary committee to examine the economics of these things. I can live very well with that, as it has been stated. If you will allow me, I say we have made progress.

At last, a parliamentary committee will be

able to examine that in our system! There will be a committee to study the proposals coming from the rest of Canada. What a horrible expression. We have no intention of transforming a country by calling it ROC, "rest of Canada", do we? We will have to find another term. It really won't do. But a committee will study any proposals the rest of Canada might put forward, as long as the proposals bind Canada and the other provinces.

I must admit, Mr. Chairman, that I still wonder how certain federalists who are - how can I put it - very lucid in their reasoning, avowed federalists, could accept the wording of the consensus. Anyway, they accepted it. It is clear, though, that there will be no call for proposals. In the recommendation, we are not seeking renewed federalism, but those who hope for it will wait for it and as long as it binds both the federal government and the other provinces, that is to say... I cannot say it better than the President of the Mouvement Desjardins, yesterday, at a conference, that is, something that binds both the governments and the legislatures.

I think the date is a bit late since, like so many people, particularly in the business world, pointed out to the Commission, at the public hearings, it is a date that, pushed back so far, gives rise to the uncertainty that so many people said would be harmful.

There is a risk inherent in this consensus on the process. Yes, a risk. A risk that we don't want to take but that is inevitable. That risk is the government. Yes, there is a danger that the government change the process on which we reached a consensus. Already, it is backing away, not only with respect to sovereignty as such - but with respect to the vote that the Commission asked for a few days ago; already it had backed away - but perhaps with respect to each of the clauses of the bill suggested by the Commission, pointing out, for instance, that there could be a referendum on something other than sovereignty, although the consensus of thirty people was that there would be only one. Yes, it is backing away. I expect.

Finally, we will have to see the bill to discuss whether the two committees we called for are there. We do not know. We would have to see the bill. That is a risk, a risk we have to take because the government is in power and, like any government, it can do whatever it likes with its majority in the National Assembly. That is the way our system works. It is often said, to describe British parliamentary law that the Parliament can do anything except change a man into a woman. And even that may not be true in our day and age.

What message will English Canada receive from the work of the Commission? I don't think I can answer that. We will have to see. We will have to see what it gets out of the message we

send it. Simply reading the text of the recommendation, it should get the impression that, for it, things are going badly, the deadlines are not very long, the chances for it to do an about-turn are not very big. Listening to the government's representatives over the past 48 hours, on the other hand, it will presume that there is still hope, that something can be arranged. So it depends a bit on whether it will be reading or listening. I imagine it will be doing both and, in that case, its impressions will be a bit vague. It will have to ask the head of the government to clarify matters, to interpret the consensus for it, and, in that respect, I was going to say: I feel the same way. The head of the Québec government now has the ball in his court and he must tell us what he wants to do with it. Follow the text, or something else, a revised text. We, as a Commission, at any rate, have done what I think we were supposed to do and we tried to agree on the text. What will become of that text? Time will tell. If there is a risk, that is where it is.

As for us, the Parti québécois, and I will end with this, Mr. Chairman, our objective is clear. In the Opposition, we will try to advance the cause of Québec's sovereignty; in power, we will accomplish it. Thank you.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you, Mr. Parizeau. To terminate this working session, I will now give the floor to the Prime Minister of Québec, Mr. Robert Bourassa.

Address by the Prime Minister

Mr. Robert Bourassa

Mr. Bourassa: Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will understand that, being the thirty-fifth person to take the floor, I feel the need to be concise. I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to the chairmen for the work they have done and to the secretary, Mr. Rousseau, who had such good news for us during these financially difficult times, and to all the members of the Commission, thinking first and foremost, you will understand, of my colleague Gil Rémillard, who led the government team so well, and to all the liberal MNAs who were so supportive of their party. I would also like to thank the representatives of the business world, of Québec's workers, of the cultural, educational, cooperative and municipal milieus, everyone who contributed to the conclusion reached, which is so important for the future of Québec, including, of course, all those who presented briefs, particularly those at the youth forum which I attended and which I found especially interesting.

Nor do I wish to forget my friends in the Parti québécois, particularly the cofounder of this Commission, the Leader of the Opposition,

and member for l'Assomption. It is not difficult for the member for l'Assomption to understand State matters but to reconcile his role as Leader of the Opposition with those State matters is sometimes less obvious. I would like to point, in that respect, to the declarations made by the Leader of the Opposition when we agreed to set up a Commission. We were asked about the date of the referendum. The member for l'Assomption hoped that it would be as soon as possible, speaking as the Leader of the Opposition. But he said: I perfectly understand that the Prime Minister – implying that the Prime Minister is responsible for day to day administration, which is not always easy – must be more circumspect. And I agree with him.

Messrs. Chairmen, for some months now, I have been emphasizing various objectives in the constitutional process. I believe that the people of Québec, most of the people of Québec, want a profound change, not only to satisfy their aspirations as Quebecers but also to create a Canadian federation that works, particularly in these financially critical times not only for the Canadian provinces but for the federal government as well, and even for our neighbour to the south, the United States. So, first objective, a drastic change.

Second objective, results. We have been discussing constitutional problems for several decades now, and, for all practical purposes, since the beginning of Confederation, we have been unable to obtain the constitutional changes that we in Québec consider important for our future.

Third objective, public involvement, specifically in a referendum. Well, these objectives are to be found in the recommendations made by the Commission: profound change, the need for results through a vote on sovereignty and, if we are unable to reach an agreement with our Canadian partners – the Leader of the Opposition objects to the expression "the rest of Canada", so, our Canadian partners – we can hold, in keeping with the recommendations of the Commission, a referendum on Québec's political sovereignty. Obviously, the people are necessarily involved here.

The process will continue in parliamentary committees. We insisted, for our part, that these committees examine the economic implications of such a step. It will not surprise anyone to hear that, since it has always been part of my political creed to insist on the economic and financial repercussions of the various consequences or options.

I also mentioned the importance of basic rights and freedoms, of the historical role of the English, and of the role of the cultural communities and the Native peoples in the future of Québec and of Canada.

So there is a consensus on the process. There is a consensus on the existence of a

parliamentary committee to study any proposals from our Canadian partners. I agree with the Parti québécois MNAs that article 1 of the Parti québécois is not article 1 of the Québec Liberal Party but I am obliged to say, as the Leader of the Opposition has just done, that there is agreement as to the process. There is agreement on the fact that we can examine any proposals from our partners. And I am obliged to say that our friends in the Official Opposition have accepted this process. Nor is it the first time the member for Lac-Saint-Jean or the member for Joliette or others perhaps accept this process. They accepted it in the case of the "beau risque". They accepted it on the question of national affirmation. I am happy to see that they continue to be flexible.

Messrs. Chairmen, that said, if we accept the presence and the existence of a parliamentary committee, we cannot refuse the recommendations of that committee. How can we seriously and logically ask the people of Québec to say: O.K. for the parliamentary committee; O.K. for its recommendations, but there may be some that, in some cases, we won't want to apply. Unless we use the logic of fairyland, I do not see how we can, on the one hand, accept the process and, on the other hand, refuse the consequences and implications of it.

Along the same lines, I think we have to respect the powers of the Executive and the National Assembly. Can you imagine for one instant suspending the powers of the Executive or the National Assembly? You would be the first, everyone here, to say that that would be a thoroughly antidemocratic gesture which we have no intention of supporting. In that respect, Messrs. Chairmen, I worry when I hear some of the things our friends have to say. I hope I am wrong. I sometimes am.

The Bélanger-Campeau report gave rise to a major consensus on the need for a drastic change in our political institutions and the deep desire of the people of Québec for greater autonomy. From a historical perspective I am obviously the one who will have to make one of the most important decisions ever for Québec. This decision must not be a party or a political decision. It must be a State decision that will unite Quebecers, not divide them, a decision for the future, prudent and realistic, a decision that will bear witness to the confidence of the people of Québec and their determination to take their future in hand in a world where no nation stands alone.

Messrs. Chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission, once again, my deepest thanks for an excellent piece of work that will play a decisive role in determining the future of Québec.

The Chairman (Mr. Jean Campeau): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Bourassa. So ends our last

working session and our mandate. Before we each go our way, allow me to remind you, to make five comments. First, you know that the budget is tight. So, in the way of gifts, all we have to offer are your easels, which you may take home with you. Second, a reception will nevertheless be held in the President's chambers behind, right after this sitting. It is free. Our report will be tabled in the National Assembly at 2:00 p.m. All the members are invited to watch from the gallery. The members may then obtain a copy of the report in the Salon rouge at 2:15. Thank you everyone.

(End of sitting, 12:25 p.m.)